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PERSPECTIVES AND DEBATES

Merchandising and sanctity: the invasive cult of Padre Pio

Peter Jan Margry

Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences

Abstract

In the final decades of the twentieth century, the Blessed Padre Pio da Pietrelcina (1887–1968) became a ‘saint’ of global stature. It is most exceptional for the cult of a saint to acquire such dimensions in so short a time. Further, this is the story not of someone with a modern profile of sanctity, but someone who on the contrary answers to the traditional model of sanctity, and whose cult is moreover characterized by an instrumental devotional repertoire. Despite this ‘classic’ model, his person and cult are extremely ambiguous. This article describes and analyses the processes which have brought and continue to bring this about, and the recent development of the cult in Italy. By these processes a controversial cult, often associated with anti-ecclesiastical devotional activities and of limited scope, has become one of the most important and irreproachable in Italy. In part through the personal support of Pope John Paul II, in about a decade Padre Pio has grown from a friar in a controversial fundamentalist context to an almost invulnerable national saint, who is beginning to become a part of the Italian identity.

The power of his cult is so strong – a devotional avalanche – that it has sidelined other cults, and to an increasingly large degree defines the Italian sacred landscape. The Pio cult encroaches on other devotions, and moreover is becoming its own competitor: to an increasing degree Pio’s central pilgrimage site at San Giovanni Rotondo is losing pilgrims to the secondary pilgrimage site at Pietrelcina and to the hundreds of chapels and local shrines that have sprung up the length of Italy.

Keywords

Saint (cult), sanctity, (contemporary) devotion, Padre Pio, Italy, Catholic fundamentalism.

Visitors to Italy in the final years of the twentieth century encountered important questions about the nature of popular devotions. How is it possible that veneration for the Capuchin Padre Pio has taken on such massive proportions in recent years? Certainly, as an individual he already enjoyed great popularity some decades before, but the immense wave of devotion to Pio that has possessed Italy

since the mid-1990s is quite unprecedented. Never before in the history of Christendom has the cult of a saint expanded so rapidly and so intensely.

The cult surrounding the Padre, beatified on 2 May 1999, is so intense that it has diminished, overtaken or even entirely replaced older local devotions. As a result, the Italian devotional landscape has been both expanded and levelled down by Padre Pio in recent years. Patterns and mechanisms of devotional competition are not unusual, but in the case of Pio, their extent, intensity and speed are exceptional. Everything to do with him is in superlatives. Thus not only has a unique devotion grown up around this Capuchin, but he can himself be termed ‘destructor devotionis’, the suppressor of cults. In this article, I examine the nature and growth of his cult, and the reduction and displacement of, or symbiosis with, other devotions that has accompanied it.

The person

Enough books to fill a library have been written about Padre Pio,¹ and extensive archives have been collected.² Padre Pio was born as Francesco Forgione on 25 May 1887, in the village of Pietrelcina, about 100 kilometres north-east of Naples. As a child he was already deeply religious, had mystical experiences, and tried to emulate St Francis of Assisi. At the age of 15 he entered the Capuchin monastery at Morcone, taking the name Pio. He moved from one Capuchin community to another until he found his ultimate home at the monastery of Santa Maria delle Grazie in San Giovanni Rotondo, a small city in the impoverished southern Italian region of Apulia, near the Adriatic Sea. Although suffering from poor health and an additional self-imposed strict ascetic regime, he began his work for the area’s needy residents. His spiritual gifts and stigmata became widely known. As a result he became – and remained until his death on 23 September 1968 – the most important confessor and spiritual adviser in the monastery.

He was the proverbial ‘living legend’, a person who literally lived ‘in the odour of sanctity’, who had a multitude of devotees and critics, chiefly in Italy but also in other countries. His life was marked by his peculiar gifts, both his penetrating manner of hearing confession and saying the Mass, and his stigmata and miraculous powers. From the beginning of his life in the Church, much has been written about him. But just as many details about his life are shrouded in mystery, so also are the sources. Despite the deluge of material, it is difficult to find trustworthy, verifiable sources on him and his cult. A good deal has been written (much of it exaggerated) about him, but most of the authentic documents are kept in sealed archives. The extensive dossier for the beatification process may be considered one of the most trustworthy sources. In view of the historical/critical methods which are in principle used for the compilation of such dossiers today, this is presumably the best source for his life.³ Ecclesiastical and theological parameters are likewise applicable for the interpretation of the extraordinary phenomena surrounding him, the treatment of the miracles he performed, and

his spirituality. Further, various editions of sources have been compiled,⁴ several better, but none the less hagiographically tinged, biographies have been written, and a more or less scholarly journal devoted to Padre Pio has begun appearing recently.⁵ For further information about him and his life, I refer the reader to these biographies.

As more is written about him, he appears to take on ever more mythic dimensions. The number of analytic studies by scholars in such fields as the history of religion, religious sociology or ethno-anthropology⁶ has been as small as the stream of religious and hagiographically tinged, apologetic Pio literature in recent years has been great. The significance of Pio and his cult has been given limited attention in the surveys of modern religious history.⁷

The Pio controversy

The problems involved in investigating and explaining the mystification surrounding his person and cult are perhaps connected with the problems that Pio experienced with the ecclesiastical hierarchy.⁸ In brief, the issues are these. At the beginning of the 1920s the Friar Minor Agostino Gemelli visited Pio as apostolic visitor from Pope Pius XI, and after his investigations established a diagnosis of 'hysteria' and 'fanaticism'.⁹ Suspicions had begun to develop around Pio in 1918, after he was found to bear the stigmata, an extreme form of *imitatio Christi*.¹⁰ In 1919 the phenomenon became generally known outside the monastery, and a flow of pilgrims began which to this day has not ceased. Later, the paranormal phenomena surrounding his person multiplied.¹¹ In part on the basis of information from local clergy, the Holy Office pronounced a solemn and public judgement on Pio.¹² His religiosity had crossed the boundary into fanaticism, and the Vatican desired that he no longer be visited by the faithful. In 1922 the Holy Office was already contemplating his removal from the cloister. Warnings and disciplinary measures were repeated in the years that followed. In 1931 the Congregation forbade him to carry out activities as a priest. The only thing he was permitted was the private celebration of Mass in a chapel in the monastery. Because the resulting tense relationship between the monastery and the Vatican urgently needed a solution, a new visitor was appointed, a Capuchin. He saw in Pio a 'man of God', and on his authority the restrictions were lifted. On 16 July 1933, Pius XI restored him to his rank as priest and allowed him to say Mass publicly again. Since then his fame and popularity gradually spread until, in 1960, at the time of the *aggiornamento* of Pope John XXIII, who took a critical attitude towards cults, the Holy See instituted another investigation into San Giovanni Rotondo. Among other things, financial and administrative irregularities were alleged: his fellow monks were using him as a 'gold mine'. His devotees were accused of religious fanaticism and the Capuchin administrators were labelled 'careless and incompetent'. The highest authorities of the

Capuchins forbade the priests at San Giovanni Rotondo to organize pilgrimages. In 1966 the Archbishop of Gorizia once again received a papal order, this time to carry out an investigation of devotional practices within the monastery.¹³

At first heavy opposition from Rome continued, but the devotion became so extensive that it could no longer be stopped. Whereas John XXIII remained critical of all paranormal phenomena and religious fanaticism, in 1971 Pope Paul VI was already speaking about Pio in a positive manner as a man 'of prayer and suffering'.¹⁴ From the beginning of his pontificate John Paul II, who himself has visited San Giovanni Rotondo three times, has encouraged the devotion. His first visit, as a priest in the diocese of Cracow, took place in 1947; his second, as Archbishop of Cracow, in 1974, and the last, as Pope, on 23 May 1987, as inscribed on a marble memorial plaque in the Pio crypt.

Despite the beatification and world-wide devotion, the stories about Padre Pio as *santo impostore*, the holy deceiver, have never entirely ceased, and in fact past judgements and bans pronounced by the Vatican have never been formally lifted. There has been a long tradition of internal conflict within the Vatican between the credulous and the non-credulous. Until the arrival of Pope John Paul II the counter-forces were sufficiently strong to hold back the beatification process. However, the present Pope, with his Polish spirituality, has given devotion to saints a new importance during his pontificate, and it was he who on 29 November 1982 signed the decree introducing the *causa* for canonization.¹⁵ Only in 1997 did Padre Pio receive the title of 'Venerable' as a 'Servant of God', and he was beatified in 1999.¹⁶

As the monastery of San Giovanni Rotondo was under the direct administration and supervision of the Vatican, it was not possible for the Capuchins there to begin such a *causa* on their own. It is noteworthy that no statue of Padre Pio stood in the church at San Giovanni Rotondo, although millions of images of him had already been disseminated across the world. Shortly after his death, a statue was placed outside the church by the marquee in the square where pilgrims lit candles and which functioned as one of the central points of devotion. After the beatification the placing of a similar image was also permitted in the church of pilgrimage.

In the meantime, in 2001, new rumours about financial irregularities began making the rounds, and once again an inspector from the Vatican was sent to the Capuchin monastery.¹⁷

The formal beatification process provided an impetus for the independent Roman psychiatrist Luigi Cancrini to study Padre Pio's personality and make a psychiatric diagnosis. On the basis of the internationally accepted diagnostic standards set out in the DSM IV, he found evidence of dissociative trance coupled with obsession and loss of identity, and a histrionic personality disorder.¹⁸ Technically one of the hysterical personality disorders, this is accompanied by exaggerated emotionality, and has wide variations in expression, including self-dramatization and demands for attention.

Categorizing cults: traditional and instrumental¹⁹

How should the cult surrounding Padre Pio be categorized? There are many interpretations resulting not only from his controversial position, but also from the power and extent of the cult, which embraces both modern and traditional forms. In some respects it has the characteristics of a traditional cult of a person who, on the basis of the qualities ascribed to him by his devotees, was being viewed as a 'saint' from an early stage in his life.

People's saint

The cult is unmistakably 'a popular devotion', as can be seen not only from its extent but also from a demographic analysis of its devotees: men and women, young and old, rich and poor, from well educated to poorly schooled.²⁰ This is overwhelmingly apparent in Italy, where almost the whole country has 'gone down on its knees' for him, and appears to be 'into Pio'. This can very easily be confirmed empirically by looking around the country any day, and asking questions. Pio has become a new father figure in the Italian devotional tradition, a modern successor to 'national' saints in the line of Francis of Assisi and Antony of Padua.²¹ In recognition of this, during the beatification the Pope described him as 'a son of Italy'. In 2000, a pilgrim rendered this on the banner of a group of pilgrims to San Giovanni Rotondo as 'Padre Pio – Padre Mio'.

