Lived Religion and Everyday Life in Early Modern Hagiographic Material

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Introduction: Hagiography and Lived Religion

*Jenni Kuuliala, Rose-Marie Peake
and Päivi Räisänen-Schröder*

Since late antiquity, the veneration of saints has been a vital, essential part of the everyday life for devout Catholics. Saints were considered and presented as exemplars and perfect Christians who modelled themselves on the life and deeds of Christ. Among the public, their miraculous deeds and shrines were the most visible aspects of their cults. The acts of saints were a common dinner table topic, their lives and miracles were recorded in various written and pictorial formats, and since the thirteenth century, their life, merits, and miracles were also investigated and

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confirmed through the canonisation process. In the veneration of saints, the underlying concept of 'lived religion' is essential. Lived religion, as we understand it, describes individual and communal participation in religious rituals, performances, and other practices. As a concept, it links individual experience to a larger communal and societal framework, it and helps us grasp the many ways in which religion could be experienced and acted out. Furthermore, it is a concept that cuts across different social groups. Learned and elite forms of religion are by no means exempt from this perspective; rather, they form an officially sanctioned cultural and religious template that local lived experiences could adhere to, modify, or even outright reject. Therefore, the study of lived religion is the attempt to analyse the various experiences and expressions of religion in a certain time or place, without lapsing into simplifying dichotomies between 'elite' and 'popular' religion, for example. Religious experience was in essence a dynamic interaction between believers and God and the saints, but also between lord and subject, kin and family members, and professional partners and neighbours.[1]

Hagiography and Scholars: From the Middle Ages to the Early Modern Period

In recent years, hagiographic sources have been widely used in studies on medieval religious practices and social history. By hagiography, we refer in this book to the multitude of material related to saints and people considered holy,[2] such as *vitae* (or saints' lives), spiritual biographies, miracle narratives, canonisation processes, iconography, and drama. Hagiography has played a crucial role in studies on parent–child relationships, gender roles and women's religious practices, communal life, and the history of healing, illness, and disability. Among other things, the scholarship on miracle narratives has been able to debunk the myth that due to high infant mortality rates, parents did not hold tender

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[1] For 'lived religion', see Katajala-Peltomaa and Toivo (2016). For historiography, see Arnold (2014, 23–41).

[2] The concept of 'saint' can be used to denote a person considered to be holy, as well as a canonised saint. The problem lies in the Latin word *sanctus*, which can be an adjective or a noun. Over time, the differentiation between *sanctus/sancta* and *beatus/beata* became more established, and many witnesses in the seventeenth-century canonisation proceedings systematically used the word when referring to a holy person not yet officially canonised. For further discussion, see Finucane (2011, 3–4) and Wetzstein (2004, 211, 289).

feelings towards their children.[3] Miracles have also been used success-fully to analyse the gendered practices of religion and healthcare,[4] and to examine the influence of gender on poverty and networks of care.[5] In addition, they have been used to show the varying concepts and attitudes that existed towards disability and bodily deviance.[6] Important work has also been done on the veneration of saints per se, as a cultural and societal phenomenon.[7] Furthermore, work on saints' *vitae* has offered new insights into discussions on women's religiosity and gender roles in medieval society.[8]

In recent years, studies focusing on the religious culture and lived religion of the Renaissance—especially in Italy—have become more abundant, revealing that the era was far less secularised than previously thought by scholars, and showing the omnipresence of the sacred and the miraculous in various forms.[9] *The Sacred Home in Renaissance Italy* (2018) by Abigail Brundin, Deborah Howard, and Mary Laven extensively analyses domestic piety and devotion across a wide social scale. The book points out that during the Renaissance period, miracles were extremely popular: they were written about, and the stories were printed and distributed in increasing numbers. The authors attribute this phenomenon to the abundance of religious images, the building and reconstructing of shrines, and the increasing amount of material reporting miracles (p. 251). On the other hand, Alison Knowles Frazier shows how the rise of humanism and admiration of classical culture intermingled with Christianity and the writing of saints' lives in her book

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[3] Lett (1997), Krötzl (1989, 1994), Finucane (2000), and Shahar (1990).

[4] Lett (1997), Katajala-Peltomaa (2005, 2009, 2013).

[5] Farmer (2000, 2002, 2005).

[6] Kuuliala (2016a), Metzler (2006), Salter (2015), and Wilson (2010).

