

Sacerdotal masculinity at war

Jesuit military chaplains at the Eighty Years' War

In 1587 the Jesuit *missio castrensis* was instituted in the army of Flanders (the Spanish army fighting against the “rebels-calvinists” of the Seventeen Provinces of the Netherlands between 1568 and 1648, during the Eighty Years' War). This initiative was in response to the wishes of Alessandro Farnese, General of the Army of Flanders and governor of the Spanish Low-Countries, who wanted to reform the military chaplaincy. The mission was active until the Peace of the Pyrenees in 1659. It was suspended during the Twelve Years Truce, but already in 1614 it was restored following the will of Archduke Albert and his general, Ambrogio Spinola¹. Its first superior will be the Brussels' Jesuit Thomas Sailly (1558-1623)².

- 1 On that mission, see different issues of V. LAVENIA, *Dio in uniforme. Cappellani, catechesi cattolica e soldati in età moderna*, Bologna, il Mulino, 2017, p. 129-154; *id.*, “Missiones Castrenses: Jesuits and Soldiers between Pastoral Care and Violence. Introduction”, *Journal of Jesuit Studies*, 4 (2017), p. 545-657, here at p. 545-558; *id.*, “In God's Fields. Military Chaplains and Soldiers in Flanders during the Eighty Years' War”, in M. MONDINI, M. ROSPOCHER (ed.), *Narrating War. Early Modern and Contemporary Perspectives*, Bologna-Berlin, Duncker et Humblot, 2013, p. 99-112. S. MOSTACCIO, “La mission militaire jésuite auprès de l'armée des Flandres pendant la guerre de Trente ans. Conversions et sacrements”, in B. FORCLAZ and P. MARTIN (ed.), *Religion et piété au défi de la guerre de Trente ans*, Rennes, Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2015, p. 183-202; *id.*, “Dieu à la guerre. Les émotions de Dieu et la guerre des Quatre-vingt ans aux Pays-Bas espagnols”, in C. BERNAT and F. GABRIEL (ed.), *Émotions de Dieu. Attributions et appropriations chrétiennes (xvi^e-xviii^e siècle)*, Turnhout, Brepols, 2019, p. 205-229, here at p. 207-218; *id.*, “Spiritual Exercises: Obedience, Conscience, Conquest”, in I. ŽUPANOV (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Jesuits*, New York, Oxford University Press, 2019, p. 75-104 (“The Spiritual Exercises in the army in wartime”). Still important: A. PONCELET, “L'activité apostolique. Les aumôniers militaires”, in *Histoire de la Compagnie de Jésus dans les anciens Pays-Bas*, vol. 2, Brussels, Académie Royale de Belgique, 1927, p. 405-422; X. ROUSSEAU, “Sur tous les fronts. Les missions des jésuites aux Pays-Bas et outre-mer”, in A. DENEUF et al. (ed.), *Les jésuites belges 1542-1992. 450 ans de Compagnie de Jésus dans les provinces belges*, Bruxelles, aesm éditions, 1992, p. 45-48. See also G. PARKER, *El ejército de Flandes y el Camino Español 1567-1659. La logística de la victoria y de la derrota de España en las guerras de los Países Bajos*, Madrid, Alianza Editorial, 1985, p. 213-214.
- 2 In addition to the bibliography of the previous note add L. BROWERS, art. “Sailly, Thomas”, in *Diccionario Histórico de la Compañía de Jesús: biográfico-temático [= DHCJ]*, vol. 4, Rome-Madrid, Institutum Historicum Societatis Iesu-Universidad Pontificia Comillas, 2001, p. 3463-3464. Books by father Sailly addressed to military man: T. SAILLY, *Guidon et pratique spirituelle du soldat chrestien*.

