



Studies in Medieval Religions and Cultures

**IRENÆUS OF SIRMIMUM AND
HIS STORY IN THE
MEDIÆVAL EAST AND WEST**

REMEMBERING A LESSER SAINT

Marijana Vuković

ROUTLEDGE



Irenaeus of Sirmium and His Story in the Medieval East and West

The study of hagiographies has generally been focused on the more prominent saints of late antiquity and the Middle Ages who inspired significant and long-lasting veneration. However, this has caused many less-well-known saints to be pushed aside and forgotten.

This book is a study into one such saint, Irenaeus, a martyr who was killed in 304 CE in Sirmium, Pannonia. His short-lived cult, his feast day, and the account of his martyrdom (which had been translated into Latin, Greek, Old Slavonic, Georgian, and Armenian) had all been forgotten during the Middle Ages. This book examines Irenaeus of Sirmium's life, cult, sainthood, and eventual disappearance from the memory of medieval Christendom, in the context of a wider study on the memory of those less-well-known saints who, like Irenaeus, became neglected and eventually forgotten.

Irenaeus of Sirmium and His Story in the Medieval East and West will be of interest to scholars and students alike interested in hagiography, medieval literature and history, as well as all those interested in the religious history of Byzantium, medieval Europe, and the Slavic world.

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Remembering a Lesser Saint

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First published 2024
by Routledge
4 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 4RN

and by Routledge
605 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10158

*Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa
business*

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British Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN: 978-0-367-19284-6 (hbk)

ISBN: 978-1-032-59041-7 (pbk)

ISBN: 978-0-429-20157-8 (ebk)

DOI: 10.4324/9780429201578

Typeset in Sabon
by Apex CoVantage, LLC

**To Milica and Marianne,
my mother and my supervisor,
both cancer victims**



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Acknowledgments

Nearly fifteen years have passed since I first thought about this book. In its present form, it provides a revised version of my PhD dissertation from the Central European University in Budapest (2008–2015). In the opening of the book, I wish to acknowledge those exceptional individuals who contributed to its elaboration.

My long quest for the saint evolved into a life-changing journey. Flavored by countless relocations and travels, it diverted my life path in unforeseen directions. My project on Irenaeus was housed at the Department of Medieval Studies of the Central European University. Back then in Budapest, the department became our second home away from home. At first, an unfamiliar and challenging place, it was yet inspiring in myriad ways. During my years at CEU, I was supervised by the late Marianne Sághy. Her continual encouragement and trust in my contribution enabled me to get through. As someone who flared her optimistic vibes around her, she cannot but live eternal in my memory. Marianne is no longer with us, and CEU has relocated; we will, nevertheless, always cherish those momentous Budapest days.

Volker Menze was another professor who committed himself to advise my work. I appreciated his meticulous, honest comments and his friendship. My colleague at CEU, András Németh, proposed comparing the Latin and Greek *Martyrdoms of Irenaeus* to the Old Slavonic version, the approach which opened so many opportunities for new knowledge. Gábor Klaniczay and Trpimir Vedriš were there to instruct me on all things hagiographical. My colleagues from CEU, Mihail Mitrea, Svetlana Tsonkova, Stanka Kuzmova, and Ottó Gecser, offered helpful suggestions in the pre-final stage of my dissertation, and Judith Rasson and Alice Choyke polished its English language.

When I eventually landed in Ithaca, New York, to study at Cornell University and live in the Telluride House, with the generous financial support of the Reese Miller Scholarship from the Telluride Association, I encountered marvelous academic groups at the Medieval Studies Program and the departments of History, Near Eastern Studies, and Linguistics. I learned immensely from my professors, Wayles Browne, Kim Haines-Eitzen, and the late Paul Hyams, but I found it equally valuable to connect with all my colleagues in the Medieval Studies program at Cornell in 2010–2011.

I further spent a lovely and adventurous year at the American Research Center in Sofia, Bulgaria (2011–2012), polishing the Old Slavonic unit of my work. The center funded and facilitated my year of research, and Denver Graninger and Emil Nankov led an inspiring academic group there. Furthermore, the Institut für Byzantinistik und Neogräzistik endorsed my three-month stay in Vienna in 2012, where Claudia Rapp and Maximilian Diesenberger offered their precious advice on Greek and Latin hagiography.

