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Notion of Sanctity in Official Catholic Thought (last quarter of XIII century).

Since the 18th century the word "reason" was employed to discredit the Christian dogma, and "rationalist" in common parlance came to mean "unbeliever"[1]. But in the cultural space of 13th century, "an age of faith", in Western Europe one can find two interlaced and roughly concurrent tendencies, representing different types of reasoning: scholasticism was an abstract and deductive branch, while the canon law was the empirical one. Both have a strong link with the Catholic Church and represent the official catholic discourse.

Present study will largely be confined to the official catholic thought and to the rationalization of the notion of sanctity in clergy's perception. It aims at investigation of this question by an exemplary study of official catholic discourse of late 13th century. This subject, that rests virtually unexplored but is however outlined in last works of David d'Avray[2] and Nicole Beriou[3], seems to me the most relevant and deserving a systematic research, because this tendency has not yet found its place in the context of theological and faith-teaching tradition of this period. I would like to close a gap in the knowledge about official conception of the sanctity by studying it in its development. This subject seems quite important because it can be put in the context of the beginning of rationalization of the perception of the world and of the way of thinking that is traditionally perceived as the foundation for turning from the Middle Ages to the Early Modern Period. Showing the rational nature of thinking about sanctity in the 13th century, I would like to disengage the idea of "rationalization" from its enduring association with Western "Modernity".

The starting point of this study has to be a clarification of the core meaning of "rationality" and "rationalization" as used in present research. This term is applied by representatives of many different branches of knowledge: by sociologists, economists, anthropologists, psychologists, political scientists, historians and, last but not least, by philosophers[4]. As far as the principal inspiration for the present study was a book "Economy and society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology[5]" written by Max Weber, I am going to treat this subject in Weber's conceptual framework.

It does not mean that I will try to find the roots of modern Western rationality in medieval practices. I am going to take a pluralist approach to rationalities and the modern Western rationality will be considered as *one of* possible manifestations of this phenomena. There is a deep-rooted delusion that during the Middle Ages the reason was oppressed by the superstition. This situation is considered to be lightly changed by the Renaissance and the Reformation and only the Enlightenment allegedly succeeded in remedying this situation by the rise of science. This stand is faulty.

To judge one type of rationality by the criteria of "current" rationality means to fall into reductionism. In my opinion, Thomas Kuhn's idea of incommensurability of scientific theories or paradigms can be applied here. It is not possible to understand, to prove or to disprove one paradigm by the rules of another rival paradigm, through its conceptual framework and terminology[6]. This statement holds true for rationalities as well: we should not reduce any

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[1]   *Becker C.L.* The Heavenly City of the Eighteenth-Century Philosophers (Yale University Press, 1932), p. 8.

[2]   *D'Avray D. L.* Medieval Religious Rationalities: a Weberian Analysis (Cambridge, 2010).

[3]   Modern questions about medieval sermons. Essays on marriage, death, history and sanctity. / Eds. Nicole Bériou and David L. D'Avray. (Spoleto, Firenze, 1994

[4]   An overview of philosophical work exploring the nature of rationality can be found in: The Oxford Handbook of Rationality / Ed. by A.R. Mele and P. Rawling. (Oxford, 2004).

[5]   *Weber M.* Economy and society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology / Ed. by G. Roth and C. Wittich. (Berkley, Los Angeles, London, 1978).

[6]   See: *Kuhn Th.* The Structure of Scientific Revolutions. 50th anniversary. 4th ed. (University of Chicago Press, 2012), see esp. pp. 147-149.

substances that are important for an "ancient" rationality justifying it by the reasons of our "actual" rationality and culture. This thesis can be illustrated by a metaphor of political map. It represents political borders of depicted countries but at the same time it forms the borders. So does the rationality of the researcher, it leaves its mark on the body of his or her interest.

