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Hagiografi

(_sjanger, _sakprosa) Fra gresk “hagios”: “hellig” og “gráphein”: “skrive”. En tekst om en helgen, skrevet for troende. Første ord i titlene er ofte “vita”, dvs. “liv” eller “levemåte”. Tekstene handler om hellige kvinner og menns utsagn, dyder og mirakler (Madelénat 1984 s. 43). De tidlige hagiografiene er en av opprinnelsene til biografisjangeren.

Ordet hagiografi “has come to refer to the full range of Christian literature which concerns the saints. The scope of that literature has been breathtakingly wide over the course of two millennia of Christian history, including such genres as lives of the saints, collections of miracle stories, accounts of the discovery or movement of relics, bulls of canonization, inquests held into the life of a candidate for canonization, liturgical books, sermons, visions, and the like. These works have been composed not only in the official clerical languages of the Christian churches, such as Latin and Greek, but in the full range of vernacular languages as well. Works of hagiography, in this sense of the term, have been written by Christians from at least the middle of the second century of the Common Era to the present day. The middle ages, however, was a particularly fruitful time for the composition of hagiography, and hagiographic texts remain particularly important to our understanding of the history of medieval Christianity and society. [...] Hagiography can only be understood with reference to the concept of sanctity and to the practice of the cult of saints. For medieval Christians saints were those “holy people” (*sancti* or *sanctae* in Latin) who had posthumously entered the kingdom of heaven.” (Head 1999)

“[I]n order to be strictly hagiographic, the document should be of a religious character and should aim at edification [moral improvement or guidance]. The term may only be applied therefore to writings inspired by devotion to the saints and intended to promote it. The point to be emphasised from the first is the distinction between hagiography and history. The work of the hagiographer may be historical, but it is not necessarily so. It may assume any literary form suitable to the glorification of the saints, from an official record adapted to the use of the faithful, to a poetical composition of the most exuberant character wholly detached from reality. It is obvious that no one would venture to assert that everywhere and at all

times hagiographers have submitted themselves to strict historical canons.” (Hippolyte Delehaye i <https://legacy.fordham.edu/halsall/basis/delehaye-legends.asp>; lesedato 12.10.15)

En hagiografi “[b]etegner i snæver forstand en helgenberetning og kendes fra de tidligste beretninger om de kristne martyrer, hvis liv og virke fejres i kirkelige sammenhænge. I bredere forstand bruges begrebet om de mere eller mindre legendariske biografier, som findes inden for mange religioner, og som omhandler de pågældende religioners hellige mænd og kvinder, fx religionens grundlægger, væsentlige profeter o.lign. Fælles for disse beretninger er, at de, snarere end at gengive tilfældige hændelser i en persons liv i historisk forstand, lægger vægt på de hændelser i personens liv, som har betydning for opfattelsen af den pågældende person inden for den pågældende religion. Hagiografier er produceret med ét formål for øje, nemlig at imødekomme nogle behov hos modtageren (lytteren eller læseren) og omverdenen, som kan forklare visse aspekter af en religion. Inden for islam har man hadith-litteraturen om profeten Muhammad, som på en gang gør Muhammad til et eksempel til efterfølgelse blandt de troende, og som samtidig understreger det særlige ved islam i forhold til andre religioner. Kristendom har sine beretninger om Jesu liv og færd; fx er Lukasevangeliets beretninger om den tolvårige Jesus, der under påskefesten i Jerusalem belærer de skriftkloge, et udsagn om, at Jesus allerede som barn havde særlige kvaliteter, som peger frem imod hans opgør med jødedom og hans rolle som religiøs foregangsmand. Buddhismens legender om Siddhartha Gautamas vej til erkendelse beretter om Buddha som det fuldkomne menneske, men samtidig understreges det, at erkendelsens vej er en vej, som det enkelte menneske selv må betræde; der findes ikke nemme løsninger. [...] Trods disse religioners og de pågældende hagiografiske beretningers store indbyrdes forskelligheder er lighedstrækkene tydelige.” (Dorthe R. Christensen i <https://www.religion.dk/leksikon/hagiografi>; lesedato 19.11.18)

Noen helgener står for en så stor mengde mirakler etter sin død (post mortem) at skildringer fra hva som skjedde etter døden tar like stor plass i teksten som deres liv (Madelénat 1984 s. 44).

