The following is the "Introduction" to *Devotional Cultures of European Christianity, 1790-1960*.

Introduction

By Henning Laugerud and Salvador Ryan

This volume takes as its theme the devotional cultures of European Christianity, from the dawn of the French Revolution to that later revolution which was the Second Vatican Council. At one level it deals with what might be called, in devotional terms, a 'long nineteenth century'. This term, of course, as used by Eric Hobsbawm, begins in 1789 and ends at the outbreak of the First World War, and this chronology, with some variations, has been generally adopted since. However, an argument might be made that, in devotional terms at least, the 'long nineteenth century' did not end at the outbreak of the Great War; certainly when applied to Catholicism, the devotional world forged in the late-eighteenth and nineteenth centuries continued to make a great deal of sense at a popular level through the 1960s and, even, to a lesser extent perhaps, beyond. This can also be justified when we are talking about the protestant or reformed churches in Northern Europe. The nineteenth–century practices, ideals and theologies were hardly challenged until the well into the 1960s.

The Catholic revival of the nineteenth century might be said to have its roots in the revolutionary period of the 1790s when a particular reading of the 'Enlightenment' had 'Reason' enthroned as a goddess in the cathedral of Notre Dame in 1793 and two successive popes were arrested by Napoleon some short years later – Pius VI and Pius VII, the latter held for six years. In fact, the years of turmoil through the 1790s actually led to a great deal of clandestine creativity among members of the laity as familial reading and interpretation of the lives of the saints, lay instruction in catechism and the recitation of the rosary supplemented for the Eucharist in the absence of clergy; some other prominent members of the laity celebrated what were called 'white masses', complete with vestments, rubrics and Gregorian chant, excepting, of course, the consecration. In addition, more extreme examples of lay activism would see angry groups accost local officials and forcibly compel them to restore confiscated religious statues and other sacred objects. After the downfall of Napoleon, the status of the papacy was enhanced rather than diminished, and the example of Pius VII's fortitude in captivity certainly contributed to the credibility of an emerging wave of Ultramontanism.

This, of course, is the paradox of the nineteenth century: on the one hand, it is an age which witnesses the onward march of secularism and the end of the thousand-year old or so Papal States, leaving a pope (Pius IX) who regards himself as a 'prisoner' in the Vatican; on the other, papal infallibility is solemnly defined in what might be regarded as the zenith of the ultramontane movement. It is an age of deep scepticism towards religious faith, fuelled, in part by developments in science and the rise of critical biblical and historical scholarship; yet,

it is also an age in which reports of Marian apparitions proliferate, often associated with unlettered and unsophisticated visionaries. Indeed, in some quarters, where reason abounded, anti-intellectualism did much more abound. These trends within Catholicism might be regarded as evidence of a reactionary church responding to the challenges of Reason, Revolution and *Risorgimento*; a last-ditch attempt to stem the tide of modernity such as that found in the Syllabus of Errors of 1864. However, this view, which tends towards an interpretation of the developments in devotional culture as directed 'from the top down', as part of some ultramontane 'master plan', surely misjudges the dynamism within popular piety, which is more than capable of accepting or rejecting devotional innovations on their own merits or usefulness.

The challenges of secularisation in the nineteenth century were, moreover, shared across denominational divides. Indeed, industrialisation and the advent of secular socialism would contribute to a weakening of religious practice among males, leading to the increasing feminisation of religion. This was especially evident in the explosion of female religious orders within Catholicism, but also the important roles which women enjoyed within religious movements such as Haugeanism in Norway, the subject of the first essay in this volume. Many women within the Haugean movement had leadership roles and acted as counsellors and preachers, often travelling long distances alone, in an age when this was altogether uncommon. Sara Fiona Maclaren's essay in this volume highlights particularly how the spiritual strength of women such as Blessed Anna Maria Giannetti Taigi (1769–1837) and Blessed Elisabetta Canori Mora (1774–1825) would be held up as models to be emulated.

