The *Topos* of Martyrdom as a Memory Box

The Book of Martyrs by John Foxe and the Fresco Cycle at San Tomaso di Canterbury

KRISTINA MÜLLER-BONGARD

This article deals with the *topos* of martyrdom as a memory box. The term martyrdom comes from the original language of the court, where the Greek word *martyrs* means witness. It was then used in the New Testament for the apostles and in the course of the second century as a loan word taken over into Latin (martyrs) and transferred to tortured and executed Christians, the so-called "blood-witnesses".[1] Thus, the semantics have changed to a more militant connotation and, until today, emphasise less the witnessing than suffering, pain and cruelly dying.

To see the *topos* of martyrdom as a memory box allows focusing on one special moment of "opening": the chosen moment in this article is the second half of the sixteenth century, since the *topos* of martyrdom became an important instrument for confessional legitimation and in the politics of conversion.[2]

After the Council of Trent (1541-1563) various factors helped to renew the consciousness as well as the appreciation of martyrdom in Catholic Europe.[3] The reminiscence of the Early Christian Church brought martyrdom that was in theological tradition an argument for the divine Origin of Christianity in the

1 FRANK, 2007, pp. 209f.
2 Confer BAUMGARTEN, 2007, p. 465.
3 See BURSCHEL, 2001 and 2004.

centre to legitimate the Catholic doctrine. In addition, the apostles as the first martyrs served as models for an ideal Christian way of life.[4] To suffer martyrdom became the most aspired way of death, because that was the highest form of an "imitatio Christi".[5] In that sense, especially the reform-orders cultivated a martyrological sensibility, but no order did it more consciously than the Society of Jesus.[6] The meaning of martyrdom as an imitation and renewal of Christ's Passion was tightly integrated in the Jesuit spiritual doctrine and fixed in the *Exercitia Spiritualia* by Ignatius of Loyola, who was one of the main cofounders of the order in 1534.[7] This is why the Jesuits were particularly eager in restoring the old and re-enacting the recent martyrs, as it can be exemplarily seen by the monumental martyrdom cycles at the Jesuit College Churches in Rome. During the pontificate of Gregory XIII (1572-1585), three Roman Jesuit College Churches were decorated with a martyrdom cycle: the German College San Apollinare (1580), the Hungarian Santo Stefano Rotondo (1581-1582) and the Venerable English College San Tomaso di Canterbury (1582-1583).

But not only the Catholic Church operated with the *topos* of martyrdom; also Protestants needed a legitimation strategy especially since the 1550s, when the Reformation itself became an increasingly fading memory.[8] However, to keep that memory alive it was important to raise a Protestant publicity, through which a collective identity could be formed. The representation of martyrs proved to be particularly qualified to catch the public's attention. This is not an invention of sixteenth century; the "symbolic capital"[9] of martyrdom has been maintained since early Christian times. The Christian community made use of it to shape a collective memory through material cultures such as memorials, artefacts, texts, songs, etc. and emerged again in the mid of sixteenth century. On both sides – Catholic and Protestant – the new appreciation of Early Christianity and the cult of martyrdom became obvious in producing Martyrologies[10] as well as in martyrdom pictures.

4 Confer BURKE, 1987, pp. 54-66 and ANGENENDT, 1994.
5 ANGENENDT, 1994, p. 35.
6 To this aspect see HERZ, 1988.
7 The Society of Jesus was officially confirmed by Pope Paul III in 1540. For Ignatius and his Exercitia spiritualia see MEISSNER, 1997.
8 FUCHS, 1998, pp. 592f.
9 ROECK, 2007, p. 13.
10 E.g. Protestant ones by Ludwig Rabus "Historien der Heyligen Auserwölten Gottes Zeügen, Bekennern und Martyrern" (first published in 1552) and Jean Crespin's "Le livre de Martirs" 1564, or the revision of the Martyrologium Romanum by

Due to the new opportunities of the printing press, many religious-propagandistic pamphlets were produced. Thereby, particularly the images played an important role and turned out to be a very successful medium to highlight all the attributes of the *topos* of martyrdom carried in the memory box. Thus, there exists a special interrelation between the concept of memory box and images.

