

CRIMINALITY AND VICTIMIZATION IN THE LIVES OF THE SAINTS INTERDISCIPLINARY APPROACH

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Abstract

This study aims to approach and examine the existence of different categories of criminality and victimization in the Lives of the Saints. The goal is to focus on the "crimes against the person" (homicide, rape, mass murder, etc.), that are not connected to martyrdom. Additionally, the crimes "against property", "against sexual freedom", the "organized crimes", the "White collar crimes", the "victimless crimes" and the "ritual - religious crimes", that are recorded in hagiographical Texts, will also constitute study subjects of this project. The present research focuses on the victims and consequences of such crimes in the daily life of the Saints.

Several examples are also going to be presented and examined from the viewpoint of both Criminological Psychology and Theology, as there are important differentiations between the two sciences.

Criminological Psychology claims that the consequences of some specific cases of crimes can be predicted based on the reactions of the victims. Consequently, this idea will have to be applied during the examination of the Saints of the Church, since it could provide a different perspective on their thought processes and life.

Introduction

It is commonly accepted that Hagiographical texts not only inform the readers about the life of the Saints, their Sanctity and other Religious issues, but also serve as endless sources of information regarding the prevalent social and cultural customs of the era. This is the reason why this specific approach to the criminality and victimization in the lives of the Saints was selected for this Paper.

The presentation is divided in three parts. The first part includes some clarifications regarding the information and research behind this project. The second part discusses the main categories of crimes mentioned in our sources, and the third part intends to provide some examples of different crime cases by examining the conditions of the criminal action, the relationship between the victimizer and the victim, the reactions of the latter, and the different approaches to the cases recorded.

Our Research Data

This paper presents and analyzes the initial results of a research that focuses on the Lives of the Saints of the Orthodox Church, beginning from the very first recognized Saint and reaching the twenty-first century. The research was based on primitive Synaxaria and Menologia, such as the Synaxarion Ecclesiae Constantinopolitanae, the Menologion of the emperor Basil the 2nd and the Menologion of Anonymi Byzantini. These texts were written between the 10th and 12th century. Additionally, a few other individual Synaxaria were approached when no similar collections focused on the Life of a Saint were available.

At this point, it would be necessary to clarify that the extreme torture suffered by the Saints, as well as their deaths, do not form part of the present research and will not be included in the final section of the paper. The approach on the texts was mainly centered on the different crime categories, which are not always connected to the martyrdom or death of the Saints. Moreover, it is important to underline that, in addition to the information provided herein, a thorough examination of the criminological cases mentioned may also be necessary in the future, especially since their content is of such great significance.

I. Classification of types of crime in the "lives of the saints"

The most generally accepted idea regarding "crime" and "criminality", and, as a result, what most people consider as the definition of a "crime" is that it constitutes a specific action forbidden by statute, harmful to an individual or to public welfare, and punishable by law. Consequently, the two basic characteristics of a crime are that it is forbidden and punishable (Maurice Cusson, p. 12). A criminal act could be theoretically divided into two parts (Maevé Maddox): the "*actus rea*", which is related to the act of the crime itself, and the "*mens rea*", which expresses the intention behind committing a crime.

It should be highlighted that the differentiations in terms of the Classification methods of the crimes greatly depend on the selected approach to the crime, the State where it occurs as well as the particular Science (such as Criminology, Sociology, Law, etc) through whose prism it is examined. Given that there is no universal consensus in regard to the abovementioned options, it was decided that the crimes recorded in the Hagiographical texts would be classified in the following way:

- a. *Crimes against the person*- such as homicide- either characterized as crimes "with intention" or as "non negligent" crimes. Other criminal acts included in this category are the following: "mass murders", "organized crimes", "filicide", etc.
- b. *Crimes against sexual freedom*, such as sexual abuse, rape, forcible Sodomy, etc.
- c. *Crimes against property*, such as larceny, robbery, burglary, theft, etc
- d. "*Organized crimes*".
- e. "*White collar crimes*",
- f. "*Victimless crimes*", and
- g. *Ritual and Religious crimes*.

These are the main crime categories we came across during our search for the specific cases mentioned in the Hagiographical texts.

a. *Crimes against the person in Hagiographical Texts.*

It is widely accepted that "crimes against the person" are in most cases defined as the direct and serious harm or force inflicted upon a person and are related with homicide or murder. Almost fifty texts describing "crimes against the person" were detected in the Lives of the Saints, most of which are included in the Synaxaria of the Martyrs and New-martyrs, and some of which in the Synaxaria of the Venerables.

