# Hagiography in Portugal in the Sixteenth Century

## *The Representation of Miracles in the Texts of André de Resende*

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**Abstract**

André de Resende (†1573) is one of the best-known Portuguese humanists. Among the various works he wrote, we find two hagiographic texts: the dialogue *Aegidius scallabitanus* (or *Conversio aegidiana*, 1566/1567) and *Ha sancta vida, e religiosa conuersaçam de Fr. Pedro Porteiro do Mosteiro de Sancto Domingos de Evora* (1570), written in prose. These texts are part of a context, marked by denunciations and criticisms from humanists and Protestants, which intensified over the sixteenth century, of the hagiographic genre, especially its descriptions of miracles. Among the humanists, one of the most critical voices was Erasmus, who, in 1516, published the *Vita Hieronymi*, which stimulated a new interest in the biographical genre. Erasmus valued the philological method *ad fontes*, trying to construct an image of Saint Jerome that highlights not only his virtues but also his faults, which are also reflected in the inclusion and representation of miracles in the text. In this context, what place do miracles occupy in the texts of André de Resende? Did Resende accept the proposals of Erasmus or other authors? Faced with this problem, the article aims to draw attention to two hagiographies that Resende wrote, highlighting the context of their production and analysing the miracles included in the texts, as well as the use of rhetorical and poetic strategies from secular literature to achieve the binary *prodesse ac delectare*.

**Keywords**

André de Resende, Erasmus, hagiography, miracles, Portugal, sixteenth century

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## 1.

Hagiography, a textual genre that aims to glorify exceptional Christians for spiritual edification and the promotion of their cult *ad maiorem Dei gloriam*, has enjoyed a significant fortune since early Christianity.[1] This success is shown by the reception of the first testimonies regarding saints, namely the texts describing the trial, conviction, arrest and execution of the martyrs received within Christian communities.[2] These reports, exalting the paradigm of the martyr, which remain the model of holiness par excellence insofar as it was configured in death with Christ, disseminated exceptional models of Christian life.[3] Even though these texts had didactic, spiritual and edifying purposes, their authors did not fail to include *topoi* inscribed in the dimension of the marvellous, investing in the construction of a narrative that sought to materialise the binomial *prodesse ac delectare*. As several authors have already highlighted,[4] this strategy reflected the reception of an imaginary made up of pagan gods and heroes. In any case, it is worth remembering, as medieval literary scholar Marc Van Uytfanghe has shown,[5] that the cult of the martyrs was configured to replace this disappearing imaginary of gods and heroes, and it thus aimed to nourish and emphasise the dimension of the marvellous, shaped by the framework of miracles. In fact, throughout the Middle Ages, the development of a model of hagiographic narrative with monastic roots, practically immutable, relied to a large extent on the dimension of miracles as performed

1 René Aigrain, *L'hagiographie. Ses sources, ses méthodes, son histoire*, Brussels: Société des Bollandistes, 2000 [1953]; Réginald Grégoire, *Manuale di Agiologia. Introduzione alla letteratura agiografica*, 2nd ed., Fabriano: Monastero San Silvestro Abate, 1996; Sofia Boesch Gajano, *La Santità*, Rome: Laterza & Figli, 1999.

2 Francesco Scorza Barcellona, "Le Origini", in: *Storia della santità nel cristianesimo occidentale*, Rome: Viella, 2005, p. 19–89. See also Daniel Ruiz Bueno (ed.), *Actas de los Mártires*, Madrid: Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos, 1968.

3 Francesco Scorza Barcellona, "Dal Modello ai modelli", in: Giulia Barone et al. (eds.), *Modelli di santità e modelli di comportamento. Contrasti, intersezioni, complementarità*, Turin: Rosenberg & Sellier, 1994, pp. 9–18.

4 See, for example, Lellia Cracco Ruggini, "Il miracolo nella cultura del tardo impero: concetto e funzione", in: *Actes du Colloque Hagiographie, Cultures et Sociétés* (*Nanterre, 2–5 mai 1979*), Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1981, p. 161–204; Mariateresa Fumagalli Beonio Brocchieri / Giulio Guidorizzi, *Corpi Gloriosi. Eroi Greci e Santi Cristiani*, Rome: Laterza, 2012.

