

# Introduction

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Of the sources available for the historian of medieval society, the lives of the saints must be one of the most problematic. The positivist school of historians tended to reject them as pious forgeries. Hippolyte Delehaye's rehabilitation of hagiography as a source in *The Legends of the Saints*, first published in 1907 (Delehaye 1998), was partly motivated by a desire to provide a Catholic response to positivist scepticism, though ironically his critical approach caused serious troubles for the Bollandists in their relationship with the Vatican (Godding 2007: 139-43). More recently, historians have made a distinction between lives and *vitae*: between the 'historical' life of the saint as reconstructed from documentary and archaeological sources and the *vita*, that slippery product of hagiography and the complex interrelationship of oral tradition and clerical homily.

This distinction found a theoretical basis in the work of structuralist literary theorists like Paul Zumthor, whose concept of *mouvance* articulated something already familiar to historians of folklore: that 'l'oeuvre est fondamentalement mouvante' ('the work [for which we could substitute 'the vita'] is fundamentally mobile') (Zumthor 1972: 73). Zumthor described the text as a 'unité complexe [...] que constitue la collectivité des versions en manifestant la matérialité; la synthèse des signes employés par les "auteurs" successifs (chanteurs, récitants, copistes) et de la littéralité des textes' (a 'complex unity [...] which is constituted by the collectivity of the versions making up the materiality; the synthesis of the signs employed by the successive "authors" (singers, reciters, copyists) and of the literality of the texts').

Key issues for Zumthor were authorial anonymity and the relationship of text to oral culture, the need to see the different versions of a text as the product of 'intervocalité', the complex interaction of a range of possible resources (Zumthor 1987: 160-68). More recently, textual theorists like Bernard Cerquiglini have focussed more explicitly on the *variance* of the written text and the irrelevance of modern concepts of textual authority (Cerquiglini 1989; and for a discussion of the issues see Millett 1994 and 2005-06, 1: xxxvii-lxi). There have been critics of these approaches: as Jacobs (1998: 5) pointed out, sometimes variations are simply the

product of scribal incompetence. However, Cerquiglini's concept of 'intervention consciente' gave a coherent intellectual foundation for the use of later, 'corrupt' versions of saintly *vitae* as sources valid in themselves for the study of *mentalités*. It also elides the distinction between the mobility of the oral tradition and the deliberate variation of the individual and identifiable author.

If, then (as most historians now accept), the *vita* is one of our key sources for *mentalité*, it is precisely this *variance* (whether the product of deliberate intervention or of slippage through retelling) which we need to establish: what people wanted to have happened is arguably more illuminating than what 'actually' happened. It is still necessary, though, to establish the earliest version in order to track changes, without falling into the trap of regarding the earliest as more authoritative, more authentic. Goullet and Heinzelmann's *La réécriture hagiographique* (2003) offers a theoretical perspective on the textuality of *réécriture*, based on concepts of hypertextuality, 'hypotext' and 'hypertext' and warning against the search for 'a chimerical *Ur-text*' (Goullet and Heinzelmann 2003: 11). This makes it possible to discuss the reconstruction of conjectural early versions of later *vitae* without falling into the trap of treating the earlier version as archetypal. This is particularly important in the study of those hagiographies (such as the Welsh tradition) where texts of earlier versions simply do not exist.

Further theoretical underpinning has come from recent scholarly activity in the field of memory studies (for some key texts see Nora 1984-92 and 1989; Carruthers 1990; Fentress and Wickham 1992; and for recent discussions of the historical context Doležalová). Sofia Boesch's categorization of hagiography as 'a conscious construction of the historical memory of a reality' (quoted in Falvey 2010: 347) has clear relevance for studies of the canonization process and for wider issues of the remembering of saints' lives. Jan Assmann's concept of 'cultural memory' as dynamic, a dialogue with the past, is also crucial (e.g. 1992, 2000).

Using concepts of cultural memory necessitates a widening of the debate to consider non-literary sources and to look at changes in cults as well as *vitae*. The relationship between *vita* and cult practice is complex to say the least. In the simplest case, a *vita* can be rewritten for liturgical use on the saint's day; in more complex cases (as in Anne Schuchman's study of the cult of Umiliana de' Cerchi, below pp. 171-196) changes in the social and political significance of the saint's cult led to a complete refocussing of later versions of her life.

Incorporating textual analysis, visual evidence, music and archaeology, the studies in the present collection consider both rewriting of *vitae* and changes in the perceived significance of cults and cult practices. The overarching aim is to illuminate the social and political pressures on religious belief: pressures resulting

from conquest, cultural change and political dissent, pressures which could lead to the cult of a saint from one region becoming a badge of loyalty to a totally different tradition.

As Thomas Head has observed, it is ironic that the seminal work on the reworking of hagiography was written by a Czech Marxist (Head 2001: xxix). František Graus's *Volk, Herrscher und Heiliger im Reich der Merowinger. Studien zur Hagiographie der Merowingerzeit* [People, lords, and saints in the kingdom of the Franks: studies on the hagiography of the Merovingian period] (Prague, 1965) set the agenda for the use of hagiography as a source for cultural and social history. The pioneering work of Peter Brown, beginning with his study of the cults of living ascetics in fifth- and sixth-century Syria (Brown 1971), created a school of hagiographical studies and coined the term 'holy man' to express a concept which has influenced much subsequent writing on hagiography (Brown 1987, 1995, 1998; Hayward and Howard-Johnston 1999). André Vauchez looked at approaches to sanctity in the later middle ages, focusing principally on the official canonization process (1981; English trans. 1997). From these studies a number of strands have developed.

