# Symbolic Identity and the Cultural Memory of Saints

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Edited by

Nils Holger Petersen, Anu Mänd,
Sebastián Salvadó and Tracey R. Sands

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The Editors

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# Introduction

Nils Holger Petersen

The present collection of articles contains research contributions concerning symbolic identity formation in Europe connected to cults of medieval saints. The authors and editors of this volume and the research they report have all been part of a collaborative research project under the EuroCORECODE programme of the European Science Foundation: *Symbols that Bind and Break Communities: Saints' Cults as Stimuli and Expressions of Local, Regional, National and Universalist Identities* (2010–13/14). This international and interdisciplinary research venture was carried out at five European research institutions: the *Institut für Realienkunde des Mittelalters und der frühen Neuzeit* of the Austrian Academy of Sciences (Krems, Austria), the *Centre for the Study of the Cultural Heritage of Medieval Rituals* (Faculty of Theology, University of Copenhagen, Denmark), the *Institute of History* of Tallinn University (Estonia), the *Department of Medieval Studies* of the Central European University (Budapest, Hungary), and the *Department of Historical Studies* of the Norwegian University of Science and Technology (Trondheim, Norway). It was funded by the National Research Councils of the participating countries, the project leader Nils Holger Petersen (Copenhagen) collaborating with the principal investigators Roman Hankeln (Trondheim), Gerhard Jaritz (Krems), Anu Mänd (Tallinn), and Gábor Klaniczay (Budapest).[1]

Each of the five teams had individual experts targeted to carry out specific subprojects under the overall umbrella of the collaborative project. These subprojects were connected, however, by joint research questions and by the common understanding that communities are brought together by narratives, rituals, symbols, and other cultural expressions. In his influential book, *Imagined Communities*, Benedict Anderson writes that "all communities larger than primordial villages of face-to-face contact (and perhaps even these) are imagined."[2] The sense of belonging to a community—whether socio-political community in reality, an imagined one, or both—corresponds to sharing in

[1] The Hungarian project was funded independently of the European Science Council by the Hungarian grant agency OTKA and thereby associated the *Symbols that Bind and Break* project and the EuroCORECODE programme.

[2] Benedict Anderson, "Introduction," in *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, revised version (London, New York: Verso, 1996), 6.

a collective identity, a notion to be discussed in the following. Ideas about communities and collective identities have informed the project as well as they inform the present volume. A fundamental premise is that the development of regional identities is to a great extent determined by tensions between regional traditions and transregional impulses influenced by general concerns; sometimes these are based on religious ideas, sometimes they are shaped by socio-economic and political agendas. The perspective of reception history is important here, since changes, revisions or other transformations of local or regional identities take place in connection with local appropriations of transmitted materials, ideas and/or structures. In our project as well as in this volume, we have addressed such transformations through the prism of saints' cults, which affected all aspects of medieval and early modern life, and even had some impact on modern Protestant cultures. Thus, this volume focuses on different European regions, using cults of medieval saints, sometimes including their modern appropriations, as a vehicle for studying changing cultural and social values. Regional identities in northern as well as central Europe are equally part of the studied phenomena, which means that the project and this volume also cross the boundaries between Catholic and Protestant traditions.

In recent years, the notion of "collective identity" has been approached through studies of "cultural memory," not least through the work of Jan and Aleida Assmann. The construction of what may be called a "we" identity is based on people's perceived membership in a group, through which they assume characteristics of the group as valid for themselves. In this sense it is socially constructed as opposed to an individual person's identity, to the extent the latter notion is understood and studied psychologically, through hermeneutical disciplines, based on the individual's own memory. Here, the notion of narrative identity, as it has been developed not least by Paul Ricoeur (see further below), may be immediately helpful to describe in what sense an individual person may be understood to be the same person throughout his life. In spite of the fundamental difference between individual and collective identity, notions of individual identity are relevant to the notion of communal identity, since ultimately a "we" identity can only exist within the individual's self-image, thus as a part of that person's individual identity.[3] As soon as we are focusing on the *communal* aspects, the characteristics or definitions of

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The book is available at https://sisphd.wikispaces.com/file/view/Benedict_Anderson_Imagined_Communities.pdf (accessed 7 January 2016).

[3] See Jan Assmann, *Das kulturelle Gedächtnis: Schrift, Erinnerung und politische Identität in frühen Hochkulturen* (Munich: Beck, 2005), chap. 3, "Kulturelle Identität und politische Imagination," 130–60, esp. 130–31.

the group in question, we are studying features with which a group of people identify. In some way or another this is constituted historically, whether in terms of well-defined founding events or documents, or more generally by way of a common (long or short) history; the sharing of certain social (linguistic, economic, political), spiritual (religious) or emotional conditions; and indeed very often a mixture of several of these ingredients. A shared, cultural memory conditioned by some of the features mentioned here, and a group identity are two sides of the same coin. In many cases, certain narratives and artefacts, certain feast days or memorials, certain educational curricula and not least, certain ethical and political values appear as canonical in or for a particular community, or "region". Here, the notion of region is understood in an extended way that also includes social groups that do not constitute a well-rounded, compact geographical area. For example, a group of humans may share identity-producing memories, and may have certain approaches to life and history in common, although these groups may not share the same geographic space or be easily geographically circumscribed. This can be exemplified by the major monastic orders of the Latin Middle Ages (and beyond), for example the Cistercian Order and later the Franciscan and Dominican Orders, each of which spread all over Western Europe, yet maintained its own very particular collective identity. One may also point to ethnic and religious subgroups in most European countries and regions, and in modern times certainly also to members of political (and other kinds of popular) movements across national borders.

