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This book contains eleven essays, prefaced by a general introduction, on a set of related themes: the characteristic traits and diverse functions of holy men; the fashioning of saints out of a small minority of holy men and a number of other individuals of high social status but with more dubious spiritual credentials; the literary processes involved in the construction of hagiographical texts; the role of hagiography in the creation and diffusion of cults; and the worldly interests and other purposes which were served by hagiographical texts and the cults which they propagated. These themes are

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