5 Marc Van Uytfanghe, "La controverse biblique et patristique autour du miracle et ses répercussions sur l'hagiographie dans l'Antiquité Tardive et le haut Moyen Age latin", in: *Actes du Colloque Hagiographie, Cultures et Sociétés* (as note 2), pp. 205–233, esp. p. 211.

by saints in life and postmortem, which resulted, not infrequently, in a lack of historicity regarding biographical aspects.[6]

Even though the dimension of miracles was fundamentally important to crystallising the *fama sanctitatis* of these exceptional Christians and garnering recognition from the Holy See of their cult, the Church decided to put in place a filtering mechanism to distinguish between true and false holiness. In fact, the introduction of the canonisation process, during the pontificate of Alexander III (1159–1181), marked the emergence of a new conception of holiness, whereby the objective criteria included not just the candidate's thaumaturgical power or the miracles performed through their intercession but also their doctrine and behaviour (*fides et mores*) and reputation for holiness (*fama sanctitatis*).[7] However, this sieve that sought to control the recognition of holiness was not enough to prevent various criticisms regarding the dimension of the marvellous that miracles entailed and which was reflected in many hagiographies, such as those included in the *Legenda aurea* (Golden Legend, thirteenth century) by Jacobus de Voragine.[8] In fact, despite its wide dissemination in Western Europe, Jacobus's book still aroused strong criticism, aimed at the lack of historicity, veracity and rigour of many of the narratives it relays, particularly those concerning miracles.

One of the attempts at renewal in the field of hagiographic writing was carried out by Bonino Mombrizio, with the publication of his *Sanctuarium*, in two volumes, around 1478.[9] It formed part of a framework that would be

6 Régis Boyer, "An Attempt to Define the Typology of Medieval Hagiography", in: *Hagiography and Medieval Literature. A Symposium*, Odense: Odense University Press, 1981, pp. 27–36, esp. p. 32. See also Alain Boureau, *L'événement sans fin. Récit et christianisme au Moyen Âge*, Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1993.

7 André Vauchez, *La sainteté en Occident aux derniers siècles du Moyen Âge. D'après les procès de canonisation et les documents hagiographiques*, Rome: École Française de Rome, 1988, pp. 71–120.

8 Alain Boureau, *La legende dorée. Le système narratif de Jacques de Voragine († 1298)*, Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1984; AA. VV., *Legenda aurea. Sept siècles de diffusion*, Montreal: Bellarmin, 1986; Barbara Fleith, "*Legenda Aurea:* destination, utilisateurs, propagation. L'histoire de la diffusion du légendier au XIII[e] et au début du XIV[e] siècle", in: Sofia Boesch Gajano (ed.), *Raccolte di vite di santi dal XIII al XVIII secolo. Strutture, messagi, fruizioni*, Fasano di Brindisi, 1990, pp. 41–48; Barbara Fleith / Franco Morenzoni (ed.), *De la sainteté à l'hagiographie. Genèse et usage de la 'Légende dorée'*, Geneva: Droz, 2001.

9 The *Sanctuarium* was published in Milan. See Serena Spanò Martinelli, "Le raccolte di vite di santi fra XVI e XVII secolo", in: *Rivista di Storia e Letteratura Religiosa* 28, no. 3 (1991), pp. 445–464; Serena Spanò Martinelli, "Bonino Mombrizio e gli albori della scienza agiografica", in: Gennaro Luongo (ed.), *Erudizione e devozione. Le Raccolte di Vite di santi in età moderna e contemporanea*, Rome: Viella, 2000, pp. 3–18.

complemented by the *Viola sanctorum*, a book published in several editions since 1482.[10]

Taking this framework into account, it is worth not losing sight of the position of Melchor Cano, who, in his *De locis theologicis* (1562), also criticises the fabulation that, according to him, constituted many hagiographies, including their miracles, to which readers and devotees gave much credit.[11]

Juan Luis Vives, in the first part of *De disciplinis* (1531), also strongly criticises the reports disseminated by the *Legenda aurea*:

> And not even in writing the lives of the saints is the observance of the truth more conscientious, here where it should be more specific and absolute. Each hagiographer wrote motivated by his blind devotion, so that it was passion that dictated the history, not inexorable truth. How unworthy of its own protagonists, the saints and even of simple Christians is the story called *Golden Legend*! I do not understand how they can call it golden, when it is a man with an iron mouth and a heart of lead who wrote it. What could be said to be uglier than that book? Oh, what a great shame it is for us Christians that the illustrious deeds of our saints have not been entrusted to posterity with more truth and greater clarity, both for their dissemination and for the imitation of such sovereign virtues, when of their captains, philosophers or wise men the Greek and Roman biographers wrote with such care![12]