Peter Brown's focus on the holy *man* was perhaps unfortunate in the light of the strong thread of gender studies in recent hagiology (for examples and a review of the literature see Lewis 2000, Riches and Salih 2002, and Sanok 2007, and in the Eastern tradition Constantinou 2004, 2005a, 2005b, 2008). While gendered approaches to hagiography originated in women's studies, a fruitful recent development has been the consideration of the construction of masculinity and holiness. Sam Riches study of St George (2005) is developed in her contribution to this volume. Jonathan Good's study of the same saint is geared more to the politics of his cult as England's patron saint (2009). John Damon's study of soldier saints explores the tension between the powerful warrior saint and the powerless (in worldly terms) martyr (Damon 2003).

Gender has also contributed to the study of patterning in saints' lives, an approach appealing to sociologists like John Mecklin (1941) and Pierre Delooy (1962, 1969, 1983) and to folklorists (e.g. Henken 1987, 1991) as well as to historians (see for example Goodich 1972; Weinstein and Bell 1982). The folklorists have been particularly aware of the importance of *mouvance* and intertextuality in the borrowing of topoi from one *vita* to establish the sanctity of another individual, though the theoretical concepts are not always explored. More recently, Gail Lenhoff has argued (1996) against the idea of rigid typologies and patterning specifically in medieval Russian saints lives, suggesting instead a kind of reverse-engineered *variance: vitae* are framed (in the light of socio-cultural norms) to

demonstrate that the individual fits the perception of a particular type of sanctity, but they also embody considerable deviation from these norms.

Brown, Vauchez, Bynum and their contemporaries used the analytical frameworks of the sociologists to reposition hagiology as an intellectually challenging source for the *mentalités* of medieval society. But hagiologists were already moving on to the next phase, studying the rewriting and reconfiguration of saints' lives to meet changing needs and circumstances. Delooz had already emphasized the 'constructed' nature of saints as the collective representation of their worshippers (Delooz 1962). Graus's *Volk, Herrscher und Heiliger* (Graus 1965) initiated the study of the politics as well as the social implications of changing expressions of sainthood.

This approach has generated several areas of debate. Study of the politics of rewriting inevitably involves considerations of authorship and initiative as well as purpose. Like Thomas Head's study of Orléans (Head 1990), Klaniczay's studies of royal saints (1990, 2002) have tended to focus on the high politics of royal piety and church governance. The same could be said (to take a few examples) of David Rollason's *The Mildrith Legend* (Rollason 1982), Bonner, Stancliffe and Rollason's study of St Cuthbert (1989), which argued for the manipulation of the saint's *vita* and *miracula* in the service of the political ambitions of the West Saxons, and John McKenna's study of the unofficial but intensely political cult of 'Saint' Henry VI of England (McKenna 1974). Susan Ridyard (1988) has critiqued this approach and suggests a more complex relationship, pointing to the tensions between the values of royal power and valour and the saintly virtues of chastity and asceticism. She also emphasizes the key role of the royal woman who can reject worldly values without challenging the secular framework of power.

Nevertheless, the implicit assumption has often been that changes in the cults of the saints originated in elite culture and were eventually transmitted to lay society. As Mortensen has pointed out (2006: 10), this risks imputing 'a very cynical (or superficial) view of lay and ecclesiastical rulers manipulating "religion", as it were, for their own political ends'. Brown (1981) has also challenged the relevance of the popular/elite distinction in hagiology. Klaniczay is clearly aware of this but still considers the distinction to provide a useful framework for analysis.

Julia Smith has taken the opposite perspective in her sensitive analysis of the reciprocal relationship between oral and written traditions in Breton saints' cults (Smith 1990). She points to the ways in which written texts have influenced cult practices involving sacred landscapes and landscape features such as holy wells. Oral, she insists, does not equate with popular, inauthentic or disreputable. The Latin *vitae* in the Breton hagiographic corpus include characteristic 'folk' traditions

such as the veneration of secondary relics like bells and crosses rather than bones and shrines, and post-mortem miracles involving revenge rather than healing. Vauchez's study of canonization assumed Papal influence over the definition of sainthood but also considered the unofficial culting of murder victims and those who died on pilgrimage (Vauchez 1981). John Arnold has taken this argument further, rejecting a 'two cultures' model of medieval society in favour of Foucault's idea of power as 'a field of relationships, a web of interactions and tensions' (Arnold 2005: 14). In the context of the East Slavic tradition, Hollingsworth has similarly critiqued simplistic elite *v* popular models (Hollingsworth 1992: xviii).

Written *vitae*, oral traditions and cult practices could all be reshaped to address issues of national and community identity. Lars-Boje Mortensen's *The Making of Christian Myths in the Periphery of Latin Christendom* has the explicit aim of studying 'local self-definition' as expressed in the hagiographic narratives of northern and east central Europe from c.1000 to c.1300, in the service of 'a more profound understanding of how medieval writers constructed their own past' (2006: 8). It includes studies of the work of Adam of Bremen, sanctity in saga literature, and hagiographic writing in Bohemia, Hungary, Poland, Iceland, Denmark and Norway. Margaret Cormack's *Saints and their Cults in the Atlantic world* (2007) widens the scope of the study even further, considering cults in Africa, Sicily, Canada, Boston, Mexico, Brazil, and the Caribbean as well as Wales, and Iceland, and ranging from the fourth century to the twentieth.

In Russia, the cults of the princely martyrs Boris and Glěb bridged the themes of royalty and martyrdom. Gail Lenhoff's study (1989) considered liturgical texts and chronicles as well as *vitae* to produce a socio-cultural study of the development of the cult from popular veneration to imperial status. Price's study of the two saints (1993) set them in the context of other cults of martyred royals, suggesting (like Chaney (1970) and Klaniczay) that their cults had resonances of pagan traditions of royal sacrifice. In a contribution to Hayward and Howard-Johnston's *The Cult of Saints in Late Antiquity*, Paul Hollingsworth considered the use of the cults of Boris and Glěb to construct a new political culture in eleventh and twelfth-century Rus, in the light of the debate over whether the development of the cult was driven by 'popular' devotion or clerical pressure (1999).