A memory box has special practical characteristics: it conserves, collects, transfers, and produces; it implies memories, meanings, and codes – but it needs publicity to be recognised as a memory box. Herein lays a main accordance of the memory box to the function of images.

Useful synergy effects could be produced by interrelating the memory box concept and images. The attributes of the *topos* collected in the memory box and set free at the moment of its opening could be well conserved and intensively unveiled within a picture, an engraving or a woodcut. Through the media representation of the memory box it became possible to transfer the convincing features of martyrdom to the public. Here, the purposes of using the memory box were similar with the role of images. Images are documents of cultural processes and thereby one of the most important information carriers in human communication. Like a memory box, also pictures can carry symbolic references, which make them capable of connecting different layers of awareness, e.g. spatial and temporal categories, individual and collective experiences. Within an image, cultural information is not only projected but also structured, and especially the structuring feature supports the converting and representation of complex cultural developments.[11] Thereby, images can function as a screen of the memory box, whereby publicity for the different layers of the box is achieved. This symbolises the main synergy-effect: a memory box needs publicity and images bring it into public.

This article introduces two examples, firstly the Protestant Martyrologium "Acts and monuments" by John Foxe, published in London 1563, and popularly known as the Book of Martyrs; secondly a Catholic fresco cycle, executed between the years 1582 and 1583 at the English Jesuit College Church *San Tomaso di Canterbury* in Rome. These two examples were chosen because both are dealing with the same "topographia" England, where many

Cesare Baronio in 1582, which is based on the martyrologium of Usuard of St. Germain in 875. For the Protestant Martyrologies, see GREGORY, 1999, pp. 165-196.

11 BISANZ, 2010, p. 13.

Catholics and Protestants were executed because of their religious faith during the Reformation process. In addition, both artefacts are interconnected because of their similar content: each narrates the history of the English Church from its beginnings to the present past – the Book of Martyrs in a textual manner including pictures of martyrdom and the fresco cycle in a visual representation. Thereby, the Protestant Martyrologium "Acts and monuments" by John Foxe, who initially opens the memory box for his purposes, can be seen as a model for the frescoes at the English College Church, where the same memory box was opened again and used as a direct reaction to the Protestant prototype.