[7] See, e.g., Bartlett (2006), Brentano (2000), Finucane (1995), Gaposchkin (2010), Goodich (1995), Goodich (2006), Hanska (2001), Klaniczay (2013), Lett (2008), Smoller (1998), Katajala-Peltomaa (2009), and Katajala-Peltomaa (2015).

[8] See especially Bynum (1988, 1991), Newman (1995), Elliott (2012), and Mooney (1999).

[9] Studies of some individual saints' cults have also been abundant, revealing the potential these sources have, especially when other types of documents have been sparsely preserved. This has been demonstrated particularly in studies concerning the cult and the four-teenth-century canonisation inquiry of St Francesca Romana. See Esch (1973), Esposito (1996), and the articles in Bartolomei Romagnoli (2009).

Possible Lives: Authors and Saints in Renaissance Italy (2005). The importance of visual culture for the veneration of saints in early modern Italy has also been covered by Megan Holmes in *The Miraculous Image in Renaissance Florence* (2013) and Fredrika H. Jacobs in *Votive Panels and Popular Piety in Early Modern Italy* (2013). The materiality of saints' cults in Renaissance Italy has also been addressed by Sally J. Cornelison in *Art and the Relic Cult of St. Antoninus in Renaissance Florence* (2017), which equally focuses on the importance of the veneration of a saint in an area typically associated with (secular) art and humanism. Furthermore, the subject has been discussed in the context of northern Europe in the volume *The Materiality of Devotion in Late Medieval Northern Europe: Images, Objects and Practices* (2016), edited by Henning Laugerud, Salvador Ryan, and Laura Katrine Skinnebach.

Studies on lived religion and the veneration of saints in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries are still sparse, however, and mostly focus on Italy.[10] Even less attention has been paid to these topics in the late sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries. This is somewhat perplexing, as hagiographic material is much more abundant for the early modern period than for the Middle Ages. Together with the reinforcement of the cult of saints by the Catholic Reformation, the invention of the printing press caused the amount of canonisations to explode along with the related material, *vitae*, and other spiritual biographies and iconography.[11] In fact, if measured by the amount of Catholic devotional material produced and the revival of monasticism, the early modern period up to the mid-eighteenth century can be regarded as the heyday of Catholic culture.[12]

It is possible that the potential of hagiographic material has been underestimated because of the abundance of sources in general for the early modern period. Medievalists, for their part, have been eager to

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[10]One important exception to this is the work done by Jodi Bilinkoff on Saint Teresa (see Bilinkoff 1989). Generally speaking, the concept of 'Renaissance' is problematic for the study of social history, especially for northern Europe. Similarly, the beginning of the early modern period is dated differently in different geographical areas. Research on the social and cultural history of northern Europe has been undertaken based on hagiographic texts produced in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries; however, it is usually considered as part of medieval studies. See, e.g., Katajala-Peltomaa (2016), Kuuliala (2016b), Maniura (2004), Park (1994), Smoller (1997, 1998), and Van Mulder (2015).

[11]Bilinkoff (2005).

[12]Beales (2003, 8–9, 28–29) and Strasser (2015, 569).

turn to religious material, as it offers one of the few insights into social issues. At the same time, 'master narratives' created by historians have labelled post-medieval times 'progressive', less religious, and more 'scientific'. Moreover, the Catholic Church itself has taken a more cautious attitude—especially towards miracles—after the Council of Trent (1545–1563), which is considered the launch of the Catholic Reformation.[13] All of these factors have without doubt had an impact on the way scholars choose their early modern topic and source material.

Nevertheless, scholarship using hagiographic material to study the cultural and social history of the post-Tridentine period has started to emerge. A groundbreaking work addressing the cultural history of Tridentine sanctity is Simon Ditchfield's *Liturgy, Sanctity and History in Tridentine Italy: Pietro Maria Campi and the Preservation of the Particular* (2002). Jodi Bilinkoff, for her part, has studied early modern *vitae* in several Catholic regions to examine confessor–penitent relationships in her *Related Lives: Confessors and Their Female Penitents, 1450–1750* (2005). More recently, in her book *Maria Maddalena de' Pazzi: The Making of a Counter-Reformation Saint* (2016), Clare Copeland portrays how one person's saintly reputation and eventual canonisation was created and perceived by Catholic communities. Similarly, the volume *Culture et société au miroir des procès de canonisation (XVIe–XXe siècle)* (2016), edited by Philippe Castagnetti and Christian Renoux, points out that the canonisation process cannot be understood without taking into account the social context in which it functioned. When it comes to the use of early modern hagiographic material for the study of social and medical history, the most innovative works are Jacalyn Duffin's *Medical Miracles: Doctors, Saints and Healing in the Modern World*