While much of the literature remains focussed on western Christianity, Byzantine hagiology has also moved towards an appreciation of the significance of rewriting as a source for socio-cultural change. Kazhdan and Talbot's magisterial Introduction to their Dumbarton Oaks Hagiography Project emphasized the importance of hagiographic evidence for such diverse topics as family, gender and childhood studies, social and economic structures, everyday life, medicine, art and magic

(Kazhdan and Talbot 1998, and references cited therein; see also Ševčenko 1995). Their work has however been critiqued for its tendency to view hagiographic texts through the same interpretative lens as other documentary sources, devaluing later recensions as less ‘authentic’ and thus less useful (Efthymiadis 2011: 5-6). More recently, Efthymiadis has outlined the need for the study of reworkings and an awareness of authorship and audience (2011: 6; see also Efthymiadis 2006). In the same edited collection, Tomas Hägg’s account of the *vita* of St Antony by Athanasios of Alexandria has a clear focus on the thinking behind Athanasios’s choice of *topoi*, especially as *exempla* for the monastic life (Hägg 2011, esp. p. 28). Other contributions to the collection are more in the literary tradition but there is a clear awareness of the importance of audience and reception and the ways in which these shape and inflect presentation. The second volume of Efthymiadis’s *The Ashgate Research Companion to Byzantine Hagiography: Genres and Contexts* (2014) appeared too late to influence the present collection. Focusing as the title suggests on the debate over hagiography as a genre in Byzantine literature and on issues of audience, language and patronage, literary and socio-economic influences, gender, doubt and scepticism, it will vividly illuminate the Byzantine context of many of the issues we are considering.

The study of hagiography is not confined to the Christian faith, though definitions of the ‘saint’ can be problematic in other traditions. In an early volume of the *Journal of Vaiṣṇava Studies* devoted to hagiography, Steven Rosen discussed the limited appropriateness of the term in the Indian context (1993). Clifford Hospital preferred the term ‘exemplary figures’ (1994: 69). Jan Brzezinski, however, used the term ‘saint’ without qualification in his study of female saints in Gaudiya Vaiṣṇavism (1995). Peter Brown’s concept of the ‘holy man’ (or woman) has been useful here, but the idea that some individuals have an unusual and exemplary holiness is still problematic in some faith traditions.

Studies which cross faith traditions have nevertheless been very useful in clarifying and refining definitions of sanctity. John Stratton Hawley’s (1987) definition of the saint as *example/exemplar*, companion and helper was perhaps more of a description than a definition. It enabled him to assemble studies of sanctity across a range of faiths – Islam, Judaism, several Hindu traditions, Confucianism, Buddhism and Vodou as well as Christianity – in the interest of identifying common threads, though Robert Cohn’s contribution on Judaism was mainly geared to explaining the difficulty of applying any concept of the specially holy person to mainstream Judaism (Cohn in Hawley 1987: 87-108). At the end of the same book, John Coleman suggests a sort of Wittgensteinian Venn diagram of saintly characteristics – exemplary model, teacher, wonder worker, intercessor and possessor of a special

relation to the holy – and maps the holy individuals of several faith traditions against these qualities.

Judaism is not the only faith tradition to have difficulties with the identification of some individuals as especially holy. Early Islam clearly had room for the veneration of holy men and for a concept of pilgrimage which encouraged the experience of closeness to God through the tombs of the holy dead (Radtke and O’Kane, 1996; Robinson 1999; Meri 1999). The *shayks* of the Sufi tradition clearly fit many definitions of sanctity. More recently, Christopher Taylor has studied the cult of Muslim saints and devotion to their tombs in later medieval Egypt, c. 1200-1500 (1999). Boaz Shoshan has used the framework of ‘great’ and ‘little’ cultures (in spite of Brown’s critique of this approach) to reconcile some of these cultural disjunctions (Shoshan 1991). Nevertheless, twentieth-century Muslims have been increasingly critical of the cults of ‘holy men’ (Gaborieau 1983).

Interfaith studies are thus challenging, but difficulties over the definition of sanctity are less crucial when considering issues of rewriting. Studies of religion in the Indian sub-continent (including the two in this book) are particularly illuminating in that they allow us to consider issues of conflict and reappropriation of cults between faith traditions. There are clearly political problems in bridging the gap between devotional writing and academic analysis: the assumption that the academic approach is somehow ‘western’ (and therefore suspect) means that much of the preliminary textual work which was undertaken by the Bollandists for the western Christian tradition still remains to be done. Many of the contributions to Callewaert and Snell’s *According to Tradition: Hagiographical Writing in India* (1994) are geared to establishing rather than analysing hagiographic traditions. However, Mcleod’s discussion of the Sikh tradition focuses on changing emphases in the presentation of the lives of the gurus as a reflection of the piety and sense of identity of later followers. Philip Lutgendorf has developed his earlier work on the sixteenth-century retelling of the legend of Ram by the poet Tulsidas, the *Rāmcāritmānas*, considering not only the influences on Tulsidas’s own retelling of the story but the subsequent life of the text in performance (see also Lutgendorf 1991). Indira Petersen uses poetry as well as hagiography and cult practice to discuss the construction of social identity in lives of the Nāyanār holy men of Tamil Nadu, ‘imaging the ideal community’. Simon Digby analyses anecdotes of the Sūfī saints in competition for local spiritual jurisdictions and Tony Stewart considers the influences on the development of the *Caitanya Caritāmṛta* as a classic text which articulates the ideology of a new political world while appropriating and adapting earlier traditions (see also Manring and Stewart 1996-97).