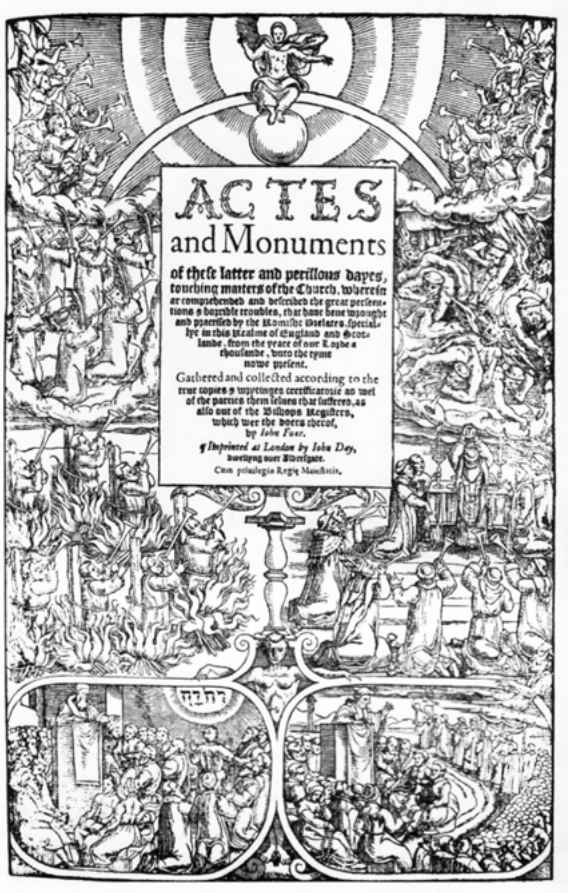
The Book of Martyrs

The English Reformation began due to personal interests of King Henry VIII, who wanted a divorce from his wife Catherine of Aragon to marry Anne Boleyn, but Pope Clement VII refused the annulment and excommunicated Henry VIII. Accordingly, in 1534 Henry VIII decided to separate the English Catholic Church from Rome and to declare himself spiritual head of the Church of England by the Act of Supremacy. But this was no religious denomination to Protestantism; Protestantism was officially introduced for the first time as late as under the reign of Edward VI (1547-1553), but it took until the long reigns of Elizabeth I from 1558 to 1603 and her successor Protestant King James I (1603-1625) for the reformed confession to firmly settle. In between, Queen Mary I (1553-1558) tried to restore Catholicism which resulted in many Protestant martyrs who refused to return to the Roman Catholic Church. During this period John Foxe opened the memory box of martyrdom by starting his book project "Acts and Monuments".

The author John Foxe was born 1517 in Boston, Lincolnshire and settled in London in 1547, where he died in 1587. In 1550 he was ordained as deacon by Nicholas Ridley, Bishop of London and sympathiser of the Reformed Anglican Church. During the reign of Mary I (1553-1558) Foxe went into exile to Strasbourg, where he published a first version of his "Acts and Monuments", which already contained the martyrdoms of Englishmen in the fifteenth century. In a second version, published in 1559 in Basel, the martyrs under Mary's reign were added. Both exemplars were written in Latin.[12] After

12 HALLER, 1963, p. 13.

Elizabeth's accession to the throne and the acceptance of Protestantism[13], Foxe returned to England in 1559, where he published the first English edition of his "Acts and Monuments" in London 1563. The entire title simultaneously provides a survey of its content:



TITLE-PAGE *Actes and Monuments* 1563

Fig. 1: John Foxe, Acts and Monuments, London 1563, from: King 2006, p. 4, fig.2.

13 POLLEN, 1920, p. 17.

> Acts and Monuments of these latter and perillous dayes, touching matters of the Church, wherein ar comprehended and described the great persecutions & and horrible troubles, that have bene wrought and practised by the Romishe Prelates, speciallye in this Realme of England and Scotlande, from the yeare of oure Lorde a thousande, unto the tyme nowe present. Gathered and collected according to the true copies & wrytings certificatorie as wel of the parties them selves that suffered, as also out of the Bishops Registers, which wer the doers thereof, by John Foxe.[14]

That first version illustrates the English Church History from its beginning to the present on over 1400 pages, but concentrates on the faith, sufferings and martyrdoms of recent Protestant victims. Thus, most of the 56 woodcuts are illustrating the new Protestant martyrs who were executed during the reign of Queen Mary I. The second edition, published in 1570, already counts over 2300 pages and more than 150 woodcuts and was often bound together with the Bible to allow reading it in common places.[15]

The Book of Martyrs became one of the most influential books in sixteenth-century England. It was constantly printed over more than 120 years – apart from the Bible – more often than any other book.[16]

It starts with a calendar of Protestant martyrs, similar to Catholic calendars of saints[17], and a dedication to Queen Elizabeth I[18], wherein Foxe compared her to Emperor Constantine, who ended the persecutions of Christians and founded the Christian empire. Foxe associated himself with Bishop Eusebios (265-339), the author of the *Historiae Ecclesiasticae*, a calendar of early Christian martyrs, and that is exactly what Foxe was subsequently intending to do in his book.

In the first chapters Foxe narrated the English Church history. Thereby, he referred to the legends of early Christian martyrs under the Roman occupation

14 The title is framed by an image of the Last Judgement, picturing and caricaturing the Protestant religion at the left and Catholic religion at the right. Thereby Christ welcomes the souls of the Protestant martyrs, who are burning at stake and condemns the Catholic priests and "false" martyrs.