I am further indebted to the following specialists for sharing their expertise. François Dolbeau, Milena Milin, and Péter Tóth provided helpful suggestions at the outset of my doctoral research. The late Francis J. Thomson informed my work in the Old Slavonic language. Anissava Miltenova, Diana Atanassova, and Margaret Dimitrova warmly welcomed me in Sofia with insightful conversations about the Suprasl Codex and the early South Slavic textual transmission from the Greek language. I am grateful to Anissava Miltenova for participating in my doctoral defense as a committee member. Yavor Miltenov supplied me with a copy of a Bulgarian Academy of Sciences manuscript analyzed in this book. Guy Philippart was an incredible host in Brussels, where we discussed the early medieval Latin hagiographical transmission. The late Robert H. Jordan kindly corrected my Greek translations of the *Martyrdom of Irenaeus* from the Imperial Menologia. Dimosthenis Stratigopoulos generously shared his unpublished material with me. The late Enriko Gabidzashvili and Temo Jojua were essential in obtaining and transcribing the Georgian manuscript of the *Martyrdom of Irenaeus*. Arpine Asryan translated the Armenian *Martyrdom of Irenaeus* for my dissertation and this book, and Sandro Nikolaishvili translated the Georgian *Martyrdom of Irenaeus*.

I also thank the following manuscript libraries for the courtesy of allowing me access to medieval manuscripts and other resources: Österreichische Nationalbibliothek (Vienna), Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana (Venice), Bibliotheca Ambrosiana (Milan), Hill Museum and Manuscript Library, State Historical Museum (Moscow), Bulgarian Academy of Sciences (Sofia), Bayerische Staatsbibliothek (Munich), Bibliothèque municipale (Rouen), Trinity College Library (Dublin), British Library (London), Bibliothèque royale (Brussels), Bibliothèque municipale (Saint-Omer), Stadtbibliothek (Trier), State History Museum (Kutaisi), and the Bollandist Society (Société des Bollandistes). The Museum of Srem and the Archives of Srem in Sremska Mitrovica, specifically the former Museum Director Jasmina Davidović, allowed access to the materials of importance from their deposits.

The following individuals and institutions provided permissions and allowed me to use or reprint their copyrighted material. The Museum of Srem permitted the use of some of the visual material from their documentation. Natalia Zhukova, on behalf of the Moscow State Historical Museum, found a way in these tumultuous times to provide permissions for the visual material preserved in their deposits. Chapter 7 was first published in OPREE

(*Occasional Papers on Religion in Eastern Europe*). On behalf of the journal, the editor-in-chief Paul Mojzes allowed full rights to reprint the article here. Michael Greenwood and Louis Nicholson-Pallett from Routledge patiently waited for this volume to see the light of day and supported the entire publication process, for which I am immensely grateful.

Some people were the source of exceptional inspiration. Having first encountered Christian Høgel's book *Symeon Metaphrastes: Rewriting and Canonization*, I learned an entirely novel way of looking at hagiography. Over the years, the book became a guiding volume to all the subsequent scholarship on textual variation in Byzantium. I owe much to Christian, not only for his method and invaluable advice before and during my doctoral defense but also for the years of subsequent collaboration during my post-doctoral research at the University of Southern Denmark (2020–2023).

Concentrating on “lesser” saints would have remained something I dare not do had it not been for the sessions “Saints at the Margins” and “Grey-zone saints” at IMC Leeds 2017, organized by Robert Wiśniewski. The occasion marked “lesser” and “marginal” saints as worthwhile subjects of scholarly inquiry. While working on the database of “The Cult of Saints from its origins to circa AD 700, across the entire Christian world” led by Bryan Ward-Perkins in 2018, we discussed the value of the term “lesser saints” for a while. This debate marked the commencement of my inspiration for an overarching approach to this book.

My friends and family fostered this work over the years in multiple ways. Inge Decooman was my host whenever I conducted research in Brussels. Roman Shliakhtin helped logistically and financially when obtaining the permissions for the use of the manuscript folios and illuminations of Syn. gr. 183 from the Moscow State Historical Museum. Over the years, my family in Serbia patiently awaited my visits, sometimes even after months of absence. The quest for the saint – I must say – deprived us of many moments together. My mother, Milica, had she lived, would still have rejoiced to see this volume finally published.