Studies of sanctity (however defined) in other faith traditions engage with many of the same debates as studies based on the western Christian tradition, and offer scope for illuminating perspectives. In her more recent study of the lives and cult of Advaita Acārya, Rebecca Manring had to spend much of her time establishing the context of manuscript versions of Advaita Acārya's life (2005). She was however able to go on to discuss the significance of variant versions, the 'discovery' of new texts in the late nineteenth century in the context of the revival of Bengali identity, and the influence of pressure from the western Christian culture of the British Raj. In the second special volume on sacred biography of the *Journal of Vaiṣṇava Studies* (2007), Leena Taneja considered the social and sectarian pressures which have led to the downplaying of the importance of Narayan Bhatt in Bengali Vaiṣṇavism. Jon Keune discussed the agenda behind collective biographies such as the *Bhaktavijay* of Mahīpati, comparing them with biographical collections in the Buddhist, Jain, Tamil and Persian traditions and concluding that 'collective hagiographies draw boundaries around conceptual, geographical and historical territory, and they stake the claim that the individuals described therein all belong together' (2007: 182).

Like Shoshan (1991) and Digby (1994), Arthur Wright (1954) and Makita Tairyō (1973, 1975, cited in Shinohara 1994) have used the model of élite and popular cultures in their analysis, this time of the lives of early Chinese Buddhist monks. The model of the élite/popular dichotomy retains a seductive charm in hagiology in spite of its evident deficiencies. Koichi Shinohara has explicitly critiqued this approach in its application to Buddhist hagiology, particularly for its underlying assumption that the élite were disdainful of stories of miracles and the supernatural (Shinohara 1994). However, Wright's basic premise that Huijiao reshaped the lives to suit the values and conventions of his own time has clearly shaped subsequent work – such as Granoff and Shinohara's *Monks and Magicians* (1988) and *Speaking of Monks* (1992). The distinctive epistemology of Buddhism and its concept of cyclical time, so that the same event can happen again and again in different contexts, make Buddhist sacred biography both complex and an effective device for communicating belief and practice. The essays in Juliane Schober's *Sacred Biography in the Buddhist Tradition* (1997) consider these multiple levels both in the life stories of Buddha Gotama and his lineages and in the lives of more recent Buddhist holy men. Like Goulet and Heinzelmann they challenge the notion of the 'ur-biography' (in the Buddhist context, articulated by Erich Frowaller) in favour of a model of biographical cycles reflecting different schools and contexts (Schober 1997: 3).

Patrick Geary suggested in 1994 that the future of hagiographic studies in the Christian tradition might lie in the use of the widest possible range of sources

– liturgies, miracle collections, devotional literature – to produce carefully contextualized microstudies. At the same time he admitted to regret at this narrowing of scope and the difficulty of studying the relationship between the ordinary laity and ‘their’ saints (Geary 1994: 28). The time for a new synthesis may not have arrived, but comparative studies based on a range of sources and incorporating insights from other faiths may offer a way ahead. It is in the light of these developments that the present collection of studies has been written.

The studies address a range of cross-cutting themes. Some (like Svitlana Kobets’ study of Palladius’s life of the holy fool Serapion, Karen Casebier’s comparison of Rutebeuf’s *Frère Denise* with the *vitae* of transvestite saints and James Hegarty’s detailed study of one text of the life of Guru Nānak) involve issues of explicit authorial intent; others (including my own study of the cult of St Armel and Sam Riches’ work on St George) are more concerned with wider issues of cult practice. There are studies of saints whose cults move across cultural and even faith boundaries, and the tensions this creates between individuals and institutional approaches to sanctity. Jayita Sinha’s study of Kabir traces his cult through Hindu, Muslim and Sikh manifestations. Other examples include John Black’s discussion of changing representations of monastic saints and Diane Auslander’s study of the transmutation of the Irish saint Darerca into the Anglo-Saxon and Norman Modwenna. Several studies follow cults across the great divide of the religious changes of the sixteenth century: both Sam Riches and Adam Coward consider the ambiguous position of the saint in the Protestant tradition, while Anne Schuchman traces the more complex implications for an individual cult of the Catholic Reformation. There are studies of saints who are appropriated as badges of identity by national and local communities, and the tensions this creates when the same saints are then adopted across boundaries. Cutting across these are issues of gender, politics and ethnic identity. The overview below attempts to draw together some themes but does not exclude others.

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One clear theme which emerges from the comparative literature is the question of what (and indeed who) a saint is *for*, in the light of Deloos’s perceptive comment that saints are saints both for and by other people (1983). Is the saint an example of the virtues, an exemplar for the faithful to follow, or is the saint someone to be revered rather than followed, someone who exhibits extraordinary and heroic qualities in sometimes bizarre manifestations that are not appropriate for everyone? These polarities change over time and are found in many faith traditions – the *lila*,

the divine play of Vishnu emulated by the *bhakti* saint, the extremes of asceticism in some Buddhist traditions. In Christianity they are thrown into sharp relief in the often bizarre stories of early desert fathers and the cult of the holy fool – those ambiguous, iconoclastic figures whose extremes of asceticism and challengingly idiosyncratic behaviours are so incomprehensible to modern eyes. The holy fool is now seen as characteristic of the Eastern tradition and particularly in Russia, where the concept of *jurodstvo* has been extended to cover both Rasputin and some of the more provocative challengers to the Soviet regime (Bodin 2009: 191-254).

Svitlana Kobets' work on the tradition of the holy fool has culminated in a collection of essays edited with Priscilla Hunt (Hunt and Kobets 2011 and references therein). She contributes to the present collection a study of Serapion the Sindonite which takes the cult of the holy fool back to its origins, suggesting that Palladius' portrayal of the saint conflates classical and Christian perspectives, importing topoi from late antique pagan writing in order to link him with the tradition of the Cynic philosophers. Serapion's life is presented as a succession of entertaining and edifying episodes, which resemble anecdotes about Diogenes. Palladius' modelling of Serapion as a Cynic thus reflects the author's classical education which has enabled him to validate the saint's unorthodox asceticism in the light of the Cynical tradition. At the same time, Serapion's unconventional asceticism, behaviour, and mindset are representative of the Egyptian desert tradition. Svitlana Kobets argues that Palladius' resignifying of the life and image of Serapion can thus be seen as a quantum leap from the rejected and taboo figure of the Hellenistic/ Cynical philosopher to the venerated figure of the Desert Father. She concludes by pointing out that in the medieval Russian tradition, the figure of the Cynical Abba from Palladius' paterikon was elevated even further when Serapion was canonized as a holy fool.