In short, the piety of the Catholic 'long nineteenth century', perhaps not to everyone's taste today – with its sentimentality and saccharine 'devotions' – could claim at least to be broadly based. Shrines such as Lourdes, examined in one of the essays here, were not solely the pilgrimage destinations of the peasant, but increasingly that of the well-heeled pilgrim who could afford to make the trip; the Stations of the Cross might appeal to the imagination of an unlettered Irish devotee in a newly-built post-Emancipation church in Ireland, but could also inspire the work of a gifted Hungarian composer such as Franz Lizst, who created his work not at a remove from the sentiments behind the *Via Crucis*, but rather by drawing deeply from his own personal devotion to Christ's passion; images of the Sacred Heart could usefully stop an enemy's bullets but could also say something theologically significant about the breadth of God's salvation in the Jesuit-Jansenist debate. This was, indeed, a devotional culture aimed at a broad Church and one which, on the one hand, excoriated the modern world and its technological creations, and on the other, made use of these with holy abandon to internationalise its brand.

Both the Orthodox and Protestant churches would have their own battles to fight with 'modernity': for the former (at least in the contribution to this volume) that battle was aimed at recovering the Byzantine painting style from its more recent Nazarene usurper. In the case of Haugeanism, the battle was as much with what it considered to be a spirituallydeficient State Church; for some members of the Established Church of mid-nineteenth-century England, the restoration of the Catholic hierarchy would raise its own difficulties, as would

the presence of two distinct traditions with their own emblems of identity in twentieth-century Northern Ireland. Whatever the geographical location, or social or political context, the deep-seated attachment of individuals and groups to their respective devotional worlds and the extent to which these worlds shaped them cannot be ignored.

1.1. The anthology

The collection is divided into three parts. The first part is comprised of five essays which explore the theme of spiritual and devotional renewal in Norway, Ireland, Italy and France. The second part explores questions pertaining to devotional culture in the arts with specific studies related to aspects of sacred music, iconography and architecture. The final part addresses the use of devotional instruments, respectively hymnody and religious emblems, to identify individuals and groups over and against a specified 'Other', whether that 'other' be in 1850s' England, 1930s' Spain or 1970s' Belfast.

PART I

In the first essay, **Arne Bugge Amundsen** introduces the Haugean movement, a hugely influential Norwegian manifestation of pietism. It was led by the young and unlettered Hans Nielsen Hauge (1771–1824), son of a peasant, who became a wandering lay preacher and took it upon himself to travel throughout Norway confronting clergy and their congregations with searching questions surrounding their own spiritual state. He would rail in particular against the Anti-Conventicle Act, which was passed in Norway in 1741 and would be imprisoned for doing so. Such acts were commonly used by a number of European governments of the period in an effort to halt the adverse effects that pietistic movements were perceived to be having on the state churches. The Anti-Conventicle Act of 1741 ensured that the clergy of the Danish-Norwegian state church had preaching rights and the right to supervise private religious meetings.

Hauge travelled enormous distances on foot, setting up small Haugean cells wherever he went, and appointing elders to represent him in his absence. While many aspects of Haugean communities have been examined in the past, Amundsen sets about exploring a somewhat neglected aspect of the movement: its devotional culture. Three years before his death, Hauge would circulate a 'spiritual testament' which was drawn up to ensure that the movement would not depart from his ideals. Here he outlines the devotional character of the movement and its tradition of reading, singing and praying. It also communicates the essential conservatism of Haugean ideals: members were to continue to predominantly use the Bible, works with biblical extracts and the catechism, and Hauge cautioned against the development of novel features. His followers would eventually be fully integrated into the Norwegian Lutheran Church.

Hauge was also the enthusiastic writer of a large collection of spiritual letters which seem to have been accorded an authoritative status from early on in the movement's history. Letters to

Hauge from his followers and the responses to these were often included in later printed editions of Hauge's works. In an almost Pauline fashion, letters addressed to individuals were often copied and more widely distributed among believers as spiritually-edifying works. Moreover, Amundsen shows how Hauge was to use his printed works as 'interactive' texts, responding to critics in subsequent editions. Hauge's achievements in this regard constitute one of the first examples of mass communication in Scandinavia, his output far outstripping the Moravian Brethren in its sheer volume. Haugeanism is a good example, then, of the manner in which revival Christianity, with its pietistic enthusiasm, could re-invigorate an established church.

