

# Psychological history: towards a profile of the beatified catholic

JAN ART

Department of Contemporary History, Ghent University

FILIP DE FRUYT

Department of Personality Psychology, Ghent University

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The aim of this article is to prove, based on a specific application, that historians are wrong when they refuse to take the insights of psychology into consideration in their conceptualisation of the past (Runyan, 1988). One of the reasons for this shyness, which is in sharp contrast with the enthusiasm with which anthropology is received, has to do with the fact that most historians, when referring to psychology, immediately associate the latter with psychohistory, a variant of psychological history mainly inspired by psychoanalysis. Despite all pleas, most historians strongly question the applicability of Freudian principles in historiography. Psychoanalytical schools, however, constitute only a minority movement within psychological science, and it would be a pity if historians, basing themselves on wrong images, treated psychological history and psychohistory as equal, thus disregarding all psychological insights that are not based on psychoanalysis. Particularly observational and behavioural assessment techniques as they were developed in personality psychology can be very valuable to historians. We would like to illustrate this by looking for an answer to the following question: is it correct to say that individuals beatified by the Roman Catholic Church in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries are characterised by a parallel personality profile?<sup>1</sup> Let us first present the source where we think we can find the answer to this question, followed by the method borrowed from personality psychology that allows us to analyse the source. Subsequently the results and an evaluation of the followed procedure will be dealt with.

---

<sup>1</sup> Other attempts at classifying: Barone (1994).

### 1.1. The source: the 'Positiones super virtutibus' and egodocuments

In the course of its history, the Roman Catholic Church has beatified many hundreds of men and women, i.e. presented them to believers as mediators or examples to be followed. From the end of the eighteenth century onwards the beatification process has followed strict rules that will remain valid far into the twentieth century (Woodward, 1990). One of the dossiers that has to be presented to the tribunal is the 'Positio super virtutibus' (file concerning the practise of virtue).<sup>2</sup> This dossier must show, by means of as many eyewitness reports as possible, that the nominated person has practised Christian virtues in a 'heroic', exceptional way. The quality of these statements may differ considerably, but what all the witnesses have in common is that they remember the behaviour of the 'Servant of God' as being indeed exceptional. The witnesses recall concrete events and situations, taken from everyday life. Their reports concern the whole life of the candidate, from the cradle to the grave, and usually take up many hundreds of pages.

Yet the 'Positiones' do not only offer advantages. First and foremost: not everybody lives and dies in an environment that is willing to put in the effort involved with conducting a beatification process: priests, monks and nuns are clearly over-represented in the catholic legion of the beatified. The 'Positiones', in its printed form, is a selection of documents collected in view of conducting a trial: they are pleas, i.e. positions that one tries to prove. If one limits oneself to this source, the result will be strictly speaking a mere image of how a beatified person should behave according to the Roman court. More strongly: one gets the image formed by late 20th century researchers of an individual's behaviour as shown from the court documents. In other words, from the point of view of classical historical criticism, the data prove to be filtered several times: by the eyewitnesses who, especially when the youth of the Servant of God is concerned, have to rely on their memory and usually think favourably about the candidate; by the court, which only asks certain questions; and finally

<sup>2</sup> Even though it concerns a printed source, compilations of it are rare. The Vatican obviously possesses a complete series, but also the library of the Bollandists in Brussels has a considerable collection. The 'Positiones' used for this research were made available by the responsible persons in Brussels, and we would like to thank them for this. Concerning the applicability of this source, studies have been published on the period before 1800 (e.g. Renoux, 1993) cfr. *Hagiographica*, 1999 and De Vriendt (2000). Nineteenth and twentieth century saints have only been studied recently, especially in Italy: Fattorini (1997), Scorza Barcellona (1997 and 1998), Martina (1997), Rusconi (1999), and France (Cholvy, 1999).

by the researcher who looks upon the described behaviour from his own scale of values, and therefore might be inclined to interpret descriptions differently than what the witnesses intended. For instance it is not unthinkable that what we consider today as being modest, used to be seen as polite. As happens often, one has the impression of dealing with representations and the way these are made, rather than with reality itself. Some of the previously mentioned objections might at least partly be overcome by also taking a 'Positio' of a layman into consideration, and by consulting other than 'Roman' sources, e.g. egodocuments such as correspondence and autobiographies. The latter would enable researchers to investigate to what extent the consultation of sources other than the 'Positiones' would change the personality profile considerably or not, and might prove (or disprove) its reliability.

Therefore, next to 'Positiones' concerning religious people, the one on Frédéric Ozanam (1813-1853) was included in the investigation. He was a beatified layman, a professor of literary history at the Sorbonne, and is known as the founder of the Conferences of Saint Vincentius à Paulo, a catholic charitable organisation. Ozanam was married and had a daughter (Marchasson, 1982). Similarly to all Servants of God, there was an extensive Roman dossier on him, and also a publication of his entire correspondence (Fridiricus...1980, 1990; Cellier, s.d.-1993). His case allowed for at least two investigations: to see whether there was a significant difference in personality between him and other figures who were all members of a religious order or congregation, and secondly to see to what extent the profile described by researchers who based themselves on Roman sources differed from the one of those who based themselves on his correspondence.

Other figures who have been studied are: Louis-Joseph Wiaux (1841-1917, friar Mutien-Marie of the Christian schools (Tihon, 1981)), Joseph de Veuster (1840-1889 alias Father Damian, priest of Picpus (Masson, 1960)), Emilie d'Oultremont d'Hoogvorst (1818-1878, founder of the Société de Marie Réparatrice (Ganguiti, 1980; di Muzio, 1988)), Léon-Gustave Dehon (1843-1925, founder of the Prêtres du Sacré Coeur de Jésus (Tessarolo, 1976 and 1988)) and Johannes Ludovicus Paquay (1828-1905, alias Father Valentijn, Minorite (de Troeyer, 1969; Paquay, 1938)). Why those people were selected and not others, has a practical reason: since the investigators were modern history students, all the figures had to be from the nineteenth or twentieth centuries; the trial had to be conducted based on extensive eyewitness reports noted down in Dutch or French; and finally, their 'Positio' had to be available.