In this sense, it should not surprise us that, since the beginning of the sixteenth century, hagiography received breaths of renewal and modernisation, to which the challenges of certain humanists, the disputed positions of Protestants,

10 Serena Spanò Martinelli, "Le raccolte di vite di santi fra XVI e XVII secolo" (as note 9), p. 447.

11 Melchor Cano, *De locis theologicis*, in: Réginald Grégoire, *Manuale di Agiologia. Introduzione alla letteratura agiografica* (as note 1), pp. 32–33.

12 Juan Luis Vives, *De las disciplinas*, in: Lorenzo Riber (ed.), *Obras Completas*, vol. 2, Valencia: Generalitat Valenciana/Consell Valencià de Cultura, 1992, p. 423, my translation: "Y ni aun en escribir la vida de los santos es más esmerada la observancia de la verdade, aqui donde debería ser más pontual y absoluta. Cada hagiografo escrebía al dictado de su devoción ciega, por manera que era la pasión la que dictaba la historia, no la verdade inexorable. Cuán indigna es de sus propios protagonsitas, los santos, y aun de los simples cristianos, la historia que se llama Aurea Leyenda! Yo no alcanzo cómo pueden llamarla de oro, siendo que así que la escribió un hombre de boca de hierro y de corazón de plomo. ¿Qué cosa puede decirse más fea que aquel libro? Oh, qué gran vergüenza es para nosotros, cristianos, que los hechos esclarecidos de nuestros santos no hayan sido encomendados a la posteridad con más verdade y mayor lima, así para su noticia como para la imitación de tan soberanas virtudes, cuando de sus capitanes, de sus filósofos, de sus sábios escribieron con tanto esmero los biógrafos griegos y romanos!"

and later, in the seventeenth century, the activity of the Bollandists[13] and the Benedictines of Saint Maur contributed. On the other hand, it is important to remember that, even before the Council of Trent, an ongoing humanisation of saints was occurring. Erasmus proposed a "refinement" of hagiographic texts and their writing patterns – especially with regard to miracles,[14] in line with his *philosophia Christi*, as he defends it in his *Enchiridion militis Christiani* (1503).[15] He also laments that, in the overwhelming majority of cases, hagiography disseminates an almost unrealistic portrait of the saints, characterised especially by ascetic and thaumaturgical traits.[16] Erasmus defends this position in the programmatic introduction to the *Vita Hieronymi*:

> I think that nothing is better than to portray the saints just as they actually were, and if even a fault is discovered in their lives this very imperfection turns into an example of piety for us. But if anyone takes delight at all in fiction, and if with practised hand he fashions the likeness of a holy man, whatever his fame may be, without resort to sackcloth, hair shirts, scourgings, prodigious fasts, and incredible vigils, but under the influence of Christ's own teaching, first with a thorough understanding of the meaning of Christian piety and then with a skilful expression of its image, that man perhaps I will tolerate. Although an artist may represent ever so much of the brilliance and light of a jewel, an imitation certainly never reaches a jewel's genuine sparkle. Truth has its own power matched by no artifice. Moreover, who would put up with those writers who, rather than honour the saints for us, debase them with their childish, ignorant, foolish, and feeble-minded nonsense?[17]

13 See Baudoin de Gaiffier, "Hagiographie et critique. Quelques aspects de l'œuvre des bollandistes au XVII[e] siècle", in: *Études critiques d'hagiographie et d'iconologie*, Brussels: Société des Bollandistes, 1967, pp. 289–310 (*Subsidia Hagiographica*, no. 43). See also the two essays in Sofia Boesch Gajano (ed.), *Raccolte di vite di santi dal XIII al XVIII secolo. Strutture, messaggi, fruizioni*, Fasano di Brindisi: Schena Editore, 1990: Sofia Boesch Gajano, "La raccolta di vite di santi di Luigi Lippomano. Storia, struttura, finalità di una costruzione agiografica", pp. 111–130; Serena Spanò Martinelli, "Cultura umanistica, polemica antiprotestante, erudizione sacra nel *De probatis Sanctorum historiis* di Lorenzo Surio", pp. 445–464.