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[13] Ditchfield (1995, 1; 2009, 559–60). The reorganisation of the Catholic Church in the early modern period has traditionally been described as the Counter-Reformation. Some scholars have objected to this term, claiming that it reduces the process to a mere reaction to the Protestant Reformation despite the fact that certain developments had taken root already in the late Middle Ages. Alternative terms used in Anglophone scholarship include the Catholic Reformation, the refashioning of the Catholic faith or Church, the Catholic revival or renewal, and early modern Catholicism. French scholars often employ the term *renaissance catholique* or *la Réforme catholique*, whereas historians in German-speaking areas generally use the terms *katholische Reform* or *katholische Reformation*, as opposed to the older *Gegenreformation*. See, e.g., Bireley (1999), O'Malley (2000), and Delumeau (2010). Nevertheless, in this volume we have chosen to use a variety of terms synonymously according to the preference of the authors of the articles.

(2009), Albrecht Burkardt's *Les Clients des saints. Maladie et quête du miracle à travers les procès de canonisation de la première moitié du XVIIe siècle en France* (2004), and David Gentilcore's *Healers and Healing in Early Modern Italy* (1998). The three authors have all studied healing through miracles.

This volume builds on the scholarship outlined above, but also aims to surpass it by offering an interdisciplinary approach to the study of Renaissance and early modern hagiographic material. We hope this will inspire more research in the field in the years to come. The articles shed light on the various types of hagiographic material and the abundant ways it can be used to study everyday life and lived religion between the fifteenth and the seventeenth centuries. Therefore, our goal is not to study the promotion and validation of saints' cults per se, but to pave the way for future research and illuminate how this material can be used in exploring various aspects of the experience of everyday life and lived religion.

HAGIOGRAPHY AND GENRE: BASIC PRINCIPLES AND DEVELOPMENT

The prolific use of hagiographic material for research is based on acknowledging the different ways it was generated. The culturally established ideas about sainthood and the miraculous have largely shaped the various forms and narrative patterns of hagiographic texts and images. In general, their purpose was to convince the audience of the protagonist's holiness, to convey Catholic principles and tradition, and to inspire veneration and a proper way of life. The various ways this was achieved, and how it intermingled with the veneration of saints as part of lived religion, are discussed in the articles in this volume.

While the ways of recording and depicting the saints' deeds have remained more or less the same throughout the centuries, there were also significant changes in the procedures during the late medieval and the early modern period. Since the thirteenth century, the Catholic Church has confirmed saints' cults through the process of canonisation, during which the putative saint's life, deeds, and miracles are investigated in a legal inquiry. This process was already strictly regulated in the Middle Ages.[14] The accounts of witnesses were carefully gathered and

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[14]For the medieval canonisation process and its legal developments, see Klaniczay (2004), Paciocco (2006), and Vauchez (1988).

the records of the inquests analysed in the papal curia. Although our sources about the curial phase before the late fifteenth century are very sparse,[15] the criticality of this phase is clear, and only a small portion of medieval inquests led to an official canonisation. There were also significant gaps in canonisation procedures before the Council of Trent. The Western schism of the fourteenth century put the processes on hold, and those conducting the hearings of St Rose of Viterbo, St Vincent Ferrer, St Frances of Rome, and St Bernardino of Siena in the mid-fifteenth century more or less had to start anew.[16] As shown by Ronald C. Finucane, the processes at the turn of the sixteenth century were in many ways tumultuous, reflecting the political and religious situation of the period. There were no canonisations between St Benno and St Antoninus of Florence in 1523 and St Diego of Algala in 1588, with the latter canonisation occurring more than twenty years after the end of the Council of Trent.[17]

In the early modern period, the refashioning of the Catholic Church included a revision of the requirements to confirm saints' cults. This was partly due to Protestant criticism towards the cult of saints. The Council of Trent did not directly change the procedure of canonisation, but it issued a decree on the validity of saints' cults and the importance of images and relics for them. It therefore secured old traditions while calling upon bishops to take firmer control over new cults to avoid scandals. This decree then prompted the changes made to the process of canonisation, which occurred in phases.[18] Perhaps the most famous change was the creation of the Sacred Congregation of Rites (*Sacra Rituum Congregatio*) in 1588 and the office of the *promotor fidei*, which has been active since 1631.[19] Furthermore, the renewed process was implemented in two stages. First, there was an 'ordinary process' executed by the local

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[15] Finucane (2011, 2).

