

The special reverence surrounding some of the deceased is a phenomenon found in many religions. However, the complicated procedure of recognizing saints and then formalizing their veneration, culminating in a decision made by the highest religious authorities is peculiar to Roman Catholicism. Yet, the procedure of papal canonization as we know it today has not always existed in Latin Christianity - it was born between the tenth and thirteenth centuries, gradually replacing local forms of recognition of saints, and gaining popularity over time. Why did this happen? This is the question our project tries to answer. Its goal is to understand why the local bishops or their congregations, hitherto responsible for formalizing the cults of the new saints, increasingly decided to cede these decisions to the papacy during the High Middle Ages. Also, why did this happen so unevenly? Some local churches accepted the papal authority to appoint new saints very early on, making elevation to the altars dependent on Rome's decision, while others continued the custom of local recognition of sainthood for a long time.

To answer the questions posed, we must look at the phenomenon of the recognition of new cults itself, which in this period differed significantly from the system of papal canonizations as they exist today. In most cases, canonizations were carried out at the local level, but by various people: sometimes by individual bishops, at other times by synods or by groups of bishops, often headed by a metropolitan. Not infrequently monastic communities were the guiding force, while lay rulers also had their role in the whole process. Why such a path was chosen and not another - this, as in the case of the reasons for appeals to Rome - we do not know. This is because no one has yet conducted a systematic and comprehensive study covering all cases of formalization of new cults in the High Middle Ages. This is the task our project sets itself. The established research team will undertake a systematic analysis of the available sources, which will allow us to create a comprehensive picture of this phenomenon and answer the most important research questions. This will also be served by a digital tool, created as part of the project - the Sainthood Recognition Catalogue - which will allow us to document all cases and look at the relationships between them. It will let us fully understand the phenomenon of sainthood recognition in the High Middle Ages, as well as answer the question of why one way to formalise cults or another was chosen. It will also give us a chance to understand what was the reason for the centralization of this phenomenon and the increasing involvement of the papacy in it.

In our research, we note that the initiative to apply to the papacy for the recognition of saints lay with the local churches. The reason for this was not some kind of command or legal norms, but rather a desire to gain additional prestige for the new cults. We believe that this prestige was connected with the notion of Romanness, referring to the apostolic tradition and the origins of Christianity. Papal Rome was its natural depository, but many local churches were also convinced of their own ancient origins, even if this belief did not always correspond to reality. It seems that these Churches were much less inclined to use the authority of the papacy in creating new cults, as they had their own authority, related with their "Romanness". Churches from areas outside the former Roman Empire, which could in no way demonstrate the authority of the early Christian metric, acted differently.

The project will allow us to verify this hypothesis, but above all it will provide a much better understanding of the medieval cult of saints, a phenomenon whose importance for this era simply cannot be overstated. At the same time, the project looks at a key moment in the development of the solution that distinguishes Catholicism to this day, namely the functioning of a central authority in the form of the papacy. It shows how Rome's power in the Church grew gradually, primarily through its authority, which found recognition and was accepted by the local churches. This allows for a broader reflection on the issue of the building of the authority of institutions, not only religious ones, as well as the relationship between the periphery and the centre, represented here by Rome.