“Hagiografiske beretninger lægger vægt på, at forskellige og tilsyneladende tilfældige hændelser i en persons liv ikke er tilfældige. Forskellige begivenheder knyttes sammen til kæder af begivenheder, således at fx hændelser i personens barndom ses som varsler om senere begivenheder, fx åbenbaringer. Tilfældigheder elimineres til fordel for en højere plan, og de enkelte, tilsyneladende tilfældige hændelser knyttes sammen og fortolkes som religiøst meningsfulde. Hagiografier er brugstekster, som er konstrueret med en særlig hensigt, fx at legitimere en tradition eller en åbenbarings ægthed ved at påpege stifterens særlige karaktertræk. På denne måde siger hagiografien ikke blot noget om det pågældende menneske, men formidler i videre forstand den pågældende religions selvforståelse.” (Dorthe R. Christensen i <https://www.religion.dk/leksikon/hagiografi>; lesedato 19.11.18)

De kristne middelalder-hagiografiene prøver ikke å forklare de hellige handlingene, men å virke oppbyggende, og dette målet med tekstene gjør at også fiksjoner, oppspinn og løgner om personene kan bli akseptert som sannheter i tekstene (Madelénat 1984 s. 44).

“The most common type of hagiography, that is lives of saints (*vitae*), served to record the actions which had formed and demonstrated their holiness. Excerpts from such lives were often read out as part of the liturgical celebration of a saint’s feast. In the mid-ninth century Bertholdus of Micy, in his *Life of St. Maximinus of Micy*, described the purpose of hagiography, “The churches of the faithful scattered through the world celebrate together with highest praise the fame of holy men. Their tombs, which are wreathed in the metals of gold and silver, as well as in layers of precious stones and a shell of marble, now bear witness to their pious memory ... Surely to no less a degree than miracles, which incite the love proffered [sic] by the devotion of faithful people, the monuments of letters which are set down on pages also fully satisfy the senses of those who read and hear them. For what has been said and done by the saints ought not be concealed in silence. God’s love provided their deeds to serve as a norm of living for the men of their own times as well as of those years which have since passed; they are now to be imitated piously now [sic] by those who are faithful to Christ.” ” (Head 1999)

“The term hagiography encompassed a variety of texts which included among others: readings on the saints such as the *Golden Legend*; the *vita*, the recorded life of the saint, which was essential for the cult of saints because “...no cult was or is sanctioned by the Church without a *vita*,” the *passio*, the account of the martyr’s suffering and death; a book of miracles associated with the saint; the *inventio*, the account of the discovery or finding of relics usually through a divine vision; the *de reliquiarum furto*, and the *translatio*. [...] The hagiographic texts were written to prove the main figure was holy, to increase the fame of the declared saint, and to show what was considered to be the ideal Christian behavior at that time and location.” (Gina Kathleen Burke i https://etd.ohiolink.edu/!etd.send_file?accession=miami1090353960&disposition=inline; lesedato 16.11.18)

Etter de romerske kristenforfølgelsene skrives i senantikken de første martyrbioграфиene, som sterkt understreker den kristnes tro og godhet. Et eksempel er Sulpicius Severus’ biografi om Martin fra Tours, som delte kappen sin i to og ga halvparten til en tigger.

Den spanske munken San Millán (også kalt Sankt Emilianus) levde på 500-tallet e.Kr. Han grunnla et spansk kloster, og beretningen om hans liv forteller om undere han utførte både før og etter sin død (Strosetzki 1996 s. 15). Boka oppfordrer alle innbyggerne i regionen rundt klosteret til å gi pengegaver til klosteret.

Fra 800-tallet økte antallet hagiografier mye, og i middelalderen inngikk disse tekstene sammen med kulten rundt helgener og relikviesamlinger (en relikvie er en

gjenstand eller kroppsdel, f.eks. en tann, som de troende mener at har tilhørt en helgen). Tekstene ble blant annet lest i klostrene, og noen fikk betydning for katolsk liturgi (Claudia Bröcher m.fl. i http://www.read-maryread.de/index.php/literarischer-fachbegriff/literaturlexikon_hagiographie_240581857032/; lesedato 25.09.18).