One may wonder why this exceptional series of sources, which may be considered as a continuation of the hagiographies medievalists cherish so much, has until now hardly been used by students of contemporary history. It was used for drawing up a sociological model of the beatified person, whereby the objective data (date and place of birth, gender, status etc) were charted (Delooz, 1969), but up to now it has never been applied to develop an

empirical psychology of saints. One of the reasons for this is that historians do not really know how to distil information from those many thousands of pages of testimonies in a more or less objective way – in other words how they can classify this massive source material in function of their questions. In this matter recently developed methods in personality psychology may offer help.

## 1.2. The Five-Factor Model (FFM) of personality

Historians have been interested in individual differences for a long time. Biographies, for example, usually enclose large and extensive descriptions of a subject's ideas, values, life goals, work history, interests, leisure time activities, and traits, but the range of personality descriptors is usually restricted and the piecemeal discussion of traits lacks coherence or insight. Biographers interested in an *intra-individual* study of a historical subject's personality do not use an integrative framework to accommodate the many behavioural descriptors available in reports of relatives, eyewitnesses or colleagues. The study of *between-subjects* trait differences is even more difficult, because such an analysis requires a set of trait dimensions along which individuals can be compared. Such is the case, for example, when historians try to investigate the relationship between presidents' traits and the political-economical context in which they were elected (Simonton, 1984). It is clear that both the intra- and the inter-individual type of investigation require a person descriptive taxonomy enabling an integration of diverse behavioural descriptive types of information and advancing a comparison of subjects' trait scores along the dimensions constituting the taxonomy.

In the past decade, personality psychologists have reached a growing consensus regarding the basic dimensions underlying adult personality description. At the beginning of the century, trait taxonomists such as Allport and Cattell started to investigate the natural personality descriptive language culled from dictionaries to invent the main dimensions of personality. The basic assumption underlying this lexical research is that all important individual differences have been encoded in the natural language as person descriptive terms, more particularly as personality descriptive adjectives. The analysis of the structure of the personality descriptive language is therefore expected to provide a solid basis for building a taxonomy of individual differences. Indeed, research on the structure of self- and peer ratings using extensive lists of trait adjectives reveals no more than five robust, replicable factors, commonly referred to as the Big Five. These bi-polar factor-analytically derived dimensions are usually labelled as: Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Emotional Stability/Neuroticism, and Intellect. For an extensive review of the historical

antecedents of the model, the reader is referred to John (1990) and Goldberg (1993).<sup>3</sup>

McCrae and Costa extended the evidence from the lexical studies leading to the discovery of the Big Five, to the analysis of personality questionnaire items, and developed the Five Factor NEO Model. They represented a selection of major personality constructs described in the personality literature in their NEO model, including higher level scales to assess Neuroticism, Extraversion, Openness, Agreeableness and Conscientiousness. Costa and McCrae's label and operationalisation for the fifth of the FFM, is different from the lexical studies and is entitled Openness, instead of Intellect. The NEO model is operationalized in the NEO Personality Inventory Revised, which evolved to the golden standard to assess the five factors of personality. Its hierarchical conceptualisation, assessing five large domains and thirty more specific traits, enables both an analysis at the general domain level and at the more specific facet level.

The present study uses an adaptation of Costa and McCrae's hierarchical NEO model to assess the traits of nominees. Furthermore, the design takes advantage of personality assessment methodology, involving multiple raters of the same target's biodata material. From an assessment point of view, the behavioural descriptions as exemplified in the biodata records may be biased towards socially acceptable norms and thus present a flawed picture of a person's traits. This bias may stem from the social-economical and historical-religious context in which the beatification trial takes place, or it may be related to the particular information source that is studied, e.g. the 'Positiones super virtutibus' versus the ege documents. Such a bias, however, does not invalidate the biodata material in itself to examine the admission rules to be accepted for beatification. Indeed, the primary interest is to link traits to historical and religious changes with respect to the admission rules for beatification. As such, the written records – biased or not – may reflect such changed admission policy. Indeed, beatified subjects are selected to serve as a role model for the religious community and the public in general, and hence reflect the traits that are considered to be desirable by the religious authorities. These traits will be given considerable weight in the written beatification records, and may thus reveal changes in the 'religious' desirability of traits, our topic of interest.

<sup>3</sup> A critical appraisal of the model is presented by Pervin (1994), Brand (1994), and more recently by Block (1995), and De Fruyt and Furnham (2000).

To investigate traits exemplified in beatification records, the personality descriptive taxonomy and the assessment procedure should meet necessary criteria to be practically and methodologically useful. First, the taxonomy should be comprehensive and hierarchically organised, including both domains and facets. A hierarchical broad bandwidth approach towards personality description provides the best opportunity to detect unexpected and more fine-grained differences among nominees (De Fruyt and Mervielde, 1998). The taxonomy should further include a set of guidelines on how to aggregate scores on particular traits to higher order traits. A second criterion is that one should be able to operationalise such a hierarchical taxonomy into an assessment procedure that focuses at the trait level, instead of presenting particular behavioural items as is usually done in personality inventories, e.g. the NEO PI-R (Costa jr. and McCrae, 1992). The raters of a nominee are only in a position to provide ratings on traits after they have extensively studied the beatification trial record, but they are not able to provide accurate judgements on specific behavioural items. Ratings should thus be made on more abstract entities, preferably personality descriptive adjectives, referring to traits underlying a range of similar behaviour. Finally, the assessment method should be designed to work with multiple judges investigating the same beatification record. Working with multiple raters is commonly accepted and favoured (Hofstee, 1994) in psychological assessment, but is more exceptional in historical studies (e.g. biographies) that are usually conducted by a single author. Such a rating procedure further enables the empirical investigation of agreement among judges.