As noted above, Paul Ricoeur has dealt with individual as well as collective identities as narrative identities. In his monumental three-volume philosophical work, *Time and Narrative*, he takes up the question of the permanence of such identities:

> To state the identity of an individual or a community is to answer the question, "Who did this?" "Who is the agent, the author?" We first answer this question by naming someone, that is, by designating them with a proper name. But what is the basis for the permanence of this proper name? What justifies our taking the subject of an action, so designated by his, her, or its proper name, as the same throughout a life that stretches from birth to death? The answer has to be narrative. To answer the question "Who?" as Hannah Arendt has so forcefully put it, is to tell the story of a life. The story told tells about the action of the "who." And the identity of this "who" therefore itself must be a narrative identity. Without recourse to narration, the problem of personal identity would in fact be condemned to an antinomy with no solution. Either we must posit a subject identical with itself through the diversity of its different states, or, following Hume and Nietzsche, we must hold that this identical subject is

> nothing more than a substantialist illusion, whose elimination merely brings to light a pure manifold of cognitions, emotions, and volitions. This dilemma disappears if we substitute for identity understood in the sense of being the same (*idem*), identity understood in the sense of oneself as self-same [*soi-même*] (*ipse*). The difference between *idem* and *ipse* is nothing more than the difference between a substantial or formal identity and a narrative identity. Self-sameness, "self-constancy," can escape the dilemma of the Same and the Other to the extent that its identity rests on a temporal structure that conforms to the model of dynamic identity arising from the poetic composition of a narrative text.[4]

In a recent article, Hille Haker summarises and interprets Ricoeur's ideas about narrative identity and narrative configurations. She also discusses the question of the relation between the rhetorical and aesthetic side of narration on the one hand and the so-called contents, the "substance" of the narrative on the other hand. This question is unavoidable not least when discussing broader historical narratives, which obviously come into focus when dealing with narratives of social groups, regions, or nations. The question is whether these two sides can be separated at all, a question which Hayden White brought into the philosophy of history several decades ago, and which also is taken up in Ricoeur's discourse.[5] Haker writes:

> [My concern is] a definition of the connection between existence and aesthetics. For this, not only the connection but also the difference between actions, practices and "life" in general on the one hand, and "story telling" of the kind which takes place in literature on the other, must be clarified. Here Paul Ricoeur's sophisticated notion of mimesis is important. Ricoeur distinguishes here between three levels of mimesis, which also become relevant for the conception of narrative identity.
>
> Mimesis$_2$, the configuration in narration, is framed by prefiguration in praxis (mimesis$_1$) and refiguration in reception (mimesis$_3$), which are themselves forms of mimesis. The theory of a mimesis composed of three elements assumes that one can say that as soon as praxis is understood as such, it is narratively or prenarratively structured, and that the act of reception of stories demand in turn an activity which can be identified as mimesis. [6]

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[4] Paul Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, trans. Kathleen McLaughlin, Kathleen Blamey, and David Pellauer, 3 vols (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1990), vol. 3, 246. For the discussion of narrative identity see vol. 3, 245–49 building on esp. vol. 1, 45–77. Ricoeur's work was originally published in French as *Tempts et Récits* (1983–85).

[5] Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, vol. 1, 161–68; vol. 3, 152–54.

[6] Hille Haker, "Narrative and Moral Identity in the Work of Paul Ricoeur," in *Memory, Narraticity, Self and the Challenge to Think God: The Reception within Theology of the Recent Work of Paul Ricoeur*, ed. Maureen Junker-Kenny and Peter Kenny (Münster:

Accordingly, in Ricoeur's understanding of identity through narrative a representation of a life story is first shaped on the basis of what has happened in practice. This mimesis$_1$ constitutes, in the case of broader historical narratives, as well as in individual persons' biographies, a historical pre-narrative of particular events that are agreed upon among those attempting to come to terms with the historical narrative. This pre-narrative is already at this point in the process of being interpreted so that it can be re-configured. It is then represented as an actual narrative that can be told in order to articulate the perceived identity or character of the person(s) and/or events which are part of this narrative. Finally, it will be up to other persons reading or in other ways receiving the narrative to re-configure the narrative in order to take in, or interpret (in some cases critically) the "message" of the narrative, as it were, concerning the identity of the protagonist(s) of the narrative: the character(s) as presented through the emplotment of the narrative.

From the above quoted Ricoeur passage it is clear that the discussion about narrative identity as a solution to the question of constancy applies just as well to collective identities as it does to personal identities, the *ipse* in such a case referring to a community, region (in the extended sense indicated above) or nation in question. This accords well with Assmann's understanding of identity and cultural memory, which precisely concerns the construction of a memory, of a history at least to some extent canonised or privileged–shared, a cultural memory which is not any individual's actual personal memory. As Assmann points out, societies do not have memories in the original meaning of the word:

> Through the concept of the cultural memory we take a large step beyond the individual who— after all—alone has a memory in a proper sense. Neither the group nor the culture "has" a memory in this sense. To speak in such terms would be a flagrant mystification. Persons continue to be the sole carriers of memory. What this is about is the question to what extent this individual memory is determined socially and culturally.[7]

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LIT-Verlag, 2004), 134–52 (140–41). For Ricoeur's own extensive discussion of the three kinds of mimesis, see *Time and Narrative*, vol. 1, 45–77.

[7] Jan Assmann, *Religion und kulturelles Gedächtnis*, 2d ed. (Munich: Beck, 2004), 19, my translation of original German text: "Mit dem Begriff des kulturellen Gedächtnisses gehen wir noch einmal einen großen Schritt hinaus über das Individuum, das doch allein ein Gedächtnis im eigentlichen Sinne hat. Weder die Gruppe, noch gar die Kultur 'hat' in diesem Sinne ein Gedächtnis. So zu reden, wäre eine unzulässige Mystifikation. Nach wie vor ist der Mensch der einzige Träger des Gedächtnisses. Worum es geht, ist die Frage, in welchem Umfang dieses einzelne Gedächtnis sozial und kulturell determiniert ist."