In Italy Padre Pio is at one and the same time a 'people's saint' and a myth. Countless people are in contact with him in one way or another and constantly report remarkable experiences in relation to his person. Padre Pio is mythic because critical questions can no longer be posed about him or his cult, a clear indication to everybody that he is 'holy' and that the forces he generates are convincing and reasonable. Padre Pio is no longer open to discussion, and very few people publicly raise questions about him. A sort of national consensus exists on him and all the miraculous phenomena. This does not mean that no more criticism is forthcoming from clerical or secular circles, or that there is no longer any hostility towards him. The population as a whole, however, those holding such views have become a minority, indeed an almost negligible percentage.²² Pio often even enjoys a special status among the residents of Rome, who as a rule take a critical attitude towards the institutional Church and include a comparatively large number of non-churchgoers. While critics of Padre Pio may often express an aversion to the hype surrounding him and his cult, in spiritual terms they often acknowledge a peculiar attachment to him. The number of his critics inside and outside the Church has declined markedly since his formal beatification. Because of the almost unassailable, sacrosanct status Padre Pio has today, those who remain sceptical about him are more restrained about expressing their criticisms in public.

The myth around Padre Pio has, however, also taken on new dimensions. Although for many he is a miracle worker, others try to distance that image in

order to highlight a different aspect of his spiritual significance: the real miracle is not his healing powers but the whole movement, the many conversions it has gained and the construction of a modern hospital.²³ In 2000 Archbishop Ruffini of Lecce put it like this: 'Pio's real miracle is that so many people come and that such a huge movement has been created.'²⁴ Or might this be seen as a typical statement from Pio's doubters: to cite something (the mass movement) as possible evidence for that which still remains to be proved (his authenticity)?

His devotees often cite as one of the most remarkable things about him is that despite all the fuss about him he always went on being himself, continued to pray and behave as he always had. This is repeatedly given as an example of his extreme *umiltà*, humility. Perhaps his submissiveness acts as a *locum tenens* for Italians collectively, making him represent all that Italians themselves cannot or will not be. For one northern Italian, not an outspoken Pio devotee, his extreme *umiltà* was in itself a sufficient reason to consider the stigmata possible.²⁵

In other aspects too the Pio cult can be regarded as a popular devotion. It is remarkable that in a country with such strong culturally determined views about 'hygiene' and *la bella figura*, where Pio is concerned a broad affinity has arisen for things for which people, generally speaking, feel great aversion, such as personal confrontation with body fluids.²⁶ There is great adoration for Pio's wounds and blood, and all sorts of dirty, stained and unwashed items of clothing are displayed and revered, and rather repulsive photographs are constantly in view. Furthermore, Padre Pio's iconographic representation bears no relation to the usual ideal images of sainthood, or of beauty. The material expression of the cult takes the rather primitive form of cheap mass production. The image literally created for Pio is that of a bent old man whose lined face is not idealized in the crude reproduction techniques. This could be interpreted as the modern iconography of affliction, of Pio's humility and noble suffering.²⁷

Motivations

Suffering and humility are among the motives for pilgrimage cited by Pio devotees. For instance, a pilgrim wrote, 'With P. Pio I am constantly impressed by his suffering during his life; [I] dedicate my suffering to his honour and glory, and ask that my prayers be heard.'²⁸ The pilgrims are eager to visit his grave, to gain a sense of communion in his suffering and in his spiritual depth, and to commend their personal intentions to him. These intentions can be left there in writing, and are temporarily placed on his grate overnight. For them, he is also a guide during their life: 'He knows my problems and is a support for me. I feel that he bears me up and strengthens me.'²⁹ He is also part of their everyday life, and his devotees communicate directly with him, 'speak[ing] with him daily in prayer'.³⁰ His fame as a confessor endures.³¹ As someone once wrote, with Pio you can 'really go to him for everything'.³² Devotees therefore often carry a memento, and pray daily to 'offer up' their personal 'difficulties'. Many members of prayer groups praise Pio as an exemplary figure because of his *semplicità*. They feel a

constant inner urge to return to San Giovanni Rotondo to see his cell and visit his grave.

What other motives influence the devotees who visit and venerate the shrine and the 'holy one'? Around 1985 Giuseppe Scarvaglieri obtained the following percentages:³³

• Pio as an 'imitator of Christ', an example of Christian life	30
• the stigmata in particular	24
• Pio's compassion, <i>caritas</i>	19
• his miraculous powers, Pio as healer	19
• Pio as confessor	4
• Pio as a man of mystery	4

In San Giovanni Rotondo in 2000, the vice-postulant and Capuchin Di Flumeri noted the pilgrims' main motives.³⁴ The stigmata that Pio bore for more than fifty years and his spiritual, charismatic gifts top the list, followed by his gifts of bilocation and his odour of sanctity. Of further importance is that many come to pray for grace; according to Di Flumeri people come for spiritual help more often than for material help. The hundreds of letters written every day by pilgrims deal primarily with spiritual matters, for instance: 'let me love Jesus as Pio loved Him.' According to the Capuchin the young come to San Giovanni Rotondo to 'find their heart' and 'find the good for everyday life'.

Instrumentality

For all this, the veneration of Pio is characterized by a high ritual/instrumental content, typical elements of a cult with a traditional or even archaic character.³⁵ Padre Pio unmistakably possesses the characteristics of a miracle worker, a healing saint. During his life he continually availed himself of a wide range of instrumental expressions of faith: stigmata, bilocation, miraculous powers, clairvoyance, prescience, levitation, *profumo di santità*.³⁶ He is a priest/healer with supernatural powers, a 'shaman', 'everybody's Cyrenean'. His devotees therefore want to achieve maximum physical contact with him. The statues of Padre Pio in San Giovanni Rotondo are touched and kissed at length, as are all spaces and objects which commemorate him. Most of the Pio memorabilia have had to be placed behind strong plexiglass in order to prevent wear and tear or theft. Pilgrims regard the mysterious flowery odour (roses, violets or incense) that many smell by his tomb as a sign of his continual presence. Such odours are also increasingly being noted outside San Giovanni Rotondo as a sign of his spiritual closeness and succour.³⁷ Even today – years after his death – at regular intervals his devotees all over the world smell this odour, which can also be given out by objects. Once when Pio's intercession was invoked during a pregnancy in France, and the birth ultimately went well after ten months, during the delivery there was 'a lovely smell of violets, but no flowers could be seen'.³⁸ People have also

testified that while sitting in their car or riding a scooter, at the moment of his beatification in 1999 they suddenly became aware of the odour of flowers.

This instrumentality is also expressed in the veneration of relics; after the beatification, new prayer cards with relics of fabric were again printed in huge numbers. Contemporary relic production, and the demand for it, are still enormous. In 1999, because of his beatification, another million new prayer cards with the new title of 'blessed' in different languages had to be produced. Huge rolls of fabric were purchased to be made into relics of the third category by means of simply being brought into contact with other relics. Relics of the first and second category, which can be distributed among devotees only after a beatification, are still not available.³⁹ In the meantime, on Pio Internet sites, a *caveat emptor* has begun appearing because relics alleged to be of the second category are being offered for large sums of money: pieces of fabric that really belong to the third category are being offered as actual fabric from Pio's habit.⁴⁰ The need for material goods remains large. The Capuchins have been unable to keep the sale of regular devotional objects under control. The market has taken the upper hand, and produces the usual devotional kitsch for sale at the main shrines. Even so, the Capuchins still strive for a higher standard as regards the sale of accurate likenesses of Padre Pio.

Traditional model of sanctity

The cult of Padre Pio does not consist purely and solely of an instrumentally defined devotion. For instance, the former Italian Prime Minister Giulio Andreotti has been a fervent admirer of Pio all his life and appears to have carried a textbook by him as a spiritual guide at all times. In Andreotti's view, the stigmata and miracles were not as important as the way in which Pio performed the Mass, what he said, and how he saw the world. Not only Andreotti, but also those directly involved with the cult, the Capuchins, want to reduce the emphasis on his 'miraculous' side and raise his cult to a higher or more modern religious design. They think Pio could play a role in the Church's 'offensive' to renew and strengthen itself for the future. For instance, because of Pio's power to inspire people to turn over a new leaf, a specific mission could be given to his cult, with him as the 'guide for the coming millennium'.⁴¹ Concrete expressions of this effort at modernization include the systematic removal of devotional graffiti and keeping the 'popular' votive gifts – aside from some of the more 'artistic' expressions – out of sight at the shrine, putting them in storage instead.⁴²

Despite attempts to modernize the pilgrimage site and cult, no fundamental change is really evident. As it happens, Pio stood – and stands – for everything from which the Church has tried to distance itself. In this respect, he is no modern saint. On the contrary, he pre-eminently fulfils the traditional model of sanctity, and is not the prototype of the twentieth- or twenty-first-century saint. The cult around him has no place in the modern models of sanctity which the Church itself sees for the future.⁴³ There is hardly a more traditional healing saint

than Padre Pio, whose instrumental and miraculous aspects have only developed in recent decades.