Homicide, either described as an intentional or a negligent crime, is recorded in the Hagiographical texts of the primitive Synaxaria and is usually committed by a man, with the victim being of the same gender. In most cases, the action is finalized, but there is also one unsuccessful murder attempt recorded in these texts.

When the murder is "with intention", the motivation is observed to be multidimensional. In some examples, the victimizer wishes to take revenge on the victim for an incident that has happened in the past. In other cases, the intention behind the crime is heresy. Needless to say, homicide is also often committed in self-defense, when the victim attempts to prevent their abuse and sodomy (crime in defense). Moreover, oftentimes, people tend to resort to murder in order to maintain their anonymity and keep their identity secret after a forcible rape. Filicide and juvenile homicide are often committed with that goal. All the categories mentioned above serve to prove the general rule that there is no dominative category of motives which can lead people to committing murder.

The texts pertaining to this category are numerous and a few examples were selected to be presented in the following segment:

- i. Theophilus, the Archbishop of Alexandria (345-412 AD), was a very ambitious and high-handed man and attempted to murder the monk Ammonius of Nitria by tightening the scapular of the bishop around the monk's neck and accusing him of Origenism, as explained by Simeon the Metaphrast (PG 114, 1144D-1145A). Needless to say, the underlying reason for his actions was the contrast between their beliefs and ideas and the support that Ammonius offered to the other monks of Nitria, against Theophilus's judgement.

- ii. An attempted murder is recorded in the Life of the Venerable Simeon of Emessa, the Fool-for-Christ (PG 93, 1709A). The Venerable heavily criticized some people who attended and participated in the Holy Liturgy without truly focusing their mind and thoughts on God.

He proceeded to throw walnuts at the church where this incident occurred in order to prove their typolatry (formalism). He was subsequently horribly beaten by those he had angered and was left half-dead.

iii. It is well-known that the role of women in the uprisings and revolution of the masses was quite significant during the Byzantine era (Basilica Leontaridou, p. 229), especially when an issue was related to the conflict between orthodoxy and heresy. This was confirmed in the Life of Saint Eusebius, bishop of Samosata. The text informs the reader that the Saint was killed by a heretic woman. The cause of his death was a serious head injury sustained after a woman, adherent of the heretic Arius, attacked him with a roof tile.

iv. An example of filicide would be the case of the Saint martyr Jonilla from Turbo, who threw her infant son into the fire before her martyrdom. It is evident that this act could not possibly be justified by any logical assumption. According to Bioethical and Criminological criteria, her motives must have been of altruism, compassion and "pity" (Pettrakis, II, p. 119), as she probably wished to protect her child from becoming an orphan after her death.

vi. As mentioned above, homicide was also the result of self-defense when the victim attempted to protect himself from rape and sodomy (crime in defense). This type of crime is basically included in the juvenile homicide category and usually occurred during the era of the Ottoman Empire. It is important to note that in each of these cases below, aggravation factors and triggers, like the loss of family members, captivity and psychological, physical or sexual abuse were almost always prevalent and were responsible for turning the victims into victimizers. Two examples were selected for this type of crime.

The first one revolves around the Saint New-martyr John the Wallachian of Romania. According to the Synaxarion, he killed a soldier when he was fifteen years old. It was a crime in defense, as he was trying to protect himself from being abused and sodomized.

The second example, which shares the same context, also concerns a young Anonymous new-martyr, a little older than the first, who killed a Turkish-Cretan man, who tried to forcibly sodomize him. This incident occurred in 1811 in Alexandria (Papadakis, pp. 23-25).

In addition to the cases described above as well as several other cases connected to suicide, there are other crime types as well, such as manslaughter, "white collar crimes" and mass murder. Each one of the above types could be accurately portrayed in the following example:

According to the Hagiographical tradition of Crete, Venerable John the Hermit, who, during the 14th century, lived alone in a cave on the Akrotiri of Chania, prayed so much in a very specific way that he became unable to walk. He would always crawl on the ground in order to find seeds to eat. One day, a young farmer shot him with his bow and arrow, believing the Saint to be an animal. Right before his death, the Venerable forgave his victimizer.

b. *Mass murder crimes in Hagiographical Texts.*

According to Criminology, the main characteristics of a mass murder crime are the following: the victims of the crimes should be multiple (more than three or four), and should lose their lives at the same place and at the same time (or within a relatively short period of time). It is said that two types of mass murderers exist and that they are distinguished by the motivation behind their actions. The ones pertaining to the first category choose their victims due to the emotions of anxiety and anger they trigger in them. The victims are thus part of the murderer's close environment and are the recipients of his revenge. The criminals of the second category select victims they do not personally know, but who belong to a certain type of people they dislike (Pettrakis, II, p. 56-57).

