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Christians have often admired and venerated martyrs who died for their faith, but for long time thought that the bodies of martyrs should remain undisturbed in their graves. Initially, Christian attitude toward the bones of the dead, saint or not, was that of respectful distance. The Beginnings of the Cult of Relics examines how this changed in the mid-fourth century. Robert Wisniewski investigates how Christians began to believe in power of relics, first, over demons, then over physical diseases and enemies. He considers how they sought to reveal hidden knowledge at the tombs of saints and why they buried the death close to them. An essential element of this new belief was a string conviction that the power of relics was transferred in a physical way and so the following chapters study relics as material objects. Wisniewski analyses what the contact with relics looked like and how close it was. Did people touch, kiss, or look at the very bones, or just at reliquaries which contained them? When did the custom of dividing relics appear? Finally, the book the book deals with discussions and polemics concerning relics and tries to find out how strong was the opposition which this new phenomenon had to face, both within and outside Christianity on its way relics to become an essential element of the medieval religiosity.

This book contains eleven essays, prefaced by a general introduction, on a set of related themes: the characteristic traits and diverse functions of holy men; the fashioning of saints out of a small minority of holy men and a number of other individuals of high social status but with more dubious spiritual credentials; the literary processes involved in the construction of hagiographical texts; the role of hagiography in the creation and diffusion of cults; and the worldly interests and other purposes which were served by hagiographical texts and the cults which they propagated. These themes are explored across a wide range of social and cultural milieux, extending from the late antique east Mediterranean through the early medieval Frankish world and Byzantium to Russia and Islam in the high middle ages. The work of Peter Brown, in particular his article, 'The Rise and Function of the Holy Man in Late Antiquity', first published in 1971, forms a constant point of reference, acknowledged by the contributors as having irradiated the whole field with fresh, provocative, and illuminating ideas.

In this first comprehensive monograph on St Erik, the author follows the cult of the Swedish royal saint from its obscure beginnings in the twelfth century up to its climax in the time of the Kalmar Union (1397-1523). The focus of the book lies on the interaction of the cult with different groups within medieval Swedish society and the cult's attempts to utilize the prestige of the saint to further its political aims. From the middle of the thirteenth century the cult was particularly connected to the archbishopric of Uppsala and the royal dynasty of Bjalbo. During the fifteenth century the Swedish royal saint symbolized (together with St Olaf of Norway and St Knut of Denmark) the three kingdoms of the Kalmar Union. At the same time his prestige was successfully used in the propaganda of King Karl Knutsson (Bonde) and the three Sture-riksforestandare to legitimate their anti-Union politics. In order to reach a broad perspective the author uses a wide variety of sources. This includes a number texts which contain information about the cult of the saint (legend, miracle collection, offices, sermons, chronicles, charters). In addition
different sorts of depictions showing St Erik on wall paintings, altar pieces, seals, and coins are used in order to give a comprehensive account of the multifaceted veneration of this saint. This book examines the origins, development and history of the cult of Saint Catherine of Siena. Gerald Parsons argues that the cult of Catherine of Siena constitutes a remarkable example of the cult of a particular saint which, across more than six centuries, has been the vehicle for an evolving sequence of civil religious rituals and meanings. He shows how the cult of this particular saint developed, firstly, as an expression of Sienese civil religion; secondly, as a focus for Italian civil religion; and finally into an expression of European civil religion. Instead of the predominantly devotional - and frequently essentially hagiographical - approach of much of the literature on Catherine of Siena, Parsons examines the significance of her cult from the perspective of civil religion and the social history of religion. This book explores the uses made of sanctity and patronage by the Franks. This accessible study is the first critical investigation of the cult of saints among Muslims and Jews in medieval Syria and the Near East. Through case studies of saints and their devotees, discussion of the architecture of monuments, examination of devotional objects, and analysis of ideas of 'holiness', Meri depicts the practices of living religion and explores the common heritage of all three monotheistic faiths. Critical readings of a wide range of contemporary sources - travel writing, geographical works, pilgrimage guides, legal writings, historical sources, hagiography, and biography - reveal a vibrant religious culture in which the veneration of saints and pilgrimage to tombs and shrines were fundamental. The Cult of St Anna in Byzantium is the first undertaking in Byzantine research to study the phenomenon of St Anna's cult from the sixth to the fifteenth centuries. It was prompted by the need to enrich our knowledge of a female saint who had already been studied in the