In Odense,
2023



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1 Irenaeus of Sirmium

Memory and forgetting

The last “Great Persecution” of Christians in the early fourth century (303–311 CE) during the time of the Roman tetrarchs Diocletian, Galerius, Maximian, and Constantius marked a watershed in the history of Christianity, dividing as it did Christian history into two epochal phases. In 304 CE, amid this persecution, the first Christian bishop of Sirmium, Irenaeus, sacrificed his life for martyrdom. Situated in Roman Pannonia, Sirmium was one of the capitals and a densely inhabited city during the Tetrarchy. The expansion of the later Roman Empire inevitably brought to the fore but also spotlighted several new, strategically important places. Sirmium was also notable because many later Roman emperors were born and resided there.

This late antique urban setting had a sizable Christian population, as attested to by considerable material evidence, including inscriptions and remains of early Christian basilicas. Since the body of Christian followers grew in number while Christianity was not officially recognized, many sacrificed their lives for the faith in defiance of the persecuting Roman authorities. Although the number of casualties and the scope of the persecutions are today subjected to debates, the very occurrence of the persecutions is not questioned.¹ Specifically, after Diocletian’s fourth edict, the Christian community of Sirmium faced one of the most challenging periods. According to the written sources, many Christian followers were martyred in Sirmium besides Bishop Irenaeus.²

St. Anastasia, who happened to be in Sirmium during the persecution, was at least captured there, if not brutally murdered.³ Her cult experienced an impressive memory migration from Sirmium to Constantinople, Ravenna, Rome, and the Dalmatian coast.⁴ The cult of Sinerotes (Synerotes) or Serenus, a gardener from Sirmium, was attested to by an early basilica in Sirmium.⁵ Four Crowned Martyrs (Quattuor coronati) were the stonecutters who refused to create a pagan statue of Asclepius and consequently suffered in Sirmium.⁶ Demetrius, Irenaeus’s deacon, died a day after him. His cult may have transformed into the prominent cult of St. Demetrius of Thessaloniki.⁷ Montanus, a presbyter from Singidunum (Belgrade), visited Sirmium during the persecution and suffered there.⁸ Many others, whose records may not have been visible, also died for the faith in this same location.⁹

2 *Irenaeus of Sirmium*

The first Christian bishop of Sirmium, Irenaeus, shared the same destiny. The emperor Diocletian issued the edict stating that all citizens must offer a sacrifice in a public space to express belief in the empire's gods. Irenaeus was captured and put on trial because he was among those who refused to give an offering. A Roman official and a local governor, Probus, ran the trial where Irenaeus renounced his earthly life by declaring himself to be a Christian.¹⁰ The crowds attending the persecution scene, including his family and friends, tried to dissuade Irenaeus from renouncing his life for the faith. Not willing to give up his belief, Irenaeus was sentenced to death by beheading. After the martyrdom, the persecutors threw Irenaeus's body from the bridge into the river Sava. It is what the story of his martyrdom says.

The historical yet anonymous testimony to Irenaeus's heroic death, *The Martyrdom of Irenaeus of Sirmium*, could have been written already in the fourth century CE.¹¹ This paradigmatic martyrdom narrative complied with the rules of the genre, with which it shared the standard structure, form, and aims. The Bollandists Hippolyte Delehaye and René Aigrain surmised that the *Martyrdom of Irenaeus of Sirmium* possibly belonged to a group of martyrdom narratives originating from the principal written documents of the Christian trials or was composed based on them. Irenaeus's martyrdom was of solid historical value and remained very close to the direct testimony of the persecution or even the minutes of the trial, according to their views.¹² Herbert Musurillo agreed with their perspective by stating that the text was close to the earliest acts from the fourth-century late Roman province of Pannonia.¹³

Recent contributors expressed more concern regarding the text's authenticity. François Dolbeau emphasized Delehaye's skepticism regarding the reputation of the *Martyrdom of Irenaeus*. He stated that some textual peculiarities suggested a relatively ancient tradition regarding Irenaeus of Sirmium; he dated it to the beginning of the fifth century.¹⁴ Finally, Timothy Barnes commented on the "problematic historicity and documentation" of this martyrdom narrative:

My book (from 2010) deliberately avoided any discussion of Pannonian martyrs under Galerius because of their problematical documentation, even though the passion of Irenaeus, who was bishop of Sirmium, is included in standard modern collections of authentic early hagiographical documents.¹⁵

The debate about these matters remains open-ended; nevertheless, it is notable that Irenaeus's late antique cult also existed in Sirmium from the fourth to the sixth centuries in addition to the potentially early text. The cult was attested to by archeological remains in two sites and an epigraphic inscription. It was swept away by the Avar intrusion in sixth-century Sirmium. There are no traces of cult continuity in the following period. Irenaeus's physical remains – relics – never reappeared after his body was thrown into the river Sava. His cult did not spread elsewhere.