The notion of narrative identity is important for the present volume, not because each author and article necessarily uses this terminology or Assmann's or Ricoeur's theories, but because it constitutes an overall framework concerning the understanding of communal identity, cultural memory, and narrativity, which ultimately underlies the research of the project behind the volume altogether.

Another relevant broad notion is *occasionalism*, recently discussed by Peter Burke as an "idea of culture as performance" which has "developed out of an older idea of society as theatre, but has gradually diverged from it."[8] Along the way, Burke points out how "the history of identities in particular has been studied in this way," exemplifying this with ideas of "honour as something to be performed," of "performance of ethnicity," "negotiation of identity" etc. concluding that "we see an increasing emphasis on the performance of culture, or a view of culture as a series of performances."[9]

Burke raises questions relevant to this volume as a backdrop for the constructions and interpretations given in the articles. He refers positively to the tendency to move from studies of rituals *per se* to the broader category of human ritualised behaviour, and to the greater fluidity of cultural studies, for instance in the interest in studying gaps between what has been intended and what has actually happened. However, in his opinion the new fluidity of occasionalism, which goes against the older notion of social determinism, may sometimes go too far, since the idea of performance may not always be appropriate to what actually happens. Thus Burke suggests making a basic distinction between two kinds of performance: the first kind consists of rituals, festivals and other specific, deliberately performed events set apart from daily life. Burke calls these "'framed' events"; they form a class of "strong" performances. The second kind consists of situations, for which notions of performance are also sometimes used in order to interpret or characterise them. These are situations in which people may "stage" themselves in certain ways, with conscious or subconscious strategies of presenting themselves; their ideas; the causes of their groups, regions, beliefs etc. They are weaker kinds of performance and must be recognised as such. Burke acknowledges that there is a spectrum encompassing the two kinds of "performance" standing at each end. Altogether, Burke opts for a recognition of "variations between different 'genres' of performance."[10]

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[8] Peter Burke, "Performing History: the Importance of Occasions," *Rethinking History* 9, no. 1 (2005): 35.

[9] Ibid., 40–41, see also 44–46.

[10] Ibid., 41–44, at 44.

Without explicitly being based on these notions, the articles in this volume to a great extent carry out the kind of views and distinctions pointed to here. For a saint's narrative or legend, Ricoeur's schematic way of characterising the construction of a narrative identity indicates that the perception of the saint in the legend is first configured in order to bring out the dramaturgy of the plot of the saint's life story, or—very often—death story. This is what Ricoeur calls the pre-figuration. This basic narrative is then re-configured in the following so as to emphasise the most important message about the saint, shaping in specific ways how the saint in his or her particular way has contributed to bringing divine truth or divine help to humans. Fundamentally, all events in the saint's life are seen in this light, so that the saint will appear as what may be called a heavenly hero.[11] That understanding makes it possible to give the actual narration its specific flavour, so that it can be received by readers and listeners; their reception of the narrative constitutes the third stage in Ricoeur's model. In the context of this volume, such readers and listeners would most often be participants in the cult or members of a group or region for which the saint was important. What matters for the reception of the saint in the group is some kind of identification with the saint's identity, a congruence between the members of the group and the life values and life (or death) story of the saint. Similarly, the narrative identity of a group or a region may be passed on and received by new generations of members or newcomers to the group. Thus, obviously, Ricoeur's model in three stages may be extended infinitely. The story will be re-configured again and again, and sometimes, of course, it will be critically re-configured, re-told in ways which strip the narrative of some of the elements that have become unbelievable, at least for certain groups.

Group identities are often displayed publicly through manifestations, processions (in a religious context) or demonstrations (in a political context) in which the accepted identity is performed strongly (using Burke's terminology) or, for example, by dressing or behaving in special ways (wearing monastic habits, religious symbols or participating in rituals, meetings, expressing opinions). Often, such practices of dress or behaviour will belong to what Burke designates "weak performance" because they are not framed in any particular way, but simply belong to the person's (or group's) traditional appearance. However, under certain circumstances public manifestations of such weak performances may be part of strong performances, when framed

[11] Concerning the notion of hero applied to saints, see Nils Holger Petersen, "Heroic Virtue in Medieval Liturgy," in *Shaping Heroic Virtue: Studies in the Art and Politics of Supereminence in Europe and Scandinavia*, ed. Stefano Fogelberg Rota and Andreas Hellerstedt (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 41–54.

under particular circumstances, thus intended by those who perform the acts, or, indeed, recognised by outsiders as belonging to the group in question. Thus, artistic expressions or displays of group identities may gain importance, whether they have been part of strong performances, such as a liturgical office or a procession in honour of a saint, or have been made as individual expressions without any (strong) performative intention (in Burke's sense). This latter might be a painting in a church or a house, or a poem or song appropriating a saint's narrative to express the significance of the saint in question in new contexts. As stated, weak performances may be used in strong performances, and strong performances may—over time—become customary; then they are no longer understood as manifestations, but only as something done because it is always done so, no longer a performance intended to be noticed by others.

All the authors in this volume study the cultural memory of saints through texts, images, music, and other sources from pre-modernity and even into modern times. The main focus concerns how the formation of communal identities in various groups, nations and regions may be understood to be related to historical processes concerning the establishing of saints and their cults, their preservation and, not least, their transformations over time. This may include their extension from local areas to larger regions, nations or even to a universally recognised significance; or their appropriation as patron saints for new regions or particular groups. Equally, however, it may also concern their marginalisation or even disappearance as markers of identity for the regions or social groups in question.