“As the devotion to relics grew, so did the theft of these prized relics. The popularity of relic thefts peaked in Western Europe during the ninth, tenth, and eleventh centuries. Although many clerics and members of royalty desired relics for their own, monks and nuns usually performed the relic thefts. The monks and nuns often recorded the sacred thefts in artwork, manuscripts, and hagiographies. Interestingly enough, these recorded thefts were usually considered pious and justifications were given by the hagiographers to defend the deed. [...] The justifications given within the hagiographic accounts at first seem to be the answer to how the thefts were legalized and placed within the realm of the sacred. However, the justifications do not completely deflect all the questions of moral impropriety and, in fact, seem to reflect some of the hagiographer’s own tension over the matter. [...] the historian Patrick Geary, who sees some ambivalence within the given justifications about the nature of sacred theft within the hagiographic accounts. This ambivalence casts doubt upon the validity of the supplied justifications and thus prompts the scholar to look for alternative answers for why clerics and royalty were able to participate in relic theft and have the theft considered sacred.” (Gina Kathleen Burke i https://etd.ohiolink.edu/!etd.send_file?accession=miami1090353960&disposition=inline; lesedato 16.11.18)

Den italienske erkebiskopen Jacobus de Voragine ga i 1275 ut en samling hagiografier, et verk kalt *Den gyldne legende (Aurea Legenda)*. “The Golden Legend, an extensive collection of saints’ biographies, became one of the best-selling books of the late medieval period. By the 15th century, editions of Voragine’s Golden Legend were available in every major European language. This seven-volume edition, published in 1900, is F. S. Ellis’ modern update of a 1483 Middle English translation. While the latter six volumes contain brief biographies of the saints, this first volume records the history of major Old Testament figures as well as the life, death, and resurrection of Christ. Together with these histories, Voragine details the establishment of the major Christian sacraments and holidays.” (<http://www.ccel.org/ccel/voragine/goldleg1>; lesedato 12.08.15) Voragines bok ble oversatt til engelsk i 1483 av William Caxton.

Den adelige, tyske kvinnen Maria Aegyptiaca von Oettingen levde på 1500-tallet, og hagiografien om henne handler om hvordan hun var prostituert, men takket være jomfru Maria omvendte seg og deretter levde flere tiår som eneboer i en ørken (Strosetzki 1996 s. 13). “I alle hagiografier er feilslagene og tabbene ikoniske stadier mot martyriet og salighetene.” (Johannesen 2000 s. 45)

I renessansen trykte det franske trykkeriet Trepperel en del hagiografier, blant annet om den hellige Geneviève og den hellige Katarina fra Alexandria (Barbier 2007 s. 76). Martin Luther kritiserte produksjonen av hagiografier, men fra midten av 1500-tallet blir det utgitt tekster som kan kalles protestantiske hagiografier.

Andre eksempler:

Iakob Tsurtaveli: *Den hellige Shushaniks martyrium* (400-tallet)

Olavs lidelse (egentlig *Passio et miracula beati Olavi*) – en norsk helgenbiografi fra 1100-tallet som fikk stor utbredelse

Joris-Karl Huysmans: *Sainte Lydwine de Schiedam* (1901) – om en nederlandsk helgen som levde på 1300-tallet

Johannes Jørgensen: *Den hellige Frans af Assisi* (1907) og *Den hellige Katerina af Siena* (1915)

Giovanni Papini: *Sankt Augustin* (1929)

Shushanik var en kristen, armensk prinsesse som nektet å la seg omvende til zoroastrismen, og derfor ble kastet i fengsel av sin ektemann. Historien hennes handler om tro, kyskhets, askese og under, og er mye lest i skolene i Georgia (Claudia Bröcher m.fl. i http://www.read-maryread.de/index.php/literarischer-fachbegriff/literaturlexikon_hagiographie_240581857032/; lesedato 25.09.18). Shushanik døde etter syv år i fengsel. Hennes far døde også som martyr, etter tortur og mange år i fengsel. Historien om Shushanik ble antakelig skrevet på 400-tallet, men det første bevarte manuskriptet stammer fra 900-tallet.