After some centuries of silence, one of the cult places in Sirmium reputedly dedicated to Irenaeus returned to life. Building activity of a religious character appeared on the site from the tenth to the fourteenth centuries. In this period, Sirmium was controlled by different entities, one after another, namely, Bulgaria, Byzantium, and Hungary. The last construction at the site, dated approximately to the mid-thirteenth century, was dedicated to Irenaeus. This attestation led Vladislav Popović, a Serbian archeologist who excavated in Sirmium, to assume that the earlier buildings erected in the exact location had an equivalent consecration.¹⁶ In his view, the religious objects did not emerge due to the continuity of the cult. Their building was motivated by the proliferating literary and liturgical sources at the time.¹⁷

This book covers the period before the late thirteenth century when Sirmium was within the Kingdom of Hungary. The focus is placed on the literary and liturgical sources that emerged before this period and their links with the efforts to restore Irenaeus's medieval cult in Sirmium. Although we are bereft of the information about the original language and the original textual version of Irenaeus's martyrdom, we know that it was written, rewritten, and translated into five languages, namely, Latin, Greek, Old Slavonic, Georgian, and Armenian. The manuscripts containing this text appeared from the eighth century in the Latin West and the tenth century in Byzantium and Bulgaria. The saint's name was present in the earliest and some later calendars in various medieval realms. The number of languages and various versions of this narrative do not allow us to disregard any of the phases of its textual afterlife.

The question of the original language of the *Martyrdom of Irenaeus* is still a matter of ongoing debate. The majority of scholars trusted that the original language was Latin. Tillemont and Simonetti were the two scholars who argued for the Greek origin of this text. The seventeenth-century scholar Tillemont admitted that the Latin text appeared to be closer to the records of the trials, although he considered the original language Greek. In 1955, Simonetti concluded that the original version of this text was a lost Greek version.¹⁸ The Latin version, in his view, is a literal translation of the lost Greek version, which has indirect connections with the extant Greek version because it represents its somewhat earlier phase of *metaphrasis*. He argued that the extant Greek version was created based on a Greek source which was the direct source for the Latin text. In recent decades, Dolbeau revisited this question, expressing his skepticism about Simonetti's arguments and reaffirming that the original language was Latin in most scholars' view. Dolbeau left this issue open for future research.¹⁹

Placing aside the thorny question of the original language, this book aims to follow as many of the phases of the text's afterlife as possible to allow a view of its multiple varieties. Perhaps more than the other medieval genres, hagiography has been known for its exposure to textual varieties. It allows one to spot the initial layers and the later additions to the text and link the specific additions to the given periods, places, and communities. The power

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of interpolations becomes visible. The comprehension of these “living texts,” which changed through different media of their transmission in the Middle Ages, is possible through such analysis.

Despite the various languages in which the *Martyrdom of Irenaeus of Sirmium* was translated and the number of textual versions, its presence significantly declined after the eleventh century in Byzantium and the neighboring lands, judging by the number of manuscripts. It led to the disregard for and neglect of the saint. The decline became striking as it coincided with the time when one of the cult places in Sirmium revived. The manuscripts containing the text grew in number in the Latin West, but only until the fourteenth century when they decreased, too.

Ultimately, Irenaeus did not become a prominent medieval saint, although he was an early martyr of the Great Persecution with a historical martyrdom narrative and a late antique cult. Irenaeus would have had all the credentials to ensure a glorious afterlife and a long-lasting cult. However, entire communities forgot about him. The forgetting occurred in some parts of Christendom faster than in others.

This book covers the period from late antiquity until the high Middle Ages, encompassing a critical span from the text’s appearance until the first tangible signs of the saint being forgotten. I inquire into how Irenaeus was remembered before he came to be neglected and forgotten.