14 Stefano Cavallotto, *Santi nella Riforma. Da Erasmo a Lutero*, Rome: Viella, 2009, p. 17.

15 Desidério Erasmo, *El Enquiridion o Manual del Caballero Cristiano* (*edición de Dámaso Alonso*), Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1971, po. 252–254.

16 Stefano Cavallotto, *Santi nella Riforma* (as note 11), pp. 26–35.

17 Erasmus, *Life of Jerome* [*Vita Hieronymi*], in: *Collected Works of Erasmus. Patristic Scholarship*, vol. 61, ed. by James F. Brady / John C. Olin, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992, pp. 22–23. I thank Avi Liberman for access to this edition. See also Serena Spanò, "'Bien qu'il n'existe pas une hagiographie humanistique'. Spunti diversi, da Boccaccio a Erasmo", in: Concetta Bianca / Anna Scattigno (eds.), *Scritture, carismi, istituzioni: percorsi di vita religiosa in età moderna. Studi per Gabriella Zarri*, Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 2018, p. 137. Very close to this Erasmian position, with regard to the most correct form of representation and praise of saints, were Jansenist hagiographies from the

**2.**

Did, in the context of humanism, in Portugal, the authors of the lives of the saints accept the lesson of Erasmus and other authors regarding including miracles in the narratives? Let us take as an example the case of André de Resende (ca. 1500–1573),[18] author of two hagiographic texts: *Aegidius scallabitanus* (1566/1567) and *Ha sancta vida, e religiosa conuersaçam de Fr. Pedro Porteiro do Mosteiro de Sancto Domingos de Evora* (1570).

*Aegidius scallabitanus* is a hagiography in dialogue about Friar Gil de Santarém, born Gil Rodrigues de Valadares, in Vouzela (ca. 1185–1190). He studied medicine at the Monastery of Santa Cruz de Coimbra. When he was already a cleric, with the support of King Sancho I, he continued his studies in Paris, where he received a doctorate in theology. At a certain period in his life, Friar Gil dedicated himself to the arts of magic. However, he repented and converted, joining the Order of Preachers at the Convent of Palencia, Spain, in 1225. Upon his return to Portugal, he entered the Convent of Saint Dominic of Santarém, where he taught theology. His virtuous life, his fame as a preacher and the miracles performed through his intercession contributed to his contemporaries perceiving him as a living saint. Friar Gil died in Santarém on May 14, 1265. Over the centuries, his tomb became a place of pilgrimage and subsequent miracles – performed through the intercession of his relics or the invocation of his name – contributed to spreading the *fama sanctitatis* already present during his lifetime.

According to Virgínia Soares Pereira, editor of the *Aegidius scallabitanus* published in 2000, the dialogue was written around 1566 to 1567.[19] It was posthumously edited by Father Estêvão Sampaio and included in the work *Thesaurus arcanus Lusitanis gemmis refulgens, in quo. Praed. ex eadem Lusitania gesta, multaque alia scitu dignissima continentur: quae uersa pag. indicabit* (1586).

The dialogue's interlocutors are three humanists: André de Resende, Inácio de Morais and Luís Pires. In this work, which revolves around the "wonderful" life of Friar Gil, Resende follows the hagiographic model that had been

seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, as shown by Éric Suire, "L'hagiographie janséniste. Théories et réalités", in: *Histoire, économie et société* 19, no. 2 (2000), pp. 185–200.

18 André de Resende was a Dominican friar and studied at the Universities of Alcalá de Henares, Salamanca and Paris. He was one of the most notable Portuguese humanists, with a vast body of work, and was a promoter of Greek and Latin studies in Portugal.

19 Pereira conveys this in her introduction (pp. 56–63) to André de Resende, *Aegidius Scallabitanus. Um diálogo sobre Fr. Gil de Santarém*, ed. by Virgínia Soares Pereira, Lisbon: Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian/Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia/Ministério da Ciência e da Tecnologia, 2000. Hereafter cited as AS.