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Entering the Jesuit novitiate in Rome in 1580, Thomas Saily will then become the personal secretary of Antonio Possevino during his diplomatic missions in Poland and Hungary. Returning to the Netherlands, he became the confessor of Alessandro Farnese, sharing with him the project of a new form of apostolate with soldiers of the army of Flanders: an apostolate led by religious men, capable of supporting the fighters on a spiritual and material level. Aware of the difficulties inherent in this pastoral activity, the superiors of the Flandro-Belgica province decided to support it, and in 1587 father Saily became its first responsible. The *missio castrensis* was linked to the Jesuit college in Brussels during the winter months: 400 Jesuits took part in its activities between the foundation and 1659³. In 1588 General superior Claudio Acquaviva, engaged in the revival of Jesuit missionary enterprises, approved the *Instructions* written for the *missio* by the Belgian provincial François Coster⁴.

This article would like to examine the issues of missionary masculinities in military and confessional wartime contexts. This includes pointing out the elements highlighted in the definition and by the practices of what is missionaries' masculinity in relation to the military one. From then on, discourses on masculinities become a focus point for thinking in terms of hierarchies of masculinities within the essentially homosocial framework of the army. Indeed, women are well represented in early modern armies: prostitutes, "wores" and wives are accompanying *vivandières* and traders of all sorts. They played an active and decisive role in the pillage economy on which the war was based, at least until the military reforms of the second half of the 17th century⁵. However, military or religious authorities are not taking their numerically significant presence, linked to concrete activities, seriously. Women were excluded from formal power and its hierarchies. Their presence has had significant consequences on masculine

Reveu & augmenté pour l'armée de S.M. Catholique au Pays-Bas par le R.P. Thomas Saily Prestre de la Compagnie de Jesus, Anvers, Imprimerie Plantinienne chez la veuve et Jan Monreto, 1590 ; id., Memorial testamentaire composé en faveur des soldats combattans sous l'Estandart de la crainte de Dieu. Par le R.P. Thomas Saily de la Compagnie de Jesus. Partie premiere dédiée à monseigneur Ambroise Spinola Marquis des Balbases, Chevalier de l'ordre de la Toison d'or, du conseil de Sa Maïesté Catholique, Capitaine General de son armée au Palatinat Inferieur, &c., Louvain, Henri Hastens Imprimeur de la Ville & Université, 1622; Thesaurus litaniarum ac orationum sacer, cum suis adversus Sectarios Apologis Opera, Bruxellae, ex officina Rutgeri Velpii, 1598.

3 *Prosopographia Iesuitica Belgica Antiqua* [= PIBA], vol. 3, Leuven, 2000, Appendix IX.

4 I refer here to the copy of the *Ordinationes* preserved in a small handwritten book belonging to the *Castrensis*' Jesuit missionaries: "Ordinationes pro Missione Castrensi", *Liber ordinationum et aliorum quae in Missione Societatis Jesu in Castris Regys observantur*, Archives Générales du Royaume (Brussels) [= AGR], Jésuites, Collège de Bruxelles, n. 1969, f. 7-9. About François Coster, J. ADRIASSEN, art. "Costerus (De Costere) Franciscus", in *DHCJ*, vol. 2, p. 981-982. On Coster pastoral activities, see L. CHÂTELLIER, *L'Europe des dévots*, Paris, Flammarion, 1987, *ad indicem*. See also Claudio Acquaviva's *Generalate (1581-1615) and the Emergence of Modern Catholicism*, ed. by P.-A. FABRE and F. RURALE, St. Louis-Boston, The Institute of Jesuit Sources St. Luis-Boston College, 2017, *ad indicem*.

5 J. A. LYNN II, *Women, Armies, and Warfare in Early Modern Europe*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2008.



performativity, but theirs remains a presence on the margins. The setting of the explicit games of power, influence and redefinition of the self in relation to the other, therefore, remains essentially homosocial: a complex of hierarchies at the crossroads of religious, social and military contexts⁶.

Analyzing writings from and about Thomas Sailly's, this article will develop into four parts: the missionary's borderline position in a military context – between sharing with the laity and loneliness –, the discourses on the virility of the chaplain manifesting itself in the confessor's capacity for free judgment and in the virile power of sexual continence, the performance of the chaplain's masculinity in his relationship with the Virgin Mary and with the women victims of rape.