It should be underlined that all cases of mass murder crimes recorded in Hagiographical texts mainly pertain to the second category. Moreover, as opposed to the usual outcome of a mass murder crime where the perpetrator kills himself (suicide), the mass murderers described in the sources cited herein do not follow this course of action. The location chosen by the victimizers for the execution of their crime is either a church during prayer, a ship or cells inhabited by monks.

There are two known murder cases involving a large number of martyrs (over eighty) who were sentenced to death by the emperor and were asked to board a ship that was subsequently burned.

Another significant mass murder crime would probably be the act of burning two million martyrs (!), priests and laymen in a church, during the reign of the emperor Gaius Galerius Valerius Maximianus Augustus.

The case of Theophilus, the Archbishop of Alexandria has already been mentioned above. He wished to see some monks who opposed him, and since he did not manage to find them, he decided to burn the cells of the monks of Nitria, killing a large number of them in the process.

c. "White Collar Crimes" in Hagiographical Texts.

Despite the fact that the expression "White Collar Crime" was coined in 1939 by Edwin Sutherland, the acts falling under this definition can be observed throughout the history of humanity, as there are always people of "respectable position and high social status" who commit crimes. The following example from the Hagiographical texts has nothing to do with commercial or financial issues, but is relevant to homicide and infanticide - filicide.

The most characteristic example of a "white collar crime" is the incident of the 14.000 Infants (Holy Innocents) slain by emperor Herod at Bethlehem. The numbers of the deceased infants are of course exaggerated.

d. "Crimes against sexual freedom" in Hagiographical Texts.

Crimes against sexual freedom, such as sexual abuse, rape, adultery and forcible Sodomy are not rare in the Lives of the Saints. There are many notable cases falling under this category.

The sexual harassment of men by women is a very common occurrence in the sources of the present research. The female victimizer is usually a prostitute attempting to seduce a man, who is either monk, like the Venerable Martinianus, or a soldier and layman, examples being Saint Nickolas and Saint Philosopher. In some cases, the monks manage to avoid the temptation and seduction of the women by devoting their virginity to Jesus Christ and harming themselves, usually by torturing their bodies.

In other cases, the sexual abuse would either lead the victim to homicide or suicide. The most notable example, which connects sexual harassment with murder and could be considered "domestic violence", is recorded in the Hagiographical text of Female martyr Thomais of Alexandria. According to the Synaxarion, she was married, but her father-in-law insisted on trying to have sex with her when his son was away for work. One day, after yet another unsuccessful attempt, he used his sword and killed Thomais (BS, t. 12, p. 529). Trying to analyze the conditions under which the double crime occurred, the reader would probably conclude that this was a crime of passion, where the perpetrator exhibited some symptoms of Post-traumatic stress disorder, such as the loss of his sight, confusion, etc.

Two other cases of sexual harassment (Sodomy) which forced the juvenile perpetrators to kill their victimizers have already been mentioned above. Another example should be added to these, namely that of Hieromartyr Philonidis (*Philoneidis*) of Curii - Cyprus who chose suicide over being sodomized by pagans.

The cases of Saint Palagia of Antioch, and Female martyrs and Saints Domnina, Veronica and Prosdoki also constitute great representatives of this category. All the aforementioned women chose suicide over their rape and abuse in the hands of pagans (Galenianos, p. 84-94).

Another incident that should not be forgotten is the double murder committed by a venerable, known as Jacob or James the Ascetic (4th century). According to his Synaxarion, he raped a young lady he had taken under his protection with her brother. After abusing her, he killed both her and her brother, in order to prevent his identity from being revealed.

e. Ritual and Religious crimes in Hagiographical Texts.

All crimes falling under this type of criminality are expected to be multidimensional as far as the participants and their rituals are concerned. They can be committed either by a group of people, or by individuals, who are likely involved with Satanism and follow specific rituals, oftentimes extremely sadistic, or cannibalistic. Needless to say, in this type of homicide, the victimizer always reveals his "modus operandi" at the scene of the crime.

Only three cases of such incidents will be presented, always based on the Lives of the Saints: one unfolds in the 21st century and the others are taken from the Synaxaria of the first centuries of Christianity.

The first example revolves around the Saint and New-hieromartyr John Karastamatis of Santa Cruz, CA, native Greek, who lived for almost thirty years in America, before his violent death in 1985. According to police investigations and his Synaxarion, he was murdered by Satanists inside the church. It was said that he suffered before his passing due to the torture he was subjected to. Satanists are also said to have used his blood to write their slogans and draw the symbol of 666 on the walls of the church (Andrali, p. 127).