crystallised throughout the Middle Ages, largely based on the importance of miracles. In fact, this text, through the interlocutors' discourse, pays significant attention to the issue of miracles performed through the Dominican friar's intercession. In this sense, Resende's strategy seems to fall within the tradition that supported the cult and devotion around Friar Gil. In any case, it is important to keep in mind that, throughout the dialogue, the interlocutors highlight the fact that Friar Gil embodied an important example of repentance and conversion, which brought him, to a certain extent, closer to the cases of Saints Mary Magdalene, Paul and Augustine. At the same time, his exemplary behaviour – guided by the exercise of virtues, penances and mortifications and devotion to the Virgin Mary, alongside aspects that fall within the domain of the marvellous, such as ecstasies and prophetic capacity – contributed to solidifying his *fama sanctitatis*. Taking this framework into account, it is worth remembering the words of Resende himself, in the *Aegidius scallabitanus* dialogue:

> I proposed to myself to discover the miracles of our Gil, not with the mere objective of making them known to you, but as an idea of raising up those who read the history of this man – who, stained with superstition and the ravings of magic, and polluted by having abjured religion, freed himself from the power of the devil and, in addition to being freed, reached a great friendship and intimacy with God, who illustrated the name of God with divine wonders and magnificent prodigies, who in life and after death – take them, he said, to proclaim more loudly the goodness of God, love Him with more fervour, and with greater faith escape from the darkness of sin and embrace the light of grace, flee from falsehood towards the truth, desert the ranks of the Devil and embrace the banner and cross of Christ.[20]

Resende also describes several miracles performed through Friar Gil's intercession, through contact with something that belonged to him or simply by invoking his name. They are, above all, healing miracles. One such case relates to the healing of King D. Afonso III (1210–1279). The king had great esteem for Friar Gil and one day he asked for the friar's old stick to be brought to him to

20 AS, p. 474, my translation: "Eu propus-me escrever os milagres do nosso Gil, não com o mero objectivo de os dar a conhecer, mas com a ideia de levar aqueles que lerem a história deste homem – que, manchado pela superstição e pelos desvarios da magia, e poluído por ter abjurado a religião, se libertou do poder do diabo e, além de se libertar, alcançou uma tão grande amizade e intimidade com Deus, que ilustrou o nome de Deus com maravilhas divinas e magníficos prodígios, quer em vida quer depois da morte – levá-los, dizia, a que proclamem mais alto a bondade de Deus, O amem com mais fervor, e com mais fé deixem as trevas do pecado e se acolham à luz da graça, fujam da falsidade em direção à verdade, desertem das fileiras do demónio e abracem o estandarte e a cruz de Cristo."

support him while he walked, as the king's feet were swollen from gout and he believed the presence of the friar's object would cause the disease to disappear. As Resende highlights: "[T]he result was not less than hoped for, for after a short time the disease completely disappeared. However, the king, no longer out of necessity, but only out of devotion, continued to frequently use the aforementioned staff on his domestic outings",[21] doing so as a reminder of the miracle.

If, while still alive, Friar Gil was already recognised by his contemporaries as a (possible) saint, then his *fama sanctitatis* would come to take on broader dimensions after his death, fuelled, to a large extent, by stories of the miracles performed through his intercession. The words of Resende, when reflecting on the value that men of his own time recognised in the miracles of the saints, indicate that he was very much aware of the humanist criticism of miracles:

> I know well that many men, in today's calamitous times, have completely abandoned the cult of the saints, and that others have preserved it, it is true, although with little sympathy and warmth, and that for this reason, little attracted by the miracles they performed, they prefer to spend the time proclaiming the travels of this or that saint, his maxims full of wisdom and his acts full of courage, imitating in this Philostratus's Life of Apollonius, instead of enumerating the miraculous acts that God performs through their intercession – to allude to my friend Desiderius Erasmus.[22]

As Pereira has already highlighted, it is likely that Resende, when formulating this criticism, was thinking about the way Erasmus had prepared his *Vita Hieronymi*.[23] In any case, it is important to emphasise that Resende and Erasmus exchanged letters and that the Portuguese humanist had great esteem for the Dutch scholar. However, certain aspects addressed in Erasmus's work, in Resende's opinion, cannot be defended, namely those issues having to do with the credibility of miracles. According to Resende, "the miracle of resurrecting

21 AS, p. 424, my translation: "[O] resultado não foi inferior à esperança, pois passado pouco tempo a doença desapareceu por completo. Todavia, o rei, não já por necessidade mas por devoção, continuava a usar com frequência, nos seus passeios domésticos, o referido bordão."