West but remained virtually unknown in Eastern Christendom. It focuses on a figure little-studied in scholarship and examines the formation, establishment and promotion of an apocryphal saint who made her way to the pantheon of Orthodox saints. Visual and material culture, relics and texts track the gradual social and ideological transformation of Byzantium from early Christianity until the fifteenth century. This book not only examines various aspects of early Christian and Byzantine civilisation, but also investigates how the cult of saints greatly influenced cultural changes in order to suit theological, social and political demands. The cult of St Anna influenced many diverse elements of Christian life in Constantinople, including the creation of sacred spaces and the location of haghiasmata (fountains of holy water) in the city; imperial patronage; the social reception of St Anna's story; and relic narratives. This monograph breaks new ground in explaining how and why Byzantium and the Orthodox Church attributed scriptural authority to a minor figure known only from a non-canonical work. From 11 to 16 August 2003, the nineteenth international congress of the Societas Liturgica was held in Veldhoven (the Netherlands), with as its theme A cloud of witnesses. Saints and role models in Christian liturgy. The present publication contains a collection of nineteen case studies reflecting the versatility of the congress in its variations and themes, its scope in time (from early Christian times to the present day), and the fact that many churches and religious communities as well as the Jewish tradition are represented. The collection contains a number of articles that reflect on subjects like the phenomenon of saintliness, heortology, the dimensions of time and space in ritual-liturgical practice, and saints and canonizations in the present-day Roman Catholic and Protestant church. The last section consists of contributions on saints and forms of saint's cult by a number of authors, based on their own religious communities, such as the Old Catholic Church, Anglican Church, Dissenting Free Church, Reformed Church and ecumenical movement. The editors of this collection have by way of an introduction compiled a historiographic-bibliographic overview relating to saints and their cults in various research domains, specifically within liturgical studies, also touching upon certain specific, and for this collection interesting, themes such as the position of the (cult of) saints in cultural and historical studies, Protestant traditions, and the Feminist Liturgical Movement. "The cult of the saints is a phenomenon that expanded rapidly in the fourth century, and John Chrysostom's homilies are important witnesses to its growth. In this volume, Wendy Mayer investigates the liturgical, topographical, and pastoral aspects that marked the martyr cult at Antioch and Constantinople in John's time."--BOOK JACKET. Title Summary field provided by Blackwell North America, Inc. All Rights Reserved. This Handbook is the only reference work of its kind providing surveys on a broad range of topics concerning Abrahamic Religions. Each of its essays studies a central topic across the three traditions, allowing for a unique and comprehensive understanding of the interactions and relationships between these religions. Such a volume is essential for students and academics in the field of comparative religion. From its earliest centuries, one of the most notable features of Christianity has been the veneration of the saints -- the holy dead. This ambitious history tells the fascinating story of the cult of the saints from its origins in the second-century days of the Christian martyrs to the Protestant Reformation. Robert Bartlett examines all of the most important aspects of the saints -- including miracles, relics, pilgrimages, shrines, and the saints' role in the calendar, literature, and art. The book explores the central role played by the bodies and body parts of saints, and the special treatment these relics received. From the routes, dangers, and
Medieval Syria

Professor Anne Simon's study of St. Katherine of Alexandria adds a welcome new interdisciplinary perspective to the study of this major figure in medieval European history. Katherine of Alexandria was a major object of devotion within medieval Europe, ranking second only to the Virgin Mary in the canon of female saints. Yet despite her undoubted importance, relatively little is known about the significance and function of her cult within the German-speaking territories that stood at the heart of Europe. Anne Simon's study fills a significant gap in current research, the work has much to offer scholars of medieval religion, researchers in medieval studies and religious studies scholars engaged in comparative research.

The cult of saints was one of the most important aspects of life in the Middle Ages, and it often formed the nucleus of developing group identities in a town, a province or a country. The literature of Anglo-Saxon England is unique among contemporary European literatures in that it features a vast amount of saints' Lives in the vernacular. Of these Lives, Ælfric is the most important author, and his saints' Lives have never previously been explored in their contemporary setting. In this study, Gretsch analyses Ælfric's Lives of five important saints in the light of their cults in Anglo-Saxon England. This gives the reader fascinating glimpses of Ælfric at work: he adapts the cults and rewrites the received Latin hagiography of the five saints, with the result that each of their English Lives conveys a distinct message to the contemporary political elite and to a lay audience at large.