In the case of mid-nineteenth-century Ireland and England, the so-called 'Devotional Revolution' exerted a profound influence on what was clearly not the established church – the Roman Catholic Church – albeit, in the case of England, one which had just had its hierarchy restored by Pope Pius IX on 29 September 1850. Emmet Larkin's seminal article in 1972 on the 'Devotional Revolution' posited the transformation of post-Famine Irish Catholicism from a faith centred on prayer in the home, pattern days to holy wells and local pilgrimage sites and the practice a brand of folk religion largely untouched by the ideals of sixteenth and seventeenth-century catholic reform, to a more clerically-controlled form of Catholic observance. With this came a new emphasis on regular attendance at Sunday Mass and the adoption of Rome-sponsored devotions such as the rosary, the forty hours, benediction, novenas and confraternities, all of which could be associated with the 'Cullenisation' of Irish Catholic life under the eponymous Cardinal Paul Cullen, Rome's man in Ireland, through the years 1850 to 1878.

In this second contribution, **Sheridan Gilley** revisits the devotional world of this 'revolution', emphasising both its complexity and its vitality, and concurring with recent conclusions that its genesis can be said to actually pre-date Cullen's arrival by some decades, its stirrings to be found perhaps as early as the episcopacy of Archbishop Troy of Dublin in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century and his promotion of a number of confraternities and sodalities in the diocese. Furthermore, Gilley stresses the primacy of English devotional works in the literature of the 'revolution', suggesting that it should be viewed not merely a feature of the Romanisation of Ireland, but also of its Anglicisation. One of the classic devotional texts of the period was, Bishop Richard Challoner's *Garden of the Soul*, which continued to be widely used, albeit updated to include additional devotional exercises in later editions.

Gilley cautions that this devotional world should not be regarded simply as imposed from above, and clerically driven. Rather, he argues, many of these devotions became popular for precisely that reason – they were adopted by the people – lay men and women – who found them to be spiritually beneficial and accessed them in a variety of ways. Indeed, for the lay person, there was any number of ways in which one could hear Mass – the Redemptorist, George Stebbing, for instance, published a devotional work outlining thirty different ways of doing so in 1913. Moreover, it was the clergy's celebration of Mass which was, in fact, the most constricted for obvious reasons. The advent of the modern liturgy in the 1960s would

bring an end to much of this devotional world, and Gilley wonders whether, in its modern word-laden form, something valuable has not been lost.

Brendan McConvery's essay on the shaping of Irish devotion from 1851 to 1965 traces the impact of the Redemptorist order and, in particular, its parish missions, on Irish popular religious culture. One of the decrees of the Synod of Thurles of 1850, in many respects the Devotional Revolution's ecclesiastical flagship, instructed that bishops were to have parish missions organised in their diocese in an effort to combat error. While the presence of parish missions in Ireland pre-dated the Synod by less than a decade, their numbers would increase exponentially in subsequent years conducted by a number of religious orders including the Vincentians, the Oblates, the Rosminians, the Passionists and the Redemptorists. These missions were often occasions of spectacular outpourings of faith, devotion and, indeed, repentance for sin, the queues for Confession sometimes taking more than a single day to process. They would play a hugely significant role in the implementation of Cullen's efforts to re-sacramentalise the Irish. In later years, they would ally themselves to temperance campaigns, the most memorable examples being the 'poitín missions' of the Redemptorists which often closed with the ritual burning of the equipment for the manufacture of this illicit spirit. In the early years of the Irish Free State, they would help to reconcile within communities neighbours who had found themselves on opposite sides during the Civil War.

Parish missions are perhaps most remembered, however, for their promotion of a lively faith and intense piety and, to assist the attendee in this regard, were enthusiastic purveyors of all manner of devotional objects which were aimed at helping the individual to continue in this vein after the mission departed. No one could attend a mission without encountering a number of religious goods stalls which offered a wide variety of crucifixes, medals, scapulars, and devotional and catechetical pamphlets. The supply of printed works to assist the devout layperson in hearing Mass or making visits to the Blessed Sacrament which became associated with parish missions further enabled the 'ordinary believer' to participate in the renewal of devotion which had been promoted by Cullen and others. McConvery argues that this kind of 'devotionalism', which would be largely jettisoned in the years after Vatican II, filled a void in a period of theological poverty, which struggled to engage with modernity, and, in doing so, fostered both a warm religious fervour and a sense of belonging for many.