22 AS, p. 472, my translation: "Bem sei que muitos homens, nos calamitosos tempos de hoje, abandonaram por completo o culto dos santos, e que outros o conservaram, é verdade, embora com pouca simpatia e calor, e que por isso, pouco atraídos pelos milagres que eles realizaram, preferem passar o tempo a apregoar as viagens deste ou daquele santo, as suas máximas cheias de sabedoria e os seus actos cheios de valentia, imitando nisto o Filóstrato da Vida de Apolónio, em vez de enumerarem os actos milagrosos que Deus opera por intercessão desses – para aludir a propósito ao meu amigo Desidério Erasmo".

23 AS, p. 676.

the dead is something worthy of the greatest admiration and amazement for us".[24] In this mode, he reports some miracles of this type performed through the intercession of Friar Gil, including some related to his relics. One case involved a noble boy from Lisbon who died of a serious illness. Meanwhile,

> the bell rang in the Convent of Preachers, calling Matins, and a feeling of devotion touched the hearts of those present at the boy's funeral who remembered, excited with confidence, the merits of the holy father Gil. Therefore, they sent someone to the convent to bring them relics of the holy man and placed them on the stiff corpse. Between prayers and tears they waited for some time and then, suddenly regaining his soul, the boy stood up, coming back to life.[25]

Most of the miracles performed through Friar Gil's intercession are of a healing nature: in this way, they seem to reflect the population's difficulty in accessing medical care. Most of the cures – which are always called "miracles", even though some do not appear to be especially supernatural – carried out through intercession with his relics affect, above all, the bodies and physical condition of many people who, due to the economic and social circumstances of the time, had no access to medicinal therapies. On the other hand, the fact that characters of huge social importance – such as King D. Afonso III – resorted to the thaumaturgical powers attributed to the Dominican friar and his objects also seems to reflect another situation: the medical and therapeutic practices of the time were relegated to a secondary position, as they were not always able to respond effectively to problems, unlike relics, which provided immediate assistance that was always useful and safe.[26]

Resende also evokes miracles that have nothing to do with curing physical diseases. He relays, for example, how a man called João Solers had a huge vat of spoiled wine: the taste was horrible, the colour was muddy and the smell was horrendous. Solers had suffered a loss of family wealth, which he could have

24 AS, p. 474, my translation: "[O] milagre de ressuscitar mortos constitui para nós algo digno da maior admiração e espanto".

25 AS, p. 480, my translation: "[S]oou o sino no convento dos Pregadores, a chamar a matinas, e um sentimento de devoção tocou o coração dos que se encontravam presentes nas exéquias do menino que se recordaram animados de confiança dos merecimentos do santo padre Gil. Mandaram por isso buscar ao convento alguém que lhes trouxesse relíquias do santo varão e colocaram-nas sobre o hirto cadáver. Entre preces e pranto aguardaram algum tempo e então, readquirindo subitamente a alma, o menino levantou-se, vindo de novo à vida".

26 Edina Bozóky / Anne-Marie Helvétius (ed.), *Les reliques. Objets, cultes, symbols* (*actes du colloque internacional de l'Université du Littoral-Côte d'Opale*), Turnhout: Brepols, 1999; María Tausiet, *El dedo robado. Reliquias imaginarias en la España Moderna*, Madrid: Abada Editores, 2013.

mitigated by selling that wine. However, when he was about to throw it away, he first went to the tomb of Friar Gil and prayed:

> "Holy Gil, whose power with God I do not doubt, please look at my indigence and deign, with your mercy, to restore to me the spoiled and completely lost wine, so that I may be able to assist, in part, to my assets, which are very limited." He then went home and, having barely rested for an hour, anguished with worries, pulled out an auger and drilled into the vat. From it came a pure wine, without mixture, without impurities, with a very pleasant taste and smell. And, astonished by this sudden change in the wine, he put it up for sale, at the same time as he proclaimed Gil's favour.[27]

Resende's concern over recording the miracles in writing so that the memory is not lost, "as happened to many others who, because of their frequency and due to the negligence of the friars, all ended up disappearing",[28] is evident. On the other hand, it is worth highlighting the importance Resende gives to the faithful's devotion for the relics of Friar Gil – head, vertebrae, ribs, clavicle, shoulder blade, humerus, femur, tibia – that contribute to the congealing of his cult.