“According to letters exchanged between the early seventh-century prelates of the Armenian and Georgian churches, the martyred Princess Shushanik was the object of veneration in Tsurtaw, the capital city of Gugark, itself the marchland between Armenia and Georgia. [...] The longer Armenian version of the Passion differs considerably from the Georgian. The former has a more hagiographical structure and includes details absent from the latter. Professor Muradyan is of the opinion that both the Armenian and the Georgian versions derive from a lost archetype. In the longer Georgian version, the author of the Passion is identified as Hakob, the priest who was Shushanik’s father confessor. The Armenian version knows of him but does not identify him by name.” (Krikor Maksoudian i <http://www.attalus.org/armenian/smamint.htm>; lesedato 07.09.18)

Den skotske presten Adomnan skrev i tidlig middelalder en hagiografi om St. Columba, en tidligere prest og misjonær i Skottland. Columba skal ha “kristnet Skottland”, men det mange mytiske innslag i hagiografien. “The ‘Life of St Columba’ offers an account of events in the life of the sixth-century saint who

founded an influential monastic community with strong connections to the peoples of Ireland and Scotland. The text's relationship to the categories of 'Celtic Christianity' and 'Celtic spirituality' [...] It is deemed justifiable to locate the Life within these categories because it manifests features of other religious texts produced by Celtic peoples in the early Middle Ages." (<http://epubs.surrey.ac.uk/761778/>; lesedato 06.06.14)

"The Life of Antony and Life of Martin of Tours, written by Athanasius and Sulpicius Severus, respectively, helped in the establishment of a long tradition of Hagiography that would resonate throughout the Middle-Ages. The two follow a standard formula: beginning of life, often showing signs of holiness, revelation, deeds and miracles, heavenly death and post-mortem miracles. Both Antony and Martin were born to wealthy parents; both of them renounced their wealth and property to seek solitude and prayer but had trouble achieving it due to the divine favors it brought. Both were also deeply concerned with maintaining or establishing Orthodoxy in their own time and served as a way for their writers to challenge or attack their particular enemies. [...] While the characteristics of holiness embodied in Martin and Antony are essentially the same, it is the position and goal of the author that changes the persona and life of the saint. Sulpicius portrayed St. Martin as a man who sought solitude but in the end settled with a more public career since he was the perfect model of a holy man, thus exemplifying the role of a bishop in a world filled with corrupt ones. This fits well with Sulpicius, who is both a follower of strict asceticism and a heavy critic of the Gallic clergy [...] On Athanasius' side, in his own exile, Athanasius isolates Antony from the heretical world he himself fell victim to, making him a hero of Orthodoxy and a follower of radical ascetic virtues." (Theodore Felix i http://www.allempires.com/article/index.php?q=Propaganda_in_Hagiography; lesedato 04.06.13)

"Father Ribadeneyra's "Flos Sanctorum" (first edition Madrid, 1599) had a greater popular success and was translated into several languages; it was followed by a great number of lives of the saints for every day in the year. Among the most famous of these must be mentioned Alban Butler's, "The Lives of the Fathers, Martyrs and Other Principal Saints", which first appeared in 1756 and was often reprinted and translated [...] a complete bibliography of hagiographical materials would require several volumes." (<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/07106b.htm>; lesedato 07.02.17)

Sjangeren holdt seg populær til langt inn på 1800-tallet, med ca. 200 utgivelser i perioden 1870-74. Forlagene Ardant, Lefort og Mame spesialiserte seg på hagiografier (Madelénat 1984 s. 58).

Den franske presten Vincent de Paul levde på 1600-tallet og ble erklært som helgen i 1737. På begynnelsen av 1900-tallet ble det skrevet to hagiografier om han, av Henri Lavedan (1928) og Marthe de Fels (1936), deretter kom en filmatisering om hans liv.

Den franske forfatteren Joris-Karl Huysmans ble katolikk mot slutten av sitt liv. Han skrev blant annet *Sainte Lydwine de Schiedam* (1901), der han “dropped the fictional form altogether and embarked on explorations of mystical states of consciousness. [...] a modern-day hagiography, Huysmans traced the life of the early fifteenth-century mystic and provided a definitive statement of his fervently-held ideas about mystical substitution.” (<http://www.huysmans.org/en/context.htm>; lesedato 24.06.16)

Det hender at hagiografier inneholder komikk, og dermed delvis fungerer som underholdning for leserne. I en spansk helgenbiografi blir en menneskeliggjort djevil stadig lurt, og leserne kan le av hans nederlag (Strosetzki 1996 s. 15).