That's why I am going to apply Weber's pluralist approach to rationalities[7]. In rational thinking "in general" is inherent involving some general principles and logical consistency[8]; Weber has named 4 forms of rational thinking or "ideal-types": value or belief-oriented rationality[9], instrumental rationality[10], formal rationality[11] and substantive or material rationality[12][13]. The advantage in Weber's interpretation of rationality is that it makes it possible to describe, for example, religious practices as partly rational (or partly irrational), it permits to speak of "diminished rationality" rather than irrationality.

Due to the method that I have chosen for my research I hope that it can contribute to the field of studying sanctity. A considerable amount of valuable work in this field has been done during last 50 years, but the problem that is indicated above is still uninvestigated. And although rationality and its diverse manifestations in historical rationalization processes have been universally acknowledged as a major theme in Max Weber's corpus, only a few commentators have endeavored to investigate this theme or to relate the various types of rationality to one another.

Around 1965, scholars began to turn to the legends of the saints in an attempt to breathe new life into a long-ignored body of religious texts. But phenomenon of the sanctity itself didn't get an obvious appeal among the historians up to the end of 1970-s; they preferred to focus on the history of certain saints and on their cults (even Peter Brown who's books has given the greatest impetus to the functionalist tradition on hagiographic studies dedicated himself to the studying of "holy men"). But at the last third of 20 century we can observe that the interest in the history of sanctity has quicken. Probably that was the book "Sainthood in the Later Middle Ages[14]" written by André Vauchez who has excited that turn; in this work Vauchez has identified shifts and transformations in the history of who counted as holy, according to what criteria and among which audience. Author has also raised the question of the social identity of the saints.

This book can be named the turn-point in the history of sanctity: after its publication the researcher's focus has shifted towards phenomenon of sanctity. Historians started to turn to such problems as the social composition of the saints and their "clients" i.e. those who were touched by the miracles worked by the saints (this problem was brought about by M. Goodich[15], M.

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[7]   The concept of plurality of rationalities has several advocates, such as Maurice Godelier (see notably Rationalité et irrationalité en économie. (Paris, Maspero, 1966)), Peter Winch (see chapters 1 and 5 in Rationality / Ed. by Bryan R. Wilson. (1970)), Edward Evan Evans-Pritchard (see esp. *E-E. Evans-Pritchard*. Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic Among the Azande. (Oxford University Press, 1976)) and others.

[8]   This idea was expressed by Charles Taylor (*Taylor Ch*. Rationality, in: Hollis and Lukes (eds.) Rationality and Relativism (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1982), pp. 87-105) and became a subject of criticism several times (see, for example, *Johnston A. S.* Theory, Rationality, and Relativism, in: *Tradition and Discovery,* Vol. 20(3), 1993, pp. 16-28) but as far as this paper is a historical, not philosophical research, I find Taylor's definition convenient and sufficient.

[9]   It implies conscious belief in the value for its sake, submission to a system of conviction, no matter secular or sacred.

[10]   Id est calculation of practical and logical consequences of the action.

[11]   Weber uses this concept to describe simple means-ends rational calculation.

[12]   This concept refers to goal oriented rational action within the context of ultimate ends or values.

[13]   *Weber M.* Economy and society, p. 24ff. For discussions about applicability of these notions in history, see *D'Avray D. L.* Rationalities in History. (Cambridge, 2010), pp. 58-64 and 67-69.

[14]   *Vauchez A.* La sainteté en Occident aux derniers siècles du Moyen Age d'après les procès de canonisation et les documents hagiographiques. (Roma, 1988). See english translation : *Id.* Sainthood in the Later Middle Ages. / Translated by Jean Birrell. (New York, 1997).

[15]   *Goodich M.* The Politics of Canonization in the Thirteenth Century: Lay and Mendicant Saints, in: *Church History.* Vol. 44, 197, pp. 294-307.

Rousche[16], R. Finucane[17], J. Ziegler[18], P.-A. Sigal[19]); the role of the cult of saints in the Latin Christianity (P. Brown[20]); procedure and mechanism of canonization (O. Kraft[21], T. Wetzstein[22]). Within two last decades the focus had shifted from overall categorizations and comparison of various processes to a narrower but nuanced perspective; nowadays a qualitative close reading of the depositions is an important method of analysis. Currently, social history approach, everyday life, family and gender, as well as local interaction and political motivation behind the practicalities of the proceedings are pre-eminent themes in the study of medieval canonizations. But, of course there is no doubt that the history of sanctity has not yet received all the attention it deserves and much remains to be done in that field.