Why are saints, and especially, why have saints been important with respect to establishing communal identities? Not least in the Latin West, saints' cults in combination with the development of Christian liturgies involved not only a proliferation of liturgical offices for saints during the Middle Ages, but also broad religious and cultural practices beyond the liturgies themselves. Much of this continued in post-medieval Catholicism, and in some cases even in Protestant cultures. Various social groups and regions identified with (different) saints, and confraternities and guilds had saints as their particular protectors. All this is dealt with in concrete examples in a number of the contributions in this volume. Individual saints were believed to be particularly helpful against illnesses and other dangerous conditions, thus helping in some situations to provide a partial group identity between humans sharing such predicaments. Royal saints in particular became important markers of identity for royal families along the way, and were also appropriated as national or regional saints. Medieval religious devotional practices have had a huge artistic European reception history, in music, literature, drama, and the visual arts, reaching out far beyond the original geographical confines of Western Europe, and

in post-cultic appropriations often representing ethical, religious or political ideals of a person, group, region or nation.

Saints were seen from the outset as markers of true faith. They were regarded as manifestations of what it meant to be an ideal Christian. In other words, they manifested the mark of a Christian identity, one which ordinary people would not be able to claim as their own, but which nevertheless would stand as a mark of ideals which the faithful would accept as normative and worth striving for. Ultimately, these ideals would be ideals connected to how Christ was perceived as the ideal human. Since saints, however, were not considered to be divine during their lives, they were easier to have as human models, manifesting the possibility, even if only for the select few, of actually attaining such perfection.[12]

The liturgical practice of saints' cults was, naturally, inextricably connected to the liturgical offices as they developed over time, primarily based on the Rule of Benedict (for the so-called Divine Office, the liturgical hours especially cultivated in monastic contexts). However, it was further developed for centuries during the Middle Ages, and only gradually—not least following the Carolingian liturgical reforms—further stabilised in structure and contents. This development includes, in particular, the role of a saint in an office in his or her honour: during the nightly ceremony of Matins (or Nocturns) the saint's narrative would traditionally be read during the Middle Ages among responsories and other musico-poetic elements for the celebration of the feast of the saint. No other post-biblical persons were given such a place in church rituals. Church services in Antiquity and the Middle Ages were completely dominated by biblical texts and paraphrases; these normative and to a great extent narrative texts, unsurprisingly, remained the unquestioned canonical text material for church services in Christian Antiquity, the Middle Ages, and beyond, in all Christian confessions in European history. The saints' narratives were inserted into the structure of the Divine Office, which otherwise only (even on saints' days) featured narratives concerning Jesus' life, death and

[12] For general introductions to the cult of saints in the early Christian Church and the Middle Ages, see Peter Brown, *The Cult of Saints: Its Rise and Function in Latin Christianity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), Arnold Angenendt, *Heilige und Reliquien: Die Geschichte ihres Kultes vom frühen Christentum bis zur Gegenwart* (Munich: Beck, 1994). Also André Vauchez, *Sainthood in the later Middle Ages*, trans. Jean Birrell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), originally published in French as *La sainteté en Occident aux derniers siècles du Moyen Age* (Rome: École française de Rome, 1988). Most recently, Robert Bartlett, *Why Can the Dead Do Such Great Things? Saints and Worshippers from the Martyrs to the Reformation* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013).

Resurrection, supported by texts from the Old Testament that were understood to predict Christ; and the New Testament letters, especially of Paul, as canonical interpretations. In this way, saints, which were sometimes contemporary and at least normally post-biblical figures—except for the late medieval tendency to also canonise biblical figures—were inscribed as exemplifications of God's continued sacred history with humans into an overall context of the canonised sacred biblical history.[13]

Liturgical practices are performative events, communal practices or rituals. They constitute—as liturgical scholars and anthropological studies of ritual have shown (notwithstanding many disagreements within these branches of scholarship)—strong performances (as already pointed out using Peter Burke's notion) where religious identity in terms of adhering to fundamental ideas of religious thought and practice are confirmed and reinforced, not least through the communality and the repetitive nature of the performances.[14]

The liturgical narration of saints during the Nocturns (Matins) emphasised that liturgical practice was not only connected to something that had happened long ago. Although fundamentally based on only one master narrative about Christ, it also included other and more recent narratives. The possibility and even actual practice of incorporating new saints and thus new saints' narratives into the annual celebrations made the ongoing character of God's history with humankind clear. However, the point was also the opposite: that human history as it evolved, and contemporary struggles between evil and good forces, could be seen as part of God's eternal plan for the world and its inhabitants.[15]

Communities celebrating a particular saint shared the common practice of the saint's celebration on a particular day (or days) in the calendar, and in addition to this probably also private prayers in some measure. The members

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[13] See Nils Holger Petersen, "Memorial Ritual and the Writing of History," in *Historical and Intellectual Culture in the Long Twelfth Century: The Scandinavian Connection*, ed. Mia Münster-Swendsen, Thomas K. Heebøll-Holm, and Sigbjørn Olsen Sønnesyn (Durham: PIMS, 2016), 166–88. See also Sigbjørn Olsen Sønnesyn, "'Only Through Time Time is Conquered': Liturgy, History and the Timeless Aspirations of the Temporal," in *Of Chronicles and Kings: National Saints and the Emergence of Nation States in the High Middle Ages*, ed. John Bergsagel, David Hiley, and Thomas Riis (Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum Press, 2015), 23–50.

[14] See Nils Holger Petersen, "Ritual. Medieval Liturgy and the Senses: The Case of the Mandatum," in *The Saturated Sensorium: Principles of Perception and Mediation in the Middle Ages*, ed. Hans Henrik Lohfert Jørgensen, Henning Laugerud, and Laura Katrine Skinnebach (Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 2015), 180–205, esp. 191–96.

[15] See the discussion in Petersen, "Memorial Ritual and the Writing of History."

of such a community would all share the saint's life history. For the believer, and in accordance with Ricoeur's understanding of the mimetic configurations of the narrative, this life history identified the saint as a saint and thus contributed importantly to the collective identity of the community. Locally, a grave or relics would be central places for the cult.