Changing responses to the asceticism of the desert fathers and changing concepts of the purpose of the saint also underlie John Black's study of developments in the representation of three monastic saints in early and medieval England. First celebrated as saints of heroic eremitic austerity, Sts Mary of Egypt, Guthlac and Cuthbert were by the twelfth century represented as living their sanctity in community. The spiritual athleticism of the hermit is replaced by a more generally accessible coenobitic sanctity. The coenobitic element was always there in the traditions of Guthlac and Cuthbert but becomes significantly more important in later versions of their *vitae*. In parallel with this, while Mary becomes more dependent on the salvific and essentially community-based intervention of the monk-priest Zosimus, the role of the male saints as spiritual exemplars is overlain (particularly in the case of Cuthbert) with an emphasis on the power and authority

of the monastic community established or led by the saint. These developments may not be entirely the result of the Norman conquest of England but they are paralleled by similar developments elsewhere in perceptions of sanctity and gender.

Visual sources are increasingly prioritized in understanding developments in the lives and cults of the saints across all faith traditions, not just as illustrations but as the primary source. To cite just a few examples: Magdalena Carrasco's study of the illustrated lives of Albinus and Radegund (1991); Robert Brown's analysis of narratives in Buddhist architectural carvings (1997); and several of the studies in Gecser's recent *Promoting the Saints* (2011). Barbara Abou-El-Haj used architecture as well as manuscript illumination to discuss the promotion of saints' cults in medieval France (1994). Less use has been made until recently of liturgical and musical sources. In her study of the creation of the cult of St Louis, Cecilia Gaposchin used a detailed analysis of liturgies to discuss the development of approaches to royal sanctity and sacral kingship (2008: esp. 86-92, 100-24). In the eastern tradition, more recent studies include Per-Arne Bodin's discussion of the debates over the revival of Old Church Slavic (Bodin 2009) and Giannouli's forthcoming comparison of Byzantine hagiography and hymnography (in Efthymiadis 2013). Michael Anderson's study of music for John the Baptist and St Anne (2008; see also Anderson 2011) considered the function of music in interpreting as well as enhancing liturgical text and the experience of pilgrimage, veneration of relics and private devotion as well as public worship.

The late Andrew Hughes pioneered this area of research in his study of liturgical and musical developments in the later medieval offices of the saints (1996). In his contribution to the present collection, written just before his death, he and Kate Helsen have developed this with a study of the numerous new offices for saints and feasts that already had offices in the standard repertory. Music for these new liturgies was often modeled on existing melodies or borrowed phrases from them, or adapted to accommodate the new fashion for rhymed and metrical texts. These chains of influence contribute to our understanding of the remodeling of the whole cult. In order to explore the reasons for such new offices Hughes and Helsen consider in detail the composition of responsories for Thomas Becket, the development of the office of the Trinity from the tenth century and the new Franciscan office of the Trinity written by Peckham in the thirteenth century. They suggest that one reason for Peckham's rewriting might be Becket's promotion of the feast. However, Peckham's work clearly alludes to his studies in France, the philosophy of Bonaventure and the work of Roger Bacon on light, making it what Hughes and Helsen describe as a 'personal manifesto'. Initially concerned with literary matters,

these musical case studies thus illuminate why and how the chants were ‘rewritten’ to conform with new ideas.

There is a clear gendered element in the patterning of saints’ lives. While male saints have conception and birth miracles, miracles of early learning and devotion, female saints are more likely to appear fully formed and ready to defend their chastity. Different perceptions of gender roles are often reflected in rewriting, though the results can be surprising.

Of all the hagiographical traditions considered here, that of Wales might be expected to exemplify cultural conflict. The Norman conquest of Wales took place in the context of extensive changes in the contemporary European church, and received papal blessing since it was expected to impose reform on a church perceived as lax and corrupt. However, Madeleine Gray’s study of two Welsh hagiographical traditions – the Anglo-Norman *vitae* of St Winifred of Holywell and the essentially Welsh *vitae* of St David – suggests that, while new ideas from Europe had a profound impact on Wales, many of the new ideas had already been internalized before the Conquest. At the same time, a distinctively Welsh focus on gender issues can still be found in the Anglo-Norman hagiographic tradition. While the *Vita Prima* of Winifred (the Welsh Gwenvrewi) is the story of a tough-minded independent woman, Robert of Shrewsbury’s slightly later version presents her as an innocent girl in search of a male mentor. Meanwhile, the Welsh cleric Rhigyfarch’s Latin *vita* of St David exhibits post-Gregorian hostility to marriage and human sexuality and models the picture of life in David’s religious community on eleventh-century European monastic reforms.

Transvestism offers an intriguing perspective on gender and conflicting gendered identities. Paul Szarmach’s study of the Anglo-Saxon *vita* of Euffrosine viewed the story as a father/daughter genre narrative in which a flawed but essentially virtuous character was created for the father to add depth and complexity to Euffrosine’s choice of salvation above family duty (Szarmach 1996: 353-65). In the present collection of essays, Karen Casebier’s ‘Immaculate Deceptions: Virginité and Society in *La Vie de Sainte Euphrosine* and Rutebeuf’s *Frère Denise*’ considers the subversion of hagiography within a cultural tradition. Vernacular hagiography simultaneously offers us models of and models for ideal behaviour in which sexuality and gender play a crucial role. Moreover, since these works articulate popular religious values and sensibilities, they cannot be abstracted from the social context in which they were produced. This paper examines the *vita* of the Old French transvestite saint Euphrosine and compares it to Rutebeuf’s *Frère Denise*, a contemporary *fabliau* that parodies traditional hagiography, offering both a critique of female sanctity and a social prescription for it.