It is well-known, that the early 13th century witnessed the triumph of the papal monopoly in the right to the canonization of saints[23]. Gregory IX has included in his "Decretals" the rule, that "you may not revere (anyone) as a saint without the permission of the Roman Church"[24], Innocent IV was able to make even more rigorous statement: "only the pope can canonize saints"[25]. Of course, throughout the later Middle Ages hundreds of new saints were recognized in the traditional manner, but starting from the 13th century the "papally" canonized saints formed a different, special category. What is also important is the fact that during the 13th century the approach of the Medieval Church to the sainthood became more and more pragmatic. With the aid of the cults of saints, and the organizations supporting them, the Church hierarchy could control and oversee a form of religious enthusiasm which might otherwise find more destructive channels.

During the early Middle Ages the lay society *discovered* sanctity: people started to regard somebody as saint, when they recognized in this person the incarnation of a "stereotype of sanctity", when he (or she) fitted, for example, the Franciscan ideal of sanctity[26]. But with the intensification of papal influence on the canonization came the idea that the sanctity has to be *proven*. The only way to verify whether somebody was holy was to launch an investigation, a process of canonization.

The papal canonization process had a very strict form. It included several steps: to initiate the procedure of canonization, the Curia needed a "postulation" (a request to examine some "candidature", coming from local church authorities); then, if the pope was convinced, he sent the commissioners to hold hearings (*informatio in partibus*) in the region, where the future saint lived. During these hearings the representatives of the Curia questioned the witnesses about the life and virtues of putative saints, about the miracles that they performed during their lives (*ante mortem*) and after the death (*post mortem*) and about the general reputation (*fama*) of the person

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[16] *Rousche M.* Miracles, maladies et psychologie de la foi à l'époque carolingienne en France, in : Hagiographie, cultures et sociétés, IV-XII siècles. (P., 1981), pp. 319-337.

[17] *Finucane R. C.* The Use and Abuse of medieval miracles, in: *History.* Feb. №60, 1975, pp.1-10.

[18] *Ziegler J.* Practitioners and Saints: Medical Men in Canonization Processes in the Thirteenth to Fifteenth Centuries, in: *Social History of Medicine.* №12, 1999, pp. 191-225.

[19] *Sigal P.-A.* L'homme et le miracle dans la France médiéval (XIe-XIIe siècle). (P., 1985).

[20] For brief exposition of his ideas see: *Brown P.* Arbiters of the Holy: The Christian Holy Man in Late Antiquity, in: Saints and Virtues. / Ed. by John Hawley. (Berkeley, 1987), pp. 57-78.

[21] *Krafft O.* Papsturkunde und Heiligsprechung. Die päpstlichen Kanonisationen vom Mittelalter bis zur Reformation. (Köln, Weimar, Wien, 2005).

[22] *Wetzstein T.* Heilige vor Gericht. Das Kanonisationsverfahren im europäischen Spätmittelalter. (Köln, Weimar, Wien, 2004). (Forschungen zur kirchlichen Rechtsgeschichte und zum Kirchenrecht Bd. 28).

[23] For more details about the struggle of the Curia for this right see: *Kemp E.W.* Canonization and authority in the Western Church. (Oxford, 1948), *Vauchez A.* Sainthood in the Later Middle Ages.

[24] *Decretales Gregorii IX,* 3.45. This statement originates in letter "*Audivimus…*", written to the king of Sweden in 1171-1172 by Pope Alexander III. More information about this letter you can find in: *Kemp E. W.* Pope Alexander III and the Canonization of Saints: The Alexander Prize Essay, in: Transactions of the Royal Historical Society, Fourth Series. 1945. Vol. 27, pp. 13-28.