In **Sara Fiona Mclaren's** essay on Blessed Anna Maria Giannetti Taigi (1769-1837) and Blessed Elisabetta Canori Mora (1774-1825), we see how a particular model of female sainthood is identified by the Catholic Church as a powerful resource in the struggle against modernity. What marks these individuals apart is that neither was a nun; indeed both were wives and mothers. Theirs was a sainthood rooted in the chores of everyday life, which included the care of their respective husbands and children, although this did not preclude either from experiencing mystical revelations or exhibiting the gift of prophecy.

Maclaren situates the recognition of the reputation for sanctity of these individuals even within their own lifetimes in the context of the Catholic Church's efforts at *Christiana Restauratio* after the calamitous events of the late eighteenth century. This restoration would

now be achieved by drawing on the strength of faith of the lower classes and, in particular, of women at a time when many of the so-called ‘enlightened’ elites had turned away from the Church. However, the portrayal of Taigi would change over time in accordance with the prevailing religio-political climate. For instance, during the reign of Pope Pius IX, her prophetic and political qualities would be emphasised over her motherly virtues: she is depicted as predicting the attacks on the Pope and the Church while also presaging the Church’s future resurrection and its conquering of the forces of modernity. From the later nineteenth century, however, she will revert to being a model for young women who wish to lead virtuous lives while at the same time rearing their families and caring for their husbands.

Eli Heldaas Seland focuses on the phenomenon of Marian apparitions of the nineteenth century and, in particular, the religious medals associated with the burgeoning Marian cult in the final contribution to this volume’s first section. This essay closely examines the interplay between the images presented on the medals and the principal texts associated with the cults in question. In the case of the medal which would come to be titled ‘Miraculous’, the visual image, while reminiscent of *immaculata* iconography of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, nevertheless departs from this type in some details. Furthermore, a discrepancy between the image depicted and the account of the visionary, Catherine Labouré, of what she actually saw in the year 1830 (namely the Virgin holding a globe representing the world, and particularly France) suggests that what emerges in the material culture of the devotion constitutes something of a compromise (the medal, by contrast, depicts the Virgin with her open hands by her side from which rays of light stream). The image, it is argued, would play a significant role in preparing the ground for the proclamation of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception in 1854.

If Catherine Labouré’s medal was used in advance to prepare the way for the proclamation of the Marian dogma, the apparition at Lourdes to Bernadette Soubirous and its associated cult would constitute a veritable celestial rubber-stamping of this development four years later: here, the Virgin identified herself as the ‘Immaculate Conception’. The depiction of the figure of Bernadette kneeling before the apparition was also significant: here was a young, pious girl from a poor and unsophisticated background communicating with the Virgin Mary. The same Virgin had stated that she could not promise to make her happy in this life but in the next and, indeed, this visionary would experience much suffering before dying at a young age. Here, then, was someone with whom a majority of unsophisticated Catholics could identify; the favour visited upon this country girl was undoubtedly recognised by church authorities who came to see its potential to unmask the inadequacy of the rationalism and scepticism of the so-called ‘enlightened’ elites.

PART II

Peter de Mey and **David J. Burn’s** contribution examines the *Via Crucis* of Hungarian composer, Franz Lizst (1811–86) as a reflection of his own religious sentiments. This complex work was composed in 1878–9, quite late in Lizst’s career, although never

performed during his lifetime; it followed the death of a dear friend of the composer, Baron Antal Augusz. The composition of the *Via Crucis* expressed, in part, the deep sadness which Lizst experienced after this event. De Mey and Burn closely examine the composer's deep devotion to Christ's passion and the Way of the Cross in particular. In a close analysis of the piece, De Mey and Burn note how Lizst situates his composition within the timeless tradition of the Church, principally by introducing it with Venantius Fortunatus' *Vexilla Regis* with its traditional Gregorian melody. Yet he also employs newer techniques, as exemplified in what would later be termed 'tone-clusters', which he uses for the Fourth Station in which Jesus meets his Mother. Ultimately, De Mey and Burn agree that a purely stylistic analysis of Lizst's *Via Crucis* will always be inadequate, as it belongs to the realm of faith and can only be properly understood when its theological message is appreciated. To this end, De Mey and Burn situate Lizst's work within the broader devotional evolution of the Way of the Cross, which was greatly influenced by figures such as Leonardo da Porto Maurizio (1676–1751) Alphonsus de Ligouri (1696–1787) in the eighteenth century and, indeed, Lizst's contemporary, John Henry Newman, in the nineteenth (1801–90).