In its cultic forms the devotion is hardly prototypical. Pio could be characterized as 'modern' because his cult has risen to great heights in recent years, and because the Vatican – or more precisely, John Paul II – has supported traditional cults as an instrument for the restoration of the Church and a repositioning of devotional and religious life.⁴⁴ Developments, however, remain ambiguous. On the one hand, following his own devotional and religious views, the Pope has stimulated a traditional, Mariological and charismatic saintliness, such as is found, for instance, in Faustina Kowalska, Escrivà de Balaguer and Padre Pio. But these saints are not really held out as models. On the other hand is a development towards a more general modern pattern of sainthood, which can function as a direct model for the Church community and its members, a model in which, for example, Titus Brandsma, Edith Stein, Mother Teresa and Etty Hillesum obviously find their place.⁴⁵

It was precisely the condemnations by the Vatican and the way that the Padre and his devotees went ahead 'against the judgement of their betters' that made Padre Pio a standard bearer. Everywhere he was appropriated by groups which themselves were developing a critical stance to the Catholic Church and/or the renewal within it, and through them he was brought into the context of 'deviant' devotions. Here, incorporation into fundamentalist religious movements in and around the Church was possible, a movement which contributed to the faster and broader dissemination of the Pio cult. Further, in Italy there arose a tight group of *fedelissimi* who, like crusaders, sought to protect the Padre against 'intrigues' from the Vatican.⁴⁶

Fundamentalist uses

After Padre Pio received the stigmata in 1918, for the rest of his life he was the subject of debate about his character and of criticism and censure by the Vatican and others. This has constantly both tainted and stimulated his cult. At the same time this positioned the cult in the 'protest' camp, on the margins of or outside the institutional Catholic Church, where most of the non-acknowledged or disqualified devotions surrounding appearances, weeping Madonnas, persons with stigmata and other forms of 'religious fanaticism' have their place. This marginalization was further strengthened by the fact that Padre Pio received several apocalyptically coloured prophecies or revelations, comparable to some of the Marian messages.⁴⁷ That which was traditional in his cult also attracted reactionary, anti-modernist forces and brought the cult into contact with Catholics who had turned against the reforms of the Second Vatican Council. This created unintended bonds, and informal religious structures arose that ran more or less parallel to the Catholic Church.⁴⁸ Pio's controversial position led to the appropriation of his person and his spirituality by diverse groups, from deeply faithful Catholics in the Italian countryside to fanatical leaders and their

'devotees' in non-acknowledged cults. Moreover, the fact that Pio, for example in his prophetic and visionary pronouncements, regularly passed judgement on other deviant devotions, and therefore gained a considerable attraction as a spiritual guide among the visionaries involved, reinforced his place in the 'protest' camp.⁴⁹ The Pio cult thus entered into a close relationship with Catholic fundamentalism.⁵⁰ However controversial, Pio also had important supporters within the Catholic hierarchy who would speak up for him, through whom he could still be seen as a possible intermediary with the institutional Church. Nevertheless, Pio became one of the central connecting elements within the informal structures of modern devotions.

The appearances of Our Lady of Fatima in 1917 came to be centrally involved in the positioning and interpretation of Pio's cult.⁵¹ Since Fatima has become one of the most important seedbeds for modern Catholic fundamentalism, Pio's great devotion to her may be seen as a confirmation of that which is traditionalist and fundamentalist in his spirituality. This can be corroborated by the parallels in the messages disseminated on the suffering of humanity and catastrophes on earth: the concerned Mother, Mary's revelations to the world in 1917, and Pio's receiving the stigmata in 1918 as a symbol of the repetition of Christ's suffering for mankind. Years later they came into contact again in what devotees saw as an extraordinary occurrence. When the authentic Fatima image was brought to San Giovanni Rotondo on its pilgrimage in August 1959, Pio was seriously ill, and hardly able to perform devotions to her while she was there. When the helicopter with the statue circled the monastery three times as a farewell before the return trip, a tremor shot through Pio's body and he called out 'Sono guarito!' He was healed immediately.⁵²

The line connecting Pio and Fatima can be extended to Pope John Paul II via Pope John XXIII. John XXIII attempted to end religious fanaticism and sentimentality, and he wanted to keep all persons and cults involved in deviant devotions at a distance from the renewed and modernized Church. He therefore rejected the Polish Christian visionary Maria Faustina Kowalska⁵³ and Padre Pio in 1959 and 1960 respectively.⁵⁴ The two are highly comparable in many respects, in their miraculous powers, prophecies (among other things, she predicted a Polish pope), direct communications regarding Jesus' 'Misericordia', rehabilitation after vilification, and the rapid worldwide expansion of their cults. It is therefore not without significance that both were beatified by John Paul II, Pio in 1999 and Kowalska in 1993. Kowalska was then canonized in 2000, and the same process is underway for Pio. Wojtyła's personal devotion to Faustina and Pio has played an important role in this. Moreover, like Pio he is deeply devoted to Mary, and here again Fatima has a central place.⁵⁵ According to John Paul II, Our Lady of Fatima was his protectress at the time of the attempt on his life in 1981. She saved him from death, just as she healed Pio. As thanks, and to strengthen Marian devotions in general, Wojtyła went to Fatima himself in the Jubilee Year, 2000, and also had the original Fatima image brought to Rome once again. To eliminate all misunderstandings and apocalyptic connotations and

theories regarding the millennial year of 2000, Wojtyła at the same time revealed Fatima's third secret.⁵⁶ The 'Great Evil' which formed its subject appears to have been less serious than expected, he said, signifying nothing more than a prediction of the attempt on his life.⁵⁷ One encounters the theme of evil again in Pio's commitment to honour Mary and say the rosary, the prayer most often repeated within modern devotions, as a 'weapon against all evil in the world'.

There is a link to Padre Pio in almost all these modern deviant devotions. The important Marian shrine of San Damiano (Piacenza) is linked with him through the visionary Mamma Rosa. While ill in 1962, she went to a Pio prayer group near San Giovanni Rotondo, met him there once, and received the commission to begin caring for the sick, just as he did. Rosa saw Pio as a central mediator through whom God intervened to cure her and guide her further life.⁵⁸ Likewise in Civitavecchia, once one of the most controversial sites where a Madonna sheds tears of blood, but recently embraced by the Church, its existence may in part be credited to Pio.⁵⁹ Pio is also regularly brought in and referred to as a guiding force in the creation or development of a cult. Sometimes the Capuchin enjoys only a complementary function, as in the case of Manduria, where the shrine of the Madonna dell'Eucaristia was accidentally enriched with a statue of Pio and where at the same time the town council, 'just by chance', decided to name the unnamed road to the shrine 'Via Padre Pio'.⁶⁰

In most of these cases, prayer groups, both general and linked to Padre Pio, play a central role in the connections and interchange between the various deviant modern devotions. The 'devotees' involved create informal networks through which, in this case, the Pio cult can be vigorously disseminated.⁶¹

Devotional avalanche

Although Pio's popularity had become widespread early in his life, the devotional avalanche really only got under way during the 1980s. Because highly placed supporters within the Church swung into line behind him, his *causa* was taken up, and the devotional avalanche picked up speed. It was particularly Pope John Paul II himself who brought Marian and other devotions back to centre stage. Unusual cults which were not tolerated under previous popes could again emerge into the light of day. All this fits with the Pope's view of the strategic function of devotions within the Church, and is also connected with a new focus in the Church on 'popular devotions' as part of its pastoral ministry.⁶²

A new church

Originally the Capuchin monastery with its Marian shrine lay about 2 kilometres outside San Giovanni Rotondo, but the expansion of the city has brought it within the built-up area. San Giovanni Rotondo, with a population of more than 25,000 (1998), is in the province of Foggia, and ecclesiastically under the

authority of the diocese of Manfredonia. It is located at an altitude of 567 metres, on the Promontorio del Gargano, a mountainous spur stretching out into the Adriatic Sea, in the extreme north of the region of Apulia.⁶³ Apulia is one of the southern regions with a lower than average standard of living, a strongly agrarian character and high unemployment, and it is less developed socially and industrially. Moreover, the region exhibits the characteristics of 'southern' Catholicism which, among other ways, expresses itself in stronger links with the Church and a religious traditionalism that is coupled with a relatively strong expression of popular religiosity.⁶⁴ The empty and inhospitable Gargano has from antiquity been a region of richly varied sacred space. Three important old shrines are found on the plateau near one another: Monte Sant'Angelo (St Michael the Archangel), San Marco in Lamis (St Matthew the Apostle) and San Giovanni Rotondo (Santa Maria dell'Grazie).⁶⁵ All three of these shrines are still heavily visited by pilgrims, although in the latter its Marian devotion has been overshadowed in recent decades by the Padre Pio cult.

This shrine at San Giovanni Rotondo, with its multiple facilities, can thus serve as a material metaphor for the rapid development of the cult. The devotion began life in a small sixteenth-century chapel which afforded sufficient capacity for the devotion to Santa Maria delle Grazie. But from the 1930s it gradually became too small, as the stream of visitors who wished to meet Pio and have him hear their confessions increased sharply. Plans for a larger shrine were therefore developed. This large church was finally consecrated in 1959. Because of the 'canonization' of Pio by his devotees, after his death most of the spaces in and around the new church were collectively transformed into a sort of Pio mausoleum and museum, in which people could follow a fixed 'Pio route' of all the important objects and spaces that had to do with his religious life and experiences. At the beginning of the 1990s it became clear that the capacity of this church and its annexes had become too small. In view of the exponential growth in the number of visitors, plans were made for a new shrine of colossal proportions: a central prayer space for more than 7,000 people and an open space for attendance at Mass that could hold at least 30,000 people.⁶⁶ The building is a modern and fascinating design by the internationally famous Italian architect Renzo Piano. The church itself is shaped like a spiral seashell, opening at the front onto a large triangular square, the apex of which leads to the old shrine. The 'open' front consists of a sort of transparent curtain wall made of a strong plastic developed by NASA, on which will appear a powerful symbol designed by an American artist: a depiction of the New Jerusalem.⁶⁷ It is expected that the church, dedicated to Padre Pio and Mary, will not be ready before at least 2002, after which the shrine with the body of Pio will be transferred to it.

It is in practice almost always problematic to work out the number of visitors at large shrines and pilgrimage sites.⁶⁸ The figures which circulate constantly in the media are hardly ever more than vague estimates. The same is true for San Giovanni Rotondo. There are no precise or objective figures available for charting the size of the devotion there. The leaders of the cult have never been able

– or perhaps never wanted – to count the number of visitors.⁶⁹ Therefore an attempt to substantiate the existing figures is not out of place here.