In the last few years some important contributions have focused on the masculinity of religious in the Early Modern period⁷. These investigations have multiplied the points of observation by complexifying the tridentine model of the angelic priest. This model was based on the "intimate relationship between man and the rite", recalled by Philippe Martin about the celebration of Mass⁸.

With regard to the complexity of this unequivocal angelic model, Ulrike Strasser highlighted how the gender norms crisis provoked by the Protestant Reforms towards Catholic priests and religious gave the occasion to the founder of the Society of Jesus, Ignatius de Loyola, to consider and put into practice a new form of clerical masculinity. This one, thanks to the Spiritual Exercises, was built around a fluidity of genders: "a compelling combination of affective piety and active involvement in the world⁹". In this perspective, it was not a question of denying the gendered dimension of individuals by the constant reference to an angelic reality, but rather of circulating – at least in practice – between attitudes recognized as masculine and other in link with female attitudes – tears, introspection and affectivity. This Jesuit novelty will be seized by the contemporaries and will be the subject of severe criticism against a religious order perceived as both "hermaphrodite" and carrying a "predatory masculinity"¹⁰.

If one investigates the hagiographies of members of the Society of Jesus between the 16th and 17th centuries, he quickly realizes the co-presence of two

6 R. CONNELL, *Masculinities*, Cambridge, Polity press, 2001; *id.*, "Hegemonic Masculinity. Rethinking the Concept", *Gender and Society*, 19 (2005), p. 829-859; K. CRENSHAW, "Mapping the margins : Intersectionality, Identity, Politics and Violence against Women of Color", *Stanford Law review*, 43, 1991, p. 124-199.

7 About the Society of Jesus, see at least M. LAVEN (ed.), *The Jesuits and Gender: Body, Sexuality, and Emotions*, special issue of *Journal of Jesuit Studies*, 2 (2015), p. 545-684.

8 P. MARTIN, *Le théâtre divin. Une histoire de la messe du XVI^e au XX^e siècle*, Paris, CNRS Éditions, 2010.

9 U. STRASSER, "The First Form of Grace. Ignatius of Loyola and the Reformation of Masculinity", in S. H. HENDRIX and S. C. KARANT-NUNN (ed.), *Masculinity in the Reformation Era*, Kirksville, Mo., Truman State University Press, 2008, p. 54-70, especially p. 59.

10 M. CHOUDHURY, "Genre, religion et histoire de la culture politique et de la vie privée en France : le procès Girad-Cadière", in S. MOSTACCIO et al. (ed.), *Échelons de pouvoir, rapports de genre : femmes, jésuites et modèle ignatien*, Louvain-la-Neuve, Presses universitaires de Louvain, 2014, p. 27-45 ; *id.*, *The Wanton Jesuit and the Wayward Saint. A Tale of Sex, Religion, and Politics in Eighteenth-Century France*, University Park, Penn Sate University Press, 2015.

models, theorized to inspire the Jesuits according to the very moment of their life within the order. Beyond Ignatius, the other two figures are those of the angelic novice – Stanislas Kostka († 1568), Luigi Gonzaga († 1591), Jan Berchmans († 1621) – and that of the missionary who can bear witness by blood to his faith and to his concern with the salvation of the souls. In this latter case, the prototype is, of course, François Xavier († 1552)¹¹. Ulrike Strasser had demonstrated how the martyrdom of the missionary can be considered as a manifestation of his generative capacity. Pouring blood is the “virile” gesture that generates new Christians¹².

But what about these models within the framework of a very specific mission, such as that of the army of Flanders?

Between loneliness and military solidarity

The sources tell us above all about the loneliness of the Jesuit missionaries in the army. But they also tell us about the militant and military attitude of the chaplains. Among the archives of this Jesuit mission there is a small handwritten book that constitutes a kind of mobile memory of the mission. It is the *Liber ordinationum et aliorum quae in Missione Societatis Jesu in Castris Regis observantur*. The normative sources – especially the *Ordinationes* – are accompanied by prayers, the repertoire of Jesuits involved in the mission, letters dealing with complex issues to be settled from the jurisdictional or pastoral point of view, recipes for cooking and remedies for the sick people attended to by missionaries.