Saints officially recognised by the church (and papal canonisation would rapidly become the normal form for such recognition, especially after about 1200) might be represented by relics in places far from their original graves, and in these new places their cult was also centrally expressed through their liturgical commemorations. The liturgical offices would highlight the virtues and actions of the saint as well as his or her life story, in some cases reconfiguring the saint's story in ways relevant to the celebrating community for which the office was composed. Otherwise, religious dramas, songs (also outside the liturgy), popular legends, and other ways of deploying the saint manifest the understanding and use of saints for cultic, political, or other agendas. All this would be negotiated among those participating in the cult. But narrative fragments and ideals pertaining to a saint's narrative, together with the saint's name, have also in many cases been kept in the collective memory of groups, regions, or nations, in places and times long after the religious cult ceased to exist.

The articles in this volume discuss and demonstrate in specific cases and from different angles, within different disciplinary discourses, various configurations and re-configurations recording receptions at particular places and time of saint's narratives into new presentations. An overall recurring interest among many of the authors in the volume concerns the influence of (different) political and religious discourses on local, regional or national appropriations of saints' cults. In this broad context, Gábor Klaniczay discusses how regions and groups in medieval central Europe would become rivals over important saints and their relics. Regional attachments to saints are expressed in numerous medieval and early modern visual representations in which saints were appropriated as local figures. This is studied and exemplified with numerous striking images in Gerhard Jaritz's article. Kateřina Horníčková takes up a specific, famous religious and political conflict in fifteenth-century Bohemia, between the Utraquist movement (the Hussites) and the Roman Church, also within Bohemia, demonstrating the agency of saints in this context. Anti Selart and Anu Mänd take up the issue of why no local saints seem to have become established in medieval Livonia (Estonia and Latvia), pointing in particular to the influence of the Teutonic Order for the medieval history of the area.

Tiina Kala's contribution concerns medieval liturgy in a local context in the Estonian city of Tallinn (known as Reval in the Middle Ages). Through

archival studies, she studies how saints venerated in the city of Tallinn in the late Middle Ages penetrated into the local Dominican liturgical calendar, in spite of the (otherwise) strictly centralised Dominican liturgy. Medieval liturgical offices as poetic and musical constructions, which reflect theological as well as political discourses on saints, are dealt with in the articles of Roman Hankeln and Sebastián Salvadó. Roman Hankeln analyses to what extent and in which ways liturgical chants, also musically, establish or support discursive meanings in relation to the texts they set, including expressions of regional or local attachment. Salvadó discusses changes over time in the theological understanding of royal saints and violence in liturgical offices.

Tracey R. Sands discusses how saints could become part of political, even nationalist agendas in a modern context, around 1900, in the Lutheran north, the island of Gotland, now a part of Sweden. Finally, Martin Wangsgaard Jürgensen, discusses notions of universality and locality, not least addressing difficult questions of why some medieval saints were successful, others not, in different ways, concerning official canonisation or local popularity, drawing also on medieval wall paintings as sources.

I want to close this introduction with an example in order to point out how a symbolic identification with a saint in nineteenth-century Lutheran Denmark moved the saint's narrative far away from its original substance, yet preserved a direct connection to the original story. Its re-configuration was made meaningful in a new way in the new context. This was possible because the re-contextualisation of the original narrative changed the narrative emphasis. The example which follows concerns a Danish art song appropriating the hagiography of the Danish saint, Duke Knud Lavard (martyred on 7 January 1131), radically transforming the meaning of his life story as this was re-configured and read in the preserved medieval saint's offices.[16] The song transforms what in the medieval cult was an adoration of Knud's saintliness as a just prince able to lead the Danish people to God, a royal saint, a protector

[16] See *The Offices and Masses of St. Knud Lavard*, reproduced in facsimile, transcribed and ed. John Bergsagel, 2 vols. (Copenhagen, Ottawa: Royal Library and Institute of Mediaeval Music, 2010). See also the discussion in Nils Holger Petersen, "Theological construction in the offices in honour of St Knud Lavard," *Plainsong and Medieval Music* 23, no. 1 (2014): 71–96; Nils Holger Petersen, "The Image of St Knud Lavard in his Liturgical Offices," in *Of Chronicles and Kings*, 129–58, esp. 134–42; and Sønnesyn, "'Only Through Time Time is Conquered'." See also Kurt Villads Jensen, "Creating a Crusader Saint: Canute Lavard and Others of that Ilk," in *Of Chronicles and Kings*, 51–72, esp. 63–64, giving a different reading of Knud Lavard's saint's offices.

of his lineage and people, into a praising of what in the song is presented as the character of the Danish Nation, symbolised by the saint.

The Danish historian Rasmus Glenthøj has described a change from cosmopolitan patriotism to a patriotism based on ethnicity and language at the end of the eighteenth century as a precondition for the nationalism of the nineteenth century.[17] Increasingly during this period, a Danish identity was established, based on (an imagined, cf. Benedict Anderson) community of citizens with a common language and background. The war with England at the beginning of the century, and an increasing tension with the German Confederation (created in 1815) up to the First Schleswig War 1848–51 intensified this development. In his tragedy, *Svend Grathe or the Meeting of the Kings in Roskilde*, written in 1841, the Danish poet (and scientist) Carsten Hauch (1790–1872) treated dramatic events between three pretenders for the Danish throne in 1157, ending a long civil war with the victory of Valdemar, king of all of Denmark 1157–1182. Ultimately, this civil war was the consequence of the tragic murder in 1131 of Duke Knud Lavard, the father of Valdemar, by Knud's cousin Magnus, son of the ruling King Niels. Knud Lavard, son of the late King Erik the Good, an older brother of King Niels, had been a duke of Schleswig. Sources about Knud Lavard describe the conflict between him and prince Magnus as based on Magnus' fear of Knud as a rival for the Danish throne, but also on Knud being (possibly falsely) accused of being more loyal to the German emperor, at whose court he had received his education, than to the Danish king. During the nineteenth century a number of Danish and German plays take up this question, undoubtedly influenced by the increasing tensions between a German and a Danish identity at the time.[18] In Hauch's tragedy, the protagonist is Svend Grathe, son of Knud Lavard's younger (half-)brother Erik Emune (king of Denmark 1134–37). Svend, Valdemar and another Knud, son of Knud Lavard's murderer Magnus, are contenders for the throne, having formed changing alliances over the years. In Act 1 of the tragedy, a singer presents the above-mentioned poem, which briefly and succinctly narrates the events of the murder seen through Magnus and his men's cynical eyes. However, the two last strophes break away from the narrative mode just after the murder itself,