The historian Serena Spanò defends that hagiographic literature, in humanism, "does not seem to have taken much account of Erasmian proposals, in the effort to reaffirm the validity of the hagiographic tradition, insisting if anything on the antiquity/knowledge of the sources, on their reliability, in order to build dossiers of historical depth, according to the task that will be proposed by the Bollandists."[29] Resende, in fact, remains faithful to a hagiographic tradition supported by the production of portraits of holiness, whose protagonists were exceptional characters and whose fame was due, in large measure, to the miracles performed through their intercession.

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27 AS, p. 586, my translation: "'Santíssimo Gil, de cujo poder junto de Deus eu não duvido, olha, por favor, à minha indigência e digna-te, com a tua misericórdia, restituir-me o vinho estragado e totalmente perdido, para que me seja possível atender, em parte, ao meu património, que é muito limitado.' Foi de seguida para casa e, ainda mal descansara uma hora, angustiado com as preocupações, arrancou duma verruma e perfurou a cuba. Dela saiu um vinho puro, sem mistura, sem impurezas, com um paladar e um cheiro muitíssimo agradáveis. E, espantado com esta súbita alteração do vinho, pô-lo à venda, ao mesmo tempo que apregoava o favor de Gil."

28 AS, p. 606, my translation: "[C]omo aconteceu a muitos outros que, por causa da sua frequência e por negligência dos frades, acabaram por desaparecer de todo."

29 Serena Spanò, "Bien qu'il n'existe pas une hagiographie humanistique" (as note 17), p. 137: "pare aver fatto gran conto delle proposte erasmiane, nello sforzo di riaffermare la validità della tradizione agiografica, insistendo se mai sulla antichità/conoscenza delle fonti, sulla loro attendibilità per costruirvi dei dossier di spessore storico, secondo il compito che si proporranno i Bollandisti".

With regard to the "humanisation" of the saints, as Erasmus proposed it in the programmatic introduction to the life of Saint Jerome, it does seem to have had a fruitful reception, if we take into account another work written by Resende: *Ha sancta vida, e religiosa conuersaçam de Fr. Pedro Porteiro do Mosteiro de Sancto Domingos de Evora*, published in Évora by André de Burgos in 1570.[30] In fact, this text seems to indicate that Resende followed a different orientation to the one he had adopted in the life of Friar Gil, insofar as he constructs a portrait of Friar Pedro in ways rather uncommon in the hagiographic genre.

The reader finds himself facing a very humble protagonist, who is achieving *fama sanctitatis* thanks, above all, to their heroic virtues. The most significant and innovative aspect of this life is that no miracles are performed through the intercession of the protagonist. In the construction of the exemplary portrait of Friar Pedro, his virtue of charity stands out very clearly, which was so notorious that "a devout lady, D. Caterina, in his memory had the walls of the outside entrance painted, and among the poor, Friar Pedro is distributing the alms. Which painting lasted there for many years".[31]

Thus, *Ha sancta vida* seems to reflect that Resende accepted Erasmus's lesson in the *Vita Hieronymi*: we find ourselves faced with a devout biography without miracles. But this circumstance did not prevent Friar Pedro from being perceived as a living saint, crystallising a devotion around him, supported, above all, by the practice of charity and love for the poor. That is to say, his sainthood stemmed from the two dimensions that brought him closer to the example embodied by Christ himself.[32]

## 3.

The two above-explored texts by André de Resende formed part of a complex religious and cultural context: it was a decisive moment during which the genre of hagiography was confronted with proposals and criticisms. Resende, despite his humanist training and knowledge of Erasmus's texts and proposals, opted

30 André de Resende, *A santa vida e religiosa conversação de Frei Pedro*, in: *Obras Portuguesas*, ed. by José Pereira Tavares, Lisbon: Sá da Costa Editora, 2009, pp. 151–214.

31 Resende, *A santa vida e religiosa conversação de Frei Pedro* (as note 30), p. 163: "[Ũ]a devota senhora, D. Caterina, por sua memória mandou pintar as paredes da portaria de fora, e entre os pobres postos em ordem, Fr. Pedro, repartindo as esmolas. A qual pintura durou ali muitos anos".

