

## PREFACE

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The theme of 'Saints and Sanctity' was endorsed enthusiastically by the Ecclesiastical History Society committee when Prof. Andrew Louth, FBA, proposed it as the focus for his presidency of the society in 2009–10. It was both topical, given the growing number of saints canonized by the modern papacy (as discussed by Prof. Michael Walsh in this volume), and an extremely fertile theme, prompting a rich variety of papers dealing with issues ranging from the representation and promotion of saints to Protestant reactions against, and appropriations of, concepts of sainthood. The contributions edited here comprise six plenary papers given at the Summer Meeting in 2009 and the Winter Meeting in 2010, and a selection of the communications offered at the Summer Meeting.

The Editors are grateful to the members of the society who chaired communications sessions at the Summer Meeting and kindly devoted their time and expertise to reviewing those communications submitted for publication. We are also grateful to the authors for responding to editorial requests for revisions in a timely and co-operative manner, and wish to express our continuing indebtedness to Dr Tim Grass, whose tenacious efficiency in copy-editing this volume has once again ensured its publication. We thank the society for funding his vital post as Assistant Editor.

The society wishes to thank the staff of Durham University, and in particular St Aidan's College there, for hosting the Summer Meeting, and is grateful to Dr Barbara Bombi (the Conference Secretary), especially for arranging exhibitions at the Cathedral and University Libraries at Durham, and to Prof. Richard Gameson and the university library staff for curating these. The society is also indebted to Dr Stella Fletcher (the Secretary) for organizing the excursion at the Summer Meeting and to the Institute of Historical Research for accommodating the Winter Meeting. Sadly Prof. Tony Claydon and Dr Barbara Bombi decided to resign as society officers in 2010 owing to other commitments; the society is grateful for their valuable contributions and welcomes Dr Charlotte Methuen (incoming Co-Editor of SCH) and Prof. Michael Walsh (incoming Conference Secretary) as their successors.

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The Summer Meeting concluded with a Round Table discussion, a recent innovation that has become an established feature. This brought together members of the society specializing in different periods of church history and explored what the function of saints and meaning of sanctity have been over the whole course of that history, in Catholic, Protestant and other religious traditions. It underlined the fundamental and continuing relevance of 'Saints and Sanctity' for our field.

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