[17] Rasmus Glenthøj, *På fædrelandets alter. National identitet og patriotisme hos det danske borgerskab 1807–1814* [On the altar of the fatherland: national identity and patriotism in the Danish bourgeoisie 1807–1914] (Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum Press, 2012), 18–28.

[18] See Nils Holger Petersen, "Regional Saints and Saints' Regions: Post-Medieval Appropriation of Sainthood," in *Regions in Clio's Looking Glass: Reflections on the Ways in which Different Types of Historiography Shaped and Changed Regional Identity,* ed. Dick de Boer and Luis Adão da Fonseca (Turnhout: Brepols, forthcoming).

stating "A spring gushed out, but sank again into the sea; it was the tears of the Danes that flowed at the grave of the hero. Oh Denmark, you never understood schemes; often you have paid for that with your most pure blood."[19]

Niels W. Gade (1817–90), arguably the most famous Danish composer of the nineteenth century, set this poem in 1842.[20] In 1843, Gade had made contact in Leipzig with the famous Mendelssohn, who performed Gade's first symphony with great success. Gade came to Leipzig the same year and was made co-conductor with Mendelssohn at the *Gewandhaus* concerts. When Mendelssohn died in 1847, Gade was chosen as his successor. Still, Gade left Leipzig and Germany to go back to Copenhagen in 1848. Although Gade seems to have wanted all along to come back to Copenhagen at some point, his own patriotism, as well as increasingly negative attitudes in Leipzig against a Dane holding the very prestigious position at the Gewandhaus Orchestra seem to have been important for his decision to leave Leipzig so soon, and with no assurance of a position in Copenhagen.[21]

The song was later also printed in a widely circulated Danish collection of 1500 Danish songs, as a solo piano piece, but with the words written into the music, for use in bourgeois homes with a piano. Gade reinforced the ethno-nationalist characterisation of Danish identity in Hauch's poem musically. He repeated the text of the final stanza of the poem twice in a musical coda, which moves away from the c minor Romantic ballad style of the setting of the narrative part. Thereby this last stanza receives a strong emphasis, further highlighted by changes of tonality, time, tempo and musical style, beginning with the penultimate stanza. This second part of the song is in E flat major, an Andante sostenuto *con espressione*.

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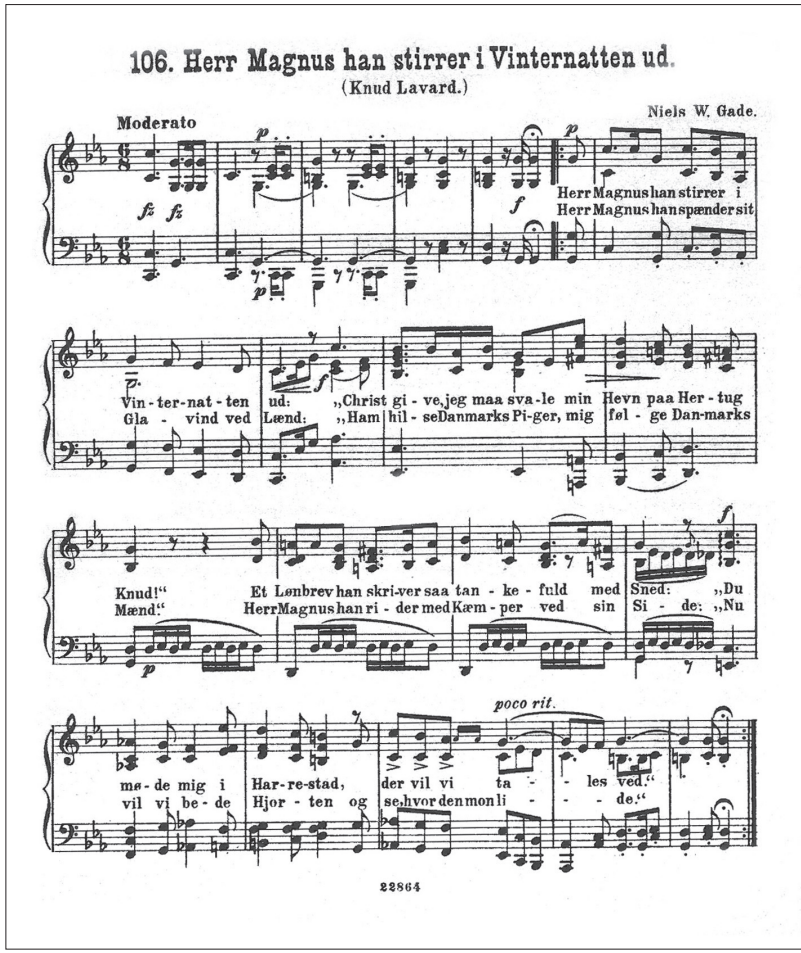
[19] Carsten Hauch, *Svend Grathe eller Kongemødet i Roskilde* Tragedie i fem Akter [Svend Grathe or The Meeting of the Kings in Roskilde: A Tragedy in Five Acts] (Copenhagen: G.E.C. Gad, 1885), 10–11. The two last strophes in the original:

> Da sprang der frem en Kilde, den sank igjen i Hav
> Det var de Danskes Taarer, der flød ved Heltens Grav.
> O, Danmark, paa Rænker du aldrig dig forstod,
> det har du tit betalt med dit reneste Blod.