15 HALLER, 1963, p. 13.

16 HALLER, 1963, pp. 13f. At the end of the seventeenth century more than 10,000 copies were circulated.

17 Confer BAILEY, 2003, p. 155.

18 In the second edition 1570 Foxe began the dedication with begging Christ to crown Elizabeth and even naming her "our peaceable Salome". In detail see KING, 2006, p. 246.

such as St. Lucius, the first Christian king, and St. Alban, the English proto-martyr, as well as to medieval martyrs like St. Thomas Becket[19] – all accepted and canonised by the Roman Church –, and up to the dissociation of the English Church from the papacy through Henry VIII.

But his focus lay on the persecutions of Reformers and Protestants caused by the Catholic Queen Mary Tudor. Foxe reported on nearly 800 pages "what happened in the horrible and bloody time of Queen Mary".[20] Thereby, he relied on different sources such as first-person narratives, manuscripts written by eyewitnesses and oral testimony.[21] The most prominent martyrdoms are not only narrated, but also illustrated by woodcuts, such as those of Thomas Cranmer, Archbishop of Canterbury, and Nicholas Ridley, Bishop of London, together with Hugh Latimer, Bishop of Worchester, who were all burnt at the stake in Oxford.

19 FOXE, 1570, vol. 1, p. 55 (St. Lucius), p. 62 (St. Alban) and p. 263 (St. Thomas).
20 Quotation after HALLER, 1963, p. 122.
21 KING, 2009, p. xxvii.

The picture of the martyrdom of Latimer and Ridley on 16 October 1555 (fig. 2) shows the two reformers at the stake surrounded by a large crowd and Thomas Cranmer at the upper right, atop Bocardo prison, looking down to them and praying "O Lord strengthen them". The last words of the martyrs are also written on banderols which are coming out of their mouths: "Father of heaven receive my soul" and "Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit" as were Jesus' last words on the Cross (Luke 23, 46). Thereby Foxe stressed the notion of an imitation of Christ, of Latimer and Ridley in being innocently murdered.

Fig. 2: John Foxe, Acts and Monuments, London 1970: Martyrdom of Thomas Cranmer, woodcut, 13 cm x 17,5 cm, vol. 2, p. 2067 (Institutsbibliothek Evangelische Theologie, Johannes Gutenberg-Universität Mainz)

The memory box implied the same meaning of the martyrdom of Thomas Cranmer (fig. 3). He was following them at the stake six months later, on 21 March 1556, as Foxe wrote "for the confession of Christ's true doctrine"[22].

Fig. 3: John Foxe, Acts and Monuments, London 1970: Martyrdom of Nicholas Ridley und Hugh Latimer, woodcut, 18,5 cm x 25,5 cm, vol. 2, p. 1938 (Institutsbibliothek Evangelische Theologie, Johannes Gutenberg-Universität Mainz)

The reminiscence of Early Christianity and its first martyrs was one of the most effective attributes of the memory box, which was inserted by Foxe to highlight the tradition of being martyred and murdered for the "true faith" in England from his days back to the roots in early Christian times. The memory box implies the arguments for the legitimation of Protestant faith by comparing the victims with Christ and his followers, which were all officially accepted, meaning canonised, by the Catholic Church as being true martyrs. Thereby,

22 KING, 2009, p. 182.

Foxe referred to the use of the memory box not only to depict the recent martyrs but also their media representation in publicity:

> I see no reason why the martyrs of our time deserve not as great commendation as the others in primitive church, which assuredly are inferior unto them in no point of praise, whether we look upon the number of them that suffered or the greatness of their torments or their constancy in dying. […] we have found so many martyrs in this our age, let not fail them in publishing and setting forth their doings.[23]

Of course, copies of Foxe's "Acts and Monuments" also circulated in the Catholic community and, together with religious refugees, the book with its pictures of modern Protestant martyrs found its way to the English College at Rome. Its influence was known there, which became obvious by the statement of Robert Parsons, Rector of the English College in Rome in 1598: "[The Book] hath done more hurt alone to simple souls in our country by infecting and poisoning them unawares under the bait of pleasant histories, fair pictures and painted pageant, than many other of the most pestilent books together."[24]

To antagonise the propagandistic power of Foxe's Book of Martyrs and to open up the confessional controversy in the printing press, the same memory box was opened by English Catholics at Rome. The martyrdom cycle in the English College Church was commissioned and graphically reproduced as a series of engravings immediately after the frescoes were finished.