[25] Innocent IV. *Apparatus super V libros decretalium,* ad. X. 3. 45. 1, *Audivimus.*

[26] *Kleinberg A. M.* Proving Sanctity: Selection and Authentication of Saints in the Later Middle Ages, in: *Viator,* Vol. 20, 1989, p. 185.

to be canonized. Notable is the fact that the witnesses were not allowed to speak freely, they were supposed to prove or deny several statements about the candidate, prepared by the cardinals. This method to conduct an inquiry served the purpose to simplify future organization of received information and to determine whether each statement has been proven. The representatives of the Curia believed that such *articuli interrogatorii* enabled a more objective analysis of saint's life[27]. These questions also aimed at making distinction between the miracles committed with divine assistance and these that could be worked by sorcerers or heretics[28].

Then the curial phase of canonization process began. The documents, created during the process, were sent to the papal court, reorganized, rewritten and subjected to rigorous scrutiny of a quasi-legal character[29]. First of all, the witnesses should have been classified in two groups: concerning "*virtus morum*" and concerning "*virtus signorum*"[30] and the quantification of these testimonies became one of the ways to verify sanctity[31]. The inquisitors tried to establish the exact circumstances in which the miracles, committed by the saint, occurred, because Rome "preferred" the miracles, providing irrefutable evidence of divine intervention contrary the laws of nature[32].

In 13th century the canonization processes have got a rarity value[33]. The members of Sacred College were really skeptical about many testimonies about miracles[34]. The main reason to doubt was an apprehension to commit an error and to canonize somebody who does not deserve it. Thomas Aquinas dedicated to this problem one of his "Disputed questions"[35]; he maintained that even though "*testimonium hominum fallibile est*", "there can be no damnable error in the Church, but to venerate a sinner as a saint would be a damnable error… Therefore the Church can not err in such matters"[36]. Many other canon lawers and theologians have contributed to this discussion[37] and though they have not always had the same position concerning the probability of an error, nevertheless they were always solidly for the tough scrutiny of all testimonies by a committee of cardinals.

While the Curia was reflecting about signs of holiness of future, putative saints, John of Wales pondered a question about the true wisdom of these who were already canonized.

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[27] *Toynbee M. R.* St. Louis of Toulouse and the Process of Canonisation in the Fourteenth Century. (Manchester, 1929), p. 166.

[28] For example, the witnesses were asked, whether the miracle was performed by God or by artifice (*ex Deo non ex arte?*); whether it was against the laws of nature (*contra naturam?*); whether it was performed by the power of words (*ex vi verborum*) or by the saint's merit (*ex merito hominis*) etc. See: *Goffredus Tranensis*. Ad X 3. 45. Summa super titulis Decretalium. (Lyon, 1519). Repr. Darmstadt, 1968. Fol. 333 (repr).

[29] For thorough description of this procedure see: *Bartlett R.* Why Can the Dead Do Such Great Things? Saints and Worshippers from the Martyrs to the Reformation. (Princeton University Press, 2013), pp. 57-64, *Vauchez A.* La sainteté en Occident, pp. 39-69.

[30] These criteria of sanctity were declared by Innocent III in the bull canonizing Homobone of Cremona: "Two things are necessary in the Church militant for sanctity: morals (*virtus morum*) and signs (*virtus signorum*), that is, works of piety during the life and miracles after death". See: Die Register Innocenz' III. / Hg. *O. Hageneder, A. Haidacher*. Bd. I. (Graz-Köln, 1964), s. 761-764.

[31] The cardinals, questioning the locals about the life and miracles of future saint, made account of the number of miracles, worked by this saint. In my future research I am going to find out, whether there was a strong proportion between "*virtus morum*" and "*virtus signorum*" that should have been respected to make the canonization successful; whether there was a computable ratio between the social status of the witness and the "value" of his testimonies; whether the gravity of healed illnesses correlated with the price of votive gifts, etc.