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Bringing together artifacts, texts, and practices within an interpretive framework that stresses the cultural work performed by saints, Kathleen Ashley presents a comparative study of the cults of the medieval Sainte Foy at a number of the sites where she was especially venerated. This book analyzes how each cult site produced the saint it needed, appropriating or creating whatever was required to that end. Ashley's approach is thoroughly interdisciplinary, incorporating visual, religious, medieval, and women's and gender studies as well as literary studies and social history. She uses the theoretical framework of "cultural work" to analyze how the cult of Sainte Foy was sponsored and received by specific groups in different locales in Europe. The book is comprehensive in terms of historical as well as geographical range, tracing the history of the cult from the early Middle Ages into the present day. It also includes historiographical analysis, examining the way the cults of Sainte Foy have been represented in various historical accounts. Ashley's narrative challenges the boundary between "elite" and "popular" culture and complicates the traditional vernacular vs. Latin language binary. A chief aim of the study is to show how "art" objects always operated in conjunction with other cultural texts to construct a saint's cult. The volume is
heavily illustrated, showing artifacts such as stained-glass windows and wall paintings which are not readily available from any other source. This book will be of special interest to scholars in art history, medieval history, gender studies, and religion. Scandinavia has often been considered as a peripheral part of the Christian world, with its archbishopric in Nidaros an isolated outpost of the Catholic Church. This volume, however, offers a reassessment of such preconceptions by exploring the way in which the Nidaros see celebrated the cult of saints and followed traditions that were both part of, and distinct from, elsewhere in Christian Europe. The contributions gathered here come from specialists across different disciplines, among them historians, philologists, art historians, and epigraphists, to offer a multifaceted insight into how texts and objects, sculpture, runes, and relics all drove the cult of saints in this northern corner of Europe. In doing so, the volume offers a nuanced understanding of the development of cults, the saints themselves, and their miracles, not only in the Norse world, but also more widely. The cult of St Ursula and the 11,000 virgins was one of the most popular and relic-rich of all saints’ cults in the medieval period. This volume constitutes the first interdisciplinary collection of essays in English to explore the development and transmission of the legend of St Ursula in detail, considering a wealth of different sources including physical remains, literary texts, artistic representations and medieval music. With original translations of primary texts and articles by leading researchers in the field, Sanctity in the North gives an introduction to the literary production associated with the cult of the saints in medieval Scandinavia. For more than five hundred years, Nordic clerics and laity venerated a host of saints through liturgical celebrations, written manuscripts, visual arts, and oral traditions. Textual evidence of this widespread and important aspect of medieval spirituality abounds. Written biographies (or vitae), compendia of witnessed miracles, mass propers, homilies, sagas and chronicles, dramatic scripts, hymns, and ballads are among the region’s surviving medieval manuscripts and early published books. Sanctity in the North features English translations of texts from Latin or vernacular Nordic languages, in many cases for the first time. The accompanying essays concerning the texts, saints, cults, and history of the period complement the translations and reflect the contributors’ own disciplinary groundings in folklore, philology, medieval, and religious studies. The Medieval Cult of Saints: Formations and Transformations explores the political economy and visual topography of the cult of saints in Medieval Europe. Especially in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, liturgies for the veneration of saints were incorporated into public spectacles staged in sumptuous architecture and coordinated with market fairs that attracted audiences of locals and pilgrim visitors. Using more than thirty picture cycles of saints’ lives in a range of media, published together for the first time, Abou-El-Haj examines a spectrum of cult practices. She argues that repeated and emphasized subjects visualized renewal, expansion, and fierce competition among cults, whether displayed in private or in public spaces. She then applies her results to the history of one monastery and its cult, St. Amand d’Elnone, where three distinct illustrated versions of its patron’s life, produced over a hundred years, document how the covent shifted the visual record of its patron as it devised economic strategies to protect its property and privileges. Charts, a map, lists, iconographic and comparative analyses, and 206 plates survey the statistical, temporal, and spatial distribution of the cults, as well as the sources for the St. Amand manuscripts.A new edition of the “brilliantly original and highly sophisticated” study of saint worship after the fall of the Roman Empire (Library