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Il Quarto Libro dei Miracoli

Abstract:

The anniversary of San Girolamo Miani's miraculous liberation from prison is predicated on a story recorded in *Il Quarto Libro dei Miracoli*, a sixteenth-century manuscript currently preserved in the Biblioteca Comunale of Treviso. Although the manuscript was cited in San Girolamo's canonization process and all subsequent histories of the saint, the author of the account and the exact date that the miracle was recorded have never been definitively established. Like many recipients of miraculous graces or supernatural aid, San Girolamo most likely made his way to the sanctuary, told his firsthand account to the sacristan of Santa Maria Maggiore, and left an ex-voto. These events undoubtedly took place in 1511. As the manuscript itself states, however, a massive fire in 1528 destroyed the existing chronicles, statues, and ex-votos. As a result, the Regular Canons who administered the sanctuary began another book, the *Quarto Libro*, or fourth book of miracles. This book, begun twenty years after San Girolamo was freed from prison, contains the account we recognize today. There has been scholarly conjecture as to the authorship of the manuscript, but these attributions, I will argue, were based on limited archival research. Internal evidence in the manuscript and documents in the church archives in Treviso and Venice indicate that a number of clergy were responsible for reconstruction of San Girolamo's miraculous event. In light of this new research, the *Quarto Libro* is best understood as the collective effort of a religious community, both clergy and laity, to rebuild both the physical infrastructure and religious memory damaged by the fire.