[16] Pellegrini (2018, 107).

[17] Finucane (2011).

[18] See, e.g., Copeland (2016, 6–7). See also Papa (2001) for the phases of these developments.

[19] The first *promotor fidei* was Antonio Cerri. His task was to evaluate the documents created to support a saintly candidate's cause and to find any possible weaknesses or inconsistencies in them. Ditchfield (1992, 381–82). For the developments after the Council of Trent, see also Burke (2005, 49–51).

bishop, during which testimonies were usually gathered in great numbers and in varying locations. If the records of this phase were accepted by the curia, a second, more specific 'apostolic' inquest was conducted under papal authority. The auditors of the Rota then produced a report, which a committee of cardinals assessed and reported to the pope. Finally, the case was examined in three consistories.[20]

At the turn of the seventeenth century, canonisations were still conducted mostly according to medieval standards. This applied both to saints with an established *fama publica*, such as St Jacek ('Hyacinth of Cracow', d. 1257) and St Andrea Corsini (d. 1374), and to recently deceased people with a saintly reputation, such as St Carlo Borromeo, St Filippo Neri, St François de Sales, St Teresa of Ávila, and St Rose of Lima. Urban VIII in particular made the rules stricter with his 1625 and 1634 regulations. The process was thus officially made two-phased: first, there had to be an official beatification process, and only then could the canonisation process be initiated. Furthermore, the 'fifty-year rule' was introduced, meaning that the canonisation process could only be started fifty years after the death of the candidate.[21]

However, the significance of the new regulations of the Tridentine Church must not be exaggerated. They were not made retroactively, and the status of many people considered holy remained ambiguous: from the medieval period onwards, there were flourishing local cults that received no papal recognition but held great significance for local lived religion.[22] The new rules also did not apply to saints canonised in the medieval period or to martyrs and saints from late antiquity and the early Middle Ages, who enjoyed official status without a canonisation process. Furthermore, many saints who eventually received canonisation were already venerated as 'official' saints beforehand, as the documents promoting their cause immediately after their deaths demonstrate.[23]

The growing attempt to control saints' cults did not thus diminish their importance for communities or people's eagerness to seek their assistance during crises. At the same time, the early modern era witnessed

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[20] Copeland (2016, 9–10).

[21] Burke (2005, 50) and Ditchfield (2010).

[22] One such group of people considered to be holy although not necessarily officially canonised are the post-Tridentine Catholic martyrs. See Gregory (2001, 252–53, 297).

[23] Burke (2005, 51).

the repurposing and reformation of the saints' cults. They were significant in overseas missions, and the newly converted Catholics might have had different needs for saintly intercession and exemplary Christian lives.[24] The missionaries could take an established European cult to the New World and reshape it to fit local requirements.[25] Alternatively, they could at times promote stories of exceptional native people they had encountered and converted, thus trying to carry traditional forms of lived religion into new territories of Catholicism. Subsequently, they could report back to Europe about successful missions, where not only the missionaries themselves but also newly converted Christians could live and die as saints.[26]

Nevertheless, the renewed principles of canonisation and the promotion of sainthood affected the forms hagiography took. The writing of *vitae* likewise became more regulated. They were essentially manifestos of sanctity used as evidence in the canonisation process. The distribution of saints' legends also had an impact on spreading and manifesting a cult, which, in turn had a direct effect on the practices of lived religion.[27] Stories were also often written of the lives of visionary women whose confessor aimed to confirm his penitent's theological orthodoxy by a *vita*. The *vitae* also educated Catholics in the proper Christian way of life.[28] In the early modern period, old legends were revised according to the criteria of humanist historical criticism: manuscripts were compared in order to reconstruct the 'original' narrative. New *vitae* were composed in the same critical spirit. In the most famous manifestation of the new trend, the Jesuit Heribert Rosweyde (1569–1629), and after

[24] See Ronald J. Morgan's article in this volume for further discussion.

[25] See Smoller (2014) for the ways the Dominicans transferred the cult of Vincent Ferrer in the new world from that of the healer of the church and the schism to a new apostle and converter. See also Morgan (2000, 2002).

[26] For instance, St Kateri (Catherine) Tekakwitha (d. 1680), a young woman of Indian descent converted by Jesuits in New France, was identified as holy already by her contemporaries, both by the Jesuits instructing her in Christianity and by the circle of female proselytes around her. Father Claude Cauchetière and Father Pierre Cholenec each recorded their version of Kateri's story and the miraculous healing of her own smallpox-inflicted body immediately after her death. She was soon venerated as a saint, although her official canonisation did not occur until as late as 2012. Greer (2004).