While memory in history occupies close scholarly attention, the phenomenon of forgetting, although omnipresent, has been a random scholarly subject. The topic’s neglect seems undeserved, knowing that more is discarded and lost than recorded in history. Large are the deposits of what has stayed in the darkness. Infinitely more things are lost than have remained in memory. If one could recall all things once forgotten, the past as we know it would look very different.

Forgetting “marginal” or “lesser” saints has undoubtedly been an unconventional topic thus far. The scholarship has focused mainly on “successful” saints and their cults. Among many studies written on memory in the Middle Ages,²⁰ some are about saints and memory.²¹ In contrast, close to nothing is written on saints and forgetting. Nevertheless, hagiographical material about “lesser” saints has proved prone to substantial transformations. The transmission of such material offers much scope for exploring how different historical periods and cultural milieus remembered but also transformed and eventually neglected the shared Christian literature by (re-)appropriating, (re-)imagining, and (re-)interpreting it. The textual transformations of medieval hagiography are tightly linked to forgetting.

Textual variations commonly present in the transmission of medieval literature possibly did not apply to all genres of literature in medieval manuscripts.²² In Jane Baun’s view, medieval copyists had completely different attitudes toward the writings of Plato, the Apostle Paul, or the Church Fathers. Their task “was to produce a faithful duplicate of the original.”²³ The anonymous authors’ writings, among which are included the writings

about “lesser” saints, were commonly exposed to textual variations. While the textual transformations of medieval literature have been studied thus far, very little was said about the connection of these transformations to forgetting.²⁴

Forgetting, at its core, refers to dysfunction or “distortion of memory.”²⁵ Paul Ricoeur refers to it as “an attack, a weakness, a lacuna on the reliability of memory.”²⁶ Traditionally understood as memory impairment, forgetting has recently started being considered by cognitive psychologists as “inseparable from the study of memory” and an equally constitutive part of future remembering.²⁷

Several aspects of remembering and forgetting are of interest in this book. First, we are not pursuing intentional, willful forgetting but unintentional, negligent, and passive forgetting that leads to disregard and loss. It is “forgetting as annulment,” according to Paul Connerton.²⁸ “Forgetting as annulment” occurs where there is a surplus of information, and more critical memory suppresses irrelevant memories. The condition is different from collective amnesia, “where communities seemingly suppress public remembrance of historical episodes that do not correspond to present interests.”²⁹

Another memory aspect of relevance for the present book is what Ricoeur calls “secondary remembrance, ‘forgetting that preserves,’ or recollection, which enables repetition or reiteration of the past.”³⁰ Recollection “transposes the past moments into a quasi-present.”³¹ According to Ricoeur, “forgetting that preserves” is the “opposite to destructive forgetting,” the oblivion without further recall.³² Such oblivion refers to the past episodes that are erased for good and cannot be recovered; they are generally of limited interest to historians of memory.³³

How do we recall and recover to memory things once forgotten? Ricoeur explains that in specific circumstances, entire sections of the reputedly forgotten past can return.³⁴ He refers to Heidegger, who argues that “forgetting, which conditions remembering, is related to the past as having-been.”³⁵ “Forgetting has a positive meaning insofar as having-been prevails over being-no-longer in the meaning attached to the idea of the past.” “Forgotten but preserved,” stories and events can reemerge in memory as a “usable past.” The concepts of “usable past” and recollection relate to manipulated memory. Manipulated memory is instructed or institutionalized memory that serves a specific cause or ideology. According to Ricoeur, the opportunities for manipulating memory lie in “everything that compounds the fragility of identity, mainly through ideology.”³⁶

Manipulated memory operates when stories and events that support the collective identity promote and corroborate it in specific circumstances. The activities of manipulated memory spread through various media. They have been embodied in oral resources, manuscripts, or visual support in the Middle Ages, including manuscripts’ illuminations and monuments. The manipulated memory remained one of the leading resources for maintaining the coherence and integrity of groups and societies, mainly through ideology. This

book, therefore, does not consider people's personal memories but collective or social forgetting related to groups and societies. Social forgetting is ordinarily not a "total oblivion," a discarded memory that cannot be retrieved. It corresponds to the study of the "forgotten but preserved" past.