Among other things, we find the letter sent to the superior of the mission – father Thomas Sailly – by his provincial, Bernard Olivier, following the death of three fathers at the Battle of Nieuport, on July 1600¹³. An intense and melancholy letter, reminding the mission leader of the duty to control the zeal of his men: they must remember what their role is and not replace the captains when it is time to encourage troops during the battle. The fathers we are talking about here, therefore, had gone out on the battleground and lost their lives.

What is striking in this letter is the Jesuits’ sense of profound loneliness and foreignness in the military context of their mission. Fathers share not only battles, but also life in military camps. They often feel isolated from their confreres. The provincial therefore reminds them of the opportunity to stay in touch

11 S. DITCHFIELD, “‘Coping with the *beati moderni*’: Canonization Procedure in the Aftermath of the Council of Trent”, in T. M. McCOOG (ed.), *Itē Inflammat Omnia: Selected Historical Papers from Conferences Held at Loyola and Rome in 2006*, Rome: Institutum Historicum Societatis Iesu, 2010, p. 413-440.

12 U. STRASSER, “The First Form of Grace...”, *art. cit.*, in part. p. 48-49; *id.*, “Copies with Souls: The Late Seventeenth-century Marianas Martyrs, Francis Xavier, and the Question of Clerical Reproduction”, in M. LAVEN (ed.), *The Jesuits and Gender...*, *op. cit.*, p. 558-585.

13 *Liber Ordinationum*, 14 July 1600, letter from Bernardinus Oliverius, s.n. Cf. A. PONCELET, “L’activité apostolique...”, *art. cit.*, p. 415-416.



with the nearest colleges; to go there and get medical supplies, food but also “maiolem consolationem inter fratres (greater consolation from the brothers)”. Missionaries seem to live side by side with men whose priorities and lifestyles they do not necessarily share. They died a few kilometers away from the confreres, but alone. Indeed, even Thomas Sailly, who is nevertheless strongly linked to military life and its protagonists, can but notice the “persecutions” experienced by missionaries “trop frequentes et journalieres en l’armée, pour le naturel depravé & corrompu de certain soldats (too frequent and daily in the army, for the natural depraved & corrompu of certain soldiers)”¹⁴.

However, in addition to these painful aspects of distance, the sources also bear witness to a sense of sharing that is deeply rooted in the experience of the military mission. This sentiment was reinterpreted as self-legitimation *a posteriori* in 1640, with the publication of the *Imago primi saeculi Societatis Jesu*. The sixth book was devoted to the Flandro-Belge province and its missionary activities: the *missio hollandica*, the *missio castrensis*, and the *missio navalis* express the same preoccupation to participate in the reconquest of men and land at risk of Calvinist reform, as well as to support the Catholic armies¹⁵. The *Imago* tells us that when Alexander Farnese decided to entrust his confessor Thomas Sailly with the Jesuit military mission to the Flanders army, twelve Jesuits from different colleges were sent to participate. On this occasion Farnese wanted the names of the missionaries to be written in the royal register *ad militare modum; not stipendio faciundo, quos erat nefas, sed elemosynis sustentandae vitae impetrandis*¹⁶. Even with their specificities, the Jesuits therefore join the army and will share with the soldiers not only the difficulties linked to the lack of food, the cold, the contagious diseases, but also and above all, the difficulty of getting paid. Again in the 1630s, the twelve ecus promised by Archduchess Clara Eugenia were rarely paid and the missionaries engaged with the cavalry were unable to follow the soldiers¹⁷.

Besides material difficulties, the missionaries share among themselves and seek to spread among the soldiers the conviction of fighting for God’s honor. In the time of heretical disobedience, God must restore his honor and, therefore, he must commit himself to war. The Catholic soldier and his chaplains will share with

14 T. SAILLY, *Memorial testamentaire...*, op. cit., p. 170.

15 *Imago primi saeculi Societatis Jesu a provincia Flandro-Belgica eiusdem Societatis repraesentata*, Antwerp, Ex officina Plantiniana Balthazaris Moreti, 1640. On *missio castrensis*, p. 804-807. For the English translation see *Art, Controversy, and the Jesuits: The Imago Primi Saeculi (1640)*, ed. by J. O’MALLEY, Philadelphia, Saint Joseph’s University Press, 2015.