The martyrdom cycle in the Venerable English College Church

The illustrated pendant of Foxe's Book of Martyrs can be found in the Roman Jesuit College Church San Tomaso di Canterbury. It was the third College Church decorated with a martyrdom cycle in Rome but, among all the others, has the most interesting and really unusual pictorial program because it concentrates on English martyrs and those who had not yet been canonised or beatified. The fresco cycle consisted of 34 panels which were executed by the

23 Foxe, 1570, vol. 1, p. 522.
24 Mozley, 1940, p. 177.

painter Niccolo Circignani between the years 1582-1583 around the entire nave.[25] He also painted the other martyrdom cycles at San Apollinare and at Santo Stefano Rotondo[26], where he was assisted by Matteo da Siena. Niccolò Circignani, born around 1520 in Pomarance near Volterra, was one of the best employed fresco painters under Gregory XIII.[27] Unfortunately, the original fresco cycle was destroyed, but survived in a series of engravings entitled "Ecclesiae Anglicanae Trophaea" by Giovanni Battista Cavalieri. He reproduced all panels and published the series in 1584, only one year after the frescoes were finished.

As the engravings show today, it provided nearly the same pictorial program in drawing up the English Church History and the roots of Catholic faith as that of Foxe in his book 20 years earlier: The frescoes represented an almost chronological series of saints and martyrs of the English Church, both prominent and unknown, from the first century and the Middle Age until the contemporary present. As in case of John Foxe, here again the same famous martyrs such as St. Lucius, St. Alban and St. Thomas of Canterbury, to whom the College Church is dedicated[28], are used to depict the roots of the Christian faith in England. Afterwards – at which time Foxe concentrated on the victims under Queen Mary I –, the San Tomaso cycle illustrated recent Catholic victims under the reigns of Henry VIII and Elizabeth I on the last ten frescoes; the most famous being John Fisher, Bishop of Rochester and Thomas More, the former Lord Chancellor of King Henry (fig. 4). Both were accused of high treason because they refused to take the oath of Supremacy, established in 1534, whereby Henry declared himself head of the Church of England and separated his new founded Anglican Church from Rome. Next to their beheading in London 1535, the print also shows Margaret Pole, countess of Salisbury. The illustration does not capture a historical moment as in the martyrdom of Protestant Hugh Latimer and Nicholas Ridley, because More died some two weeks after Fisher and Margaret Pole even six years later. But the layers transferred into the memory box intended exactly the same meaning, namely to show them as direct followers of Christ and the early Christian and medieval martyrs which were pictured in the frescoes before. In addition, the enemy himself, King Henry, can be easily identified on the scaffold at the

25 Confer BAILEY, 2003, p. 158.
26 In particular for the cycle at Santo Stefano Rotondo see MONSSEN, 1981 and 1983.
27 Confer RÖTTGEN, 1975, p. 108 and MÂLE, 1932, p. 111.
28 Pope Gregory XIII donated a piece of Thomas' forearm to the College Church in 1580. See BAILEY, 2003, p. 156.

right. Henry is dressed in a contemporary costume, as are his soldiers, whose uniforms are equipped with the Tudor emblem.

Fig. 4: Giovanni Battista Cavalieri after Niccolò Circignani: Martyrdom of John Fisher and Thomas More, engraving, 26,5 cm x 20,5 cm, Ecclesiae anglicanae trophaea, Rome 1584 (Stadtbibliothek Trier)

Fig. 5: Giovanni Battista Cavalieri after Niccolò Circignani: Martyrdom of Edmund Campion, Ralph Sherwin and Alexander Briant, engraving, 26,5 cm x 20,5 cm, Ecclesiae anglicanae trophaea, Rome 1584 (Stadtbibliothek Trier)

The most famous Jesuit missionaries among the martyrs during the reign of Elizabeth I were Edmund Campion, Ralph Sherwin and Alexander Briant (fig.5). After their capture and torture in London Tower, they were hanged, disembowelled and quartered. Thereafter, their dismembered bodies were seethed. The persecutions of Jesuit missionaries usually ended in mass-executions by the same procedure, as is shown in the image illustrating the cruel martyrdom of thirteen students from the College, all executed between 1582 and 1583. The last, Richard Thirkeld, was killed in May 1583, shortly before the cycle was finished. Their bodies are draped in disorder and can only be identified because their names are written in the inscription beneath (fig. 6).