[27] See Jenni Kuuliala's article in this volume, p. 265–292.

[28] Bilinkoff (2005, 4–5).

him Jean Bolland (1596–1665) and his followers—the Bollandists—initiated an official collection of saints' lives known as the *Acta Sanctorum*.[29] The saints' lives were a tremendously popular literary genre, and reading or listening to *vitae* was an essential part of people's religious practices, regardless of their education and social standing.

Canonised individuals and the 'unofficially holy' were immortalised in hagiographic writings. Often the accounts were the work of confessors about their penitents, but several spiritual autobiographies have also survived.[30] In seventeenth-century France, saints' lives poured from the presses, and thousands of narratives were produced of religious women alone.[31] The protagonists include, for example, religious laypeople, clergy, the founders or reformers of Orders, abbots and abbesses who founded individual monasteries under an established Order, and the first members of new or reformed Orders. Jacques Le Brun, who has studied the *vitae* of religious French women, has pointed out that these spiritual biographies are the inheritors and largely also the modern form of traditional, medieval hagiography and Jacobus da Voragine's *Legenda Aurea*, a popular collection of saints' biographies written in the late thirteenth century. This is natural, as medieval hagiography was essential reading for early modern Catholics who then echoed it in their contemporary spiritual literature. Furthermore, a resemblance to affirmed legends increased the credibility of contemporary holy narratives. Early modern spiritual biographies continued to contain elements such as the manifestation of virtue in the saintly person already in early age, diabolic temptations, supernatural interventions, miraculous healings, mortifications, and dreams and visions.[32]

The Renaissance brought about an emphasis on the heroic deeds of the saintly person: boosted by the confessional split brought on by the Reformations, new possibilities opened up to live in a saintly manner, die as a martyr, and, finally, be memorialised in texts or images. The ideological and cultural role of martyrs intensified over the course of the sixteenth century, as bold witnesses of the faith were cherished on both sides of the

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[29] Burke (2005); *The Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent* 25, 218–20; *Acta Sanctorum*.

[30] See, e.g., Bilinkoff (2005).

[31] Suire (2001) and Le Brun (2013).

[32] Le Brun (2013, 8–15).

confessional divide. From the early sixteenth century onwards, the crimi-nalisation and persecution of religious others, religious wars, and zealous missionary activities offered new opportunities to suffer and die for one's religious convictions (and the glory of God). At the same time, stories, songs, images, and plays about martyrs became hugely popular, offering models of ideal Christian attitudes and actions. Contrary to Protestant experiences, wherein the martyrologies were largely framed in apocalyptic terms, Catholics tied the heroic fates of their martyrs to the long tradition of martyrdom dating from the beginning of Christianity.[33]

As for miracles, including apparitions of saintly *personae*,[34] since the medieval times the principal idea in proving them was to find evidence of whether the alleged miracle really was a miracle and not some nat-ural occurrence, human act, or demonic trick.[35] The usage of medical vocabulary and knowledge became more regular and systematic over the course of time, especially following the formation of the canonisation process.[36] Demands for the scientific examination of the alleged miracles grew even more rigorous in the aftermath of the Council of Trent, in which medical science played a crucial role.[37] The role of medical experts was also vital for the examination of the miracle of the incorruptibility of a putative saint's corpse.[38]

Despite the growing need for the scientific evaluation of miracles, the importance of miracles for lived religion did not diminish. As is the case with all hagiographic material, collections of miracles were published in growing numbers to promote cults and new shrines.[39] However, the

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[33] Burschel (2004), Freeman (2007), Gregory (2001), and Le Brun (2013, 16).

[34] See the article by Tomasz Wiślicz in this volume on Marian apparitions in early modern Poland.

[35] E.g. Goodich (2007, 8–28).

[36] Lett (2016) and Ziegler (1999). See Wilson (2014) for the use of medical science in high medieval miracle collections.

[37] See Duffin (2009) and Jenni Kuuliala's article in this volume for further discussion. This development became even more notorious in the eighteenth century, when Prospero Lambertini (later Pope Benedict XIV; 1740–1758) acted as the *promotor fidei* and greatly influenced the interplay of medical science and the investigation of the miraculous. Messbarger (2016) and Pomata (2016). See also Touber (2014) for science and the cult of saints.

[38] Bouley (2017). See also Touber (2014, 12–13).