16 *Imago primi saeculi...*, op. cit., p. 805.

17 AGR, Jésuites, Collège Bruxelles, n. 1965. Fascicule : «Cavalerie, Ruiterij », s.d. The chaplains are not able to follow the knights: “Siendo imposible que un capellan pueda sustentar su persona, y un cavallo con doze escudos al mes, pagados come se sabe, donde resulta que quasi todos estan a pie sin cavallos”.

God the battleground, as an instrument of his vengeance for the restoration of divine honor. The shared affirmation of masculinity through the honor of arms is evident¹⁸.

The virility of the chaplain by Thomas Sailly: a matter of freedom

It is in his *Memorial Testamentaire* that Thomas Sailly summarizes his own vision of the priest engaged with the armies. Re-reading his long experience as military chaplain, the Jesuit proposes a profoundly gendered model: it is of himself and his confreres that Sailly speaks when, page after page, he sketches the portrait of the military chaplain as a deeply virile being, because he is able to keep his freedom both towards power – it is the confessor’s “holy freedom” – and towards lust. The highly hierarchical context of the army is thus explicitly put forward and it is within this framework, Sailly points out, that one will have to manage his body and his impulses.

Chapter fifteen of the *Memorial* is dedicated to the Religious and Priests following the army¹⁹. The fundamental premise for what follows is the idea of a deep, almost ontological separation between those who have received priestly ordination and the rest of humanity. Sailly refers in this regard to chapter 18 of the book of Deuteronomy, in which are specified the rights and duties of the Levite priests in Israel. Their separation from the rest of the Chosen People is clearly manifested by the rules of inheritance: “The Levite has no inheritance in the midst of his brothers: the Lord is his inheritance²⁰”. Separated from other human beings, the priest must, at certain moments, take the place of God before human beings. In this function he is both priest and prophet. The reference here is to the book of Exodus, with the distinction of these two functions²¹.

The long list of qualities specific to the chaplain is realistic only as a consequence of this very special link with God: trained in virtues, able to go and return constantly between contemplative and active life, vigilant towards heresy, animated by a zeal for the salvation of soldiers, versed in the Bible, the priest in the army stands out above all for his perfect “continence et chasteté (continence and chastity)”: complementary and “très nécessaires (very necessary)” virtues.

The priest who has as a fundamental mandate to make Christ present among the soldiers during the Eucharistic celebration – said Sailly – will be “net, pur, & honneste (clean, pure, & honourable)” in his spirit, heart, eyes, lips, hands, ears

18 S. MOSTACCIO, “Dieu à la guerre...”, p. 208-212.

19 T. SAILLY, “Religieux et Prestres qui suivent l’armée”, in *Memorial testamentaire...*, op. cit., XV, p. 168-180.

20 Deuteronomy, 18, 1-2.

21 Exodus, 7, 1: “See! I have made you as God to Pharaoh, and Aaron your brother shall act as your prophet”.



“et en tout son corps (and in all his body)²²”. What is interesting here is that the divine corporality of Christ and that of the priest are not denied; in a typically Ignatian approach, the corporality of the priest -as well as his spirit- is constantly and effectively controlled, but not negated. Indeed, it is in this self-control that true virility can manifest itself. If then, as we have seen above, the angelic model is present in the devout literature for the novices, for the Jesuits definitively incorporated into the Society, the ideal proposed is another: the priest is not only the one who consecrates the body of Christ; he is also the one who administers the confession –the Catholic sacrament par excellence, beside the Eucharist. As a confessor, he will be a “juge equitable (fair judge)” and a “prudent medecin (prudent doctor)”²³.