The FFM, and the NEO-PI-R in particular, have been recently used to examine the US Presidents' personalities (Rubenzer e.a., 2000). Biographers and acquaintances of the presidents served as informants and provided direct ratings on the NEO-PI-R observer form items. The availability of NEO-item ratings enables a comparison with observer normative scores, although one has no guarantees that norms did not change over time. An individual, previously considered as highly extraverted, may be now considered as moderately extraverted compared to recent NEO-observer norms, because of a mean-level change in extraversion scores over time. Rubenzer and colleagues further demonstrated that presidents' scores predicted presidential success, using historian ratings of presidential greatness as criteria. Finally, they constructed a presidential personality typology, derived from cluster analysing the NEO-trait ratings.

The present study adopts a different rating procedure, using trait adjectives that can be considered as proxies of the NEO-facets, instead of using the NEO-items. Our raters could only rely on the written material available for the target individuals, hampering a direct assessment of NEO-items. As a result, only a comparison between target individuals can be conducted, instead of comparing individual profiles with normative scores.

## 2. METHOD

In order to enable historians to provide trait ratings on Costa and McCrae's hierarchical organised thirty NEO traits, an extensive list of ninety personality descriptive adjectives was empirically constructed as markers for these thirty NEO facets (De Fruyt and Mervielde, 1998). Each facet was represented by three adjectives. The ninety adjectives were presented with a five-point Likert scale, with the labels 'barely characteristic', 'slightly characteristic', 'more or less characteristic', 'characteristic' and 'highly characteristic' defining the scale points. Adjectives were presented in a NEOAC hierarchical order, i.e. starting with an adjective for N1, E1, O1, A1, C1, N2, E2, O2, A2, C2, N3, ..., followed with a second adjective for N1, E1, ..., a third adjective for N1, E1, ..., and finally ending with the third adjective for C6.

Twenty five third year undergraduate students of the University of Ghent enrolled in History as a major provided ratings for one nominee for beatification. Each nominee was individually rated by three judges, except for Ozanam (by fourteen) and Paquay (by two), and all judges obtained a copy of the 'Positiones' or the correspondence. The case of Ozanam was studied by eight students reading the 'Positiones', whereas six other peers provided ratings relying on the correspondence. The students, without formal background in personality psychology or psychological assessment, were introduced to the FFM and the main pitfalls with respect to personality description by the second author in a two-hour session. Raters were instructed to provide adjective ratings after they had read the entire record. They were explicitly instructed not to provide ratings if they thought that the record did not contain information with respect to a particular trait. They were further encouraged to explicitly comment their ratings by referring to particular behaviour mentioned in the record and if possible the page number. Students received course credits for their participation.

## 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 3.1. Profile(s) of religious people based on the 'Positiones'

The hierarchical NEO model distinguishes two levels: a higher order domain level and a primary facet level. Means and standard deviations across observers are described in Table 1. Inspection of the averages helps to clarify the personality profile, whereas the standard deviations indicate agreement among raters. Large standard deviations are indicative of low agreement among raters studying the same beatification record. Facet scores can range

between 3 and 15 (3 adjectives rated on a 1 to 5 anchored scale), whereas domain raw scale scores vary between 18 and 90 (the facet scale range multiplied by 6 facets). A comparison of the average ratings of Paquay, De Veuster and d'Oultremont on the domain level (Table 1) shows strong similarities between the different persons, namely high scores for Altruism and Conscientiousness (high and low with respect to the scale's midpoint and endpoints ranging between three and fifteen). The scale of the domain of Altruism: "represents the individual's orientation towards experiences, interests and goals of others. The other person is the subject in the relations, the relation is often lived through the other person. Altruistic people are helpful, modest, kind and willing to co-operate; they project themselves into the other person and look upon situations (also) from the goal of the other person. The altruist believes that others are also willing to help him or her if necessary. People with a low rating on the A scale are antagonistic and egocentric. They have a competitive mentality rather than a co-operative one (...). Altruism may take pathological dimensions, and is then often recognised as excessive dependency." (Hoekstra e.a., 1996).

Conscientiousness is described as follows: "The term conscientious refers directly to the conscience as the guiding and testing instance for our own behaviour. When people do what they should and avoid what they should not, a long tradition in our culture attributes this to an inner instance of conscience. In psychology, mainly psychodynamic notions tend to follow this line of thought. The interest is then focused on the second part: do what is not allowed, and the conscientious function that should keep people on the right track. When controlling (or not) of desires and impulses is discussed, many psychodynamic theories have a moralising overtone, and describe impulsive behaviour as immature, neurotic or psychotic. The desires in question are then considered 'bad' (sex, excessive eating, drugs etc), and the term conscientious (inhibited) is interpreted as self-control in seductive situations. The term conscientious may also refer to doing what has to be done: a pro-active process of planning, organising and executing tasks that one has taken up. Individual differences in this pro-active variant of control are at the centre of the notion of conscientiousness. The conscientious person is characterised by such qualities as perseverance, ambition, scrupulousness, and reliability. He or she is goal-oriented and well organised, and looks upon life in terms of a series of tasks that have to be fulfilled. Highly conscientious people are strong-willed, determined, and rarely someone without these characteristics will become a great musician, athlete or entrepreneur (...). There are indications that people with a low rating might be more hedonistic than those with a high rating". The Servants of God have a moderate to low rating on the Neuroticism scale, and show more 'emotional stability'. People with a low rating are less easily thrown off their balance, are usually even-tempered, are calm and relaxed and deal with stress situations in a composed manner, without tense excitement.

For all subjects we noted moderate ratings in the Openness domain (ima-

ginative power, sensitivity for aesthetics, a preference for variation, intellectual curiosity, independent judgement and attention for their own emotional life), but there is a high variability in the Extraversion domain, with ratings varying from rather introvert (Mutien) to extravert (De Veuster). The dimension of Extraversion discriminates strongly between the investigated individuals.