In their annual 'Notizie flash', the Capuchins of San Giovanni Rotondo provide rough visitor figures, but these cannot be verified and deviate sharply from other estimates.⁷⁰ The only person who has made a more precise calculation is the sociologist, Father Scarvaglieri, during the 1980s. With full support from the Capuchins he consulted all sources and conducted large-scale surveys. For all that, for the numbers of visitors he appears to have depended on some conjecture. For 1985 he ultimately arrived at a total number of pilgrims of over a million (about 1.15 million),⁷¹ a significantly lower figure than those that were then (and previously) in circulation.⁷²

It is not clear how the figures on pilgrims produced annually by the Capuchins are arrived at, and/or how one should interpret them. From the overview (see Table 1), the advances made by the cult at San Giovanni Rotondo during the 1990s become clear. But according to the Capuchins, these figures reflect only some of the pilgrims, and the figures must be at least doubled to arrive at the real number of visitors. This would mean 6–8 million visitors for 1999, an average of about 20,000 every day.⁷³ Even insiders involved with the cult have their doubts about these high figures.⁷⁴

Figures from other sources differ a good deal. As a comparison, non-church, municipal sources in San Giovanni Rotondo were also consulted: the municipal Ufficio stampa, the Polizia municipale and the Azienda promozione turistico. The information bureau calculated very roughly that in 1999 7.5 million people

(not pilgrims) visited the northwestern sector of the city where the shrine is also situated. The number of passing automobiles and buses was counted by *segnalatori* placed along the highways, and this figure then multiplied by an unknown factor to arrive at the number of passengers. This count also includes a large number of residents who move about daily and visitors to the hospital. All told, then, it is difficult to say what the figure really means. The police have very different figures, which are also more trustworthy. They calculate the number of pilgrims who visited the city on tour buses ('pullmans') in 1999 as about 1.5 million.⁷⁵ To arrive at the total number of pilgrims, individuals who come by train or regularly scheduled bus services must be added. But in view of the fact that the overwhelming majority of pilgrims come to San Giovanni Rotondo by tour bus, the number of pilgrims cannot exceed 2–2.5 million. Data on hotel bookings provided by the visitors' bureau confirm that the vast majority of the Italian pilgrims are individuals who have booked a bus trip to the grave of Padre Pio as part of a group, and therefore come only on a day trip.⁷⁶

In short, the great differences in figures say a good deal about the haziness surrounding the cult and the myth surrounding the person of Pio. The differences between the police count of tour buses and the figures from the cult leadership are particularly striking, because it is clear that the vast majority of visitors come to San Giovanni Rotondo in groups and by bus. In the final analysis, it is not possible to get hard figures. The most realistic estimate, on the basis of the data available, appears to me for the time being to be about 2.5 million pilgrims per year.

The media

One of the important forces in the development of the cult was and is direct interaction among the saint, his miracles, his devotees and all others. He is no obscure personage with tales of miracles from the distant past, but a 'contemporary' person, about whom the public have heard directly by radio, television and the printed media. This instant accessibility, in which visual material plays an important role, has made all this possible. One did not need to go to San Giovanni Rotondo oneself. One could check out what people were seeing and make one's own judgement.

The media have thus played a central role in introducing and situating Padre Pio as a popular national hero in Italy.⁷⁷ In particular, for years on end popular magazines such as *Visto*, *Gente* and *Gente Mese* have been bringing out 'recruitment' articles about Pio, with evocative colour photographs, and telling the stories of 'ordinary' devotees. It is clear that the editors themselves were aware of the public interest in Pio and how this could contribute to higher circulation. Nevertheless, *Gente Mese* has conducted what could be called a 'devotional offensive': year after year issues were partially or largely devoted to Padre Pio, including colour covers with arresting titles.⁷⁸ Moreover, devotion to Pio was frequently coupled with that to Mary, particularly her large institutionalized

Table 1 Visitors to the shrine of San Giovanni Rotondo

Year	Visitors* (% increase)	Communicants (% visitors)
1985	496,184	227,000
1990	755,000	358,000 (47%)
1991	780,000 (3%)	240,000 (31%)
1992	810,000 (4%)	500,000 (61%)
1993	914,000 (13%)	552,000 (60%)
1994	982,000 (7.5%)	700,000 (71%)
1995	993,000 (1%)	730,000 (73%)
1996	1,120,000 (13%)	850,000 (76%)
1997	2,227,000 (99%)	1,150,000 (51%)
1998	3,500,000 (57%)	2,300,000 (66%)
1999	3,984,000 (14%)	2,700,000 (68%)
2000	3,585,600 (–10%)	2,800,000 (78%)

*This only includes pilgrims entered in the 'registro dei visitatori'; these are only pilgrim groups whose group leader has signed this register in the shrine's Sala Accoglienza. In an interview which took place in San Giovanni Rotondo on 18 October 2000, the vice-postulant, Father Gerardo di Flumeri, provided this explanation for the figures. Nevertheless, it remains totally unclear who precisely does the signing and what data are being reported; inquiries among some tour leaders who have regularly visited the shrine created still more confusion, as they had never seen or signed such a register. How can this register yield for such high figures when the book is not known among tour leaders or isn't signed by them?

devotions and cultic sites, in order to provide the controversial Pio with a new, more reliable 'pedestal'. A deluge of miracles accomplished by Pio were given airing in extensive articles. Italy was almost pounded into submission. The immense expansion in his cult during this period can largely be attributed to this.

The print media which were and are distributed from San Giovanni Rotondo, the propaganda instruments of the Capuchins and the prayer groups are likewise important for the cult. First and foremost is the magazine *Voce di Padre Pio*, which is produced in San Giovanni Rotondo, and distributed in six international languages: an Italian edition of about 100,000 copies, and English, French, German, Portuguese and Spanish editions with a collective print run of about 200,000 copies. Only Poland and the Netherlands have local editions produced in the countries themselves. The Pio prayer groups also counted as significant forces in the expansion of his devotion. These groups have multiplied across the whole world.⁷⁹ In Italy there are now over 2,000 – 110 in Rome alone – meeting every month, and as a rule going to San Giovanni Rotondo two or three times per year. Their magazine, *La Casa Sollievo della Sofferenza. Organo ufficiale dei gruppi di preghiera*, appears biweekly in Italy, and versions derived from it appear in other languages.

The beatification of Padre Pio in 1999 was one of the most heavily attended ceremonies of its kind of all time. Moreover, it was the first beatification to be spread across two of the archbasilicas, St Peter's and St John Lateran. High-level political and administrative figures of Italy were present, including the Prime Minister and President of Italy, former Prime Minister Andreotti, ministers from the cabinet and Francesco Rutelli, then mayor of Rome.⁸⁰ That Pio is indeed a political force to be reckoned with in Italy can be seen in the 2001 elections for a new Prime Minister. Shortly before his nomination the centre-Left candidate Rutelli, who during the Jubilee Year of 2000 in Rome had learned the strength and power of Church and religion, hastened to make a 'private visit' (though publicly announced!) to San Giovanni Rotondo – a genuflection at the grave of Pio to the vast middle group of Catholic voters who feel very strongly about him.⁸¹

Because of Pio's ever rising popularity, in the last few years the media have seized upon him as never before. Following up on Radio Maria and other religious broadcasters, in 2000 a separate station was devoted to Pio by the Capuchins: Radio Tau: La Voce di Padre Pio.⁸² Some media people joked about a *guerra dei santi*, the use of the sacred – or individual saints – to stimulate listener loyalty and increase ratings.⁸³ In April and November two major Padre Pio films were broadcast on the most important Italian networks. The second of these was the nearly four-hour film, *Padre Pio tra terra e Cielo*, with the famous, good-looking Michele Placido in the starring role, broadcast during prime time on two successive evenings on Rai 1.⁸⁴ It was a mega-event watched by respectively 42 and 50 per cent of Italian viewers – on the first evening 12 million and on the second 14 million – thus even outdoing the success of the earlier Pio film

on Silvio Berlusconi's Mediaset (Channel 5).⁸⁵ Cardinal Ersilio Tonino, from the Curia, was quoted on the news, saying that Pio was depicted 'as he really was', a *vera vita*. The day before the first broadcast of the Rai film, the prominent national television talk show, *Porta a Porta*, devoted its transmission to Pio, with former Prime Minister Giulio Andreotti, the star Placido and the director as invited guests.⁸⁶

Pio's sharply rising importance can also be seen in various surveys. Two American websites held polls for the 'Catholic of the twentieth century'. Padre Pio came fourth in these.⁸⁷ These 'American' results also offer an indication of Pio's world-wide significance and the rapid growth of his cult in recent decades. It should also be noted that his canonization process, together with that of Faustina Kowalska, are among the fastest of modern times.

Displacement and destruction

It is not easy to convey the effects of the cult of Padre Pio on devotion to other saints. By their very nature, these effects are difficult or impossible to express in figures, and furthermore no systematic or general representative research has yet been done. Therefore the following remarks are tentative in nature.

Supplanting other cults

The first cult to be threatened by the rise of Padre Pio was that of Santa Maria delle Grazie in San Giovanni Rotondo itself, the sixteenth-century Marian shrine that is linked with the Capuchin monastery. As the popularity of Pio rose sharply, especially from the 1950s, the cult of Mary has been totally overshadowed. An act of devotion still takes place on 30 May, but that is about all one can say of it.⁸⁸ A subsidiary factor in the relationship between Pio and Maria delle Grazie cannot go unmentioned here. Because Pio's cult was for a long time frowned on by the Vatican, it was somewhat problematic to publicize or discuss it as an independent devotion. But by discussing him and devotion to him under the heading of the original Marian shrine, the problem could be circumvented.⁸⁹ In the latest pilgrimage guides this practice is no longer followed, and San Giovanni Rotondo is included as an autonomous Padre Pio shrine, while the miracles of the Madonna have been pushed aside by those of Padre Pio.⁹⁰ Out of respect for tradition, however, the new mega-shrine in San Giovanni Rotondo is named for both Pio and Mary.

Outside San Giovanni Rotondo, elsewhere in Italy, the displacement of cults can also be seen, although the degree to which this is taking place is hard to determine. For instance, Padre Pio has also begun to assume an autonomous place in the new and popular Marian shrine at Civitavecchia/Pantano. The Spanish priest Pablo Martin had given the famous souvenir statue from Medjugorje to a 'lapsed' family in Pantano. When he heard that the image had cried, he was the one who informed the bishop about the tears of blood. Later, Martin reported that Padre

Pio himself had 'steered' him to do so. On one occasion, Martin reported, when he was praying at the grave of Padre Pio, Pio had instructed him not to return to Spain, but to go to the Pantano parish in Civitavecchia, where 'the most beautiful event in his life' would take place.⁹¹ As Padre Pio is the true orchestrator behind the miracles in Civitavecchia, a large statue of him has been placed centrally in the Mary chapel. With this, a portion of the pilgrims focus themselves devotionally/ritually on Pio.

In Naples, particularly in the neighbourhood to the west of the Via Toledo, for a number of years statues or likenesses in many formats of Padre Pio have been ubiquitous in the streets. The practice is that the images are not given a new devotional location, but as a rule are placed next to, below, above or in front of statues of saints already present. This happens in such a pronounced manner that it impinges on the older devotional traditions materially, spatially and devotionally. More rarely, an older *ediculum* is emptied out, spruced up and furnished with a new Pio image.

A simple and less serious devotional encroachment is the placement of prints or photos of Pio next to a saint's image or painting or in a chapel. This happens not just in devotional sites where several holy persons are already being honoured collectively, but also in churches and chapels where a print of him is placed near a special painting or icon of Mary, and despite its limited size attracts disproportionate attention. This is a form of Pio devotion that is to be found everywhere in Italy.