The second example concerns the Saint Martyr Dasius of Durostorum, who was a Roman soldier during the persecution of Diocletian. It is true that both the hagiographical text centered on this martyr and the information provided there are complicated on an academic level. His martyrdom took place during the Saturnalia celebration, after the rituals and the issue of his sacrifice before the altar of Saturn. Finally, the martyr chose to be sacrificed as a Christian and not as a victim of paganism (Macaire monk, III, p. 221).

Additionally, during the Martyrdom of saint Aretha, acts of cannibalism were also recorded; as a mother, she was forced to drink the blood of her twelve-year-old daughter, who had been sentenced to death earlier that day, as part of her torture,.

f. Crimes against property in Hagiographical Texts.

Crimes against property, such as larceny, theft, rustling and burglary, are usually more common in the Lives of the Saints of the last two centuries. A logical explanation of this phenomenon could be the poverty of the Greek people who had to face many difficult situations due to their history of wars, as well as their willingness to offer gifts to monasteries during their visits.

The most common type of crimes against property in the hagiographical texts is larceny, which is reported in the Lives of the following Venerables: Parthenius and Eumenius of Koudouma, George Karslides of Drama, Panagis Basias of Cephalonia, Joseph Gerontogiannis of Kapsa, Ephraim of Hatzipateras, Hatzi-Ananias, etc. In the texts of these Saints, the visitors would usually steal some fruits, seeds or herbs, such as pears, greens and olives, on their way to the monasteries in order to fill the basket they were planning to offer to the monks, as their own gardens had proven insufficient. In such cases, the Venerables would pick out and separate the fruits they had received in front of the visitor, pointing out those that were stolen. At the same time, they would criticize those people for their actions and ask them not to repeat their crimes. If the theft was more severe, an example being rustling, the visitors were asked to return the stolen animals and to avoid participating in the Holy Communion some time.

In the Life of the Venerable Ephraim Hatzi-Pateras of Limnes, an incident of burglary is recorded. Ephraim, an insightful and foresighted man, who was in another village at the time, far away from his house, had predicted the occurrence of the crime and replied to the people who tried to inform him of the burglary that the thieves would not manage to find his money and that, through their actions, their immorality had been revealed.

g. "Organized crime" in Hagiographical Texts.

This type of crime usually refers to groups of criminals who are engaged in illegal activities, such as assault, murder, violence, kidnapping, financial crimes, trafficking, drugs, etc.

Many hagiographical texts reveal incidents of this kind of organized crime. The majority of those incidents are related to piracy, robbery and murder. An indicative example of pirate violence would be the homicide of 179 Hosio-martyrs of Ntaou Pentelis in the 17th century.

In some other cases the crime committed is an abduction, as described in the life of the Venerable Chariton the Confessor, the Abbot of Palestine. We ought not to underestimate the fact that some of the individuals who served as leaders or members in organized crime, were converted to Christianity; some of them even becoming monks and saints. The most notable case is that of Venerable Moses the Black of Scete, who was the leader of a gang of thieves (Maupoulos, p. 162-163) and participated in both murders and robberies before he became a monk. The name of Saint Barbarus the Myrrh-Gusher (Agathaggelos bishop, p. 119), etc should also be mentioned at this point.

h. "Victimless crimes" in Hagiographical Texts.

It is widely accepted that "victimless crimes" are defined as actions that may be considered illegal but do not directly cause harm to any individual. "Victimless crimes" can be divided into two different categories: one of consensual and one of solitary actions.

The most common victimless crime recorded in hagiographical texts is prostitution. Despite its penalization during the Byzantine era (Writers, p. 181-183), as revealed in the Life of the Venerable Andrew the Fool-for-Christ. A female Saint who had worked as a prostitute for a large period of her life was none other than Mary of Egypt. She had not become a prostitute to gain money from the men she copulated with, but to satisfy her mind and body.

Homosexuality was disapproved of and penalized both during the Roman and the Byzantine era (Writers, p. 192-193). That is the reason why Sodomy is always criticized alongside homosexuals in some Hagiographical texts, like in the Life of Venerable Andrew, the Fool-for-Christ. It should also be underlined that, according to Symeon the Metaphrast and the Synaxarion of the Ten Saint Martyrs of Crete, the persecutor Decius was considered lecherous, due to his tendency to engage in sexual acts with both sexes (Doundoulakis, 2014, p. 29-30).

ii. Victims - victimization and reactions in the "lives of the saints". Observations and examples.