All in all, reading on a domain level yields a recognisable and coherent image, bearing a close resemblance to the ideal image presented by many convent rules. The Servants of God are noticed mainly for their Altruism and their Conscientiousness. The latter trait can be considered as a necessary condition to excel in any aspect, whether it is to become a hero in sports, science, art or the practice of virtues. If the pair 'Altruism-Conscientiousness' turns up in contemporary Servants of God as well, one can predict with a relatively high degree of probability what character profiles have a lower chance of ever being qualified for beatification. The high variety in Extraversion between the subjects is remarkable, as well as the degree in which the investigated subjects come to the fore and enter the interpersonal arena.

An investigation of Table 1 on a more intricate facet level shows a number of remarkable similarities, but also a number of differences between the five religious persons. All subjects obtain low scores on 'Angry Hostility', whereas Mutien and Valentin Paquay are ascribed high scores on 'Self-Consciousness', contrary to their peers. Self-Consciousness is related to 'social anxiety' and refers to individuals who do not feel at ease in the presence of others, and who are vulnerable to feelings of inferiority and low self-esteem. There are no important differences across subjects for the remaining Neuroticism facets. Considerable differences can be observed for the six Extraversion facets, except for 'Excitement-Seeking', for which all targets receive low scores. Beatified individuals are thus not to be considered as high sensation-seekers. In general, the beatified subjects receive moderate scores on the Openness facets, except for Openness to Actions, which is low for all subjects, except for d'Oultremont, taking an intermediate position. Low scorers on Openness to Actions have a preference for routine and the well-known, and they dislike frequent changes and unpredictable environments. They prefer a quiet life that others would describe as boring and unadventurous. Except for d'Oultremont, they receive somewhat higher scores on Openness to Feelings, a trait referring to introspection and self-monitoring behaviour. The Openness to feelings scale further refers to the bandwidth and intensity of the subject's emotional experiences and its impact on his/her behaviour. All subjects score high on the six Agreeableness facets, except for lower scores for d'Oultremont on Altruism and also for Dehon on Tender-Mindedness. A similar observation holds for all Conscientiousness facets, with lower scores for d'Oultremont on Dutifulness.

A comparison of the five subjects at the domain level shows that De Veuster obtained the highest scores for Extraversion and Openness, but the lowest

scores for Neuroticism. In this respect his profile contrasts most with the profiles obtained for Mutien and Valentin Paquay. This more extraverted pattern is consistent across all Extraversion facets, except for Excitement-Seeking. Disregarding his high Altruism scores, De Veuster's profile resembles a manager's profile, combining extraverted, energetic and assertive behaviour (E) with high self-discipline and ambition (C), emotional stability (N) and an open-minded view and vision (O). These traits also characterize, but to a lower extent, the 'founders' in this group, i.e. Dehon and d'Oultremont. It is a pity that there is only one woman among the subjects, i.e. d'Oultremont. With respect to a number of Conscientiousness and Altruism facets differences were observed with respect to the other nominees. Further investigation is required to show whether these differences are gender-specific or caused by accidental subject-related factors.

### 3.2. Profiles of religious versus lay subjects

A second objective was the investigation of profile differences between religious versus lay individuals submitted for beatification. The present data enable a comparison of mean scores obtained for the five religious individuals with the scores obtained for Ozanam, all derived from the 'Positiones'. The results of a one-way analysis of variance are presented in Table 2. Provided the large number of statistical comparisons, the significance level was set at  $p < .01$ , implying that observed differences reflect real differences at a chance level of 99 to 100. There are five significant differences at the facet level, i.e. for N3 (depression), N6 (Vulnerability), O3 (Feelings), O5 (Ideas), and C2 (Order). The largest difference is observed for Openness to ideas, a difference that might be related to Ozanam's vocation, i.e. professor at the Sorbonne. Significant differences at the domain level can be observed for Neuroticism and Openness. Ozanam is described as more neurotic and higher in Openness, and he is rated slightly more conscientious. A hypothesis that lay subjects need higher scores on Agreeableness and Conscientiousness than religious individuals to be accepted is thus not confirmed in this case, despite a tendency in the hypothesized direction. We underscore 'case' in this example, provided the small number of religious individuals compared to the single case of Ozanam. The purpose of this analysis was exemplary, and it should be clear to the reader that larger samples are necessary before this hypothesis can be firmly (dis)approved.

### 3.3. Positio versus correspondence.

Finally, the third objective was a comparison of profiles according to the information source, i.e. 'Positio' versus correspondence. This objective can be investigated comparing the profiles of Ozanam, derived from the study of the

'Positio' and the correspondence. The results of a one-way analysis of variance are presented in Table 3. There are only four significant differences at the facet level, i.e. for N4 (Self-consciousness), N5 (Impulsiveness), E3 (Assertiveness) and C5 (Self-Discipline). Historians who studied the correspondence ascribed Ozanam lower scores on Self-Consciousness and Self-Discipline, and higher scores on Impulsiveness and Assertiveness. At the domain level, Ozanam was ascribed higher Extraversion and Lower Conscientiousness scores when trait ratings were derived from examining his correspondence. In general, this case study demonstrates that trait ratings are indeed dependent from the source studied, but differences are restricted in range and they are largely dependent of the kind of behaviour studied. The differences rather reflect variations in intensity rather than a qualitatively different picture. Indeed, the study of a subject's correspondence highlights other, probably more intimate and private, aspects of behaviour that might be reflected in the judges' final adjective ratings. Again, this analysis is exemplary, illustrating how statistical analysis can help to investigate differences with respect to the examined source.