Acta Sanctorum (De helliges handlinger), av Jean Bolland og andre belgiske jesuitter fra Antwerpen, er et enormt verk på 68 folio-bøker, og ble til fra 1600-tallet og senere. De såkalte bollandistene publiserte fram til 1940, og etter det har verket blitt komplettert i skriftseriene *Analecta Bollandiana* og *Subsidia hagiographica*. “Acta Sanctorum is a principal source for research into the societies and cultures of early Christian and medieval Europe. Our knowledge of this period relies heavily on hagiographical literature, and specifically on this monumental collection of texts, published over a period of 300 years by the Société des Bollandistes. The resurgence of interest in hagiographical materials in recent years reflects the growing recognition of their value to historical research of many kinds – social and ecclesiastical history, art and architecture, literature, folklore, and ethnology. Acta Sanctorum records every detail of domestic and public life. It’s an inexhaustible fund of information on every aspect of life from the beginning of the Christian era to the end of the 16th century.” (<https://www.proquest.com/products-services/acta.html>; lesedato 08.10.18)

“The Acta Sanctorum Database now makes this vast body of literature available in electronic form, providing a new level of access to these texts and enabling them to be searched quickly and efficiently for names, topics, and themes. [...] The Acta Sanctorum Database contains the complete texts of the 68 printed volumes, from the two January volumes published in 1643 to the Propylaeum of December published in 1940. It has been prepared with the help and cooperation of the Société des Bollandistes and includes the Bibliotheca Hagiographica Latina reference numbers widely used by scholars to identify hagiographical texts. [...] offer scholars unprecedented opportunities to further their research in early European social history and the development of Christianity, from the foundation of the Church to the Reformation. Acta Sanctorum brings together materials on the lives of the saints in critical editions with commentaries on the source documents. These include Vitae, Passiones, Miracula, Translationes, Gloria posthuma, inscriptions, etc.” (<https://www.proquest.com/products-services/acta.html>; lesedato 08.10.18)

Noen moderne biografier viser tydelige likhetstrekk med gamle hagiografier. I en biografi om en brasiliansk bestselgerforfatter, Fernando Morais' *Paolo Coelho: Ordenes alkymist* (på norsk 2010), er historien "strukturert som en gammeldags helgen-biografi: Det vil si at den leder fra synd via åpenbaring til omvendelse og kanonisering – i Coelhos tilfelle i hvert fall i kommersiell forstand." (*Dagbladet* 12. april 2010 s. 32)

"A hagiography is a type of biography that puts the subject in a very flattering light. Hagiographies are often about saints. The two halves of [the word] hagiography refer to holiness and writing, and it is something written about holy people. Originally, a hagiography was a biography of a saint written without skepticism or criticism. A hagiography idealizes the subject and puts them on a pedestal. These days, a hagiography is not necessarily written about a saint, but it still idolizes the subject. A hagiography makes the subject seem like a hero, or at least a wonderful, nearly perfect person." (<http://www.vocabulary.com/dictionary/hagiography>; lesedato 07.09.15)

"Jean-Michel Palmiers monumentale, ufullendte studie over Walter Benjamin. [...] Palmiers monumentale verk ligger i forsøket på å skape en forbindelse mellom beundring og distanse. Med sine langt over tusen sider er *Walter Benjamin. Leben und Werk* (Walter Benjamin. Liv og verk) et sjeldent eksempel på en kritisk hagiografi." (<http://www.vagant.no/fillesamlerens-aktualitet/>; lesedato 12.09.18)

"Inden for Scientologi har man en rig tradition for beretninger om stifteren L. Ron Hubbards liv fra han var barn og frem til utviklingen af Scientologi." (Dorthe R. Christensen i <https://www.religion.dk/leksikon/hagiografi>; lesedato 19.11.18)