The transmission of a saint's cult from one cultural region to another offered clear scope for rewriting and re-signifying, through cultural conflation as well as conflict. Hollingsworth's study of early Rus hagiography considers the relationship between the Byzantine tradition and the cultural self-definition of East Slav society (e.g. Hollingsworth 1992: xix-xxv). It was traditionally assumed that the Norman church was contemptuous of Anglo-Saxon saints but Susan Ridyard has argued convincingly that this is a simplification (Ridyard 1986). She points out that, although St Etheldreda and her associated female royal saints at Ely initially served as a rallying-point for the Anglo-Saxon resistance, they were subsequently appropriated to defend the rights of the Norman monks against king and bishop. Meanwhile at Bury St Edmunds a French abbot welcomed the Normans but used the cult of St Edmund to defend his position. Similar patterns could be found at St Albans, Malmesbury (St Aldhelm) and Durham (St Cuthbert). Mary Swan has pointed to the number of Old English manuscript saints' lives that survive in post-Conquest copies and suggested a largely female religious readership (Swan and Treharne 2000; Swan 2005). Robert Bartlett's study of the cults of Irish, Welsh and Scottish saints in twelfth-century England also notes the number of rewritten versions of their *vitae* but argues that this was generally for literary rather than cultural reasons. There was indeed a spirit of 'smug cultural superiority' but he suggests that this demonstrates not general disapproval of Celtic barbarism but a critique of badly-written Latin (Bartlett 1999: 85).

Diane Auslander's paper 'From Darerca To Modwenna: Rewriting Female Asceticism in the Lives of an Irish Saint' develops Bartlett's use of the rewritten lives of Darerca but argues that there is a genuine change of perspective in the later versions. She considers four lives associated with St Modwenna of Burton on Trent, stretching from the seventh to the thirteenth centuries. The lives build from a ninth-century revision of a seventh-century life of the purely Irish saint Darerca, nicknamed Moninna, to include, in a late tenth- to early eleventh-century life, legends of the Scottish saint Ninian among others to become, in the twelfth century, the accepted hagiography of St Modwenna, the obscure seventh-century Anglo-Saxon foundress and patroness of Burton Abbey. This hagiography reflects an intense layering of legends that reveals both cultural interaction and vituperative polemic among the societies of Ireland, Scotland, and England. Modwenna's asceticism as a spiritual leader is translated into an expression of humility, and there is a greater emphasis on her miracles: Auslander suggests that this may have been in order to ensure her acceptance by an audience that had been taught to despise Irish Christian culture.

Ownership (or appropriation) of the saint's life and cult was clearly crucial in the process of adaptation. Several of the essays in Sticca's *Saints: Studies in Hagiography* (1996) picked up on this theme. Sarah Blake McHam used visual as well as documentary sources to elucidate the politics of Padua's construction of the cult of St Anthony as protector of the city; Patricia La Balme considered the re-promotion of the cults of Sts Mark, Nicholas and Theodore in the increasingly conflicted politics of fifteenth-century northern Italy; and Konrad Eisenbichler interpreted the re-signifying of the Archangel Raphael as protector of the young Tobias in fifteenth-century Florentine drama in the light of commercial developments which meant that it was increasingly the young men of a guild who were sent on long business journeys. Lezlie Knox's study of the use of the cult of Clare of Assisi by Clarisses and Observants (2008) suggested that the use made of Clare's memory was ultimately more influential than the life of the saint herself. Gerald Parsons took his analysis of the impact of the cult of Catherine of Siena into the twenty-first century, appropriated by Italian nationalists, post-war peace campaigners and a Sicilian vice-president of the European Parliament (2008).

Anne Schuchman's study of the cult of the Franciscan tertiary Umiliana de' Cerchi in this volume considers the cult of a medieval holy woman whose canonization was initially promoted by the Franciscan order. The process was taken over some time later by her family, and the focus of the *vita* moved from her association with the Franciscans to an emphasis on her own family as devoted followers of their kinswoman. The seventeenth-century campaign which led to her beatification is situated in the very different political and religious environment of seventeenth-century Florence and the changing fortunes of the Cerchi family. Post-Tridentine models of sanctity led to a shift of emphasis away from her mystical and prophetic miracles and the virtual elimination of references to the informal community of laywomen that she established.

The movement of a saint's cult across faith boundaries presents even more sharply-defined issues of ownership and re-signification. Born a low-status Muslim, the mystic and radical poet Kabir explicitly criticized both Hindu and Muslim practices but was nevertheless revered by Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs, all of whom tried to conform his tradition to their own beliefs. Jayita Sinha's study focuses on the appropriation of the saint by the Brahmin tradition, which softened his critique of Hindu doctrine and practice and inverted his radical stance. The importation of Hindu themes into his life modelled him more closely on the holy men of the Vaiṣṇava Bhakti tradition. Later versions of his life were increasingly anti-Muslim in sentiment, but his cult is now being reappropriated in the service of Hindu-Muslim unity.

Nancy Caciola has pointed to the recent trend towards emphasizing 'the importance of the saint's own conscious decisions and self-representations to an audience as key elements in the formation of a cult' (Caciola 1996; cf. Klaniczay 1990, 95-110). More recent studies of saintly self-fashioning have included F. Thomas Luongo's analysis of the political thinking behind Catherine of Siena's career as a saint (Luongo 2006) and Stavroula Constantinou's use of performance theory to discuss the centrality of the body in the self-fashioning of female saints (Constantinou 2005b). Critique of the cults of the saints was such a key element in the sixteenth-century Reformation that it is at first sight surprising to find them being brought into the service of the Protestant traditions. But reformers like Luther and Calvin were venerated as saints even in their own lives; Luther was actually depicted with a halo in popular woodcuts. Andreas Hondorff's *Calendar of Saints* (first published in 1573) offered stories of episodes from Luther's life alongside events from the lives of the early martyrs (Gray 2003: 196).