The most widespread form of devotional displacement occurs when devotional prints, photographs and other representations of the Padre are given a place in private or semi-public spaces. This takes two forms: in one form, images are placed in a more or less visible location in shops or bars by the owner or other staff member; in the other, in the private sphere, prints are carried in jacket pockets, wallets or purses.⁹² The majority of Italians have something related to Pio either in their home or carried on their person.⁹³ Although it is often not immediately visible, such images are commonly found in prints in wallets or purses, in small photo frames in bedrooms, on calendars in living rooms, or as a pocket shrine in a jacket or trouser pocket. The role of such devotional objects must not be underestimated. They are present everywhere; for instance, many car owners have a Pio print under the driver's seat or on the dashboard for protection. The driver's traditional patron saint, Saint Christopher, has been sidelined. It has been observed that the proportion of devotional prints of Mary and other saints has been reduced by the Pio images.⁹⁴

Penetrating other cults

Another aspect in which Pio functions as an invader and supplanter of cults is revealed in religious material culture. In general, the Italian shrines and pilgrimage sites generate an extensive devotional production that in each case is focused on the saint as the object of veneration. For several years now, and particularly

since the beatification in 1999, one increasingly sees Padre Pio within the material culture of a particular pilgrimage site, appearing as an equal next to the cult object of the place.

For example, in Assisi small dual devotional tableaux (diptychs) are for sale, with the pictures of both Francis of Assisi and Padre Pio. In view of the fact that Francis was the great model for Pio, such a combination is not entirely unexpected. But one would, then, expect the tableau to be for sale at San Giovanni Rotondo, but this is not the case. A similar panel of Maria Goretti and Pio is on sale in her shrine in Nettuno, although neither of them has anything to do with the other. Aside from the Goretti devotion, this object has no other function than to promote the person of Pio and strengthen his cult by linking it to another popular cult. From a commercial vantage point, sales in general are stimulated by Pio's popularity. Pio is not only coupled with popular Italian devotions. He can be found, for example, in devotional objects regarding the originally French Miraculous Medal (Paris, rue de Bac).

In honour of the Grande Giubileo 2000, the Capuchins of San Giovanni Rotondo themselves brought John Paul II and Pio together in a similar manner on a 'credit card devotional print', thereby suggesting that both would be central figures that year. Perhaps the monks hoped that the canonization of Pio would still take place that year. A comparable juxtaposition of Pio with central Christian figures is prominent in the diorama of his life in San Giovanni Rotondo. It includes the stable at Bethlehem and all the places where Pio lived; Pio is prominently in the Nativity scene, standing next to the infant Jesus. But the planned depiction of the New Jerusalem in the new shrine goes still further. It is clear to the devotees that through his stigmata and suffering, Pio lived a crucifixion, like a re-crucified Christ. The Gargano promontory on which San Giovanni Rotondo lies is the new Calvary, the New Jerusalem. Pio represents, as it were, a new death on the Cross.⁹⁵ In this connection, devotees stress that Pio was the first priest in history to receive the stigmata, and that through his suffering and his shedding blood, people are able to share in his spiritual well-being and his salutary and miraculous gifts. On photographs by devotees or in visions, Pio often appears beside and behind Christ, represented as a second or co-saviour.⁹⁶

Not only does Pio place himself in existing cults and concepts of holiness, but established ecclesiastical rules and procedures are broken through, by and for him. For instance, in September 2000, for the first time in history, a parish in a new neighbourhood of Ostia-Rome was consecrated to an individual who was merely beatified – and that was Padre Pio.⁹⁷ After a pilgrimage to San Giovanni Rotondo, the priest asked for a dispensation from the Vatican Congregazione per il Culto Divino to consecrate the church to him. The request was honoured, with, as justification, the fact that the spiritual 'weight' of the blessed Pio is known throughout the world.

Pio in competition with himself

Finally, Pio really lives up to his epithet *destructor* in the sense that he is undermining his own cult, as it exists at San Giovanni Rotondo. Since 1999, the devotion there has come under pressure. This can on the one hand be explained by a decline in visitors after the top year of the beatification (1999), and on the other by the Jubilee Year 2000 in Rome, which drew pilgrims in a different direction. Another factor, however, which has played a role since the beatification is that since the Catholic Church formally permits public devotion to Pio, he can openly be venerated in churches and chapels. This has led to the establishment of small local shrines where Beato Pio can be venerated by those who would find it difficult to travel all the way to San Giovanni Rotondo. The prayer groups, in particular, are involved in initiating the creation of new 'Pio corners'.⁹⁸ Further, to a greater degree than before 1999, all the other locations with which Pio was connected in one way or another are profiting from their new-found status and popularity. For example, in the regions of Puglia and Campania, devotional routes for Pio devotees have been laid out running past his birthplace and the houses where he grew up, and calling in at eleven Capuchin cloisters where he lived or with which he had links during his life.

In the meantime the double location Pietrelcina/Piana Romana has developed into a pilgrimage site in its own right. Pietrelcina has his birthplace and childhood home and the church with which he was connected; the *frazione* Piana Romana is where his parents owned land, and where he regularly withdrew in meditation and prayer under an elm, and also received the stigmata.⁹⁹ Immediately adjoining this holy place, on 22 October 2000, a large new reception-annexe-prayer space for pilgrims came into use, and property has already been purchased for the future realization of a large shrine. On this occasion, relics of Padre Pio were displayed to the public for the first time.¹⁰⁰ According to the Superior of the Capuchin monastery recently established in the village, in 1999 nearly 1 million pilgrims visited the site – a figure that is clearly only a rough estimate.

While each of these elements means an absolute increase in devotion to Pio, at the same time they have put pressure on the popularity of the shrine at San Giovanni Rotondo. In both 1999 and 2000 attendance at his feast on 23 September was lower than in previous years. The municipal police estimate that the total number of pilgrims to San Giovanni Rotondo in the year 2000 decreased by roughly 25 per cent; the Capuchins calculate the drop as 10 per cent.¹⁰¹

Balance

In the final decades of the twentieth century, Padre Pio assumed world stature. Never before has devotion to a saint become so widespread and so intense in so short a time. But analogous to his gift of bilocation, his personality and cult are in a sense ambiguous and equivocal. Despite all the published documentation,

he has begun to assume an increasingly mythic aspect, a saint who is esteemed for his spirituality, simplicity and humility, but who nevertheless allows an exuberant display of devotional instrumentality, as a miracle worker, healer and bearer of the stigmata, soothsayer and possessor of powers of bilocation, dissemination of the 'odour of sanctity', appearances, etc. It is particularly for his humility (*umiltà*) and miraculous powers that large numbers of people in Italy and elsewhere in the world want to commit themselves to him; he is the modern-day saint whom those in distress can call upon, the spiritual guide *par excellence*. Many grant him the unconditional personal trust, which they will not or cannot grant the official Church (in view of his condemnation by the Church). His underdog status and victim role make him pre-eminently suitable as a support for 'seeking' believers at a time when new, postmodern forms of spirituality, religion and church are emerging. The expansion of his cult has also been assisted by Pope John Paul II whose personal devotional perceptions formally helped to re-establish Pio and to fulfil latent religious needs. This devotional and strategic manoeuvre was intended to sideline the Church's fundamentalist movements and offer the Pio cult a more 'normal' and official existence.

At the dawn of the twenty-first century, the Pio cult is still characterized by contradictions. It is housed in one of the most architecturally interesting modern church buildings while its devotional practice is characterized by a traditional ritual and spiritual repertoire and a cult object – Pio – which have little in common with the new models of holiness propagated by the Church. That this cult has been able to mobilize such masses of 'devotees' despite the paradigmatic changes and renewals in Church and society is remarkable and interesting.

The Pio cult can be characterized as a traditional healing devotion, but its devotees deviate from the classic model of sanctity. In mid-1985 sociological research into the cult in San Giovanni Rotondo showed that cult followers were divided more equally between men and women – that is, the number of women exceeded the number of men by only about 9 per cent – than is the case for most other saints' devotees.¹⁰² Almost 75 per cent of the visitors were over 45, and visitors more or less reflected national averages in terms of educational levels. Nor was there an imbalance in their places of origin: 40 per cent came from cities and 60 per cent from rural areas. Furthermore, Pio's spiritual and/or miraculous powers appeal not only to devotees from the south of Italy, but to a great degree also to those from the centre and north of the country.¹⁰³ The characterization of Padre Pio as 'everybody's Cyrenean' is therefore to a large extent accurate.

Whatever the case, the Padre Pio phenomenon has clearly been responsible for a devotional and religious revival that has been noticeable in all layers of Italian society, a revival which, in comparison with other western countries, could only have been made possible by the fundamentally different position that 'religion' assumes in Italy and the different ways of dealing with the 'sacred' in society there. In Italy whereas participation in the institutional Church and its celebrations has declined, traditional religiosity and popular devotions have

survived. The almost nationwide acceptance of and trust in the holy healer and spiritual guide Padre Pio offer a pre-eminent example of just this phenomenon.

Notes

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- 1 A large proportion of this 'library' is to be found in San Giovanni Rotondo. All publications concerning Padre Pio and his cult are collected in the Sala di lettura Padre Pio, on the Viale Cappuccini 99, 71023 San Giovanni Rotondo. The library was founded in 1990, close by the shrine and the hospital, and specializes in three subjects: the spirituality and life of Padre Pio; the spirituality and history of the Franciscan movement, of which Padre Pio was a member, and the spirituality and history of the Church; and the history of San Giovanni Rotondo, Apulia and Italy, and other countries in so far as they are relevant to Padre Pio. In 2000 it comprised about 35,000 books, 5,000 brochures, 2,500 manuscripts and 60 periodical titles; on this library, see Antonio Villani, 'La Sala di lettura Padre Pio', *Voce di Padre Pio* 31 (October 2000): 42–3. See further the now dated bibliography, A. da Ripabottoni, *Molti hanno scritto di lui, Bibliografia su Padre Pio da Pietrelcina*, 2 vols (San Giovanni Rotondo: Ed. Padre Pio, 1986), and the hundreds of titles on Pio that can be found through the Istituto Centrale per il Catalogo Unico: <http://opac.sbn.it>.
- 2 The most important archive of materials by and about Padre Pio is in the Capuchin monastery at San Giovanni Rotondo; in addition there are the parish and Capuchin archives in Pietrelcina, and in the Vatican archive (not publicly available) the items in relation to his beatification and the files which were assembled with regard to the investigations and controversies between the Capuchins and the Vatican regarding his person and cult.
- 3 Although printed in a limited edition, these items are not yet available to the public. The most important argument against public release is the protection of privacy of persons still alive who are in one manner or another involved in the process, for instance by having provided personal witness. Although in the possession of the new postulant, Fr Florio Tessari, and the vice-postulant Gerardo di Flumeri, as a matter of principle they are not accessible to the public. As long as the *causa* is not made public, one will need to await the official disclosure date for sealed Vatican archives, now about seventy-five years. Requests to examine the materials before that term expires can be submitted to the Congregazione delle Cause dei Santi.
- 4 These are primarily letters: M. de Pobladora and A. da Ripabottoni (eds) *Padre Pio da Pietrelcina. Epistolario*, 4 vols (San Giovanni Rotondo: Ed. Padre Pio, 1975–84); Gerardo di Flumeri (ed.) *Padre Pio da Pietrelcina. Lavori scolastici* (San Giovanni Rotondo: Ed. Padre Pio, 1993); Felice D'Onofrio and Pietro Zarrella (eds) *Pio da Pietrelcina, Dolcissimo Iddio, 41 lettere inedite alla diletta figlia spirituale Giuseppina Morgera* (Casale Monferrato: Piemme, 1994).
- 5 Alessandro da Ripabottoni, *Padre Pio da Pietrelcina. Un Cireneo per tutti* (Foggia, 1974); later a condensed edition was produced under the same title, which was also translated into English as: *Padre Pio of Pietrelcina: Everybody's Cyrenean* (2nd edn 1996), and the 'official' biography by Fernando da Riese Pio X, *Padre Pio da Pietrelcina, crocifisso senza croce* (Rome, 1975; San Giovanni Rotondo: Ed. Padre Pio, 1998, 6th

