papers may be seen as resulting from the inherent tension and contrasts typical of the period itself and, subsequently, one begins to notice a flow of thought that ties these diverse papers together in order to form a rather thematically tight little volume. True to the etymology of its central theme, *Going for Baroque* may indeed be considered a pearl of irregular beauty.

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Saints and the Sacred, eds. Joseph Goering, Francesco Guardiani, and Giulio Silano. Ottawa: Legas, 2001. Pp. 225. ISBN 1-8945-0817-3.

This collection of thirteen essays is derived from the third St. Michael's College Symposium, held in February of 2000. "An Idea of Sanctity" is the provocatively titled introduction to *Saints and the Sacred*, a volume that introduces the reader to the complexities of a notion as sublime and intangible as sanctity. The introduction anticipates the tone of the following essays and directs us "to think of the effortless dramatic actions of the saints as an expression of a life that is not merely natural, a life that goes beyond human nature, a life that, therefore, becomes supernatural, and so most fully human" (10). Once initiated into this philosophical realm, the purpose of the symposium is affirmed by Christopher Potworoski's inquiry in his essay: "The Theologian and the 'Little Way'." He asks: "How can theologians benefit from the life and experience of the saints?" (136). In light of this query the essays can be read as an examination of the lives of the saints and the lessons to be learned from them. The Swiss theologian Hans Urs von Balthasar suggests in the same article that the saint's life is a presentation to his own age of the message that heaven is sending to it and is a way to approach the perennial truth of Christ (136). Applying this argument to the theological study of saints' lives allows us to gain a more nuanced understanding of the historical *milieu* in which they lived and something of the religious practice of that period.

This volume seeks to initiate the reader into a world of highly focused theological and research based topics of discussion. Jacalyn Duffin's exploration of origin and meaning in the cult of saints Cosmas and Damian in Toronto, Canada, uses an intriguing socio-historical research method involving personal experiences, surveys, and interviews as well as liturgical and lay literature as sources. Awad Eddie Halabi examines origins in his essay on the Islamic shrine and annual festival of the Prophet Moses in the Medieval Islamic period. Again, we are presented with an extensive body of research, though interestingly this time of non-Christian sources, which examines contemporary chronicles discussing Sultan Baybars' construction of the shrine and the early performances of the festival. In his conclusion the author explains how this research advances our understanding of the dynamics existing between popular religious beliefs and state-sponsored religious practices. The volume then moves to two works focusing on issues of traditional allegorical interpretation and on the "wilderness motif" respectively. Domenico Pietropaolo's essay "The Zodiac Saints" refers to the stellar cartography of Julius Schiller and

devotes much attention to the tension between science and religion during the Counter Reformation; it also analyses the traditional use of allegory as a tool of “cultural appropriation and dominance.” Riener Jaakson’s focus on “Wilderness as a Sacred Place” seamlessly brings together references from the Bible to Heidegger, from the Chinese geographer Yi-Fu Tuan to contemporary perceptions of the natural. Jaakson’s work also brings to mind Northern Romantic paintings and evokes works such as those of Caspar David Friedrich.

The next three essays are each devoted to an individual saint and their influential connections to a particular holy location, object, or behaviour. The thorough examination of the history of these saints’ lives provides a vehicle for a greater understanding of their last impact on the cultural and social *milieu*. It is from the lives of the saints that we acquire insight into the architectural decoration of Southwell Minister in Coffman’s essay on Eadburg of Repton or into the importance of musical accompaniment to Santa Caterina da Bologna’s intonations in Rosenfeld’s paper. Furthermore, Eric Graff’s article on the establishment of the first Brigettine monastery in England gives the reader a rare glimpse into the international politico-religious workings of the early fifteenth century. This paper carefully describes the letter of Katillus, an early Brigettine brother in England, to the Confessor General of Vadstena in Sweden to explain how this valuable source elucidates details about the spread of the cult into England and how Katillus justified his argument regarding the appropriation of goods reserved for the poor. This is a fascinating window into a complex debate on Church canon that echoes the discussion on sanctity in the introduction of this publication.

Joseph Goering’s re-examination of a twelfth century cult and Francesco Guardiani’s analysis of the baroque poem *L’Adone* both demonstrate independent thought and careful argumentation. Goering’s compelling investigation of the Cult of the Virgin and the Grail communicates his enthusiasm and great affinity for the subject. Similarly, we are witness to Guardiani’s adept interpretive skills and his understanding of the Baroque mind that enable him to translate nuanced layers of meaning in Marino’s poem. Without being pedantic, Christopher Potworoski’s essay on Saint Thérèse of Lisieux successfully prepares his reader by giving a brief explanation and history of his subject. He clearly sets his objective regarding the ways in which saints in the Catholic Church are “signals” to the faithful and how they act as a point of reference for those involved in theological research or teaching. Potworoski’s essay achieves this objective through careful interpretations of the conversations of Sainte Thérèse. He also makes reference to the French Dominican theologian and medievalist Marie-Dominique Chenu who emphasized the role of faith in theology and the work of Hans Urs von Balthasar who argues that each saint is given a particular mission to throw light on one forgotten or neglected aspect of revelation. We can read this volume in similar terms; as each author’s attempt to illuminate the stories, myths, and representations of Christian and non-Christian tradition.

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