Fig. 6: Giovanni Battista Cavalieri after Niccolò Circignani: Martyrdom of Jesuit Priests, engraving, 26,5 cm x 20,5 cm, Ecclesiae anglicanae trophaea, Rome 1584 (Stadtbibliothek Trier)

In the case of this martyrdom cycle, the memory box was opened by the English refugee George Gilbert, who donated 700 *scudi* to the College for church decoration.[29] The Jesuit College churches and their decorations were closely bound to the function of the Colleges hosting foreign (Catholic European) students, from which three existed in Rome: San Apollinare was founded by Ignatius himself, who had intended to create an institution to house German students for education purposes under the leadership of Jesuit supervisors. The College was authorised by Pope Julius III in 1552, whose Bull of Foundation indicated that the intention was primarily to fight Protestantism.[30] For the same purpose, the Hungarian College was established in 1573 by Pope Gregory XIII, who was one of the greatest supporters of the Society of Jesus.[31] Later, in 1580, the German seminary was merged with the Hungarian and was from now on called the German-Hungarian College.[32] Furthermore, in 1579 Pope Gregory also founded the Venerable English College, which he assigned to the Society of Jesus. The English College is an English pilgrim's hospice and was established as a seminary by the English Catholic Cardinal William Allen as early as in 1577.

As mentioned above, the College's purpose was to train English priests for the dangerous pastoral work they would face in their home country. An interesting aspect is that all students were compelled to take a missionary oath before they entered the Jesuit Seminary, promising to return to England for missionary purposes and to serve persecuted Catholics.[33]

Before he went into exile, Gilbert himself was involved in the English mission by supporting the arriving missionaries; he therefore knew that many of them were captured and executed. Thus, in opening the memory box, he was fully aware of its purpose and impact, as is documented in a letter by Alfonso Agazzari, the rector of the College, to Claudio Acquaviva in June 1583:

29 BAILEY, 2003, p. 160.

30 Thus it was formulated in the Bull of Foundation "Dum Solicita" of the German College *San Apollinare* in 1552 by Pope Julius III, see CESAREO, 1993, p. 831.

31 In detail about Pope Gregory XIII and his relationship to the Society of Jesus see PASTOR, 1958, vol. 9, pp. 170-188.

32 For the history of the German-Hungarian College and its Churches San Apollinare and Santo Stefano Rotondo see SCHMIDT, 1984, BRANDENBURG/PÁL, 2000; for the frescoes see BAILEY, 2003, pp. 128-133.

33 For the history of the English College see GASQUET, 1920, p. 77, 118 and PASTOR, 1958, vol. 9, p. 177.

> Hence the holy man [Gilbert] took great pains to note down all the English martyrs, both ancient and modern, and to have their martyrdoms painted on panels, with which he adorned the entire church of this college […] He used to say that he did this not only for the honour of these most glorious martyrs, and to show the glory and splendour of the English church, but also so that when the students in this college should see the example of these predecessors of theirs they might also be stirred toward martyrdom. And, moreover, that with the images of our new martyrdoms the miserable state of his fatherland would be placed before the eyes of Rome and of all the world, and thus move the people to pray to God on its behalf.[34]

The educational role of the pictures becomes obvious in this statement and is supported by their didactic layout, which is similar to that of pamphlets.[35] Mostly, each illustration depicts several martyrs or diverse scenes of their life. The prominent ones are placed in the foreground, the less known in the background. Letters placed near the protagonists correspond to Latin inscriptions under each illustration. These provide some short information about the depicted saint, making the identification much easier.[36]

This layout also served a meditative function. In Jesuit context, every student is held to bear his own cross, his own martyrdom, by which the greatest Imitation of Christ could be achieved.[37] In accordance with the Exercitia spiritualia by the order's founder Ignatius of Loyola, this could also be achieved by meditation. That is why the paintings illustrated emotionless, non-individual figures in anonymous landscapes without divine attributes such as the crown or the martyr's palm. They should provide the viewer with the utmost liberty for their individual imagination.