[32] *Goodich M.* Reason or revelation? The criteria for the proof and credibility of miracles in canonization processes, in: Procès de canonisation au moyen âge. Aspects juridiques et religieux. (Collection de l'École française de Rome, № 340). (Rome, 2004), pp. 185-186.

[33] *D'Avray D. L.* Medieval Religious Rationalities, p. 78.

[34] *Vauchez A.* La sainteté en Occident, p. 561.

[35] *Thomas de Aquino*. Quaestiones de quolibet. Quodlibet IX, q. 8.

[36] Ibid.

[37] For more details see: *Kleinberg A. M.* Proving Sanctity, pp. 197-200,

John of Wales was an important Franciscan theologian and an industrious collector of *exempla* of the 13th century. Unfortunately, our knowledge about his life is very meagre[38]. His name implies that he was a Welshman and belonged to the Franciscan custody of Worcester. He joined the Order about the age of 25[39], been already a Bachelor of Theology, after the Franciscans' first arrival in Oxford. We dispose of any precise information about the date of his arrival to Paris but it is certain that John was already in Paris in June 1270[40], so, he caught the time of the anti-Mendicant controversy. He was a Regent Master in Theology in the years 1281-1283[41]. He did not spend the rest of his life in Paris, having severed any relations with England: in 1282 he was sent to Wales by the Archbishop Pecham to negotiate with Llewelyn.

A huge amount of texts was attributed to John of Wales, often wrongly. Modern scholars agree that he has written some twenty works[42]. The "-*loquia*" sequence[43], four preaching aids composing the most well-known group of his works, has been studied by A.G. Little[44], W.A. Pantin and J. Swanson but all researchers were very unenthusiastic while speaking about *Breviloquium de sapientia sanctorum* (Assisi, Sacro Convento, ms. 397). This text is considered to "lack the fascination of the earlier trio"[45], it has never been published or translated.

So, inasmuch as *Breviloquium* is almost unknown for historians and at the same time it is closely related to the body of my interest, I decided to put it under scrutiny and will dedicate to the transcription and commented translation of this treatise a considerable part of my research.

In *Breviloquium* John aims at "collecting something of the philosophy (*philosophia*) or wisdom (*sapientia*) of saints, who were true philosophers, illuminated by true wisdom"[46]. Comparing lives of desert fathers with these of gentile philosophers, he finds out that as far as the latter lacked the knowledge of God, in spite of the fact that they believed themselves wise, they were actually foolish[47]. To prove this statement, John gives a definition to the particular wisdom of the saints[48] and then he distinguishes and lists nine ways to exhibit this wisdom[49]. Almost each mode to show the true wisdom, mentioned by John, was described by a classical

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[38]   For example, his date of birth fell between 1210 and 1230 according to W.A. Pantin (*Pantin W.A.* John of Wales and Medieval Humanism., in: Medieval studies Presented to Aubrey Gwynn S.J., ed. J. A. Watt et al. (Dublin, 1961), p. 297) and he probably died in 1285. We can even suppose that it happened in April. This date is more certain because we know that circa 1283-1285 he was one of theologians commissioned to examine the works of Peter John Olivi and he died before the commission has completed its function. See: *Glorieux P.* Répertoire des Maîtres en théologie de Paris au XIIIe siècle. (P., 1934). ii. 114.

[39]   Presumably, it happened around 1258-1259. - See: *Swanson J.* John of Wales. A study of the Works and Ideas of a Thirteenth-Century Friar. (Cambridge, 1989), p. 4.

[40]   The first sermon of his Paris period dates to 29 June 1270. - See: *Swanson J.* Op. cit., p. 5. Paris, BN, MS lat 15034, ff. 127, 129d.

[41]   *Pantin W.A.* Op. cit., p. 297.

[42]   List of these works can be found in: *Swanson J.* Op. cit. Appendix 1 (pp.229-231).

[43]   Consisting of "Breviloquium de philosophia, sive sapientia sanctorum", "Communiloquium" or "Summa collationum", "Compendiloquium" and "Breviloquium de virtutibus antiquorum Principum et Philosophorum".

