

Sanctity and Secularity during the Modernist Period

Sanctity continues to fascinate, both as an ideal and as experienced in another. It exerted its fascination upon the individuals studied in this volume, eliciting a diversity of response. A common thread which binds these writers, all active during the period of Roman Catholic modernism (1890-1914), is the struggle to come to terms with the intrusion of historical consciousness into the life and teaching of the Christian churches. At one extreme, such consciousness was strongly resisted by the novelist turned hagiographer, Joris-Karl Huysmans, whose *Life of Saint Lydwine* is marked by a credulousness toward the legendary. At the other end of the critical spectrum, with Albert Houtin critical historical methods served to discredit much of traditional beliefs, dismissing them as merely legendary. In between one finds the uneasy mix of criticism and romanticism in Paul Sabatier's *Vie de S. François d'Assise*, the patient methodological reflections of Hippolyte Delehaye, criticism integrated with a viable spirituality in Friedrich von Hügel, or the expansion of the saintly ideal to include nontraditional figures with Henri Bremond. From their various perspectives all attest that saints are studied, at least implicitly, because the student believes that something worth studying, and possibly even worth imitating, is there.

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1 Hippolyte Delehaye (1859 - 1941)

2 Albert Houtin (1867 - 1926)

3 Henri Bremond (1865 - 1933)

4 Baron Friedrich von Hügel (1852 - 1925)

5 Paul Sabatier (1858 - 1928)

6 Joris - Karl Huysmans (1848 - 1907)