Adam Coward's study of 'The Old Prophet', the Independent minister Edmund Jones of the Tranch near Pontypool in south Wales, a man whose intellectual interests combined evangelical theology, folklore and Enlightenment rationalism, explores his explicit self-fashioning as a saint in the tradition of the heroic warrior battling the forces of darkness. While Coward argues that Edmund Jones was not a saint, both his own presentation of himself and the stories which others chose to remember and tell about him reflect many of the classic definitions of the saint, inflected by the Protestant tradition in which sainthood is the preserve of all believers. His loyalty to his remote and mountainous homeland could even be seen as a reinvention of the 'desert' of the early hermits in the context of an eighteenth-century nonconformist community. It is a landscape full of signs and wonders, and miracles of divine vengeance.

This emphasis on revenge miracles also ties Edmund Jones in with the stories of the early saints of the insular tradition, who were also capable of violent action, though Jones himself claimed no agency in divine vengeance. He did, though, place considerable emphasis on the early Welsh saints as his godly predecessors. In this, he was in the tradition of sixteenth-century reformers like Richard Davies and William Morgan, who re-presented the early saints of Wales as proto-Protestants, defying the authority of Rome (Williams 1953, 1983; Bradshaw 1996: 79-81). In areas where the Reformation was contested, and particularly where popular tradition and the will of the government were in conflict, the saints could be pressed into service by both sides. Bridget McCormack has studied the contested identity of St Patrick in eighteenth-century Ireland, appropriated by both Catholics and Anglicans (2000). And it is worth remembering the importance of Foxe's *Acts and*

*Monuments* as a key example of rewriting and re-signifying, pressing the martyrs of the early church into the service of religious change.

The focus on popular cults should not occlude the importance of élite devotion in articulating political power. Veneration of a medieval saint could be an undeniably political act. The cult of St Thomas of Canterbury originated in an act of political defiance, albeit one in defence of ecclesiastical autonomy. More bizarrely, the thirteenth-century English rebel Simon de Montfort was culted as a saint for some years after his death. Unusually for medieval pilgrimage cults, his devotees were largely male; a surprisingly high number came from the aristocracy and upper clergy (Finucane 1995: 131-35). The undistinguished Archbishop of York, Richard Scrope, executed for rebellion against Henry IV of England, rapidly became a popular saint whose cult was a touchstone of opposition to the Lancastrians: McKenna suggests that Lancastrian encouragement of the cult of Henry VI was partly intended as a counterweight to Scrope's popularity (McKenna 1970; cf. Wright, <http://english.cua.edu/faculty/scrope.cfm>).

In his study of the cult of Sts Boris and Gléb, Paul Hollingsworth remarked on the undeveloped state of hagiographical study in East Slav historiography (1999). His own work has done much to redress the balance. For more recent periods, studies of saints' cults in Russia have illuminated the reshaping of the lives and cults of Russian saints and saints of the international tradition in the service of the imperial dynasty (Ziolkowski 1988; Thyrét 2001; Marker 2007). Slavia Barlieva's contribution to the present volume moves the discussion on to a consideration of saints in the other Slav regions. The work of the missionary saints Cyril and Methodius was described by Old Bulgarian writers and by the Papal curia as a pan-Slav achievement but their tradition has been appropriated by all the Slavic nations as a symbol of national identity. They have been treated as exemplars of Bulgarian national virtue and were used by the Greek archbishops of Achrida and the diocese of Olomouc in their campaigns for independence, but they have also been appropriated by Moravians, Czechs and Poles.

For those whose position was in any way vulnerable, public devotion could be a crucial part of strategies of legitimation. In 'Politics, Power and Piety: The Cult of St Armel in Early Tudor England and Wales', I discuss the cult of a little-known saint who migrated from Wales to Brittany in the sixth century but was reintroduced to Britain by Henry Tudor. Veneration of this obscure saint became a badge of public loyalty to the Tudor dynasty. It was displayed both by Henry's closest associates (like Cardinal Morton, who had a carving of the saint on his tomb) and by those whose loyalty was questionable, such as the Mortimer family of Chirk and Lady Katherine Gordon, widow of the pretender Perkin Warbeck. Documentary and

visual sources are here combined to illuminate the politics of late medieval royal piety.

The politics of hagiography are thrown into sharper focus when they become entwined with issues of national identity. William McLeod's work on the life and traditions of Guru Nānak (see e.g. 1968, 1980, 1994) outlined the problem that in Sikh hagiography, as in many other traditions, there is a cleavage between devotional writing and academic analysis (see also Callewaert and Snell 1994: 1-2). The oral traditions enshrined in the *janam-sākhīs* should not be rejected as a source: but they provide 'an interpretation of the Gurū's life, one which reflects the piety of his devout followers belonging to later generations [...]. As such, they can be located squarely within the category of hagiographic literature' (McLeod 1994: 19). Studies of the hagiographic tradition in the Indian subcontinent frequently feature themes of sectarian rivalry – between Sufi saints, between Hindu monists and dualists, between Sufis and Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims, Hindus and Jains. James Hegarty contributes to this collection a detailed study of one version of the life of Guru Nānak, the magnificently-illustrated British Library manuscript Panjabi B40. Written at a time of political crisis in the Punjab, the B40 *Janam-sākhī* spoke to the development of new forms of Sikh identity and changes in both doctrine and governance. Situating Guru Nānak in cosmic time as well as recounting the traditions of his miracles and journeys, the compilation describes his encounters with representatives of rival faiths and his triumph over a succession of challenges. The narrative construction in turn widens the appeal of Guru Nānak's austere devotional verse and illuminates what it meant to be a Sikh at this point in the development of a distinctive Sikh historical vision.