But the didactic function goes far beyond individual imagination. The frescoes were determined for the direct education in missions, by inspiring students to follow the illustrated martyrs. The final fresco showed Pope Gregory XIII, who encourages the students and sends them out to save Protestant souls by leading them back to Catholicism (fig. 7).

34 [Archivum Romanum Societatis Iesu (Angl. 7, 44a-b)], translated by and quoted after BAILEY, 2003, p. 160.

35 For the presentation principles of pamphlets see SCHILLING, 1990.

36 About this typical didactic layout in Jesuit education and its prototype "Evangelicae historiae imagines" by Jerome Nadal see BUSER, 1976, BAILEY, 2003, p. 36 and STEINEMANN, 2006, pp. 404-406.

37 Confer MEISSNER, 1997, p. 122 and KORRICK, 1999, p. 172.

Fig. 7: Giovanni Battista Cavalieri after Niccolò Circignani: Pope Gregory XIII., engraving, 26,5 cm x 20,5 cm, Ecclesiae anglicanae trophaea, Rome 1584 (Stadtbibliothek Trier)

The fact that an active and publically suffered martyrdom was able to be a tool of conversion is even mentioned in the inscription beneath the martyrdom of Edmund Campion, with "aliquot millia hominum ad Romanum Ecclesiam conversa sunt". Indeed, an execution was an event, which attracted many people[38], and the execution of Campion, together with his companions Alexander Briant and Ralph Sherwin, caused a sensation not only within the Catholic community; it is said that even John Foxe wrote a letter to Queen Elizabeth in which he asked for mercy and begged her pardon.[39]

In fact, the students concretely were prepared to achieve a similar fate, which actually meant to suffer a gruesome death. On account of the 41 College students who suffered for the faith in the following years, the crucial pictures did encourage them.[40]

For propagandistic issues the modern Protestant and Catholic martyrs – especially the seminary priests and Jesuit missionaries from the Roman College who were martyred in the 1580s, just before the cycle was finished – turned out to be very striking. But to exploit the executed College students in the religious controversy, they firstly had to be officially accepted as martyrs. To this effect, the pope made a number of concessions around 1580: including that the relics of present-day martyrs, who had studied within the college walls, could be used in the consecration of altars, that the "Te Deum" should be sung upon hearing news of one's martyrdom and that pictures from these martyrs might be painted on the church walls.[41] That suggested that even living students were treated as walking relics and greeted with "Salvete Flores Martyrum" – Hail, flowers of martyrdom.[42]

In general, the concessions made by Pope Gregory are similar to Foxe's written argumentation of praising the contemporary martyrs. Because the memory box transfers culturally shared knowledge (in both religious communities), it guaranteed the effective use of the *topos* of martyrdom depending on the religious point of view for the legitimacy or the falseness of the particular confession.

38 DAVIS, 1987, p. 181 and GREGORY, 1999.
39 Encyclopaedia Britannica 1963, vol. 9, p. 573.
40 WALSH, 1979, p. 4.
41 GASQUET, 1920, p. 122. The Fresco cycle was commissioned by George Gilbert, an English refugee in the Roman College. For details see BAILEY, 2003, p. 157.
42 GASQUET, 1920, p. 118; Greeting of Filippo Neri when he met the College's students.