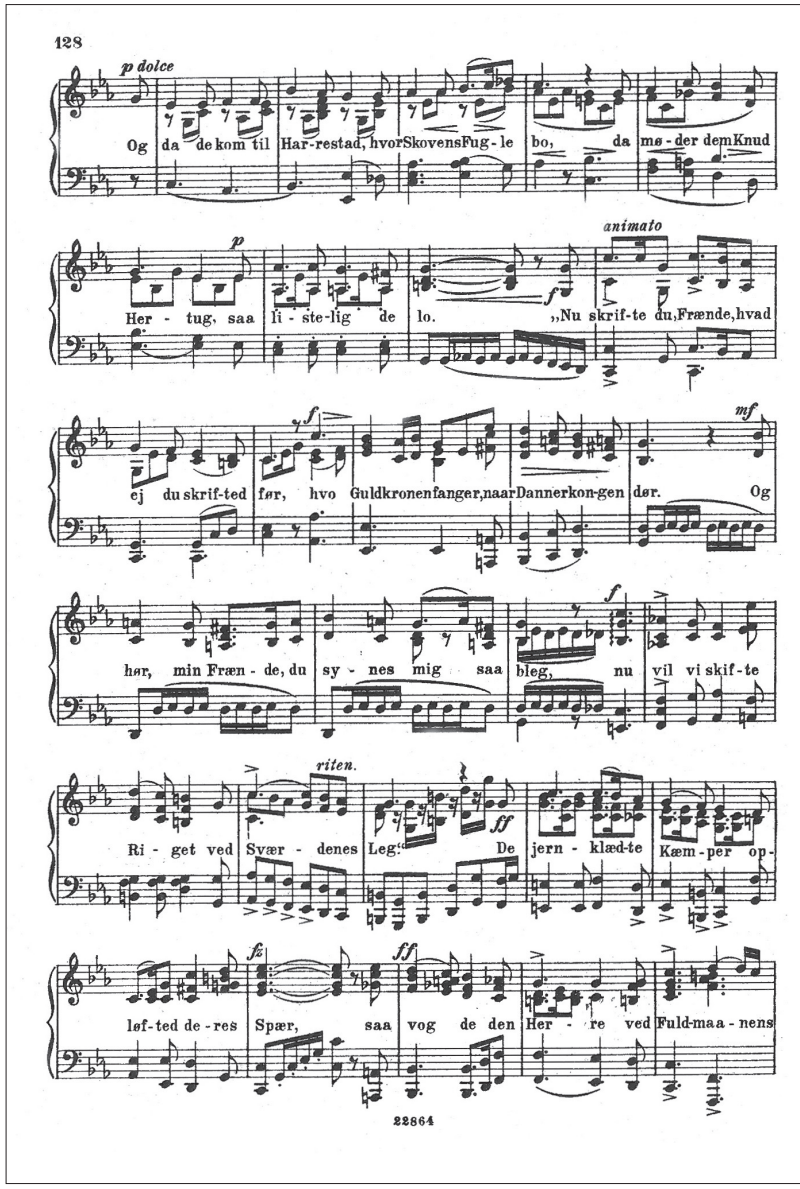
[20] Dan Fog, *N.W. Gade – katalog: En fortegnelse over Niels W. Gades trykte kompositioner* [N.W. Gade – catalogue: an inventory of Niels W. Gade's printed compositions] (Copenhagen: Dan Fog Musikforlag, 1986), 71 (no. 155). Autograph manuscripts of Gade's setting, with piano as well as with orchestral accompaniment are preserved in manuscript at the Royal Library in Copenhagen.

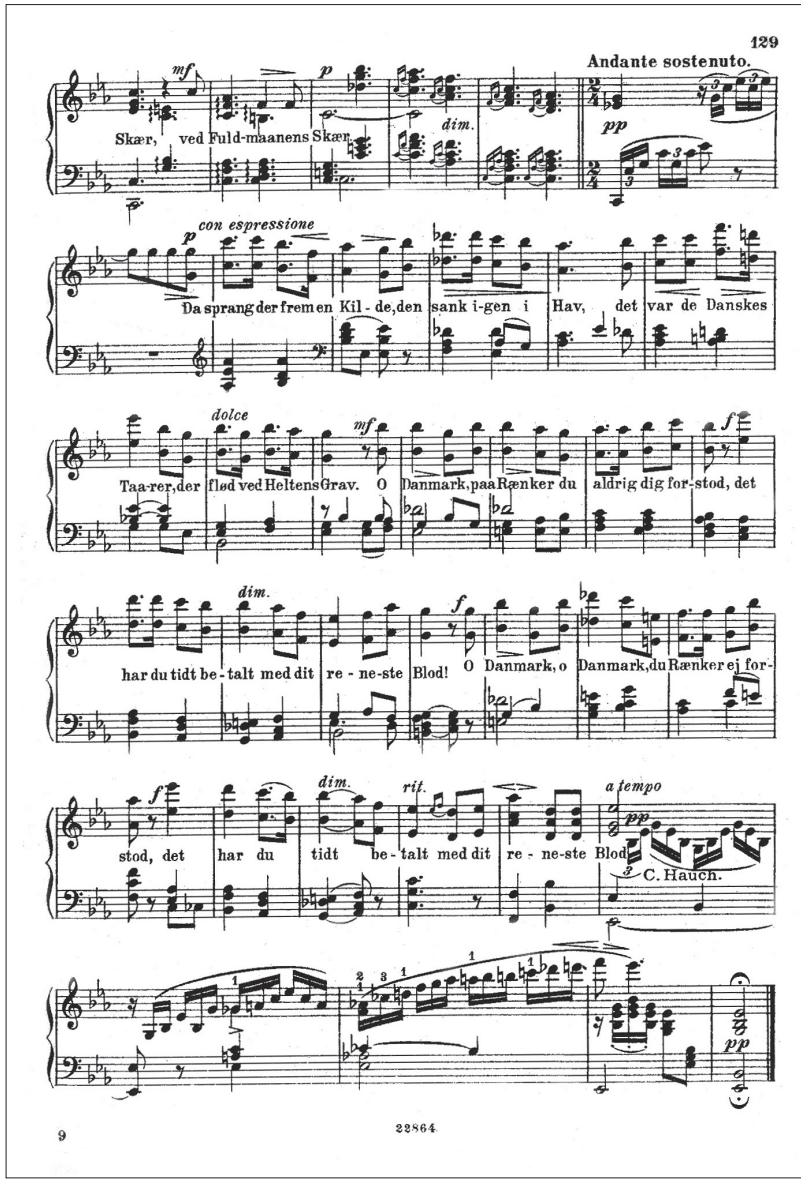
[21] Yvonne Wasserloos, *Kulturgezeiten: Niels W. Gade und C.F.E. Horneman in Leipzig und Kopenhagen* (Hildesheim, Zurich, New York: Georg Olms Verlag, 2004), 169–81. See also Nils Schørring, *Musikkens Historie i Danmark* [The history of music in Denmark], 3 vols. (Copenhagen: Politikens Forlag, 1977–78), vol. 2, 296–98.