## 4. CONCLUSIONS

The primary objective of this study was the introduction of a new methodology, derived from personality psychology, to describe differences between individuals applied to the study of historical figures. The utility of the underlying model, the assessment procedure and the possibilities for comparison were demonstrated by investigating the 'Positiones' and the correspondence of six beatified individuals. The Five-Factor Model approach proves to be a welcome tool to structure the high variety of qualitative information and to integrate it into more effective quantitative variables which permit the statistical comparison of individuals, are more reliable and which offer more guarantees for objectivity. The researchers in the assessment process are rational actors, they dispose of the same information (limited 'foreknowledge', identical source) and are confronted with the same question ('assess the subject based on this set of ninety adjectives'). The adjectives constitute a priori scales that represent the Five-Factor Model and subsequently scores are aggregated across adjectives. The divergence among observers is changed into an intersubjective consensus through aggregation across scales and observers. In addition a method is presented to integrate various pieces of information about someone's (desired) behaviour based on a dimensional system, which consequently may also be used to compare individuals with each other. Various statistical comparisons are made possible: (1) the comparison of individuals after studying the same source (e.g. 'Positiones'), (2) the study of dissimilarities between individuals with a different background (lay vs.

religious), and (3) the comparison of one individual after studying various sources ('Positiones' vs. correspondence).

Next to the demonstrative-methodological aspect, the above-mentioned investigation also shows us that people beatified by the Roman Catholic Church in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries are characterised by a parallel personality profile. At the same time it has become clear that the common altruistic-conscientious background still allows possible variations on the theme of beatification. The hierarchical Five-Factor Model allows comparisons on a more intricate but at the same time more abstract level, including five traits of a higher order and thirty more specific facets. Although the number of test subjects is clearly too low to come to general conclusions, it seems probable that the FFM makes it possible to describe certain profiles of saints within a certain period. If the model proved applicable to figures earlier than the nineteenth century, one could investigate in how far for instance the Altruism-Conscientiousness pair has always been a necessary condition, or whether other configurations of traits were possible and more desirable. Other configurations of traits are possible, e.g. A and C, completed by high Extraversion.<sup>5</sup>

The 'Positiones' have passed the test well. Their broad and extensive character permitted a judgement of the various adjectives. As a source they have a unifying character: for each Servant of God similar documentation is in principle available, which allows the records to be compared with each other. Whether the individual in question was a mystic or a missionary, someone who left a whole oeuvre or spent his days in silence, nothing is taken into consideration except their behaviour as it was observed by contemporaries. In this respect we are dealing here with a unique series of sources, which are well suited for the study of individual differences. The dossiers aim at studying the individual's entire life, which highly increases the chance to detect enduring dispositions, stable over time and consistent across situations, or, in one word, 'recurrent behaviour'. Personality psychologists further assume that traits are not directly observable, but that they have to be derived from concrete behaviour. Studying the 'Positiones' provides an interesting basis to achieve the goal of personality description.

#### What have we learnt?

We believe that the experiment shows that it is possible to draw up a psychological typology of beatified people, next to the already existing sociological typology. Earlier - rather impressionistic classifications - can be more precisely defined. The data collected in this way would gain importance if

<sup>5</sup> On how the FFM has been applied to contemporary religious psychology see Saroglou (in press and 2000).

they were contrasted with other profiles: with those of candidates for beatification who lost their trial, but also with those of prominent or exemplary figures from other sectors such as science or the arts. In addition to the 'Positiones' one might consider examining other, equally serial sources, through the FFM, e.g. the rules of various lay- and religious orders and congregations, but also the charters of certain professional groups (teachers, doctors, the military) or exemplary figures from other persuasions, always with the intention of detecting the underlying ideals: what kind of personality profile is supported, and to what extent does it differ from group to group and from time to time? What was the 'ideal personality' in Thomas a Kempis' *Imitatio*, in Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* and in Benjamin Franklin's *Autobiography*?