edn); for the information given in this article about the person of Pio, the reader is referred to these volumes. See further the short contribution by Alessandro da Ripabottoni, 'Forgione, Francesco', in *Bibliotheca Sanctorum prima appendice* (Rome: Città Nuova, 1987), p. 498. The journal is published by the Capuchins: *Studi su Padre Pio. Rassegna quadrimestrale di ricerche su Padre Pio* 1 (2000) (January–April) (publisher: Edizione Voce di Padre Pio).

- 6 With the help of the libraries of the Dipartimento di studi glottoantropologici (La Sapienza) and the Museo nazionale dell'arte e tradizioni popolari (Rome), a small bibliographic investigation was carried out regarding the existence of such publications. Only a handful of relevant academic titles were located: William A. Christian, 'Holy people in peasant Europe', *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 15 (1973): 110–13; Giuseppe Scarvaglieri, *Pellegrinaggio ed esperienza religiosa. Ricerca socio-religiosa sul santuario Santa Maria delle Grazie* (San Giovanni Rotondo: Ed. Padre Pio, 1987); Christopher McKeivitt, 'San Giovanni Rotondo and the shrine of Padre Pio', in John Eade and Michael J. Saltnow, *Contesting the Sacred. The Anthropology of Christian Pilgrimage* (London: Routledge, 1991), pp. 77–97; Christopher McKeivitt, "'To suffer and never to die'", the concept of suffering in the cult of Padre Pio da Pietrelcina', *Journal of Mediterranean Studies* 1 (1991): 54–67; Christopher McKeivitt, 'Contestation et fabrication d'un culte. Le cas de Padre Pio de Pietrelcina', *Terrain* 24: 91–102. Could the limited number of critical investigations in contemporary Italy reflect a sort of 'untouchability' for Pio? A concrete example of this untouchability is, for instance, the wide protest expressed when Padre Pio is approached satirically, as in the programme *L'Ottavo Nano*, 30 January 2001, on Rai 2, in which, as a comment on Pio's role in the media, three competing Padre Pii appeared; on this see Silvia Fumarola, 'Lo sketch su Padre Pio offende gli italiani', *La Repubblica*, 1 February 2001.
- 7 For instance, G. De Rosa et al., *Storia dell'Italia religiosa*, dl. 3: *L'età contemporanea* (Bari: Laterza, 1995), p. 367, with several short mentions of Pio.
- 8 Regarding this, see: Ennemond Boniface, *Padre Pio de Pietrelcina. Vie – oeuvres – passion. Essai historique* (n.p.: La Table Ronde, 1966), pp. 121–263; Da Riese Pio X, *Padre Pio*, pp. 265–85; and further, Francobaldo Chiocci, *I nemici di Padre Pio* (Rome: Ed. 'Reporter', 1968).
- 9 Agostino Gemelli, 'Le affermazioni della scienza intorno alle stimmate di S. Francesco', *Studi Francescani* 10 (1924): 364–404. On Gemelli: see G. Cosmacini, *Gemelli. Il Machiavelli di Dio* (Milan: Rizzoli, 1986).
- 10 See: McKeivitt, 'To suffer and never to die', pp. 54–67, and on this theme in general: C. W. Bynum, *Holy Fast and Holy Feast* (Berkeley: UBP, 1987); Ted Harrison, *Stigmata. A Medieval Mystery in a Modern Age* (New York: Penguin Books, 1994). See further: J. M. Höcht, *Von Franziskus zu Pater Pio und Thérèse Neumann. Eine Geschichte der Träger der Wundmale Christi*, 2 vols (Wiesbaden: Credo, 1951); Paul Siwek, 'Two stigmatists: Padre Pio and Thérèse Neumann', *Revue de l'Université d'Ottawa* 28 (1958): 105–29; Da Riese Pio X, *Padre Pio*, pp. 119–43; Gerardo di Flumeri (ed.) *Atti del convegno di studi sulle stimmate del Servo di Dio Padre Pio da Pietrelcina* (San Giovanni Rotondo: Ed. Padre Pio, 1988); Gerardo di Flumeri (ed.) *Le stimmate di Padre Pio da Pietrelcina: Testimonianze, relazione* (San Giovanni Rotondo: Ed. Padre Pio, 1995); P. M. Marianeschi, *La stigmatizzazione somatica. Fenomeno e segno* (Vatican City: LEV, 2000).
- 11 For one such bilocation involving Padre Pio see 'A sister receives direction', *The Voice of Padre Pio* 30 (2) (2000): 8–9.
- 12 After Pio was stigmatizzato, he became *gemellizzato*; for this epithet see Rina Camimileri, *La storia di Padre Pio* (Casale Monferrato: Piemme, 1993), pp. 77–91.
- 13 Matilde Passa, *Lacrime e sangue. Viaggio nella religiosità popolare* (Milan: Baldini & Castoldi, 2000), p. 126.

- 14 De Rosa et al., *Storia dell'Italia religiosa*, vol. 3: *L'età contemporanea*, p. 363 (concerning John XXIII).
- 15 For this Pope, see, *Enciclopedia dei papi*, vol. 3 (Rome: Istituto Enciclopedia Italia, 2000), pp. 681–97; A. Vircondelet, *Jean-Paul II* (Paris: Julliard, 1994); T. Szulc, *Pope John Paul II. The Biography* (New York: Scribner, 1995); M. Politi and M. Bernstein, *Sua Santità* (Milan: Rizzoli, 1996); Daniele Menozzi, *I papi del '900* (Florence: Castelman, 2000), pp. 94–123.
- 16 An English translation of the decree can be found at: www.ncfpp.org/vatdec.htm. For the beatification and its effects on the media and society: M. I. Macioti, 'L'ultimo dei beati: padre Pio da Pietrelcina', *La Critica Sociologica* 129 (June 1999): 139–50.
- 17 Pierangelo Sapegno, 'Truffati i frati di Padre Pio. Miliardi in fumo, finanziere condannato', *La Stampa*, 17 February 2001, p. 14.
- 18 Luigi Cancrini, 'Perizia psichiatrica di Padre Pio', *MicroMega*, *Almanacco di filosofia* 3 (1999): 194–200.
- 19 For a brief discussion of San Giovanni Rotondo and its cults, in its development strongly 'captive' to anthropological concepts, see McKevitt, 'San Giovanni Rotondo and the shrine of Padre Pio', pp. 77–97; among many others see further the sites: www.padrepio.it, www.padre-pio.com, www.vocedipadrepio.com/, www.operapadrepio.it, www.abol.it/padrepio/ and padrepio.freesevers.com.
- 20 In the 1980s his cult was not yet so general or disseminated through all social classes; see Scarvaglieri, *Pellegrinaggio ed esperienza religiosa*, pp. 122–7, 287–339; in the 1990s the cult became more or less general. For a listing of Italian VIPs among Pio's *devotissimi*, see for instance: Laura delli Colli, 'Al Padre Pio fan club', *Panorama*, 23 November 2000, p. 19.
- 21 See for instance: Luigi Peroni, *Padre Pio, il San Francesco dei nostri tempi* (n.p.: Borla, 1998).
- 22 This writer did not have an opportunity to conduct large-scale quantitative research on this point. But on the basis of a large number of interviews and conversations with Italians and a survey of media reports, the number of persistent opponents or critics of Padre Pio can be estimated at less than 5 per cent of the total population. Also, as a rule writers are no longer negative towards him: Antonio Motta, *Scrittori per Padre Pio* (Novara: Interlinea, 1999).
- 23 For the significance of the hospital, see: McKevitt, "'To suffer and never to die'" pp. 62–6, and further, Da Riese Pio X, *Padre Pio*, pp. 311–35. Regarding conversions and the hospital, see also for a pleasant impression of the cult practice in 1968: H. V. Morton, *A Traveller in Southern Italy* (London: Methuen, 1969).
- 24 In an interview on the television programme, *Porta a Porta* ('Il nuovo padre Pio'), 8 November 2000, on Rai 1.
- 25 Informant, age 48, from Mollia (VC), 26 December 2000. Bilocation is the quality or capacity of being physically (or at least visibly) present in two different places at the same time. In certain respects, one could qualify one of the two situations as an apparition. See regarding this Celia Green, *Esperienze di bilocazione* (Rome: Ed. Mediterranea, 1970).
- 26 Regarding impurity and hygienic discipline through collective self-compulsion, see: Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger* (London: Routledge, 1966); Norbert Elias, *Über den Prozess der Zivilisation, Soziogenetische und psychogenetische Untersuchungen* (Basel: Haus zum Falken, 1939), the paragraph on personal hygiene; William Ward, *Getting It Right in Italy. A Manual for the 1990s* (London: Bloomsbury, 1990), the chapter 'L'uomo: body and mind' (on hygiene).
- 27 On his model of suffering see: McKevitt, "'To suffer and never to die'", p. 59.
- 28 Padre Pio – 2000 questionnaire (respondent: woman, born 1932), archive Meertens-Instituut, Amsterdam.