In this second section of the study, further information regarding the act of victimization, the role of the victims and the way they react to the crime and their victimizers will be provided, always according to the Hagiographical texts. Will they follow the path of punishment or will they choose the path of reconciliation?

Before any attempts to answer this question are realized, the following points should be highlighted:

a. The victimizer was usually punished (either by the Law or by Ecclesiastical Law) for his crime. In some cases, he remained unpunished, or even died. Additionally, in instances of "organized crime", he radically changed his personality and his life and became a monk.

b. The victimizer usually tried to rationalize his actions by denying his guilt through the use of Neutralization techniques, as declared by Sykes and Matza in their theory.

c. The end of the victims was not always the same. In some crimes, the victim accepted the torture without any reaction, and in other cases the victim died. As far as crimes against property are concerned, in most cases the victims never actually learned about the larceny. Moreover, sometimes, the stolen goods were returned to their rightful owners and, in one case, a gifted Saint who had fallen victim of such a burglary, actually knew exactly what had happened.

d. Recalling an incident or reliving the memories of a crime is found not to cause any trauma or "secondary victimization" to the victims, which seems logical. The reason behind this phenomenon is that the faith of the victims toward Jesus Christ and their tendency to forgive the criminals, has helped them adopt a different viewpoint toward both the unwritten and the criminal Law, according to which the punishment of the perpetrators is not always necessary.

Regarding the tendency for reconciliation between the victimizer and the victim in the Lives of the Saints, it is crucial to clarify that this behavior is neither similar to the well-known Syndrome of Stockholm nor to Lima. This reconciliation and forgiveness from the part of the victim stems from his love for Jesus Christ and his fellow man.

The Life of the Venerable Silouan the Athonite narrates a story in which Silouan met a middle-aged man who played the accordion. The Saint, who knew that the musician had killed somebody in the past, asked him how it was possible for him to continue playing music and singing without thinking that he had committed murder. The answer he received left him speechless. *"When I was imprisoned, I prayed to God in order to be forgiven for my sin. And He forgave me. That is why I can peacefully play my music... This is the peace of a murderer who has been forgiven"* (Sacharoph, p. 19).

As a result, according to the Lives of the Saints, love and forgiveness that stem from Jesus Christ, His name and actions, may contribute to the reconciliation between a victimizer and his victim. In order to further clarify this statement, the following examples have been chosen and presented:

a. Both Saints, the heir-martyr Eusebius of Samosata and the Venerable John the Hermit, were able to forgive their killers before drawing their last breath. This act of love proved determinative, especially in the case of the bishop, as he saved the woman that killed him from being accused of murder.

b. Saint Dennis of Zakythos is also known for not only forgiving but actually rescuing the murderer of his own brother. This act was considered unjustified and illogical according to the Law, and can only be explained if examined through the prism of the love and forgiveness instilled into his heart by Jesus Christ.

c. The last example to be examined focus on the Life of Saint Myron of Gortyna (Crete) and the crimes against property committed against him. According to Hagiographical tradition, he himself helped the thieves to lift the sac of their own grain on their shoulders, when they burst in onto his threshing floor to rob him (Doundoulakis, 2012, p. 33-34).

Conclusion

To sum up, the following conclusions were reached and ought to be pointed out:

a. There are many different types of crimes, including "against the person", "against property" and "against sexual freedom", that are mentioned in the Hagiographical Texts. Moreover, "organized crimes", "White collar crimes", "victimless crimes" and "ritual - religious crimes" are also not rare among them.

b. The Lives of the Saints from the first centuries of Christianity, focus on the crimes "against the person" and "sexual freedom", as opposed to later centuries when the crimes "against property" prevail.

c. Venerable Saints seem to constitute the most common victims of offenses of a sexual nature, which can be attributed to their increased vulnerability -due to their position- when compared to the other categories of Saints.

d. In several occasions, there is an evident tendency for reconciliation between the victimizer and the victim observed in our sources. This tendency for forgiveness stems from feelings of love for both Jesus Christ and one's fellow man. This new point of view, instilled new ideas and behaviors into the Saints overthrowing the rule that punishment is essential after a crime.

Biography

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He holds a PhD in Theology. His studies extend from Theology (Orthodox, Catholic, Protestant) to Criminological Psychology, Journalism, Psychology and Counseling, Counseling upon Divorce, Greek Paleography, as well as Management and Marketing at Universities and Academies in Greece, in Switzerland and in France.

He is the writer of eighteen books (Theology, Poetry, Prose). Some of his poems were set to music and were presented (as songs) in Cultural festivals in Crete.

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