[39] Thomas C. Devaney discusses this in his article in this volume.

ability of saints to perform miracles was not restricted to healing acute conditions; rather, as had been the case since late antiquity, they also brought help to various problematic situations in life.[40] The problem for the modern scholar, of course, is that there is no way of knowing how often people actually thought they had experienced a miracle, or of establishing the variety of phenomena interpreted as being miraculous. Particularly in the canonisation records from the fourteenth century onwards, the proportion of cures for acute conditions and rescues from mortal danger grew, while the proportion of miracles healing a long-term disability shrank[41]; this development is more visible in the early modern processes, although there is great variation in the length of the cured infirmities.[42] Occasionally, those conducting canonisation inquests also recorded non-healing miracles.[43] Furthermore, it turns out that there was more variation in the types of miracles in the collections where there was less clerical control.[44] This shows that the lived religious reality was likely even more multifaceted than the miracle collections show, even though they represent the 'canonical' role of the miraculous.

As mentioned above, the importance of devotional and miracle-working images grew already during the Renaissance, especially in Italy. The wealthy also possessed devotional art, which was central to the religious lives in their households.[45] The Catholic Reformation

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[40] See the articles by Karen McCluskey, Jenni Kuuliala, Thomas C. Devaney, Andreea Marculescu, and Ronald J. Morgan for miracles of various types.

[41] One of the explanations for this phenomenon is that there was a shift in the forms of veneration in the late Middle Ages. While a pilgrimage had previously been needed to obtain a miracle, the use of *vota* and portable relics became more common from the fourteenth century onwards. This would naturally have made it easier to ask for saintly help in acute situations, or at least to get the help recorded. See Krötzl (2000, 561–66) and Vauchez (1988, 549–50).

[42] Duffin (2009, 89, 93).

[43] For example, the testimony of one nobleman in the canonisation hearing of Philip Neri records the holy man curing the family's beloved pet sparrow. *Il Primo processo*, vol. II, 115–16.

[44] Gentilcore (1998, 195). For example, the flourishing cult of the miracle-working image of Madonna della Quercia in Viterbo is reported to have started in 1461, when a knight escaping his enemies became invisible and evaded danger thanks to the painting. The collection, which extends to the seventeenth century, also includes a great variety of miracles, ranging from traditional cures and rescues to tempests, fires, and imprisonments. *Corona ammirabile de miracoli e gratie fatte dalla gran signora madre di Dio*, 1–2, passim.

[45] See Fletcher (2016, 25–26).

further induced the expansion of visual culture, the significance of which increased in popular veneration.[46] The stipulations of the Council of Trent endowed on altarpieces, paintings, and statues a didactic role in transmitting the central doctrines and values of the Church to the populace. Some of the greatest Baroque artists worked for the Catholic Church. For example, the masterpieces of Bernini, Rubens, and Borromini were used to manifest the grandeur and power of the thriving Catholic Church. Although Baroque art is typically depicted as bringing movement, colour, emotions, and sensuality to the fore for the first time, it was also very much about the affirmation of tradition, especially by the means of depicting traditional hagiography.[47] In addition to art, architecture was also influenced by the Catholic Reformation and the cult of saints, as has been recently examined by Helen Hills in the case of seventeenth-century Naples.[48]

Visual material also gained great importance in the promotion of canonisations. For example, after the death of Filippo Neri in 1595, 950 images were made and sold to interested parties, including those able to help the cause. A few years later, it was observed that more than 3250 printed images of Neri had been distributed to devotees.[49] As a rather grandiloquent project, the *Veneranda Fabbrica del Duomo di Milano* commissioned the *Quadroni di San Carlo*—the production of two cycles of large-scale oil paintings depicting St Carlo Borromeo's life and miracles—to honour his beatification (1602) and canonisation (1610).[50] The importance of visual culture for the veneration of saints is also evident in the abundance of votive *tavolette* the devotees have left at cult sites as a sign of their gratitude since the fourteenth century,[51] and in the numerous Marian images that became famous miracle-working cult sites.[52]

[46] Sangalli (1993, 118).

[47] See, e.g., Hills (2011, 18–20) and Bazin (2004, 11–12), et passim.

[48] Hills (2016).

[49] Ditchfield (1995, 237–38).

[50] For visual culture and Carlo Borromeo's cult, see Turchini (1984, 40–44).

[51] These have been extensively analysed in Jacobs (2013). As one example, the documents reveal that in 1606, four years before the canonisation of Carlo Borromeo, there were 1411 *ex voto tavolette* in the Duomo of Milan. Marcora (1962, 79).