In fact, the propagandistic use becomes more than obvious in the anti-Catholic, respectively anti-Protestant, program. Foxe, as well as the Jesuits from San Tomaso, was eager to use the antagonisms produced by martyrdom respectively the martyr, as good and evil, suffered and executed violence, peaceful and aggressive faith, victim and offender, etc., to draw a clear concept of the enemy. In this way, the collective memory of the old martyrs became a distinctive memory when the new martyrs were shown and thereby formed a religious identity. This was one of the reasons for the reproduction of the frescoes into a medium: a fresco is limited to a pin point because it is painted upon the freshly laid plastering and therefore bound to the wall. Accordingly, by using engravings it was possible to displace the memory box in a wider publicity and publish the anti-Protestant message in England and all over the world, as it is written in the Annals of the College:

> But with the view of throwing light on the wretched state of that kingdom and the miserable plight of its Catholic inhabitants, a book of the English persecution has been re-published at the expense of this College […]. We have spread copies of this work far and wide, even to the Indies, that the infamy of this most disastrous persecution, the phrenzied [sic] rage of the heretics, the unconquerable firmness of the Catholics, may be known everywhere.[43]

Conclusion

Since the sixteenth century particularly images – primarily engravings and woodcuts – were used for the public mediation and commemoration of confessional martyrs since they were easy to reproduce. Thus, the pictured Protestant Martyrologium and the frescoes – respectively the engravings of the Jesuit College – served as screens for the modern martyrs. By their media representation, the transformation of meaning became visible: victims were transformed to heroes, the defeat was transformed to a spiritual and religious victory, suffering martyrdom meant eternal life and getting a direct ticket into heaven. That, again, plays an important role in producing publicity – there

43 FOLEY, 1880, vol. 6, p. 83; confer NOREEN, 1998, p. 698.

couldn't be any martyrs without – as well as for their commemoration and ritual veneration (the martyrs' bodies become relics). [44]

An advantage of images over written media was particularly the easier control of the receivers (=Rezipientensteuerung) as is suggested by the Italian art and media theorist Cardinal Gabriele Paleotti in his "Discorso".[45] In his book, Paleotti theorised what the Catholic Church had already recognised and practiced under the pressure of the confessional conflict, namely the efficiency of images as an instrument of/in mass communication[46] as can be seen in Roman church decorations under Pope Gregory XIII and their immediate graphical reproduction. In sixteenth and seventeenth-century Rome, both in painting and graphics, the representations of martyrdoms became very popular, which demonstrates the papal authorities' awareness of the sensational and convincing power of these mostly very gruesome illustrations.

At the same time, Paleotti provided the argumentation for the "verita istorica", the validity of the images by using the rhetorical device of "docere" that allowed seeing the image as perception medium (=Erkenntnismedium) and which is able to mediate the truth and knowledge.[47] This was previously argued by Giovanni Andrea Giglio da Fabriano in 1564 by comparing the historical painter with a translator of the text/literary source.[48] Indeed, the validity of the sources is a central problem, but by the visual translation of the martyrdoms, which were already proved to be true and accepted in Protestant as well as in Catholic faith, also the pictures of them and those who followed became valid as (mediators of) historical truth.

As in the Book of Martyrs, through using the memory box of martyrdom the San Tomaso cycle pointed out the long-lasting tradition of the Catholic Church in England and its legitimacy in claiming to be the historical "true" confession up to the contemporary past that is proved by the modern martyrs.

44 See HORSCH/TREML, 2011, p. 13. For the publicity-aspect of martyrs see also FRANK, 2007, pp. 220f., and for especially Protestant concerns MENSING, 2002, pp. 117-146.

45 "Discorso intorno alle imagine sacre e profane", Bologna 1582.

46 For a comprehensive analysis of Paleotti's Discorso see STEINEMANN, 2006, here p. 38.

47 STEINEMANN, 2006, p. 122. Next to Paleotti many others referred to the validity of images as Roberto Bellarmino, Antonio Possevino and Cesare Baronio. For the "verita historica"-concept see also HECHT, 1997, pp.185f.

48 Dialogo nel quale si ragiona degli errori e degli abusi de' pittori circa l'istorie, Camerino 1564, in: BAROCCHI, 1961, pp. 1-115, here pp. 35,55.

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