The book focuses on three types of source material related to Irenaeus: material evidence, calendars, and hagiographical manuscripts containing the martyrdom narrative, aligned mainly by calendars. Archeological remnants, calendars, and hagiographies – media of medieval memory of the saint – had the potential to transfer and modulate memory, but they also had limitations in their interaction. The inner textual transformations omitted and added information that corroborated or distorted the saint's memory. Irenaeus's local, late antique cult in Sirmium ceased after the sixth century. The unstable feast day of Irenaeus in medieval calendars and the anonymous text about his martyrdom translated into five languages did not ensure him a place in long-lasting memory either. The study of calendars, material evidence, and textual versions is here a study of their nonsynchronicity.

Besides exploring the nonsynchronized markers of the cult, including calendars, texts, and material evidence, the book examines the role of place in remembering and forgetting. The place is understood as a literal *lieu de mémoire*, according to Pierre Nora. Along with Connerton's argument that the acts of remembering are site-specific, the place is considered crucial in remembering and forgetting Irenaeus.³⁷ The place, Sirmium, was simultaneously a periphery and the crossroads. It witnessed the succession of people, cultures, languages, invaders, and different inhabitants. Their inherent and different cultural traits turned Sirmium into a place of forgetting because discontinuity prevailed over maintaining a single tradition, culture, and language. Much memory was tied to this place. However, memory vanished as the place speedily changed identity. Sirmium became the place subject to social forgetting, a *lieu d'oubli*.

Archeological remains, mainly the remnants of Christian basilicas dedicated to saints, are clear signifiers of past remembering and commemoration. Monuments and shrines are often discussed in connection to memory. As some scholars argue, "archeology is well-suited to tackle the relationship between materiality and memory."³⁸ It should play a pivotal role in the reconstruction of memory work.

While the continual remembering reflected in material evidence in places of memory is easily interpreted, more complex memory migration and resurgence of memory are of interest here. In memory migration, "carriers, media, contents, forms, and practices of memory travel and transform through time and space, across social, linguistic, and political borders."³⁹ The memory migration leaves the sites of memory unattended. In Beiner's view, "an examination of a memorial that is disregarded can tell us more about forgetting than remembering."⁴⁰ With memory migration, places become the places of forgetting. Forgetting then gives rise to "new societies" in the places of memory, which have previously turned into places of memory absence. New

societies further either appropriate the memory or allow its oblivion. Therefore, the physical disappearance of monumental objects in such cases creates a possibility for memory to be implanted in new places, while their vanishing allows the possibility of forgetting.⁴¹

Further, calendars and hagiographical manuscripts aligned by calendars are memory carriers within a society. Through calendars, Christians organized their liturgical year by associating each day with one or more saints by ascribing to them their feast days. Memorial dates and calendars relate to collective memory.⁴² Every society decides which saints to remember and forget. According to Zerubavel, calendars map societies' basic temporal structures, enabling and constraining their abilities to remember different pasts.⁴³ Calendars invoke "mnemonic synchronization": everybody within a society or a group remembers the same person or event on the same day.⁴⁴

These "temporal arrangements" are closely linked with group formation.⁴⁵ By copying and preserving the collections that glorify saints according to dates, each community maintained its Christian identity, regardless of whether they produced the collections or borrowed them from another Christian group. Calendars shaped remembering of the society's Christian past. Such a collective memory as the active past that formed their identity continued to be relevant for their present.⁴⁶ In the words of Gabrielle Spiegel, "in liturgical commemoration, . . . the fundamental goal is to revivify the past and make it live in the present, to fuse past and present, . . . into a single collective entity."⁴⁷ The tremendous symbolic significance of the calendars lies in the fact that their reforms were frequently associated with significant social-political and cultural reforms.⁴⁸

Calendars were not only lists of saints to be remembered by Christian societies. They were also part of what directed people's liturgical behavior. Calendars imposed liturgical practices by recalling saints' names on a particular day. They further promoted certain behaviors and virtues and triggered different feelings each day, considering that saints were described by different stories. The communities that remembered – mnemonic communities – were reminded almost daily of the different holy names, deeds, and the saints' exemplary behavior.