[52] See Thomas C. Devaney's article in this volume for the shrines in Spain.

Overall, the visual sources add another layer to early modern lived religion, showing the material, tangible side of the veneration of saints. They may also record different aspects of the cults than the written records do, providing new viewpoints and topics of research.[53] The same can be said of literature and drama, which hagiography has hugely influenced since the Middle Ages. Developing from liturgical drama into religious vernacular drama, mystery plays, Easter plays, and miracle and morality plays became an essential aspect of late medieval and early modern lived religious culture. For example, Jesuit drama, which was widely used as a pedagogical instrument, introduced the public to the deeds and lives of saints and martyrs, and reinforced the popularity of well-known tales.[54]

STRUCTURE OF THE BOOK

Present in both everyday life and festive rituals, saints provide a prime example of lived religion in early modern Catholicism. The veneration of saints was a religious and performative practice that cut across all social groups within early modern Catholicism, from pope to peasant. Most people had some experience of the workings of saints, if not personally, then at least through their ties to family and community. Children grew up surrounded by images, objects, and stories about holy people and their deeds, people with *fama sanctitas* interacted with their communities, guiding and counselling them, and the possibility of the miraculous was always present. In other words, saints were omnipresent in communal life and in the material world and space.

As is the case with all aspects of lived religion, the veneration of saints also helped people give meaning and shape to their various mundane and religious experiences. Thus, saints and their cults cut through everyday experiences, which in turn influenced the various forms their veneration took. The versatile and ubiquitous role saints and their cults played in the lives of various communities is also reflected in the sources used and topics discussed in this book. Arising from our understanding of religion

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[53] See Diana Bullen Presciutti's article in this volume. See also Jacobs (2013) for votive panels as a source for everyday life and veneration.

[54] On Jesuit drama, see, e.g., Burschel (2004, 263–83) and Gallo (2017). See also in this volume the articles of Andreea Marculescu on late medieval French drama and Florian Schmid on late medieval German drama.

as a lived experience and practice, we also advocate that hagiographic material be understood broadly, encompassing all kinds of texts and images linked to saints' cults and canonisations. This also allows a more comprehensive selection of topics to be studied based on hagiographic material, which consequently results in a more thorough understanding of the various practices and nuances of early modern lived religion.

At the same time, given the scope of the potential topics and sources, we do not aim to cover every possible topic or hagiographic source type—or even the majority of them—but rather hope to provide illustrative examples of the type of research on lived religion between the fifteenth and the seventeenth centuries that can be done based on texts and images related to those people considered holy. Similarly, this book does not cover the whole of Christendom. Instead, we focus primarily on the southern European cultural sphere—the 'heartland' of Early Modern Catholicism—including France, Italy, and Spain, countries that remained Catholic at the time of the Reformations. Two articles discuss the topic in the context of central Europe, and one focuses on the Spanish colonies. Similar topics and materials could—and hopefully will be—analysed regarding other geographic areas and confessions as well; this would also enable the detection of further continuities and changes in the practices of lived religion.

The veneration of saints and lived religion are studied in this book from several viewpoints that focus on holy lives in connection with the vagaries of everyday life. Saints' *vitae* and spiritual biographies are used in the articles by Barbara Diefendorf, Christopher J. Lane, and Rose-Marie Peake. Various forms of miracle narratives, the help saints brought to everyday life, and the way their example was used to comfort and teach people are analysed in the articles of Thomas C. Devaney, Diana Bullen Presciutti, Andreea Marculescu, Florian Schmid, Karen McCluskey, Ronald J. Morgan, Tomasz Wiślicz, and Jenni Kuuliala. Drawing from different types of evidence—miracle collections, art, plays, saints' lives, and canonisation processes, and other devotional printings— these writers demonstrate the various aspects of social history upon which hagiographic sources can shed light.

Barbara Diefendorf uses seventeenth-century French Catholic biographies to examine relations between Catholics and Protestants in intimate settings such as in family life, work, and friendship. Previous research has tended to emphasise the relatively peaceful inter-confessional relations— despite the repeated violent outbreaks—that held sway more or less until

the suppression of the Protestant faith in 1685 by Louis XIV. In her article, Diefendorf shows that the hardening of confessional lines had begun already before the actions of the king, and that in this, Catholic hagiography was an important tool used to point out the dangers of heresy.

Christopher J. Lane tackles the subject of vocation among seventeenth-century French Visitandine nuns by examining their hagiographic death notices, which offer abundant biographical information. Lane finds that these necrologies reveal that different spiritual currents were present in Visitation convents: young women took the veil for various reasons, despite the rigorist approaches to vocational discernment advocated by several authors.

