

*Cesare Baronio tra santità e scrittura storica.* Giuseppe Antonio Guazzelli, Raimondo Michetti, and Francesco Scorza Barcellona, eds. Studi e ricerche 29. Rome: Viella, 2012. 536 pp. €34.

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The absence of a truly critical monograph on Cesare Baronio makes any conference about his work a welcome contribution to early modern history. The papers delivered at the most recent such event, held at the Biblioteca Vallicelliana in Rome in June 2007, have now been published in the volume *Cesare Baronio tra santità e scrittura storica*, edited by Giuseppe Antonio Guazzelli, Raimondo Michetti, and Francesco Scorza Barcellona.

Organized thematically, the eighteen papers are divided into four sections. Part 1, “History and Sanctity in the Works of Baronio,” contains two articles on the methodology of the cardinal’s *Annales Ecclesiastici*: the first, by Simon Ditchfield, questions the rigor with which their author followed his own rules for writing history; the second, by Mario Mazza, takes the cardinal’s commitment to these rules at face value. The section concludes with Marina Benedetti’s rather inconclusive essay on Baronio’s scant treatment of heretical movements in the *Annales*.

Part 2, “Biography and Hagiography,” opens with Giuseppe Guazzelli’s meticulous study of Baronio’s contributions to the various revisions of the *Martyrologium Romanum*. Next, Giuseppe Finocchiaro leaves Baronio behind to discuss Antonio Gallonio’s *Historie delle sante vergini forestieri* — never published, he convincingly claims, because Filippo Neri and other members of the Roman Oratory preferred that attention not be drawn to non-Roman virgin saints. Baronio’s own hagiographical status is covered by Tommaso Caliò and Edoardo Aldo Cerrato, the latter of whom includes a handy bibliography of the cardinal’s autograph manuscripts. Francesco Scorza Barcellona then attempts to make sense of Baronio’s discrimination between truth and fiction in the various Acts of the Martyrs to conclude that the cardinal’s decisions were prompted not by ideological but by formal considerations. Finally, dealing with the paradigm of the female martyr in Baronio’s texts, Sara Cabibbo and Carmela Compare make much of the cardinal’s humanist methods and claim that his writings on female martyrs were too scholarly to win the hearts of cloistered women in the Seicento.

In part 3, “Baronio in Europe,” Stefano Andretta reflects on the cardinal’s involvement in the 1606–07 Interdict of Venus and his earnest use of historical sources to uphold papal primacy during the conflict. Next, Paolo Broggio discusses in fascinating detail Baronio’s anti-Molinist writings and their political subtext, namely the friction between Spain and the Holy See. Two essays on Baronio’s impact on Eastern

Europe follow: Giovanna Brogi Bergoff analyzes Baronio's decidedly anti-Byzantine account of the Christian conversion of Kievan Rus, while Andrea Ceccherelli traces the influence of Baronio's *Annales* and *Martyrologium* on the Polish Jesuit Piotr Skarga's *Żywotach świętych* (Lives of the saints). Returning to Baronio's relations with Spain, Manfredi Merluzzi discusses the cardinal's stance on the question of Saint James and the monarchy's submission to the Holy See in matters of faith. Finally, Bernard Dompnier traces the increasingly negative attitudes of French scholars toward the *Annales Ecclesiastici* over the course of the seventeenth century.

In part 4, devoted to archaeology and iconography, all too often Lucrezia Spera bases Baronio's contribution to Christian archaeology on incorrect information and a misreading of sources. Though somewhat out of place in this section, Ingo Herklotz's painstaking analysis of the cardinal's ideologically motivated construction of the persona of the early Christian matron Priscilla, makes one wish for more essays of this caliber. In the final essay, Alessandro Zuccari summarizes the iconography of martyrdom in churches redecorated under Baronio's supervision.

With several exceptions, the essays are more encomiastic than analytical: Baronio is a man of impeccable integrity, the savior of the Catholic Church, a paradigm shifter, the father of Christian archaeology and modern historical writing, a humanist, and a saint, who, among other things, was instrumental in the collapse of the USSR. Unfortunately, praise of the cardinal's accomplishments takes precedence over fundamental questions, such as why a man with no training in history was chosen to write the official history of the Catholic Church when there were at least forty more-qualified candidates for the job; why was he so quick to refute the authenticity of saints venerated in certain areas, yet so uncritical when it came to those of Rome; why, despite insisting that he would present everything in the *Annales* in strict chronological order without venturing his opinion, did he insert contemporary events among those of centuries past, and engage in polemic; how did his allegedly humanist approach to history resemble or differ from that of his contemporaries, such as Onofrio Panvinio, Carlo Sigonio, or Juan de Mariana?

The snapshots of Baronio presented in the volume often conflict. While Herklotz and Brogi Bergoff show the deliberate means by which the cardinal fashioned history for the benefit of the papacy, Andretta, Scorza Barcellona, and Spera present him as a scrupulous man whose earnest faith in primary sources and material evidence outweighed his interest in polemics. While Guazzelli and Cabibbo demonstrate the care with which Baronio revised hagiography, Zuccari's essay reveals that he was quite careless with the stories of the martyrs when translated into images. While Broggio delves into the bitter antagonism between Baronio and the Spanish Crown, Merluzzi glosses over it as if it were a mere blip on the historical screen. Differences of opinion are inevitable in any joint enterprise, but the conference and volume would have been more interesting had the contributors been willing to grapple with these contradictions or analyze their origins.

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