32 See Paula Almeida Mendes, "A Pobreza e a Caridade como 'virtudes heróicas' no Portugal da Época Moderna: textos e contextos", in: *Via Spiritus* 25 (2018), pp. 91–125.

to follow two different hagiographic writing strategies. In the hagiography of Friar Gil de Santarém, the author continues to follow a traditional hagiographic model, supported above all by the miracles famously performed through the twelfth-century Dominican friar's intercession. Despite the fact that, according to many humanists and Protestants in the sixteenth century, the excessive appreciation of miracles was dangerous and did nothing to improve the behaviour of the faithful, Resende maintained a strong belief in Friar Gil's ability to be an intercessor in the operation of miracles. For the author, his involvement with the miraculous indicated that Friar Gril was in the grace of God.

In the life of Friar Pedro, however, we find a devout biography without miracles: its protagonist is a somewhat rustic character, who stands out among men for his heroic virtues. Resende seems to have accepted Erasmus's lesson in this case, even before Pope Urban VIII, in 1625 and 1634, imposed his new requirements and conditions that hagiography should follow.[33] It is well known that the dimension of miracles became even more complex after the outbreak of the Reformation. Moreover, the Catholic Church responded to this circumstance by not canonising anyone between 1523 and 1588. The Council of Trent (1545–1563) would reaffirm the importance of the cult of saints and the miracles performed through their intercession, even though, gradually, the Catholic Church developed strategies aimed at controlling the official recognition of new cults.[34] It was, above all, during the pontificate of Urban VIII that, in an attempt to impose discipline on society at large, several requirements were decreed to control devotions that frequently appeared beyond the reach of the civil and ecclesiastical authorities.[35]

33 See Éric Suire, *La Sainteté française de la Réforme catholique, XVI^e^–XVIII^e^ siècles, d'après les textes hagiographiques et les procès de canonisation*, Pessac: Presses Universitaires de Bordeaux, 2001.

34 Peter Burschel, "'Imitatio sanctorum'. Ovvero: quanto era moderno il cielo dei santi post-tridentino?", in: Paolo Prodi / Wolfgang Reinhard (eds.), *Il concilio de Trento e il moderno*, Bologna: Il Mulino, 1996, pp. 309–333; Giulio Sodano, "Il nuovo modello di santità nell'epoca post-tridentina", in: Cesare Mozzarelli / Danilo Zardin (eds.), *I tempi del Concilio. Religione, cultura e società nell'Europa tridentina*, Rome: Bulzoni Editore, 1997, pp. 189–205; Miguel Gotor, "Le théâtre des saints modernes: la canonisation à l'âge baroque", in: Florence Buttay / Axelle Guillausseau (eds.), *Des saints d'État? Politique et sainteté au temps du concile de Trente*, Paris: Presses de l'Université Paris-Sorbonne, 2012, pp. 23–33.

35 Marina Caffiero, "Tra modelli di disciplinamento e autonomia soggetiva", in: Barone et al. (eds.), *Modelli di santità e modelli di comportamento* (as note 3), p. 265–278; Dilwyn Knox, "'Disciplina': le origini monastiche e clericali del buon comportamento nell'Europa cattolica del Cinquecento e del primo Seicento", in: Paolo Prodi (ed.), *Disciplina dell'anima, disciplina del corpo e disciplina della società tra medioevo ed età moderna*, Bologna: Società editrice Il Mulino, 1994, pp. 69–99.

The guidelines issued by the Council of Trent imposed a re-evaluation of spiritual literature and, most especially, of hagiography, taking into account its edifying and didactic purposes. If it is true that more and more attention was given to the historicity, or philological rigour, of texts, which was detrimental for representations of the marvellous – with the contributions of Georg Witzel, Luigi Lippomano, Laurentius Surius, the Bollandists and the Benedictines of Saint Maur all standing as examples of this approach – miracles continued to mark, very clearly, hagiographic writing, in both the lives of ancient and medieval saints and those of early modern ones. Furthermore, it is important to remember that miracles continued to constitute a fundamental requirement for beatification and canonisation processes. In this sense, hagiographers justified writing about them, because they still demonstrated that their protagonists were exceptional figures elected by God. But it must also be considered that the production and edition of hagiographies and devout biographies, which experienced an exponential increase from the second half of the sixteenth century, also aimed to fulfil another function: to fascinate readers, causing admiration, and thus aiming at entertainment. In this way, the saints embodied real examples contributing to the glorification of the Catholic Church, because they demonstrated heroic virtues that regular believers could imitate and, at the same time, they were exceptional: their miraculous intercessions demonstrated that, even after death, they could intercede with God's help to respond to the supplications of their devotees on earth.