In **Georgios Kordis'** essay on the painter Fotis Kontoglou (1895–1965), we move to the world of Orthodox Christianity and its tradition of iconography. Here we find an account of how the Byzantine style of iconography, which had been in dialogue with western naturalism since the fifteenth century was, for a period of the nineteenth century, substituted by the naturalistic Nazarene style, which was now favoured by some Russian monks at Mount Athos and, indeed, by Otto, the new Bavarian king who came to rule Greece. Yet this would later provoke its own reaction. Kontoglou would become acquainted with traditional Byzantine painting on a visit to Mount Athos in 1923 and would begin to employ it in his own work, abandoning the Nazarene style. He would go on, in the post World War II years, to spearhead a movement to restore traditional Byzantine artistic language in the face of much opposition.

It was, however, theology, that Kontoglou would use as the most effective argument for reviving the Byzantine style: these icons, while not possessing the beauty of some Nazarene examples, nevertheless possessed a theological beauty which could not be matched in their expression of the truths and mysteries of the Christian faith. In this way, he would set their spiritual beauty over and against the fleshly concerns of western naturalism. His approach would, to a degree, be vindicated, and in 1963 he would meet with the first monk in Mount Athos to begin to paint in the Byzantine style in over a hundred years. Yet, it was also at a cost, for by too closely identifying the Byzantine style with theological content, artists would subsequently become far less willing to be creative, often slavishly copying earlier examples.

A different kind of revivalism is treated of by **Henrik von Achen** in his essay on nineteenth-century art and architecture. Medieval revivalism would join the wider struggle of religion with secular forces which so characterised the culture wars of that century in an effort to 're-enchant' a disenchanted world, exemplified best in A.W.N. Pugin's *Contrasts or A Parallel between the Noble Edifices of the Middle Ages, and Corresponding Buildings of the Present Day* of 1836. However, the forces of re-enchantment were much wider too: the promotion of new or revived devotions, the reinvigoration of lay piety in confraternities and sodalities, the

wave of reported Marian apparitions giving rise to vigorous and influential cults which would ultimately exert international influence; and, within Protestantism, the ongoing phenomenon of religious revivals. Across denominational boundaries, the explosion of church-building in the nineteenth century is also worthy of note.

This movement was not without its critics, however; Max Weber, for instance, would intimate in the early twentieth century that medieval revivalism was a kind of antiquarianism, the pursuit of which allowed intellectuals to express nostalgia for the genuine faith they no longer possess. The Liturgical Movement within Catholicism would likewise caution against visualised nostalgia and the resultant danger of petrification of forms and styles. In allowing for the spiritual and ideological conflict between the sacred and the secular which characterised the period, von Achen nevertheless cautions against forgetting that most ordinary believers lived between these two worlds: it was, after all, the contribution of Pope Gregory XIV's 'infernal machines', trains and the railway systems, which would go on to open up many burgeoning sites of pilgrimage to the devoted masses. Likewise, the industrialised world of mass production would also ensure that millions of devotional items would reach their 're-enchanted' users in time for them, in turn, to pray for protection against this same secularised world! The dynamic between these 'two worlds', therefore, remains a fruitful subject which will require a great deal of further research.

PART III

The construction of the 'Other' by means of religious texts, emblems and iconography is the subject of the final three contributions of this collection. **Peter McGrail** begins the discussion with a treatment of hymn production among English Catholics and Protestant communities across the 'long nineteenth century' which is understood here to reach the 1960s and the era of Vatican II. What both sets of hymns share is an effort to map out a particular account of English history and national identity: on the one hand, the elect nation which had successfully withstood papally-sponsored attempts to overthrow the ideals of religious and political liberty, and on the other, the 'dowry of Mary' whose Catholics would always remain loyal to Rome in the face of the depredations of the Protestant reformers.