Finally, memory directly connects to narrativity.⁴⁹ By copying, abridging, and revisiting records, liturgical texts, and literary documents, medieval people and communities actively created their past.⁵⁰ Through the process of copying medieval manuscripts, texts were exposed to variety. Some scholars considered that "variation is what the medieval text is about"; it is possible to have as many versions of a text as we have manuscripts.⁵¹ In literary history, we say that such texts are rewritten or *metaphrased*. Liedeke Plate and Els Rose define rewriting as "the process and product of the act of writing again."⁵² They further connected rewriting and memory. In their view, "rewriting is recognized as a transformative technology of memory, carrying and transmitting memories but not without change and adaptation."⁵³ Ricoeur sees such strategies in a slightly different manner. In his view,

forgetting strategies include “recounting differently, by eliminating, shifting the emphasis, recasting the protagonists of the action in a different light along with the outlines of the action.”⁵⁴ Ricoeur’s statement is here taken as a starting point of my further argument.

In rewriting, the structure transformations are the most apparent textual changes. They may cause differences in meaning. The texts eventually send different messages and have different aims. The examination of narrative structure here follows what Gérard Genette discusses within narratology as duration/speed.⁵⁵ Speed is the relationship between the duration of real-life events and their telling in the narrative. The latter is the length of the text or its sections, also called pseudo-duration.⁵⁶ The *length* of the different sections of the text is analyzed according to the topics they describe. Length measures the physical space (number of lines on paper and number of words) dedicated to each subtopic within a larger narrative.⁵⁷ The pseudo-duration of the narrative sections juxtaposed to their topical choices is particularly interesting for this book.

I employ several other terms within narratology. “Frequency” refers to the repetition or recurrence of the same events in the text.⁵⁸ “Pause” presents the digressions without action, the other term for which is “non-narrative comments.”⁵⁹ “Scene” shows the most dramatic moments of the narrative, such as dialogues.⁶⁰ Within Genette’s category of “voice,” I analyze first- and third-person narratives. In first-person narratives or “homodiegetic” tales, the narrator is present as a character in the story he tells. The usage of the first person is also called a “personal language situation.” In “heterodiegetic” descriptions, the narrator is absent from the story he tells.⁶¹

Additionally, Genette’s theory of intertextuality establishes connections among the textual versions. It purports the actual presence of one text within the other. Every document is considered a mosaic and a combination of quotations and references from other books, genres, and discourses. Intertextuality reveals the dependence of a source on the other source. It specifies how much a text moves away from the original historical record and gets involved in rewriting. Hagiographies that do not rely on other sources about the same saint reveal that their purpose was not to save the story in an alternating manner but to twist the historical record and adapt its use to purposes other than preserving memory.

Intertextuality helps us understand better the metaphrastic processes. Intertextuality pertains to overlapping sections in textual versions. The parts that differ allow the analysis of rewritings. Generally, *metaphrasis* was commonly exercised in texts written by anonymous authors, particularly in Byzantium. It may have been understood as a tool for reworking possibly dubious documents, where redactors were unsure of their contents but wished to keep their gist in the collections. For example, Ephrem Mtsire, an eleventh-century Georgian monk and theologian, confirms that a reason to redact the old hagiographical texts was the wish to purge them of heretical ideas.⁶²

Intertextuality presupposes literal, word-for-word borrowings from one version to another at its most simplified level. Intertextuality additionally

means drawing inspiration or imitating thematic models. It involves borrowing the same topic but not necessarily using the exact words. Intertextuality supports the study of *length*. In that sense, Genette discusses two types of transformation: text's abridging (*reduction*) and extending (*augmentation*).⁶³ Reductions and augmentations also introduce changes that quite evidently affect not only length but also structure and substance.⁶⁴ *Excision* is a cut-off, the simplest version of reduction that comprises omitting or subtracting. Aside from the simple cutoff (*amputation*), excision also presupposes *expurgation*, reducing with a moralizing or edifying function.⁶⁵ *Concision* presupposes not omitting any part of the text but narrating in a more concise style. The product is a new version, which does not necessarily preserve any word of the original text.⁶⁶ Finally, *condensation* depends only indirectly on the original document. It is a sort of autonomous synthesis produced from memory upon the text's body, where every detail of the composition may be forgotten, but the meaning is kept.⁶⁷

Augmentation has several manifestations. The *extension* is augmentation by massive addition, the simplest form of enlargement.⁶⁸ *Expansion* augments the text with many new additions and stylistic embellishments. Finally, *amplification* brings in a thematic power when enlarging the narrative. Narratology and intertextuality corroborate the study of memory and textual transformation. We are equipped to research how transformed texts preserve and distort the saint's memory.