TABLE 1: NOMINEES' MEAN ADJECTIVE SCALE SCORES <sup>(1)</sup>

	I	II <sup>(2)</sup>	III	IV	V
N1: Anxiety	5.33 (3.21)	7.00 (2.83)	4.33 (0.58)	7.67 (1.53)	4.00 (1.00)
N2: Angry Hostility	4.33 (2.31)	6.00 (0.00)	5.67 (0.58)	4.67 (1.53)	5.67 (1.53)
N3: Depression	8.00 (3.00)	8.00 (2.83)	3.33 (0.58)	5.67 (0.58)	6.33 (0.58)
N4: Self-Consciousness	12.67 (2.52)	12.50 (2.12)	7.00 (0.00)	8.67 (1.15)	6.67 (0.58)
N5: Impulsiveness	6.00 (2.65)	6.00 (0.00)	8.33 (2.52)	7.33 (2.31)	8.67 (1.15)
N6: Vulnerability	9.33 (3.51)	8.00 (0.00)	7.00 (1.00)	9.00 (1.73)	6.67 (0.58)
E1: Warmth	8.33 (3.21)	9.50 (2.12)	13.67 (0.58)	8.67 (1.53)	9.33 (2.08)
E2: Gregariousness	6.33 (4.04)	7.50 (3.54)	14.00 (0.00)	8.00 (1.00)	11.00 (2.65)
E3: Assertiveness	6.00 (2.65)	6.00 (1.41)	13.67 (1.53)	7.33 (1.15)	9.67 (3.79)
E4: Activity	6.33 (2.08)	8.00 (2.83)	13.00 (2.00)	10.00 (0.00)	11.67 (3.21)
E5: Excitement-Seeking	4.33 (0.58)	6.00 (1.41)	7.00 (3.00)	7.00 (1.73)	5.67 (1.53)
E6: Positive Emotions	6.33 (4.16)	7.50 (2.12)	13.33 (2.08)	7.00 (1.00)	7.00 (1.00)
O1: Fantasy	6.33 (0.58)	6.00 (0.00)	8.67 (1.15)	7.00 (3.00)	9.33 (0.58)
O2: Aesthetics	5.33 (0.58)	7.00 (1.73)	9.00 (1.00)	8.00 (2.00)	7.00 (2.00)
O3: Feelings	10.00 (1.73)	11.00 (1.41)	12.67 (0.58)	10.33 (0.58)	8.33 (1.53)
O4: Actions	4.33 (1.15)	5.00 (1.00)	8.00 (1.73)	4.67 (0.58)	9.00 (2.00)
O5: Ideas	9.67 (1.15)	10.50 (0.71)	7.00 (0.00)	7.33 (1.15)	9.33 (2.08)
O6: Values	6.33 (0.58)	8.67 (2.08)	10.33 (1.53)	10.33 (2.08)	9.33 (1.53)
A1: Trust	12.33 (3.06)	12.00 (1.41)	13.67 (1.53)	10.67 (0.58)	13.67 (0.58)
A2: Straightforwardness	14.00 (1.00)	13.00 (0.00)	14.00 (1.73)	15.00 (0.00)	12.33 (1.53)
A3: Altruism	14.00 (1.73)	12.00 (0.00)	13.33 (1.53)	12.33 (2.08)	8.00 (1.73)
A4: Compliance	14.33 (1.15)	12.00 (1.73)	10.33 (2.52)	13.00 (2.00)	11.67 (0.58)
A5: Modesty	14.00 (1.73)	14.00 (0.00)	14.33 (0.58)	14.67 (0.58)	10.67 (2.08)
A6: Tender-Mindedness	12.00 (0.00)	11.50 (0.71)	12.67 (1.53)	9.33 (2.08)	9.33 (2.52)
C1: Competence	11.67 (0.58)	13.50 (0.71)	13.33 (1.15)	12.00 (2.00)	12.67 (1.15)
C2: Order	14.00 (1.00)	11.50 (0.71)	11.33 (0.58)	12.33 (1.53)	14.00 (1.00)
C3: Dutifulness	11.00 (1.15)	10.00 (1.41)	10.33 (0.58)	9.67 (1.53)	7.00 (1.41)
C4: Achievement Striving	12.33 (0.58)	10.67 (2.08)	11.67 (1.15)	10.33 (3.79)	12.33 (2.89)
C5: Self-Discipline	11.67 (2.08)	12.00 (1.41)	13.33 (0.58)	12.00 (1.00)	13.00 (2.00)
C6: Deliberation	12.33 (0.58)	11.50 (0.71)	12.33 (1.53)	10.67 (3.51)	11.00 (3.46)
NEU: Neuroticism	45.67 (15.18)	47.50 (2.12)	35.67 (2.31)	43.00 (4.36)	38.00 (1.00)
EXT: Extraversion	37.67 (14.19)	44.50 (10.50)	74.67 (5.51)	48.00 (2.65)	54.33 (9.07)
OPE: Openness	42.00 (5.29)	47.00 (1.41)	55.67 (3.79)	47.67 (2.52)	52.33 (2.52)
AGR: Agreeableness	80.67 (8.39)	75.50 (2.12)	78.33 (4.04)	75.00 (6.93)	65.67 (5.51)
CON: Conscientiousness	73.00 (4.04)	69.50 (7.78)	72.33 (1.15)	67.00 (12.77)	68.00 (8.49)

Note:

(1) I = Mutien

II = Paquay

III = De Veuster

IV = Dehon

V = d'Oultremont;

Standard deviations are enclosed between parentheses

(2) Only two raters.

TABLE 2: RELIGIOUS (MEAN PROFILE ACROSS TARGETS AND RATERS) VERSUS LAY (OZANAM ACROSS RATERS) BEATIFICATION PROFILES

	Religious	Lay	F	Sig
N1: Anxiety	5.57	6.88	1.60	
N2: Angry Hostility	5.27	6.63	2.63	
N3: Depression	6.14	9.25	11.81	.01
N4: Self-Consciousness	9.29	9.50	.04	
N5: Impulsiveness	7.36	7.25	.02	
N6: Vulnerability	8.00	11.25	14.24	.01
E1: Warmth	9.93	10.88	.80	
E2: Gregariousness	9.50	10.63	.71	
E3: Assertiveness	8.71	10.13	1.05	
E4: Activity	9.93	10.43	.16	
E5: Excitement-Seeking	6.00	4.75	3.21	
E6: Positive Emotions	8.29	8.00	.05	
O1: Fantasy	7.57	8.13	.37	
O2: Aesthetics	7.27	9.38	6.03	.05
O3: Feelings	10.43	12.88	10.11	.01
O4: Actions	6.20	5.88	.12	
O5: Ideas	8.64	13.13	42.54	.01
O6: Values	9.00	9.50	.26	
A1: Trust	12.50	11.88	.62	
A2: Straightforwardness	13.71	13.86	.06	
A3: Altruism	11.93	14.13	5.13	.05
A4: Compliance	12.27	12.63	.16	
A5: Modesty	13.50	13.25	.10	
A6: Tender-Mindedness	10.93	13.25	7.37	.05
C1: Competence	12.57	11.71	2.62	
C2: Order	12.71	14.38	8.09	.01
C3: Dutifulness	13.46	14.50	2.24	
C4: Achievement Striving	11.47	13.38	5.28	.05
C5: Self-Discipline	12.43	13.50	2.97	
C6: Deliberation	11.57	13.25	4.29	
NEU: Neuroticism	41.57	50.75	8.60	.01
EXT: Extraversion	52.36	54.43	.12	
OPE: Openness	49.07	58.88	11.15	.01
AGR: Agreeableness	75.00	79.14	1.56	
CON: Conscientiousness	73.85	81.00	6.70	.05