- 29 Padre Pio – 2000 questionnaire (respondent: woman, born 1932), archive Meertens-Instituut, Amsterdam.
- 30 Padre Pio – 2000 questionnaire (respondent: woman, born 1927), archive Meertens-Instituut, Amsterdam.
- 31 On his practice in confession, see Da Riese Pio X, *Padre Pio*, pp. 201–31.
- 32 Padre Pio – 2000 questionnaire (respondents: woman, born 1927, woman, born 1932), archive Meertens-Instituut, Amsterdam.
- 33 Scarvaglieri, *Pellegrinaggio ed esperienza religiosa*, pp. 253–62. The percentages were obtained on the basis of answers to open questions in the surveys: a percentage shift occurred with multiple choice questions.
- 34 Interview with Gerardo di Flumeri, in San Giovanni Rotondo, 18 October 2000.
- 35 Regarding pilgrims' participation in rituals, see Scarvaglieri, *Pellegrinaggio ed esperienza religiosa*, pp. 228–46.
- 36 For these qualities see, among others: Da Riese Pio X, *Padre Pio*, pp. 185–98; Jim Gallagher, *Padre Pio, apparizioni, guarigioni e miracoli nelle testimonianze di chi lo ha conosciuto* (Milan: San Paolo, 1999), pp. 32–124.
- 37 Regarding Pio's *profumo*, see: Da Riese Pio X, *Padre Pio*, pp. 186–91; Umberto Cordier, *Guida ai luoghi miracolosi d'Italia* (Casale Monferrato: Piemme, 2000), p. 339; Elena Bergalano, *Padre Pio. Il profumo dell'amore* (Milan: Paoline, 1999).
- 38 See the letter sent in by a French Pio devotee: 'Padre Pio, superstar', *The Tablet*, 23 January 1999.
- 39 Relics of the first category are parts of the body of a saint; relics of the second category are objects which belonged to him or her; and relics of the third category have only been in temporary contact with relics of the first or second category.
- 40 See www.ncfpp.org/fraud.htm.
- 41 Jeroen Smith, 'De gestigmatiseerde priester uit San Giovanni Rotondo', *Katholiek Nieuwsblad*, 23 April 1999, p. 24.
- 42 In addition to the usual votive gifts, a separate genre appears to have arisen of making portraits of Padre Pio or otherwise depicting him, by drawing, painting, making mosaics, in needlework or carving. A great deal of this amateur art or craft work hangs in the shrine or in the Sala di lettura Padre Pio, and is further stored in the archive. See also Antonio Ciccone, *Padre Pio visto da Antonio Ciccone: dipinti, disegni, schizzi e una litografia dal 1958 al 1999* (Florence, 1999). For practical reasons, it is almost impossible to discourage tossing money offerings and letters of intention. Graffiti have been systematically removed at least since the 1960s; see Morton, *A Traveller in Southern Italy*. In this connection, it is startling that the study by G. B. Bronzini (ed.) *Ex voto e santuari in Puglia I: Il Gargano* (Florence: L. S. Olschki, 1993), entirely neglects the Pio/Mary shrine at San Giovanni Rotondo and its votive gifts.
- 43 See Francesco de Palma, 'La santità postconciliare: considerazioni statistiche, tipologiche e sociologiche per una storia delle canonizzazioni', in Francesco Scorza Barcellona (ed.) *Santi del Novecento, storia, agiografia, canonizzazione* (Turin: Rosenberg & Sellier, 1998), pp. 49–82.
- 44 For the ecclesiastical politics of this Pope, see Menozzi, *I papi del '900*, pp. 94–123.
- 45 For Brandsma see: H. W. F. Aukes, *Het leven van Titus Brandsma*, 3rd edn (Utrecht: Spectrum, 1985); H. P. M. Heruer and G. Prinsen (eds) *Titus Brandsma. Zaligverklaring Rome 1985* (Oegstgeest: Stichting R. K. Voorlichting [1985]); C. E. M. Struyker Boudier (ed.) *Titus Brandsma, herzien – herdacht – herschreven* (Baarn: Gooi & Sticht, 1993). For Stein see: L. Borriello (ed.) *Edith Stein. Mistica e martire* (Vatican City: Ed. Vaticana, 1992); E. Constantini, *Edith Stein, profilo di una vita vissuta nella ricerca della verità* (Vatican City: Ed. Vaticana, 1992); Rudolf Stertenbrink, *Neuer Tag, neues Leben: Edith Stein, ihr Weg, ihre Botschaft für heute* (Frankfurt, 1997); R. Girardello, *Edith Stein. 'In grande pace varcai la soglia'* (Rome: Ed. OCD, 1998); J. Sleiman and L. Borriello

- (eds) Edith Stein. *Testimone di oggi, profeta per domani. Atti del simposio internazionale Roma – Teresianum 7–9 ottobre 1998* (Vatican City: Ed. Vaticana, 1999). For Teresa see: *Mother Teresa: In My Own Words 1910–1997* (New York: Random House, 1997); Kathryn Spinks, *Mother Teresa. A Complete Authorized Biography* (New York: Harper Collins, 1998). For Hillesum, see Graziella Merlatti, *Etty Hillesum. Un cuore pensante* (Rome: Ancora, 1999).
- 46 They were united in the International Association for the Defense of the Person and Works of Padre Pio; see Boniface, *Padre Pio da Pietrelcina*, p. 199.
 - 47 Anna-Maria Turi, *Pourquoi la Vierge apparait aujourd'hui* (Paris: Félin, 1988), pp. 55–6.
 - 48 For this see Peter Jan Margry, 'La terra di nessuno dei devoti. Strategie e diffusione di devozioni informali a carattere transnazionale nell'Italia e nell'Olanda contemporanee', forthcoming in *La Critica Sociologica*.
 - 49 For instance, the apparitions at Garabandal, rejected in 1967 by the Bishop of Santander; these were subsequently promoted particularly by Pio supporters because Pio had acknowledged these appearances as authentic; see: Sandra L. Zimdars-Swartz, *Encountering Mary. Visions of Mary from La Salette to Medjugorje* (New York: Avon, 1992), pp. 228–9; N. Perry and L. Echeverria, *Under the Heel of Mary* (New York: Routledge, 1988), pp. 264–5; William A. Christian, Jr, *Visionaries. The Spanish Republic and the Reign of Christ* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), pp. 25, 284, 398.
 - 50 For Catholic fundamentalism in general, see: W. Beinert (ed.) *Katholische Fundamentalismus. Häretische Gruppen in der Kirche?* (Regensburg: Pustet, 1991); Enzo Pace and Piero Stefani, *Il fondamentalismo religioso contemporaneo* (Brescia: Queriniana, 2000), pp. 133–51; for fundamentalism in relation to this article, see Margry, 'La terra di nessuno'. See further also F. Ferrarotti et al. (eds) *Studi sulla produzione sociale del sacro, volume primo: Forme del sacro in un'epoca di crisi* (Naples: Liguori, 1978).
 - 51 Regarding Fatima, see: Zimdars-Swartz, *Encountering Mary*, passim; G. Hierzenberger and O. Nedomansky, *Erscheinungen und Botschaften der Gottesmutter Maria. Vollständige Dokumentation durch zwei Jahrtausende* (Augsburg: Patloch, 1993), pp. 250–66; in this connection, on Fatima and other appearances, see Paolo Apolito, *Il cielo in terra. Costruzioni simboliche di un'apparizione mariana* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1992), pp. 153–68.
 - 52 For this, see: Da Riese Pio X, *Padre Pio*, pp. 424–6; *La Madonna e Padre Pio. Pubblicazione speciale dell'Apostolato della Madonna di Fatima in Italia in occasione della beatificazione di Padre Pio* (Rome: Centro di Fatima, 1999).
 - 53 Regarding Kowalska, see: *Bibliotheca Sanctorum prima appendice* (Rome: Città Nuova, 1987), pp. 719–20; *Bibliotheca Sanctorum secondo appendice* (Rome: Città Nuova, 2000), p. 883.
 - 54 Perry and Echeverria, *Under the Heel of Mary*, p. 264.
 - 55 For the background to this, see Edward D. O'Connor, 'The roots of Pope John Paul II's devotion to Mary', *Marian Studies* 39 (1988): 78–114.
 - 56 See the publication of sources, *Il messaggio di Fatima* (Vatican City: Ed. Vaticana, 2000). In connection with his devotion to Fatima, the beatification by John Paul II of two (of the three) visionaries, Francisco and Jacinta, on 13 May 2000, is also relevant.
 - 57 For commentary, see 'Il segreto svelato', *Il Messaggero*, 14 May 2000, pp. 2–3, 5.
 - 58 Zimdars-Swartz, *Encountering Mary*, pp. 98–101.
 - 59 Pablo Martin Sanguiao, 'Figlio, non dimenticare le lacrime di tua madre'. *Il segno delle lacrime di Maria e del Sangue dell'Agnello nell'interpretazione del parroco di S. Agostino al tempo dei Fatti* (Udine: Segno, 1998), pp. 15–16.
 - 60 Interview with Constantino Perucci, chairman of the Movimento d'Amore in Manduria, 8 December 2000.
 - 61 This is developed in Margry, 'La terra di nessuno'.
 - 62 See, for instance, M. van Uden et al. (eds) *Bij geloof. Over bedevaarten en andere uitingen van religiositeit* (Heerlen: UTP, 1991).
 - 63 See for this region: *Puglia, anno 1987* (Rome: ISTAT, 1991); *Puglia: turismo, storia, arte, folklore* (Bari: M. Adda, 1980); Ant. Beltramelli, *Il Gargano* (Bergamo, 1907); S. Acquaviva and G. Eisermann, *La montagna del sole* (Turin: ERI, 1982).
 - 64 G. de Rosa, *Chiesa e religione popolare nel Mezzogiorno* (Bari: Laterza, 1978), passim; G. Cioffari et al., *Agiografia in Puglia. I santi tra critica storica e devozione popolare* (Bari: P. Malagrino, 1991).
 - 65 See for these sanctuaries Giustino Farnedi, *Guida ai santuari d'Italia 2000* (Casale Monferrato: Piemme, 2000), pp. 357–61.
 - 66 Regarding this church, the architect and 'booming' San Giovanni Rotondo, see Stefano Mencherini, 'Miracolo economico', *Lo Specchio*, 17 February 2001, pp. 24–30.
 - 67 For a description of the church, see *The Voice of Padre Pio* 30 (11) (2000): 21.
 - 68 A similar vagueness with regard to figures exists for other great shrines as well: for example, at the shrine of Antony of Padua, at Padua, towards the end of the twentieth century 700,000 hosts were being distributed annually; this figure allows one more or less to distinguish the faithful from the tourists, who also come in large numbers because of the art-historical treasures in the church. The magazine *Messaggero di Sant'Antonio* has a print run of 800,000 in Italy; see Passa, *Lacrime e sangue*, pp. 97–8. At Loreto, in the basilica of La Santa Casa, just under 700,000 hosts were distributed annually during the 1990s (only in 1995, the jubilee marking the 700th year of S. Casa di Loreto, was it around 900,000). But there the cult leadership insists on multiplying this by the high factor of 6 to obtain the 'correct' total number of pilgrims: between 3,700,000 and 4,200,000 pilgrims per year; see 'Tabella del flusso dei pellegrini a Loreto', published by S. Casa di Loreto, 2000.
 - 69 Scarvaglieri, *Pellegrinaggio ed esperienza religiosa*, p. 71.
 - 70 Every year the March issue of the *Voce di Padre Pio* has a brief summary, 'Notizie flash sulla vita del santuario', which includes some key figures for the previous year.
 - 71 Scarvaglieri, *Pellegrinaggio ed esperienza religiosa*, pp. 70–5: for this he took the number of individuals and groups who had signed the register as his point of departure (about 500,000), doubled that for those who had not signed, and increased that by a figure of 50 per cent of the number of pilgrims who had come in groups (about 125,000). In 1985 the number of communions was around 140,000; see Scarvaglieri, *Pellegrinaggio ed esperienza religiosa*, p. 61.
 - 72 For instance, in *Santi e santuari. Atlante dei personaggi e dei luoghi della fede*, vol. 1 (Milan: Compagnia Generale Ed., 1979), p. 249, where they were then already writing of 'certamente alcuni milioni l'anno'.
 - 73 This factor is roughly equivalent to that used by Scarvaglieri for 1985: for the year of his research he came out with 1.15 million pilgrims while the number of pilgrims 'registered' by the Capuchins was half a million. It is unclear, however, whether his figure was founded on a more precise count, or whether he was also applying this factor. Still higher estimates, which run from 3 to 8 million through vacuities such as 'more than Lourdes or Fatima' and 'more than Lourdes and Fatima put together', are currently circulating in the literature and the media. Both sanctuaries receive, in rather precise calculated figures, around 5 million visitors each. San Giovanni Rotondo is clearly not twice the size of Lourdes.
 - 74 These were individuals involved with organizing and leading Dutch/Belgian pilgrimages to San Giovanni Rotondo.
 - 75 The calculation was as follows: on weekdays the police counted an average of forty buses in the carpark, each with about fifty passengers, the average group size (and bus capacity: see Scarvaglieri, *Pellegrinaggio ed esperienza religiosa*, p. 73); 60–80 buses on Saturdays, and 300–350 on Sundays and feast days. In total that comes to a minimum