Western European society has been described in terms of the 'eclipse of the sacred' (Acquaviva 1979: 200) but the cults of the saints remain surprisingly influential and acquire new meanings in new contexts. Secular cults can take on the appearance and trappings of hagiography. Albert Soboul's study of French Republican martyrs points to the irony that atheist Republican activists became venerated as saints, with hagiographic topoi inserted into their lives and miracles attributed to them (Soboul 1983). Mark Jurgensmeyer's contribution to Hawley's *Saints and Virtues* debated the identification of Mohandas Gandhi as a saint (Hawley 1987: 187-203). The cults of more conventional saints have also always had a secular charge, and this has contributed to their survival as cultural icons in an increasingly secularized world. The cult of Joan of Arc was appropriated first by the Left in the nineteenth century and then by French conservative nationalists (McMillan 1993; Jennings 1994). As a result, while she has become a feminist icon elsewhere, in France she is still more associated with conservatism in religion and politics (Margolis, online).

Female saints like Winifred and Melangell (and in the international hagiographical tradition the early virgin martyrs as well as Mary Magdalene) have also acquired an additional gendered charge as feminists identify them with tough-minded women who ‘stand up and say “No”’. Melangell featured on Radio Wales’s ‘Helluva Girl’ series in 2001; Mary Magdalene’s status as the *apostola apostolorum* has received attention in a range of books, from academic studies to the *Da Vinci Code*. Similar developments in the Vaiṣṇava tradition have focused on revalidating the poetry of Alvar and the women poet-saints of the *bhakti* tradition (Dehejia 1990; Hudson 1993; Venkatesan 2007 and 2010).

Patron saints acquire new meanings as the national identities they articulate come under question. In Wales, at the Celtic Hagiography conference in 2000, Elissa Henken identified the cult of the patron saint, David, as a sort of ‘nationalism-lite’: ‘One can celebrate St David’s Day and still vote against devolution’. She concludes with the suggestion that St David’s final message to his followers, ‘Do the little things you heard and saw from me’, may ‘be read as the perfect indictment of a powerless nation [...] or [...] as David’s message of empowerment, his equivalent of “Think globally, act locally” sent across the centuries’ (Henken 2003: 41, 42). Hagiography was one of many contested issues in Eastern Europe and Russia during the Soviet period. In a study of female sainthood in twentieth-century Russia, Elina Kahla has suggested that ‘the collapse of Communism [...] invoked a need for new representations of national saints’ (2007: 17). Gábor Klaniczay’s *Holy Rulers and Blessed Princesses* concludes with a discussion of the re-politicization of saints’ cults in contemporary eastern Europe in the wake of the break-up of the Soviet bloc (2002: 409-11).

Sam Riches (2000) and Jonathan Good (2009) have both pointed in their studies of St George to the renewed interest in the saint as patron saint of England. Muriel McClendon has discussed the reworking of the saint in Protestant England (McClendon 1999), and the political inflections of his cult have been extensively discussed, from the implications of Charles I’s promotion of him through the Order of the Garter (Sharpe 1996: 219-24) to his more recent identification with Euroscepticism and the aggressive nationalism of English football supporters. The irony of a Middle Eastern saint being appropriated by the English Defence League is clear. In the concluding essay of this volume, Sam Riches develops a wider perspective on successive post-Reformation reinventions of the saint. The hero of romantic legends like the Seven Champions of Christendom and the Faerie Queene becomes the quasi-Arthurian knight of Pre-Raphaelite stained glass and the emblem of a very English chivalry on twentieth-century war memorials. Ruskin’s back-to-the-land Guild of St George appropriated the saint for another

Pre-Raphaelite ideal, the return to agricultural and craft-based society. Like Kabir, a saint who challenged authority was appropriated in the service of authority, and like Kabir he has become a focus for conflict between faiths and ethnic groups – but also like Kabir his cult is mutating again into an international and cross-cultural figure, a saint who can bring communities together.

The politics of sainthood have acquired new meaning in post-Soviet Russia as the Orthodox tradition meets the desire for new canonizations of the martyrs of the Soviet era (e.g. Bodin 2007, 2009). The invocation of the *Bogoroditsa*, the Mother of God, by the Pussy Riot protesters in Moscow in February 2012 has thrown these issues into even sharper prominence (Elder 2012). Here, saints are appropriated for political controversy by protesters who sit squarely in the tradition of the *iurodivyi*, the holy fool. Meanwhile, Ukrainian academics are gently pointing out that the hagiography of early Rus, of Boris and Glëb, Ol'ga and Volodimir, is actually Kievan and Ukrainian (see for example Hollingsworth 1992 and indeed much of the *Harvard Library of Early Ukrainian Literature*).

However, saints' cults can also be used to unite modern groupings of nations like the European Community. Slavia Barlieva's discussion of the cults of saints Cyril and Methodius points to the paradox that the cults which were so crucial to the national identities of individual Slavic nations have since Pope John Paul II's declaration in 1980 been venerated as the patron saints of Europe. In 1987 the Council of Europe declared pilgrimage to the shrine of St James at Compostela to be the first European Cultural Route and a symbol of European unity. This has required some determined rewriting to make *Santiago Matamoros*, the slayer of the Moors, into a saint for the inclusivist and secular societies of the twenty-first century.

Meanwhile, the saints are also being invoked in the service of social and economic regeneration in some of Europe's most deprived communities. At Penrhys in the valleys of south Wales, a bleak and windswept housing estate became for a while a byword for alienation and anti-social behaviour. Its regeneration has involved focusing on the long spiritual traditions of the area. John Morgans, minister of the new church on the estate, told schoolchildren the story of the three saints of the area, Illtud, Gwynno and Tyfodwg, who used Penrhys as a meeting-place because the roads between their churches met there. There is no basis in the hagiographical tradition for this story. But to call it invention would be to fall into the trap identified by Goulet and Heinzelmann of looking for the 'chimerical *Ur-text*'. This is *new* hagiography, on the medieval model, so that the saints as examples, helpers and intercessors can serve the needs of a new community.

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