



## Vides d'escriptors a l'Edat Moderna: retòrica, història i poètica

### III. PARADIGMES I INTERSECCIONS

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*Modern hagiography as a narrative paradigm: lives of saints and devout biographies*

Since ancient times, hagiography has been concerned with narrating lives. These lives were quite particular, though, since the wonderful has always played a prominent role in them. Initially these narratives were more like representations of “typologies”, rather than individualized biographical accounts. But with the passage of the medieval centuries, hagiographic archetypes evolved to present new models of holiness (confessors, founders of orders, mystics...), and it was in their *modus vivendi* that the Christian found the exemplary model to imitate. Consequently, and progressively, the stories began to show a greater interest in the particular life of the protagonists.

From the beginning of the 16th century and throughout, theoretical reflections were raised on how and with what criteria the lives of saints should be written –and rewritten. These considerations mainly affected the narration of ancient and medieval saints that, in the new post-conciliar crossroads and in response to the Protestant Reformation, had to be reviewed. They also had influence on new hagiographic models and the lives of exemplary uncanonized figures, where perhaps the rhetoric of the wonderful was not as important as the description of the spiral of moral perfection that the protagonist experienced.

After Trento, both the hagiographies and the biographies of virtuous characters became a powerful tool for moral disciplining, so they were used to reinforce new religious and ethical values. In order to capture these exemplary behaviours, we will observe how the narrative devotes more attention to daily life and the anecdotal, where often – but not necessarily – the wonderful manifests itself.

So, to reflect on the early modern hagiographic narrative paradigm in the Catalan context, I will rely mainly on the compilations of two of the first fully post-Tridentine hagiographers: the Jesuit Pere Gil, from Reus, and the Dominican Francesc Vicenç Domènec from Girona, to see how they adapt matter to the new socio-religious coordinates. We will also check how the compiler's voice emerges and acquires prominence in the narration of hagiographies, and even, in some cases, how the hagiographer becomes the venerable baron who is the subject of the biography.