A further contribution to the study of forgetting comes from quantitative manuscript analysis, or, to use a cutting-edge term, statistical codicology.⁶⁹ The total number of hagiographical manuscripts and, specifically, in this case, the number of manuscripts with Irenaeus's *Martyrdom* reveal how the saint and his narrative were eventually forgotten in the Middle Ages. Hagiographical collections were generally among the most widespread medieval readings in the East and the West. The existing evidence is probably only a part of the corpus once in circulation. Even as such, the number of preserved manuscripts containing hagiography has been the subject of scholarly study only in recent decades.⁷⁰ The total number of extant manuscripts containing Latin and Greek hagiography is known today thanks to the efforts of several scholars.

For years, a team led by Guy Philippart and Michel Trigalet conducted quantitative calculations of the total number of extant Latin hagiographical manuscripts.⁷¹ Some are hagiographical collections proper, while others are only *libelli*, booklets containing texts on single saints.⁷² They engaged in identifying and describing what was previously reported by the Bollandists as approximately 13,600 hagiographical texts.⁷³ In 2001, Trigalet reported the description of three-quarters of the total of 7,463 manuscripts.⁷⁴ Their latest publication reports some 10,000 hagiographical texts (they revised the initial Bollandist estimation) and around 7,000 preserved Latin hagiographical manuscripts from the Middle Ages (second to fifteenth centuries).⁷⁵

They advanced their research by counting the number by century.⁷⁶ Within the century range that pertains to this book, the peak of the Latin

hagiographical production was in the twelfth century (20.9%).⁷⁷ Their sample was 3,326 manuscripts out of 3,813 (not a total of 7,000), recorded at the end of 1996.⁷⁸ Philippart assumed that the trend in manuscript production would have stayed the same had they counted the total of 7,000.⁷⁹

Philippart and Trigalet mainly examined hagiographical manuscripts arranged according to calendars, otherwise called *legendaries*, *passionale*, or *vitae sanctorum*, in the Latin West.⁸⁰ These were the most common forms of manuscripts preserving Latin hagiography. Calendars used to align these manuscripts, containing short entries about saints, were called *martyrologies*. They briefly noted a saint's birth, life, virtues, and death.

Hagiographic production in the West did not decline after the twelfth century. Philippart worked solely on Latin manuscripts and did not overview the vernacular languages. The transmission and translation of hagiographical collections from Latin into vernaculars were also on the rise at the time.⁸¹ A complete overview of Western medieval hagiography would be manifested by complementing the number of collections in the vernacular languages compiled in the West. This feature would contribute to a more transparent view of the reputation of hagiography. To my knowledge, such calculations of the number of medieval manuscripts of vernacular hagiography have not been conducted thus far.

When it comes to the preserved hagiographical manuscripts in Byzantium, the *Institut de Recherché et d'Histoire des Textes* (IRHT, Paris) provided the lists of manuscripts, based on which the preliminary numbers can be calculated. The institute recorded around 40,000 medieval Greek manuscripts dated up to the sixteenth century.⁸² This number presupposes the entire medieval Greek heritage, including all genres of writing.

The IRHT records hagiographical manuscripts under several categories. Arranged according to calendars, these collections, containing lives of saints (*vitae*) and martyrdom narratives, were called *menologia*.⁸³ The IRHT counts 296 collections of *menologia*.⁸⁴ The highest number of them date to the eleventh century (99 manuscripts, 33.4%). The extant *menologia* from the ninth and tenth centuries comprise 10.8%, while this type of collection declines after the eleventh century (17.2% in the twelfth century, 10.8% in the thirteenth century). The IRHT distinguishes the abridged *menologia*, which peaked in the thirteenth century among preserved manuscripts (24.2% of the total of 116). When numbers of *menologia* and abridged *menologia* are added, the eleventh century is again the peak of production (30% out of 412 manuscripts).

Besides *menologia*, hagiographical texts were listed in the collections of *menaia*. In these collections used in the Byzantine liturgy, hagiographical texts were usually adapted, abridged, and revised to suit the liturgy.⁸⁵ They were mainly set in twelve liturgical books (one for each month) containing various readings for daily liturgies of the fixed cycle: the feasts that fall on a fixed date in the church calendar.⁸⁶ The IRHT database counts 581 collections of *menaia*. Calendars, called *synaxaria* in Byzantium, were used to arrange *menologia* and *menaia*. The database enumerates 260 such collections.