

Pius V and the Heretic Prince Constructing and Translating Saintliness

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At the end of 1566, Mikołaj Krzysztof Radziwiłł "the Orphan" (1549–1616) visited Rome for the first time. As the eldest son of a powerful magnate in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, he was being prepared not only for a successful political career but also to succeed his father as the principal patron of the Reformation in the Grand Duchy. However, after just a few days in Rome, Radziwiłł decided to convert to Roman Catholicism. His brief encounter with the newly appointed Pope Pius V, who was proclaimed blessed (1672) and a saint (1712), was included in the pope's hagiographic dossier: initially referred to by only one of his titles, the "Duke of Olyka," Radziwiłł's identity was not always recognized by later authors, leading to the abstraction and allegorization of the event. The purpose of this lecture is to reveal how a seemingly trivial historical event, mentioned in the biography of a future saint, can be transformed and integrated into wider hagiographical discourse. Moreover, it will be shown that, due to the widespread public attention, such story can become a means of criticizing and satirizing the papal institution.

When: 13 November 2024, 6pm

Where: Innrain 52a, Ágnes-Heller-Haus, 1st floor, Seminarraum 6