



The Cult of the Saints: Its Rise and Function in Latin Christianity (The Haskell Lectures on History of Religions)

By Peter Brown

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Following the fall of the Roman Empire in the West, the cult of the saints was the dominant form of religion in Christian Europe. In this elegantly written work, Peter Brown explores the role of tombs, shrines, relics, and pilgrimages connected with the sacred bodies of the saints. He shows how men and women living in harsh and sometimes barbaric times relied upon the merciful intercession of the holy dead to obtain justice, forgiveness, and to find new ways to accept their fellows. Challenging the common treatment of the cult as an outbreak of superstition among the lower classes, Brown demonstrates how this form of religiosity engaged the finest minds of the Church and elicited from members of the educated upper classes some of their most splendid achievements in poetry, literature, and the patronage of the arts. Brown has an international reputation for his fine style, a style he here turns on to illuminate the cult of the saints. Christianity was born without such a cult; it took rise and that rise needs chronicling. Brown has a gift for the memorable phrase and sees what the passersby have often overlooked. An eye-opener on an important but neglected phase of Western development.--The Christian Century Brilliantly original and highly sophisticated . . . [The Cult of the Saints] is based on great learning in several disciplines, and the story is told with an exceptional appreciation for the broad social context. Students of many aspects of medieval culture, especially popular religion, will want to consult this work.--Bennett D. Hill, Library Journal

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Review

"Brown's style is itself a feast, and he has a genius for making the past and present energize each other."
(Patrick Henry *Theology Today*)

About the Author

Peter Brown is the Philip and Beulah Rollins Professor of History, Emeritus and Senior Historian at Princeton University and the author of *Augustine of Hippo* and *The Making of Late Antiquity*.

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