C'est à luy à faire d'estre assis en son siège sacerdotal, & comme iuge installé en la place de Dieu examiner et diriger les consciences d'un chacun [...], soit qu'ils soyent Princes, ou personnes vulgaires & du commun ; c'est pourquoi il est assis la teste couverte, & le penitent est à genoux, la teste nue²⁴.

With regard to this essential role for the economy of Catholic salvation, that of the confessor, Saily admonishes by repeating a verse from the book of Ecclesiastics, for which he proposes a translation emphasizing the ‘virility’ proper to the good judge. This translation has no equivalent in any documented lesson of the old Latin version of this text. In fact, in the quotation proposed by Saily, it refers to the ‘*virtus*’ of the Latin text, interpreted as ‘*virilement*’:

Ne demande point d'estre saict juge, si tu ne peux virilement rompre du tout les iniquitez. Et ne craigne la face d'un homme puissant²⁵.

22 T. SAILLY, *Memorial testamentaire...*, *op. cit.*, p. 177. See the contribution of Brendan Roeder in this book.

23 *Ibid.*, p. 179-180. On Jesuits as confessors in wartime, R. BIRELEY, *The Jesuits and the Thirty Years War. Kings, Courts, and Confessors*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2003.

24 T. SAILLY, *Memorial testamentaire...*, *op. cit.*, p. 179.

25 *Ibid.*, p. 181. As for the latin text :

“Noli quaerere fieri iudex,
nisi si valeas virtute inrumpere iniquitates;
ne forte extimescas faciem potentis
et ponas scandalum in agilitate tua”.

Ecclesiasticus, VII, 6, in R. WEBER (ed.), *Biblia sacra iuxta Vulgatam versionem*, 4^e éd. revue par R. GRAYSON, Stuttgart, Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1994, p. 1037. See also *Vetus Latina. Die Reste der altlateinischen Bibel*, t. 11/II: *Sirach (Ecclesiasticus)*, fasc. 4, ed. W. THIELE, Fribourg-en-Brisgau, Herder, 1992, p. 307-309. I would like to thank Jean-Marie Auwers who helped me with his biblical knowledge.

Lust and virility? Lust or virility

Among the missionaries in the army, there are therefore two complementary ways of exercising and manifesting one's own virility: continence and chastity on the one hand, and the "holy freedom" of the confessor on the other. To this virility is opposed the inability to resist the sexual urge so common among the soldiers, about which Sailly gives his opinion in the long chapter devoted to the most common sins in the army²⁶.

With regard to the sin of lust, the Jesuit makes an explicit link between it and the loss of virility, which goes hand in hand with that of the *vis militaris*²⁷. From Aeneas, "capitaine très vigilant, attiré à la nonchalance & aux delices [...] par l'usage trop lascif de l'impudique Venus²⁸", to the ancient peoples of Lydians and Romans, all would have lost their military strength as a result of lust. But no one fell further down, according to Sailly, than Emperor Heliogabalus:

pas un des Princes iusque à present n'a esté tellement perdu & abruti par les voluptez comme luy, attendu que sa passion le porta si avant que se faire couper à guise d'une femme²⁹.

It is interesting to note that, in Sailly's words, Héliogabale's decision to "be cut as a woman" is not of the order of choice, but rather the extreme consequence of his (passive) passion and therefore, of his loss of virility. It is clear that we find here a judgement with regard to an emperor whom the historians of late antiquity had represented as effeminate and, above all, subjugated by the women of his family. Heliogabalus leaving control of the empire to his grandmother and mother does not respect the order of nature and this same order will be broken by his sexual habits. When he died, his decapitated body will be thrown into the Tiber: the sewers of Rome will be a "sepulchre fort convenable à un tel corps (a sepulchre most suitable for such a body)³⁰". Obviously, these pages send back to the repression of homosexual practices in the army, with a final appeal to the soldiers to take care of their virility:

C'est pourquoi j'exhorte tous nos soldats catholiques que se resouvenants de tant de dommages produits par la luxure, qu'ils se resoulent de resister virilement à l'esprit de fornication, & de tout immondicité³¹.