Events of the nineteenth century – especially the relaxation of the penal laws against Catholics and the restoration of the English Catholic hierarchy in 1850 – led to renewed fears among many Protestants, which would, in turn influence the hymns used, adapted and newly composed. However, by and large, the sectarian nature of English Protestant hymnody would wane across the nineteenth century, becoming more devotional in tone under the influence of American evangelism. However, it was just at this point that Catholic hymnody actually began to draw the 'Other' in more clearly defined terms. Centred on similar events such as Catholic Emancipation and the restoration of the hierarchy, a degree of triumphalism now entered the type of Catholic hymn used: here was England being restored again after the rupture of the Reformation. Here too, contemporary English Catholics, steadfast to the last, could identify themselves with those who had given their lives in martyrdom in the sixteenth

and seventeenth centuries. Those who, on the other hand, were considered to have rejected all that Catholicism held dear, were those ‘wicked men’ who blasphemed figures such as the Virgin Mary in John Wyse’s well-known *I’ll sing a hymn to Mary*.

The final two articles of the volume concern themselves with religious emblems which came to acquire political associations. **Ewa Klekot** addresses the topic of *detentebalas* or ‘stop-bullets’, which are also known as scapulars of the Sacred Heart, and which were used during the Spanish Civil War by the counter-Republican forces. These items, depicting the burning heart of Jesus surrounded by thorns, were accompanied by the words ‘*Détente! El corazón de Jesús está conmigo!*’ (‘Stop! The Heart of Jesus is with me!’). Klekot traces the history of the development of Sacred Heart iconography before examining its emergence as a protective talisman – from efforts to stave off plague in Marseilles in 1720 to the adoption of the Sacred Heart as a royalist symbol during the French Revolution. The Sacred Heart would subsequently take its place in some of the long-running struggles, religious and political in France: between republic and monarchy, but also between Jansenists and Jesuits (the widely-extended arms of the Sacred Heart image at Montmartre epitomising a visual rejection of the Jansenists’ preferred narrow road to salvation). Its monarchist associations would allow it to traverse the Pyrenees easily and play a significant role as a counter-Republican emblem in the Spanish Civil War where it was enthusiastically adopted by Carlist forces in a struggle which was to exhibit many of the connotations of religious crusade, acts of consecration to the Sacred Heart being taken on the feast of St James the Moor-slayer. Devotion to the Sacred Heart had been criticised for its perceived anti-intellectualism in the nineteenth century; yet Pope Leo XIII expressed a wish that the Sacred Heart image would be regarded as a new ‘Labarum’ in the struggles against what for him and many others was regarded as the ‘Other’: the forces of modernity, both political and religious. We can see that many of the themes of this volume coalesce in this hugely popular image.

E. Frances King closes the volume with an essay which focuses on the use of religious emblems and their associations with cultural identity in Northern Ireland. Here, King argues for a greater degree of attention to be paid to the material culture of religion and its role in creating what she calls a ‘visual apartheid’ in Northern Ireland. This paper is based on an oral-based study which King conducted across different communities and which explored their associations with and reactions to a wide range of religious and devotional objects. The interviewees displayed a keen awareness of the religious objects of the ‘Other’ within their wider communities and how their own identities were partly shaped using these objects as points of reference.

King surveys the nineteenth-century development of what might be called an ‘international style of Catholic art,’ epitomised in statues, prayer cards, rosaries, medals, etc. and widely available to purchase at religious goods shops and mission stalls, as outlined elsewhere in the volume by Brendan McConvery. This was paralleled within Protestantism in its mass-production of cheaper copies of the Bible throughout the nineteenth century and also the manufacture of religious texts and mottoes which might be embellished and mounted for display in the home. After Partition in 1921 the differences in material religious culture came

to matter a great deal in Northern Ireland and became markers of difference between religious communities. These objects, insignificant as some of them may seem, would actually become inextricably entangled with ethnicity, influencing both the public and private lives of families and communities and becoming vital material links in the chain of religious memory. Just as Eli Heldaas Seland reminds us in her essay on religious medals, these items are of no little account, and are overlooked at the cultural historian's peril: even the least of these items, when viewed with care, can reveal layer upon layer of unspoken meaning.

This is the second volume of essays published by the European Network on the Instruments of Devotion (ENID) in recent years. The first being: Henning Laugerud and Laura Katrine Skinnebach (eds.): *Intruments of Devotion:The Practices and Objects of Religious Piety from the late Middle Ages to the 20th Century*, Aarhus 2007.