TABLE 3: OZANAM'S MEAN ADJECTIVE SCALE SCORES ACCORDING TO SOURCE

	I	II	F	Sig
N1: Anxiety	6.83	6.88	.01	
N2: Angry Hostility	5.00	6.63	.97	
N3: Depression	9.67	9.25	.10	
N4: Self-Consciousness	6.83	9.50	11.78	.01
N5: Impulsiveness	10.00	7.25	10.55	.01
N6: Vulnerability	10.83	11.25	.09	
E1: Warmth	12.33	10.88	3.10	
E2: Gregariousness	12.67	10.63	8.93	.05
E3: Assertiveness	13.50	10.13	15.43	.01
E4: Activity	10.67	10.43	.06	
E5: Excitement-Seeking	6.17	4.75	7.99	.05
E6: Positive Emotions	7.67	8.00	.08	
O1: Fantasy	7.33	8.13	.30	
O2: Aesthetics	10.67	9.38	1.34	
O3: Feelings	12.33	12.88	.46	
O4: Actions	7.33	5.88	1.82	
O5: Ideas	13.00	13.13	.03	
O6: Values	10.67	9.50	.76	
A1: Trust	12.83	11.88	1.12	
A2: Straightforwardness	13.00	13.86	.91	
A3: Altruism	12.67	14.13	2.42	
A4: Compliance	11.67	12.63	.66	
A5: Modesty	12.33	13.25	.42	
A6: Tender-Mindedness	12.50	13.25	.63	
C1: Competence	11.33	11.71	.40	
C2: Order	12.17	14.38	8.12	.05
C3: Dutifulness	14.50	14.50	.00	
C4: Achievement Striving	13.83	13.38	.99	
C5: Self-Discipline	10.50	13.50	14.52	.01
C6: Deliberation	11.83	13.25	3.39	
NEU: Neuroticism	49.17	50.75	.11	
EXT: Extraversion	63.00	54.43	10.05	.01
OPE: Openness	61.33	58.88	.42	
AGR: Agreeableness	75.00	79.14	.75	
CON: Conscientiousness	74.17	81.00	14.20	.01

Note: I = correspondence 1819-1840, 1851-1853; II = Positio

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- BARONE (G.) ed., *Modelli di santità e modelli di compartimento. Contrasti, intersezioni, complementarità*, Torino, 1994.
- BLOCK (J.), "A contrarian view of the five-factor approach to personality description", *Psychological Bulletin*, 117, 1995, pp. 187-215.
- BOESCH GAJANO (S.) ed., *Santità, culti, agiografia. Temi e prospettive. Atti del convegno di studio dell'associazione italiana per lo studio della santità*, Roma, 24-26/10/96, Rome, 1997.
- BRAND (C.R.), "How many dimensions of personality? - The 'Big 5', the 'Gigantic 3' or the 'Comprehensive 6'?", *Psychologica Belgica*, 34, 1994, pp. 257-273.
- CELLIER (L.) e.a., *Lettres de Frédéric Ozanam*. 1. *Lettres de jeunesse (1819-1840)*, Paris, s.d., 2. *Premières années à la Sorbonne (1841-1844)*, Paris, 1971; 3. *L'engagement (1845-1849)*, Paris, 1978; 4. *Les dernières années (1850-1853)*, Paris, 1993.
- CHOLVY (G.) ed., *La Sainteté*, Montpellier, 1999.
- COSTA jr (P.T.) and MCCRAE (R.R.), *NEO-PI-R. Professional Manual*, Odessa Fl., 1992.
- DE FRUYT (F.) and MERVIELDE (I.), "The assessment of the Big Five in the Dutch language domain" *Psychologica Belgica*, 38, 1998, pp. 1-22.
- DE FRUYT (F.) and FURNHAM (A.), "Advances in the assessment of the Five-factor Model", *Psychologica Belgica*, 40, 2000, pp. 51-75.
- DELOOZ (P.), *Sociologie et canonisations*, Liège, 1969.
- DE TROEYER (B.), "Paquay" in: *Nationaal biografisch woordenboek*, t.II, Brussels, 1969, clm. 661-663.
- DE VRIENDT (F.) and TRIAGLET (M.), "Un siècle de recherches hagiographiques: un parcours à travers la Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique", *Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique*, 95/2, 2000, pp. 539-561.
- DI MUZIO (L.), "Società di Maria Riparatrice" in: *Dizionario degli Istituti di perfezione*, t. VIII, Rome, 1988, clm. 1627-1631.
- FATTORINI (E.) ed., *Santi, culti, simboli nell'età della secolarizzazione, 1815-1915*, Torino, 1997 (Sacro/Santo, 11).
- Fridiricus Ozanam, positio super virtutibus. Informatio et summarium*, Rome, 1990; *Fridiricus Ozanam, disquisitio de vita et actuositate servi Dei*, Rome, 1980.
- GANGOITI (B.), "Oultremont" in *Dizionario degli Istituti di perfezione*, t.VI, Rome, 1980, clm. 1061-1062.
- GOLDBERG (L.R.), "The structure of phenotypic personality traits", *American Psychologist*, 48, 1993, pp. 26-34.
- Hagiographica*, VI, 1999.
- HOEKSTRA (H.A.), ORMEL (J.) and DE FRUYT (F.), *NEO-PI-R/NEO-FFI Persoonlijkheidsvragenlijsten* [NEO-PI-R/NEO-FFI Personality Inventories], Lisse, 1996.
- HOFSTEE (W.K.B.), "Who should own the definition of personality?", *European Journal of Personality*, 8, 1994, pp. 149-162.
- JOHN (O.P.), "The Big Five factor taxonomy: Dimensions of personality in the natural language and in questionnaires" in: L.A. PERVIN ed., *Handbook of Personality Theory and Research*, New York, 1990, pp. 66-100.
- MARCHASSON (Y.), "Ozanam" in: *Dictionnaire de Spiritualité*, XI, Paris, 1982, clm. 1078-1084.
- MARTINA (G.), "Osservazioni sullo studio della santità in età contemporanea" in: BOESCH GAJANO (S.) ed., *Santità, culti, agiografia...*, 1997, pp. 91-104.
- MASSON (J.), "De Veuster" in: *Dictionnaire d'histoire et de géographie ecclésiastiques*, t.XIV, Paris, 1960, clm. 366-367.
- MCCRAE (R.R.) and COSTA jr (P.T.), "Validation of the five-factor model of personality across instruments and observers", *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 52, 1987, pp. 81-90.
- PAQUAY, "Valentin" in: *Biographie nationale*, t. XXVI, Brussels, 1938, clm. 81-82.
- PERVIN (L.A.), "A critical analysis of current trait theory", *Psychological Inquiry*, 5, 1994, pp. 103-113.
- RENOUX (C.), "Une source de l'histoire de la mystique moderne revisitée: les procès de canonisation", *Mélanges de l'école française de Rome. Italie et méditerranée*, 105/1, 1993, pp. 177-217.
- RUBENZER (S.J.), FASCHINGBAUER (T.R.) and ONES (D.S.), "Assessing the US Presidents using the Revised NEO Personality Inventory", *Assessment*, 7, 2000/4, pp. 403-420.
- RUNYAN (W.M.), *Psychology and Historical Interpretation*, New York, 1988.
- RUSCONI (R.), "La santità nell'età contemporanea tra agiografia e biografia", *Rivista di storia e letteratura religiosa*, 1999, pp. 567-586.
- SAROGLOU (V.) and JASPARD (J.M.), "Personality and Religion. From Eysenck's taxonomy to the Five-Factor Model", *Archiv für Religionspsychologie*, 23, 2000, pp. 41-70.
- SAROGLOU (V.), "La religion des jeunes et leur personnalité. Etudes récentes en Belgique francophone" in: SAROGLOU (V.) and HUTSEBAUT (D. ed.), *Religion et développement humain: questions psychologiques*, Paris, in press.
- SAROGLOU (V.), "Religion and the five factors of personality: a meta-analytic review", *Personality and Individual Differences*, in press.
- SCORZA BARCELLONA (F.), "Dal tardoantico all'età contemporanea e ritorno: percorsi scientifici e didattici nella storiografia agiografica" in: BOESCH GAJANO (S.) ed., *Santità, culti, agiografia...*, 1997, pp. 15-26.
- SCORZA BARCELLONA (F.) ed., *Santi del Novecento: storia, agiografia, canonizzazioni*, Torino, 1998 (Sacro/Santo 12).
- SIMONTON (D.K.), *Greatness: Who Makes History and Why*, New York, 1994.
- TESSAROLO (A.), "Dehon" in *Dizionario degli Istituti di perfezione*, t. III, Rome, 1976, clm. 410-416.
- TESSAROLO (A.), "Sacerdoti del Sacro Cuore di Gesù" in: *Dizionario degli Istituti di perfezione*, t. VIII, Rome, 1988, clm. 16-21.
- TIHON (A.) in *La Wallonie. Le pays et les hommes*, t. IV, Brussels, 1981, p. 53.
- WOODWARD (K.), *Making Saints. Inside the Vatican: Who Become Saints, Who Do Not, and Why...*, London, 1990.