Journal). In this groundbreaking work, Peter Brown explores how the worship of saints and their corporeal remains became central to religious life in Western Europe after the fall of the Roman Empire. During this period, earthly remnants served as a heavenly connection, and their veneration is a fascinating window into the cultural mood of a region in transition. Brown challenges the long-held two-tier idea of religion that separated the religious practices of the sophisticated elites from those of the superstitious masses, instead arguing that the cult of the saints crossed boundaries and played a dynamic part in both the Christian faith and the larger world of late antiquity. He shows how men and women living in harsh and sometimes barbaric times relied upon the holy dead to obtain justice, forgiveness, and power, and how a single sainted hair could inspire great thinkers and great artists. An essential text by one of the foremost scholars of European history, this expanded edition includes a new preface from Brown, which presents new ideas based on subsequent scholarship. “Informative...demonstrates once again Brown’s genius for sharing with his readers the fruits of not only his own painstaking and meticulous scholarship but also his penetrating understanding of the evolution of Western culture as a whole.”—Religious StudiesSaints and Their Cults in the Atlantic World traces the changing significance of a dozen saints and holy sites from the fourth century to the twentieth and from Africa, Sicily, Wales, and Iceland to Canada, Boston, Mexico, Brazil, and the Caribbean. Scholars representing the fields of history, art history, religious studies, and communications contribute their perspectives in this interdisciplinary collection, also notable as the first English language study of many of the saints treated in the volume. Several chapters chart the changing images and meanings of holy people as their veneration traveled from the Old World to the New; others describe sites and devotions that developed in the Americas. The ways that a group feels connected to
the holy figure by ethnicity or regionalism proves to be a critical factor in a saint's reception, and many contributors discuss the tensions that develop between ecclesiastical authorities and communities of devotees. This book explores the way in which church architecture from the earliest centuries of Christianity has been shaped by holy bones - the physical remains or 'relics' of those whom the Church venerated as saints. The Church's holy dead continued to exercise an influence on the living from beyond the grave, and their earthly remains provided a focus for prayer. The memoriae, house-churches and crypts of early Christian Rome; the elaborately decorated monuments containing the bodies of the bishops of Merovingian Gaul; the revival of ring crypts in the Carolingian empire; the crypts, 'tomb-shrines', and later high shrines of medieval England, all demonstrate how the presence of a holy body within a church influenced its very architecture. This is the first complete modern study of this hitherto somewhat neglected aspect of medieval church architecture in western Europe. St Swithun was an obscure 9th-century bishop of Winchester who became a popular and important English saint with a cult widespread throughout Europe. This volume presents new and full editions of the texts which illuminate his cult. The unprecedented wealth of this volume sheds new light not only on St Swithun himself, but also on the times during which his cult was at the height of its popularity. The studies in this volume concentrate on a complex set of socio-cultural phenomena, the cult of saints, in a variety of regions from Egypt to Poland, with a focus on Italy and Central Europe. The subjects of the contributions range in time from the fourth until the eighteenth century. The diversity of approaches adopted by the contributors—from literary analysis and historical anthropology to archaeology and art history—represents that open and multidisciplinary historical research that characterizes the work of Gábor Klaniczay to whom these essays are dedicated. How St. George became the patron saint of England has always been a subject of speculation. He was not English, nor was his principal shrine there - the usual criteria for national patronage; yet his status and fame came to eclipse that of all other saints. Edward III's use of the saint in his wars against the French established him as a patron and protector of the king; unlike other saints George was adopted by the English to signify membership of the "community of the realm". This book traces the origins and growth of the cult of St. George, arguing that, especially after Edward's death, George came to represent a "good" politics (deriving from Edward's prosecution of a war with spoils for everyone) and could be used to rebuke subsequent kings for their poor governance. Most medieval kings came to understand this fact, and venerated St. George in order to prove their worthiness to hold their office. The political dimension of the cult never completely displaced the devotional one, but it was so strong that St. George survived the Reformation as a national symbol - one that continues in importance in the recovery of a specifically English identity. This is a paperback edition of a collection of ten papers by different authors on the cult of saints, first published in hard covers in 1983. Six have been translated from French