Filmen *Det akutte menneske* (2011) er "et intenst, medrivende og på de fleste områder vellykket dokumentarportrett av det høyst bevegelige menneskelige uromomentet som lyder navnet Mads Gilbert [en internasjonalt engasjert lege]. I denne teksten om Knut Erik Jensens kinodokumentarfilm har jeg valgt å ta utgangspunkt i to begreper med bakgrunn i oldkirken – *hagiografi* og *ikonoklasme*. *Hagiografien* var et viktig redskap for å etablere den kristne religionen og har sin bakgrunn i de greske ordene for "helgen" og "beskrivelse". Ideen var å beskrive en helgens liv som eksemplarisk til inspirasjon og etterlevelse hos de kristne. Fra og med arbeidet til munken Symeon Metaphrastes i det 10. århundret ble hagiografi også synonymt med en *panegyrisk* framstilling, en offentlig ros det var vanskelig å rokke ved. Denne betydningen har siden i litteraturen blitt brukt synonymt med ensidig positive biografiske framstillinger. [...] det er en *filmatisk hagiografi*, der vi inviteres (for manges vedkommende, provoseres) til å ta stilling til måter å handle som menneske på gjennom å stilles overfor et menneske, som opplagt ikke er uten lyter, men hvis handlinger er eksemplariske og til etterfølgelse." (Bjørn Sørenssen i <http://montages.no/2011/05/analysen-det-akutte-menneske-2011/>; lesedato 20.06.18)

Thomas Heads bok *Hagiography and the Cult of Saints: The Diocese of Orléans, 800-1200* (1990) “is a study of very limited geographical focus and great temporal span. [...] During the centuries from 800 to 1200, Orleanais writers composed vitae of local Roman and Gallo-Frankish saints and, to commission, of saints outside the diocese. They also produced accounts of translations of relics, compiled collections of post mortem miracles of saints local to or naturalized in the diocese, and wrote biographies of recently deceased men whose lives had been holy or notable. [...] the anonymous ninth-century lives of Anianus, Evurtius, Maximinus, Lifar dus, and Avitus; the works commissioned from Jonas of Orleans and Lupus of Ferrieres; the miracles of Benedict collected by Adrevald, Aimo, and Andrew of Fleury; the copious writings of Abbo of Fleury and Letaldus of Micy; Aimo’s biography of Abbo and Andrew’s of Gauzlin of Fleury; Helgaud’s life of Robert the Pious and the anonymous life of Gregory of Nicopolis, to the last, twelfth-century, writers at Fleury, Rodulphus Tortarius and Hugh of Fleury, taking in many lesser and anonymous writers as well. [...] Head explores the ideals of sanctity offered in this corpus of works and shows that they remained essentially static throughout the centuries under discussion. Orleanais saints were long since deceased, male, patrons of their lay and ecclesiastical servants, channels of divine grace, “in many ways no more than bundles of topoi, simple icons of sanctity and virtus” (p. 117). [...] the cults of saints in the Orleanais exhibited tremendous stability both in the canon of saints and in the general significance of those cults during the four centuries under discussion.” (Julia M. H. Smith i <https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/2863692.pdf>; lesedato 20.11.18)

Gregorius av Tours levde på 500-tallet og skrev at “I have recently discovered information about those who have been raised to heaven by the merit of their blessed conduct here below, and I thought that their way of life, which is known to us through reliable sources, could strengthen the Church ... because the life of the saints . . . encourages the minds of listeners to follow their example.” “The lives of the saints thus provided a model, albeit an extraordinary and almost unattainable one, of the Christian life. The records of the lives of the saints were a template of Christian virtue, a map of the path to salvation.” (Head 1999)

“[M]any works of hagiography – such Baudinovia’s *Life of St. Radegund* or Raymond of Capua’s *Life of St. Catherine of Siena* – were written by authors who had first-hand knowledge of their subject. But even these authors modeled their portraits on existing ideals of sanctity and drew upon a large body of traditional and somewhat standardized stories about the saints which are known to modern scholars as topoi or types. Such stories were borrowed, sometimes with little change, from earlier saints’ lives and were intended to convey a moral message rather than historically accurate information. Works written centuries after the fact were often little more than bundles of such topoi. Some – such as the anonymous *Life of St. Montana* – were composed by authors who knew nothing about their subject’s life or identity. These consisted virtually entirely of stories borrowed from the lives of other saints in which the names and other details have simply been

changed. This traditional or typical character is one of the most striking aspects of hagiography. Hagiographic works must sometimes be used with extreme caution, recognizing that they reveal more about the religious and cultural world of their authors than about the lived lives of their subjects.” (Head 1999)