Psychologische geschiedenis:  
naar een profiel van de zaligverklarde katholiek

JAN ART EN FILIP DE FRUYT

SAMENVATTING

De bedoeling van dit artikel is aan te tonen dat observatietechnieken ontwikkeld binnen de persoonlijkheidspsychologie toegepast kunnen worden op historisch bronnenmateriaal. We trachten dit te illustreren door via één van die technieken, het vijf-factoren-model (FFM), een antwoord te geven op de vraag of het juist is te stellen dat personen die in de 19<sup>de</sup> en 20<sup>ste</sup> eeuw leefden en zaligverklaard werden door de rooms-katholieke kerk tot hetzelfde persoonlijkheidstype behoorden. Aan de hand van de *Positiones super virtutibus* (de dossiers die werden samengesteld met het oog op het voeren van het zaligverklaringsproces) werden de persoonlijkheidsprofielen van zes dienaren Gods opgesteld. Allen scoorden hoog op de dimensies 'Altruïsme' en 'Conscientieusheid'. In een tweede stap werd nagegaan of er een verschillend profiel naar voor kwam indien men voor dezelfde persoon een andere bron dan de *Positio* gebruikte. Voor Frédéric Ozanam (de enige leek uit de steekproef) werd daarom naast diens *Positio* ook zijn briefwisseling gedepouilleerd. In beide gevallen kwamen we op hetzelfde profiel uit, dat bovendien maar weinig verschilde van dat van de overige proefpersonen, allen religieuzen. Verder onderzoek moet uitmaken of het licht afwijkende profiel van de enige vrouw onder de proefpersonen bevestigd wordt. De bruikbaarheid van het FFM in historicis lijkt ons inmiddels aangetoond.

Histoire psychologique:  
vers un profil du catholique béatifié

JAN ART ET FILIP DE FRUYT

RÉSUMÉ

Cet article vise à démontrer que les techniques d'observation développées par la psychologie de la personnalité peuvent être utiles aux historiens. Nous essayons d'en fournir la preuve en appliquant une de ces techniques, le Five-Factor Model, sur les *Positiones super virtutibus* (les dossiers composés en vue des procès de béatification) afin d'obtenir une réponse à la question suivante: est-il vrai que les serviteurs de Dieu vivant aux 19<sup>e</sup> et 20<sup>e</sup> siècles avaient le même type de personnalité? L'enquête révèle que les six cas examinés excellent dans les dimensions 'Amabilité' et 'Esprit consciencieux'. Pour savoir si cette analogie résulte de la nature des sources (les *Positiones*), nous avons réexaminé le cas d'Ozanam (le seul laïc parmi l'échantillon retenu) en employant cette fois sa correspondance. Le profil qui en est ressorti est le même que celui qu'on avait obtenu sur base de la *Positio*. Des recherches ultérieures devraient établir si la constatation que le profil du laïc et celui de la servante de Dieu diffèrent peu de celui des religieux peut être généralisée. Nous concluons que le FFM est une méthode intensive mais valable pour les historiens, qui ouvre d'intéressantes perspectives de recherche pour l'étude de l'histoire des mentalités.