**Example 1.** *Herr Magnus han stirrer i Vinternatten ud*
[Sir Magnus looks into the winter night]
*Danmarks Melodibog*, vol. 5, 127–29, no. 106.[22]

[22] *Danmarks Melodibog* [Book of Danish Melodies], 5 vols (Copenhagen: Wilhelm Hansen, n.d.). The first volume of this collection of Danish songs was published in 1895. Vol. 5 was first published in 1928. The volumes were very popular and republished several times. See further information on http://www.kb.dk/da/nb/nyheder/mta/breve2010/1002melodibog.html under the homepages of the Royal Library Copenhagen (accessed 10 January 2016).


128
p dolce
Og da de kom til Har-restad, hvor Skovens Fug-le bo, da mø-der dem Knud
animato
p
Her-tug, saa li-ste-lig de lo. „Nu skrif-te du, Frænde, hvad
f
mf
ej du skrif-ted før, hvo Guldkronen fanger, naar Dannerkon-gen dør. Og
f
hør, min Fræn-de, du sy-nes mig saa bleg, nu vil vi skif-te
riten.
ff
Ri-get ved Svær-denes Leg: De jern-klæd-te Kæm-per op-
fz
ff
løf-ted de-res Spær, saa vog de den Her-re ved Fuld-maa-nens
22864


129
Andante sostenuto.
Skær, ved Fuld-maanens Skær.
Da sprang der frem en Kil - de, den sank i-gen i Hav, det var de Danskes
Taa-rer, der flød ved Heltens Grav. O Danmark, paa Rænker du aldrig dig for-stod, det
har du tidt be-talt med dit re - ne-ste Blod! O Danmark, o Danmark, du Rænker ej for-
stod, det har du tidt be-talt med dit re - ne-ste Blod
C. Hauch.
9
22864

A number of events during the nineteenth and into the twentieth century make it evident that the song achieved a general popularity in connection with strong Danish nationalist sentiments. The First Schleswig War (see above) and even more, the disastrous war with Prussia in 1864, in which Denmark lost the whole of Schleswig-Holstein, could be—and probably were—read as the background for a popular view of the innocent Danes against the powerful Germans. This idea may have gained further currency in connection with the unsuccessful peace conference in London in April 1864.

Until the new borders of 1920 (still in force today), decided by a referendum after the First World War, the Schleswig-Holstein question and the (changing) fate of the Danish minority south of the (changing) borders form an obvious background for understanding the popularity of this appropriation of Knud Lavard to represent Danish identity. It shapes an image of Denmark as the persecuted innocent, unjustly harmed by dishonest enemies.

The appropriation, on the other hand, in a sense turns the hagiographic narrative upside down. It represents the hagiography accurately in describing Knud Lavard as an innocent man tricked into a situation in which he can be ambushed. However, in the saint's narrative there is no attempt to identify Knud Lavard with an ethnic Danish identity. The loyalties under discussion concern loyalty to the Danish king or to the German emperor. The medieval chronicles and hagiographic writings of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries claim that Knud Lavard was loyal to both and see no problem in this. Between the lines of the medieval narratives, however, we can discern the story of a young man raised at a German court, and inclined toward the Latin ecclesiastical culture of central Europe, which was still relatively new in Denmark. This international orientation of Knud Lavard's would ultimately lead to his being mistrusted by elements of the traditional nobility and royalty of Denmark. To a great extent, this is how modern literary representations of the narrative have interpreted the conflict between Knud Lavard and Magnus. In 1982, the Danish writer, Ebbe Kløvedal Reich, wrote a new appropriation of the Knud Lavard narrative as a short story, "Minnesangen til Helligknud" in the second of three volumes of short literary glimpses from Danish history.[23] Here, the contrast between the peasant-like Magnus (Mågens) and the cosmopolitan and elegant Knud is made a key point of the narrative. On the one hand, Magnus is jealous of Knud and all the glamour about him; on the other hand, the conflict is about the throne of Denmark. Interestingly, it is made into a

[23] Ebbe Kløvedal Reich, "Minnesangen til Helligknud" [The Minnelied for St. Knud], in Ebbe Kløvedal Reich, *Ploven og de to sværd* (Copenhagen: Vindrose og Gyldendal, 1982), 54–70.