The training of the members of the Daughters of Charity, a seventeenth-century Catholic community for religious laywomen, is the subject of Rose-Marie Peake's article. She examines the ways a hagiography of shepherdesses was used to mould the behaviour and appearance of the sisters. Peake argues that an overall rustic discourse, importantly composed by the aforementioned hagiography, served the survival of a company weary of monastic enclosure, thus saving the company's apostolic mission among the underprivileged.

Tomasz Wiślicz focuses on apparitions of the Virgin Mary in the early modern Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. By using devotional prints and manuscripts related to Marian shrines, Wiślicz examines the transformation and use of the life stories of visionaries who gave rise to the shrines. He finds that the popularity of the shrines among the pilgrims made the life stories become more detailed and hagiographic, thus serving the pastoral care needs of people of the lower social strata in particular.

In her article, Diana Bullen Presciutti examines the forms taken by a thirteenth-century miracle performed by the Dominican Saint Peter Martyr in Renaissance Italy. In this miracle, the saint revives the fourth child of a woman who was hated by her husband for having already given birth to three stillborn children. Her primary material is three paintings hitherto largely ignored by scholars. By analysing these pieces of art in their social and cultural contexts, Presciutti demonstrates what kind of new information on a poorly recorded topic—marital violence and uxoricide—can be obtained by the means of art history, and how its methods can be used to study various social phenomena more extensively.

Karen McCluskey's article on Renaissance Venice uses a wide array of hagiographic sources, both written and pictorial, to analyse the

significance of saints in the strategies of Venice and its citizens to cope with their environment, mainly water and *acqua alta*. The article illustrates how, despite the universality of saints' cults, local circumstances, customs, and beliefs could shape and create particular forms of lived religion. The article also shows how myths related to the area's past mixed with more recent forms of veneration.

As mentioned above, the early modern period saw an increase in the number of miracle books being written and printed. These are discussed in Thomas C. Devaney's article from the viewpoint of how the sacred and the quotidian intertwined in seventeenth-century Spain, especially in terms of Marian shrines and miracle-working images. His article analyses miracles and pilgrimages both as emotional practices and as instructive elements that shaped and cultivated emotions. Devaney also takes into account the important role the sacred landscape and sacred locations had for practices of veneration.

Andreea Marculescu takes a more corporeal approach to the veneration of saints. Using Andrieu de la Vigne's fifteenth-century play *Mystère de saint Martin* as her main source, she discusses how miracles that healed different mental and physical illnesses and disabilities were staged, and how the communication between the saint and the petitioner was embodied in the rhetoric structure of the play. Central to Marculescu's analysis is the way pain as a personal and shared sentiment was vocalised, and the manner in which the text uses relationships to strengthen devotional practices.

Hagiographic drama is also investigated by Florian Schmid, who examines one of the best-quality late medieval German Easter plays, the fifteenth-century *Easter Play of Redentin*. Presenting the typical salvation events of the resurrection of Christ, it nevertheless proposes an extraordinary adaptation to the environment of the intended audience. Schmid shows that particular strategies of representation were used, shedding light on the ways the central Christian hagiographic narrative was moulded to suit contemporary needs. The play and the salvific message it aimed to convey appealed to the community, for example, by means of using the vernacular and setting the play in the Baltic Sea area instead of Jerusalem.

The two last articles use canonisation process records as their source. The social history of medicine is also a key focus in Jenni Kuuliala's article. Using the apostolic canonisation inquiry of St Andrea Corsini in 1606, Kuuliala discusses the interplay of lived medicine and lived religion in late sixteenth-century Florence. Through testimonies of the healing

miracles St Andrea performed, Kuuliala analyses the role the community played in the search for different medical and religious healing methods, as well as the manner in which medicine and religion collaborated and complemented each other in this time period.

As the final article in this collection, Ronald J. Morgan's study moves beyond the borders of Europe and uses the canonisation inquest of the Jesuit saint Pedro Claver, held in 1657, to study the everyday life of Africans and their descendants in the New World. In the document, the mostly black population of Cartagena appear as objects of the holy man's virtuous deeds. However, at the same time, the sources allow a modern researcher to treat these people as subjects in their own right. At the centre of Morgan's analysis are the sacraments, which were Claver's primary instrument in his quest of holiness, and the methods by which the established characteristics of sainthood were shaped to fit the religious and cultural situation of Cartagena.

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