- of 1,456,000 and a maximum of 1,638,000 pilgrims. On 16 September 2000, a special carpark just outside the town centre for 150 buses, financed with Jubilee funds, was put into use.
- 76 The data from the Azienda Promozione Turistico also appear to indicate lower figures. The bureau reported that the number of overnight stays in 1999 was about 496,000, of whom only 37,000 were non-Italians. Most pilgrims staying overnight stay 1–2 nights. In 2000 the number of overnight stays fell, while the number of hotels had doubled in the previous year with an eye to the Jubilee Year and the beatification. The Azienda calculated the number of hotels in 2000 at around 80, with about an additional 100 private houses renting out rooms.
 - 77 See also the article on the role of the media from the Capuchins' perspective: Luciano Rotti, 'The beatification and the media', *The Voice of Padre Pio* 30 (5) (2000): 7–9.
 - 78 For instance, 'L'ultimo miracolo. Padre pio piange lacrime di sangue', *Gente Mese, mensile di politica, attualità e cultura* 9 (9) (August 1994); 'Padre Pio e la Madonna', *Gente Mese, mensile di politica, attualità e cultura* 11 (4) (April 1996). 'Padre Pio e la Madonna'. Recently: 'Padre Pio in casa di Ranieri [di Monaco]', *Gente*, 21 December 2000, pp. 52–3, or, on the occasion of the death of the former queen, Maria José di Savoia, on her relations with Pio: *Gente*, 15 February 2001, pp. 36, 38.
 - 79 Scarvaglieri, *Pellegrinaggio ed esperienza religiosa*, pp. 86–95; Da Riese Pio X, *Padre Pio*, pp. 348–55; Gerardo di Flumeri, *I gruppi di preghiera di Padre Pio. Linee teologiche e suggerimenti metodologici* (San Giovanni Rotondo: Ed. Padre Pio, 1993); Nello Castello, *I gruppi di preghiera di Padre Pio* (San Giovanni Rotondo, 1994); the news organ of the Italian prayer groups is likewise distributed from San Giovanni Rotondo: *La Casa Solievo della Sofferenza. Organo ufficiale dei gruppi di preghiera*; Gentilis van Loon, *Pater Pio. Een Simon van Cyrene voor onze tijd* (Antwerp/'s-Hertogenbosch: Kapucijnen, 2000), pp. 73–8.
 - 80 For this see *L'Attività della Santa Sede nel 1999* (Vatican City: Ed. Vaticana, 2000), pp. 240–3; *L'Osservatore Romano* supplemento ('Giovanni Paolo II proclama beato Padre Pio da Pietrelcina'), 1 May 1999; Marc Leijendekker, 'Massale opkomst bij zaligverklaring padre Pio in Rome', *NRC-Handelsblad*, 3 May 1999; Jeroen Smith, 'Rome één dag Pater Piostad', *Katholiek Nieuwsblad*, 7 May 1999, pp. 4–6.
 - 81 Umberto Rosso, 'Rutelli, omaggio a padre Pio', *La Repubblica*, 21 December 2000, p. 22. This was not his first strategic manoeuvre of that nature; in 1995, thirteen years after being married in the municipal registry office, he went to church to have the marriage celebrated there too.
 - 82 It was launched in September with a trial issue of an accompanying *Bollettino Informativo*. The station can be heard across Europe via satellite.
 - 83 Cf. on the film and the conversion of the star, Emilia Costantini, 'Con Padre Pio ho trovato la fede', *Corriere della Sera*, 15 April 2000, p. 38.
 - 84 Produced by Rai in cooperation with Vide-Lux, directed by Giulio Base, broadcast on 11 and 12 November 2000.
 - 85 A similar biographical film, directed by Carlo Carlei and starring Sergio Castellito, was broadcast on 17 and 19 April 2000, on Mediaset's Canale 5, drawing 12.5 million viewers (46 per cent of all viewers in Italy); see *International Herald Tribune*, 'Italy Daily' supplement 21 April 2000. Interrupting a film about 'such a great saint' for advertising was found wrong and insulting; see press release ADN Kronos, 18 April 2000. The film was repeated on 23 and 24 April 2001.
 - 86 8 November 2000, on Rai 1, with the title 'Il nuovo Padre Pio'. On 12 April 2001 there was again a 'Porta a Porta' dedicated to Father Pio, under the title of 'I miracoli di Padre Pio'.
 - 87 'Verkiezing katholiek van de eeuw', *Katholiek Nieuwsblad*, 31 December 1999. Ahead of Pio were Pope John Paul II, Mother Teresa and Pope John XXIII.
 - 88 In the crypt of the church one can also identify certain changes. The large tomb of Pio is placed centrally in this space, while the statue of the dead Christ has been set in a secondary place in a corner, creating a strange relation between the two objects.
 - 89 *Santi e santuari*, vol. 1, pp. 240–51; even in a book that is devoted just to Marian shrines, the Marian tradition at San Giovanni Rotondo is given no space, while the text deals with Pio: Domenico Marcucci, *Santuari Mariani d'Italia. Storia, fede, arte* (Rome: Paoline, 1983), p. 82.
 - 90 Farnedi, *Guida ai santuari d'Italia 2000*, pp. 359–60; Cordier, *Guida ai luoghi miracolosi d'Italia*, pp. 338–9.
 - 91 Girolamo Grillo, *Our Lady Weeps. Report on Civitavecchia. Luciano Lincetto in Conversation with Bishop Girolamo Grillo* (Toronto: Ave Maria Press, 1998), pp. vi, 22–4.
 - 92 See also the observations by journalist Martin Page, 'Padre Pio, superstar', *The Tablet*, 19/26 December 1998, pp. 1688–9.
 - 93 The vast majority of the people whom the author spoke to or interviewed during the year 2000 seemed to be in possession of such objects.
 - 94 Older prints are removed or often end up more or less behind a Pio print; see for instance: Page, 'Padre Pio, superstar', p. 1688.
 - 95 Cf. also the following books about Pio: Felice Spaccucci, *L'Ecce Homo del Gargano* (Naples, 1971); Giuseppe Pagnossin, *Il Calvario di Padre Pio* (Padua, 1978).
 - 96 Piero Mantero (ed.) *Foto 'soprannaturali'. Il primo catalogo d'immagini sui segni dei tempi* (Udine: Segno, 1989, 1995), pp. 57–60.
 - 97 Patrons of churches must be formally canonized; regarding this affair, see further: 'Padre Pio: A Roma nascerà prima parrocchia con sue nome', ANSA press release, 21 September 2000.
 - 98 Such new locations and the many placements of new Pio statues in Italy and other countries are described in the issues of *La Voce di Padre Pio* and *La Casa Solievo della Sofferenza. Organo ufficiale dei gruppi di preghiera*.
 - 99 Da Riese Pio X, *Padre Pio*, pp. 77–80.
 - 100 'Esposte reliqui di Padre Pio', *La Repubblica*, 23 October 2000; press release DEA, 22 October 2000. In the reliquary, temporarily transferred from San Giovanni Rotondo, were displayed two teeth, two cotton wads with blood, several scabs from the stigmata, several hairs and a piece of cloth with blood from the wound on his ribcage.
 - 101 In an interview on 18 October 2000, the vice-postulant Gerardo di Flumeri suggested that, on the contrary, in 2000 there had been more visitors.
 - 102 Scarvaglieri, *Pellegrinaggio ed esperienza religiosa*, pp. 362–5. It is not clear if there is a connection with the fact that the cult object here is also male.
 - 103 Scarvaglieri, *Pellegrinaggio ed esperienza religiosa*, pp. 126–7, 362–5: in 1985 46 per cent of the Italian visitors came from the south of the country, 19 per cent from the middle and 35 per cent from the north.