“When reading works of hagiography, it is important to keep in mind that the primary aim of the authors was not to compose a biographical record of the saint, but rather to portray the subject as an exemplar of Christian virtue. Hagiographers also sought to show how the saints themselves had imitated such norms, particularly those provided by the life of Christ and previous saints. Just as they encouraged their audience to imitate the example of the saints, so too they employed the literary models offered them by the Bible and by earlier hagiographic works. Stories, themes, and motifs were repeated from the life of one saint to that of another, each hagiographer adapting a traditional pool of material to the needs of the narrative at hand. Hagiographers even went so far as to repeat phrases and whole passages verbatim from earlier works. The effect, largely intentional, was in part to subsume the particularity of a given saint’s life into a generalized type of sanctity, such as the martyr, the virgin or the holy bishop. Such use of models aided the moral and didactic purpose of hagiography. As André Vauchez has noted, hagiography was a genre which “aims precisely at blurring the individual’s traits and transforming his or her lifetime into a fragment of eternity.” At the same time, the traditional character of hagiography can be overstated. The models of sanctity changed considerably over time, as each new author used and thus altered extant tradition.” (Head 1999)

“In addition to exemplary conduct, the “merits and virtues” described by hagiographers also included the miracles which God performed through the saints. Such miracles did not only occur during the lives of the saints, but also posthumously at their tombs or otherwise in relation to their relics. Posthumous miracles included such visible marvels as cures and exorcisms, as well as invisible acts such as the remission of sins. The devout came to the shrines of saints or prayed to them in search of miraculous intercession. Hagiography recorded these aspects of the veneration of the saints through collections of posthumous miracle stories (miracula) and accounts of major events in the history of relic cults (inventiones, that is the “discovery” or ritual placement of relics in a shrine which inaugurated their public veneration, and translationes, the transfer of relics from one shrine to another).” (Head 1999)

Den franske forfatteren Gustave Flauberts novelle “Legenden om Julian” (1877) har blitt beskrevet som en slags hagiografi (Naomi Morgan i <http://www.imageandnarrative.be/inarchive/illustrations/naomimorgan.htm>; lesedato 27.08.01). Andre bøker som ligner hagiografier uten å være det, er f.eks. den spanske forfatteren Miguel de Unamunos roman *San Manuel den gode, martyr* (1930) og den tyske dadaisten Hugo Balls bok *Bysantinsk kristendom: Tre hellige liv* (1923), som handler om Johannes Klimakos, Dionysius Areopagita und Simeon Stylitt. Balls

tekster er skrevet mot bakgrunn av 1. verdenskrig og var “intended to pave the way for a New Man, meant to break with the traditions of German intellectual history, with military obedience and glorification of the state and its power and violence, and instead to transcend his soul towards the Christian God and his language. Ball shapes a triptych picturing the monk Johannes Klimakus, the anchorite Simeon Stylites and the church father (Pseudo-)Dionysius the Areopagite, figuring Christian Counterheroes and antipodes as opposed to key figures of German thought.” (Thomas Keith i http://bazhum.muzhp.pl/media//files/Studia_Germanica_Gedanensia/Studia_Germanica_Gedanensia-r2016-t34/Studia_Germanica; lesedato 16.10.18) De tre hellige mennene settes opp som eksempler på total hengivelse til Gud, og personer som fungerer som forbilder for alle som vil fornye samfunnet. De tre er en slags kunstnere som taler med det guddommelige.

“The Hagiography Society was founded in North America in 1990 to promote communication among scholars in various disciplines whose research involves the study of textual and visual media pertaining to holy men and women. Although our original emphasis was on medieval Christian saints, we welcome and help to disseminate information about new research on holy people and their cults in all eras, cultures, and religious traditions. By December 1995 our mailing list had grown to include nearly 500 scholars, over 100 of them from Europe and the U.K. and most of the rest from the U.S. and Canada. Each year the Society publishes two or three issues of its newsletter. We also maintain an online directory of researchers in hagiography and related fields, which includes bibliographical information on recent publications and a list of works in progress as well as the researchers’ contact information. The Society holds an annual business meeting and organizes several sessions at the International Congress on Medieval Studies in Kalamazoo, Michigan, each May.” (http://www.hagiographysociety.org/?page_id=11; lesedato 26.02.16)

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