[44]   *Little A.G.* Studies in English Fransiscan history. (Manchester, 1917), p. 185ff.

[45]   *Swanson J.* Op. cit., p. 193.

[46]   Ideo expediens videtur aliqua colligere de philosophia sive de sapientia sanctorum, qui fuerunt veri philosophi et vera philosophia illuminati. *Breviloquium de philosophia, sive sapientia sanctorum* (further: Breviloquium). Assisi, Sacro Convento, ms. 397. f. 216vA.

John was really fascinated by phenomena of knowledge, wisdom, science etc and in many works he tried to tell the difference between them. According to him, there are several types of *prudentia*: *ratio* (the aspect of mind, distinguishing good from evil, loving God and choosing virtue), *intellectus* (the part of spirit perceiving the invisible), *circumspectio* (caution against vices), *providentia* (capacity to forecast future events), *cautio* (ability to distinguish between the virtues and the vices) and *sapientia*, the most mysterious one.

[47]   Licet in priori tractatulo fuerint aliqua collecta de vita philosophorum gentilium et eorum dictis atque exemplis, quia tamen non fuit in eis scientia Dei vera, nec gratias egerunt ipsi summo Creatori, qui eis revelavit ea que noverint, evanuerunt in cogitationibus suis, et dicentes se ecce sapientes, stulti facti sunt. *Breviloquium*, f. 216rB.

[48]   Such as "sapientia est modus anime", "sapientia est regimen vitae humanae", "sapientia est comprehensio veritatis rerum, que vere sunt", "sapientia est rerum divinarum et humanarum scientia et cognitio" etc.

[49]   See Capitulum V, "Quot modis dicitur sapiencia". Ff. 217vB-219vA.

author, such as Seneca, Augustine of Hippo, saint Gregory the Great, saint John Chrysostom et al[50]; of course, he uses a lot of biblical quotations as well (57, to be precise). He tries to discover the signs of true wisdom of saints, its criteria - and this aim fits quite well with the tendency that one can observe in mentioned above canonization politics of the time.

Unfortunately, so early in my research, I can't provide a sufficiently developed conclusion but I hope to have made clear several points concerning the reasons of the evolution towards rationalization in clergy's perception of the notion of sanctity and also I hope to have shown the manifestations of indicated tendency. To sum up: the Curia had several motives to revise its stand toward sanctity. First of all, Rome intended to get the exclusive right to canonize, driven not only by political but also by didactic interest: the Curia wanted to influence the society by an exemplary image of the saint, to provide it with an example of "good Christian". To ground the idea that only the saints approved by pope's bull deserve to be called "real" the Curia had to elaborate the criteria of sanctity and reflection on this subject has entailed the first steps in applying the rational method to the phenomenon of sanctity. The second reason to treat this notion "rationally" was fear to commit a mistake and to proclaim saint a heretic or a sorcerer. The third reason was an aspiration for strengthening the respect towards the saints by rarity of canonizations[51]. Forth reason is closely related to the third one: the scrutiny of miracles (resulting sometimes by declaration of the fact that they have happened) must have helped to neutralize the doubts that were in the air in 13th century. Speaking about concrete manifestations of dealing with sanctity from rational point of view, I can mention, first of all, an adoption of juridical procedure to the process of canonization. It has shown itself in the way to draw up the protocols of the inquiries, in the way to conduct these inquiries and to treat the witnesses. It has also noticeably influenced the "sanctity vocabulary". The quantitative approach to the information provided by the witnesses (quite typical for instrumental rationality) is another illustration of rationalizing tendencies in treating sanctity.

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[50]   He quotes 17 authors in all, mainly patristic (John makes much use of the big names of earlier centuries) but one can find some quotations of works of ancient philosophers as well.

[51] Hostiensis, for example, stated that "lest the number of saints be infinitely multiplied, with the result that charity and devotion grow cold and sanctity become worthless". See: *Hostiensis* ad X 3.45.1*, In librum decretalium commentaria* (Venise, 1581; repr. Turin, 1965), fol. 172A.