²⁶ *Des quelques autres choses, desquelles les Prestres doivent avertir les soldats*, in T. SAILLY, *Memorial testamentaire...*, op. cit., p. 189-235 especially *Du peché de luxure*, p. 196-215.

²⁷ T. SAILLY, *Du peché de luxure...*, op. cit., p. 201-205.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 202.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 204. Sailly's reference is to the first chapter of Herodian's *Historiae*. Cfr. HÉRODIEN, *Histoire des empereurs romains. De Marc Aurèle à Gordien*, trad. D. ROQUES, vol. 3, Paris, Les Belles Lettres, 2004.

³⁰ T. SAILLY, *Du peché de luxure...*, op. cit., p. 205.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 205.



This invitation to preserve his virility and potency in combat also has consequences for the attendance of prostitutes (encouraged by military authorities who did not want too many married soldiers in their ranks):

Je vous coniure, ô genereux soldats, que vous chassiez loins de votre compagnie ces truyes si sales & si ordes & ces publiques vilaines & infames³².

It is obvious that when we talk about virility and conditions for preserving it in the army, whether they are chaplains or soldiers, the discourse is reserved for men. By the exercise of arms or through the engagement in the *militia Christi*, men contribute to the fair war against heretics and rebels³³. The woman is the great missing in this discourse, which is all internal to a male universe. It is the “homosocial milieu” put forward by Ulriche Strasser, about masculinity at the time of the reforms in the Society of Jesus³⁴. But if women are absent from discourses about the good catholic soldier or the manly priest, they are there when the missionary is at work in his mission. I have dealt elsewhere with pastoral practices that have actually been put in place, particularly with regard to the conflicts on the celebration of marriages in the army. Here I would rather like to emphasize the role played by women in relation to the performativity of the masculinity of the missionary. Mary Laven pointed the challenges to the masculinity of missionaries depending on life contexts; they are forced to “re-performing masculinity” in very different geographical and cultural contexts³⁵. As far as Jesuit military chaplains are concerned, the context is that of a porous but self-reliant universe: the army. With this questioning, I turned my attention to the *Elogium* of Father Thomas Sailly, written by another Jesuit, who was very active in the Catholic reconquest of the Spanish Low Countries: Carolus Scribani. A very fine latinist, author of pamphlets and historian, Scribani held various administrative functions in the Flandro-Belgica province. He knew the men of his province very well, and particularly appreciated Father Sailly. The *Elogium* – a circular letter intended to circulate in the Society for the collective edification – was written in June 1623, three months after Thomas Sailly’s death³⁶. The deeply masculine identity of the Jesuit manifests itself in the way in which Scribani speaks about

32 *Ibid.*, p. 254, chap. XX, *Des nauttonniers, chartiers, vivandiers, & des femmes qui suivent le camp*, p. 248-255. See LYNN II, *Women, Armies, and Warfare*, *op. cit.*, p. 67-72; G. PARKER, *El ejército de Flandes...*, *op. cit.*, p. 217-218.

33 V. LAVENIA, *Dio in uniforme...*, *op. cit.*, p. 37-79; D. CROUZET, *Les guerriers de Dieu. La violence au temps des troubles de religion, vers 1525-vers 1610*, Seyssel, Champ Vallon, 1990.

34 U. STRASSER, “The First Form of Grace...”, *art. cit.*

35 M. LAVEN, *Mission to China: Matteo Ricci and the Encounter with the East*, London, Faber, 2011, in part. p. 184-189 and p. 190-191; *id.*, “Introduction”, M. LAVEN (ed.), in *id.* (ed.), *The Jesuits and Gender...*, in part. p. 552.

36 L. BROUWERS, “L’*Elogium* du père Thomas Sailly S.I. (1553-1623) composé par le père Charles Scribani S.I.”, *Archivum historicum Societatis Iesu*, 48 (1979), p. 87-124; for the text, C. SCRIBANI, *Elogium* [cité dans BROUWERS, *ibid.*], p. 92-123.

Sailly's relationship with the Virgin Mary, as well as about his action towards women during the pillages.