including a pioneering study by Robert Hertz, one of Durkheim's most eminent pupils. The editor provides a wide-ranging general and historical introduction, and a 100-page annotated bibliography covering material on the subject in all disciplines and in four main languages. This volume addresses the history of saints and sainthood in the Middle Ages in the Baltic Region, with a special focus on the cult of saints in Russia, Prussia, Finland, Sweden, Denmark, Estonia, and Latvia (Livonia). Essays explore such topics as the introduction of foreign (and "old") saints into new regions, the creation of new local cults of saints in newly Christianized regions, the role of the cult of saints in the creation of political and lay identities, and the potential role of saints in times of war. This is the untold story of how black saints - and the slaves who venerated them - transformed the early modern church. It speaks to race, the Atlantic slave trade, and global Christianity, and provides new ways of thinking about blackness, holiness, and cultural authority. Sacred Precincts examines non-Muslim religious sites in the Islamic world, revealing how architecture responds to contextual issues and traditions. It explores urban contexts; issues of identity; design; construction; transformation and the history of sacred sites in the Middle East and Africa from the advent of Islam to the 20th century. The book includes case studies on churches, synagogues and sacred sites in Iran; Turkey; Cyprus; Egypt; Iraq; Tunisia; Morocco; Malta; Nigeria; Mali, and the Gambia. Scholars of religion have long assumed that ritual and belief constitute the fundamental building blocks of religious traditions and that these two components of religion are interrelated and independent in significant ways. Generations of New Testament and Early Christian scholars have produced detailed analyses of the belief systems of nascent Christian communities, including their ideological and political dimensions, but have by and large ignored ritual as an important element of early Christian religion and as a factor contributing to the rise and the organization of the movement. In recent years, however, scholars of early Christianity have begun to use ritual as an analytical tool for describing and explaining Christian origins and the early history of the movement. Such a development has created a momentum toward producing a more comprehensive volume on the ritual world of Early Christianity employing advances made in the field of ritual studies. The Oxford Handbook of Early Christian Ritual gives a manifold account of the ritual world of early Christianity from the beginning of the movement up to the end of the fifth century. The
volume introduces relevant theories and approaches; central topics of ritual life in the cultural world of early Christianity; and important Christian ritual themes and practices in emerging Christian groups and factions. These essays discuss various related themes: the traits of holy men; creating saints out of a minority of holy men; and the role of hagiography in the diffusion of cults. Peter Brown's work, especially the article "The Rise and Function of the Holy Man in Late Antiquity" forms a point of reference. A new investigation of the saints' cults which flourished in medieval Scotland, fruitfully combining archaeological, historical, and literary perspectives. The role of the saints became a theological dilemma for scholars and laity alike throughout the Reformation era. As Protestants tried to remove themselves from the hold of the Catholic Church, the cult of the saints remained a formidable presence. Through the analysis of 180 pamphlets published by reformers in German-speaking Europe, Carol Heming shows the struggle Protestants faced in purging the cult of the saints from their culture and religion. Heming examines why Reformation leaders so strongly and universally denounced the cult of the saints and whether the holy patrons disappeared from Protestant areas without benefit of champion or defender. Complete scriptural references used in the pamphlets against the saints and images are included. This book shows how the sixteenth-century priest Antonio Gallonio engaged with law, medicine and engineering, to draw attention to saintly virtues. It exposes the tensions between a theocratic clergy and the self-assertion of secular professionals in the Italian Counter-Reformation. Americans have long been aware of the phenomenon loosely known as faith healing. Such practices most often received attention when they came into conflict with biomedical practice. During the 1990s, however, the American cultural landscape changed dramatically and religious healing became a commonplace feature of our society. The essays in this book chart this new reality. Insofar as healing traditions constitute the meeting ground or point of conflict between different groups, argue the authors, they provide a powerful lens through which to examine cultural changes at work. Each of the papers offers a particular case study. Many emphasize gender, race, ethnicity, and class as key components of healing experiences. In Debating the Saints' Cults in the Age of Gregory the Great, Dal Santo argues that Pope Gregory the Great's Dialogues, which debated the nature and plausibility of the saints' miracles and the propriety of the saints' cult, should be considered from the perspective of a wide-ranging debate which took place in early Byzantine society.