Throughout his writings, Scribani insists on Father Sailly's profound Marian devotion: a trait that is hardly surprising, if we consider the place played by this devotion in the Catholic reconquest of the Netherlands, especially by the new religious orders³⁷. If we take a closer look at the relationship developed with the Virgin, we can see that it is completely coherent with the one to which Ignace de Loyola relates in his autobiography and taken up by his hagiographers. Mary is both the mother, who reinforces the bonds of spiritual brotherhood between confreres, and the Lady whose honor must be protected³⁸.

From this shared base, what strikes in Sailly is the development of a true nuptial mystic between the religious and the Virgin Mary. A mysticism which, *mutatis mutandis*, brings him closer to the feminine mystics towards the married Christ. Thus, Scribani reminds us on the day when an "impudent" servant enters the Jesuit's room to seduce Sailly. He firmly distances her by showing her the image of "his Lady". An image that – we learn a little further from the same Scribani – Sailly always carried on him: *sua sponsa tenerissime appellabat* (he called her with great tenderness "my wife")³⁹. This image, and especially the relationship it evokes, is part of the Jesuit identity as a married man (several studies have underlined the importance of marriage in affirming modern masculinity)⁴⁰ and Scribani points out that Sailly frequently showed the image of his wife to both young women and soldiers.

But it is during the looting of cities, when violence explodes; when the "fury" of the military overlaps with the *licentia* ... typical of the armies, that the Jesuit missionary shows his creativity to adapt his teaching and action to the very specific context of his mission (this is the accommodation to times and places recommended by Ignatius). To do so, once again, Sailly performs his masculinity, overturning the meaning of a practice he shared with the men entrusted to him to be saved: rape. In 1595, during the sacking of the Picarde town of Dullens, facing the obscene *militum furoris* (soldiers' fury), Sailly sets up something new. According to the story, which seems to refer to a pre-existing hagiographical *topos*, he connects several cords to his belt, which one of them, his assistants will bring

37 A. DELFOSSE, *La « Protectrice du Pais-Bas ». Stratégies politiques et figures de la Vierge dans les Pays-Bas espagnols*, Turnhout, Brepols, 2009.

38 On Ignace of Loyola's Lives, J. O'MALLEY, *Constructing a Saint Through Images. The 1609 illustrated Biography of Ignatius of Loyola*, Philadelphia, Saint Joseph University Press, 2008; cf. in part. images 8 and 9, which relate Ignatius' defense of the Virgin's honor in the face of a More doubting her virginity. On this subject, see also the comments by U. STRASSER, "The First Form of Grace...", *art. cit.*, in part. p. 52 and p. 59-61.

39 C. SCRIBANI, *Elogium...*, *op. cit.*, p. 106.

40 W. FISHER, "The Renaissance Beard: Masculinity in Early Modern England", *Renaissance Quarterly*, 54 (2001), p. 155-187. See also J.-M. LE GALL, "La virilité des clercs", in G. VIGARELLO (ed.), *Histoire de la virilité*, t. 1 : *L'invention de la virilité de l'Antiquité aux Lumières*, Paris, Edition du Seuil, 2011, p. 217-234; H. DRÉVILLON, "Du guerrier au militaire", in *ibid.*, p. 293-325.



to different parts of the town. Women who want to flee from the violence of the military could attach themselves to one of these cords and Saily, by moving away from the city, would take them with him. Scribani points out that Father Thomas presented himself as a rapist (*raptor*), just like the other soldiers. Given the prestige of the missionary among the soldiers, no one dares to take away his spoils: the logic of the military “fury” against a city that had resisted for a long time is respected by the shared practice of kidnapping and raping⁴¹.

With this paper I wanted to show the arrangement of two different masculinities, sharing the same living environment. A reality that Connell would have probably defined as complicit masculinities. The virile soldier and the virile priest are therefore two complementary images of the *miles Christi* drawing the strength of their virility from a life of devotion and control of impulses ... at least in Jesuits' interpretation!

41 G. VIGARELLO, *Histoire du viol, XVI^e-XX^e siècle*, Paris, Édition du Seuil, 1998, in part. p. 58-63.



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