

THE CULT OF SAINTS AND LEGITIMIZATION OF ELITE POWER IN  
EAST CENTRAL AND NORTHERN EUROPE UP TO 1300

COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVES ON MEDIEVAL HISTORY

VOLUME 2

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The Cult of Saints and  
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*Edited by*

GRZEGORZ PAC, STEFFEN HOPE, AND  
JÓN VIÐAR SIGURÐSSON

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British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data  
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

Publication of the book in Open Access was supported by the Norway grants and  
the University of Warsaw.

Volume editors

Grzegorz Pac (University of Warsaw),  
Steffen Hope (University of Oslo), and  
Jón Viðar Sigurðsson (University of Oslo)

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D/2024/0095/91

ISBN 978-2-503-61108-2

eISBN 978-2-503-61109-9

DOI 10.1484/M.CPMH-EB.5.136923

Printed in the EU on acid-free paper.

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## Preface

The volume presented here is the result of a collaborative effort. Initially, it was a collaboration among a group of researchers who participated in the conference ‘The Cult of Saints and Legitimization of Elite Power in East Central Europe and Scandinavia until 1300’, held at the University of Warsaw on 8 and 9 November 2021, and organized by the editors. This event provided an opportunity for researchers not only to present their own work but also to exchange ideas and engage in stimulating discussions. We are especially grateful to these researchers for their willingness to consider our perspectives and suggestions during the subsequent editorial stages, as we sought to ensure that the volume was coherent.

However, none of this would have been possible without the pre-existing collaboration between the editors and the institutions they represent: the Faculty of History at the University of Warsaw and the Department of Archaeology, Conservation, and History at the University of Oslo. This collaboration was established within the framework of the joint project titled ‘Symbolic Resources and Political Structures on the Periphery: Legitimization of ELITES in Poland and Norway, c. 1000–1300’, of which this volume is one of the outcomes. The ELITES project has received funding from the Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2014–2021 (2019/34/H/HS3/00500). The Norway grants funded the Warsaw conference and have also, together with the University of Warsaw, enabled this volume’s open access publication. Moreover, while we invited numerous researchers to collaborate, the volume also includes chapters by members of the ELITES team, who present the results of research funded by the Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2014–2021 as part of our project. We express our profound gratitude to the Norway grants for their tremendous support.

We extend our gratitude to the two anonymous reviewers of our volume, not only for their kindness but also for their valuable advice, comments, and corrections. For the same we are also grateful to Warren Brown, who shepherded the book on behalf of Brepols. We would also like to thank Rosie Bonté and the entire Brepols team for their excellent cooperation, as well as the two series editors, Louisa Taylor, and Hans Jacob Orning, who oversaw the entire process and did quite a bit of work. Finally, we appreciate Sarah Thomas for her outstanding, professional proofreading and copy-editing.



# Introduction



# 1. Saints and Elites on the Periphery: An Introduction\*

## East Central and Northern Europe in the High Middle Ages in Comparison

In the course of the ninth century, Latin Christendom began to expand towards the north and the east, as missionaries were sent to convert peoples who were indiscriminately described as pagans. This process of Christianization and cultural assimilation unfolded at different points and with varied intensity in the hinterland of Latin Christendom (see the section below on The Process of Christianization, the Social Elites, and their Legitimization). However, by the beginning of the eleventh century most of the polities of Northern and East Central Europe had replaced

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\* The research leading to these results has received funding from the Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2014–2021 (2019/34/H/HS3/00500). This chapter is part of a joint research project of the University of Warsaw and the University of Oslo 'Symbolic Resources and Political Structures on the Periphery: Legitimization of the ELITES in Poland and Norway, c. 1000–1300'.

**Steffen Hope** • is currently a Postdoctoral Researcher at the Department of Archaeology, Conservation, and History at the University of Oslo. His main research interests are the cult of saints, history-writing, identity-construction, and how these phenomena intersect. He also works on fragments of medieval manuscripts.

**Grzegorz Pac** • is Professor at the Faculty of History, University of Warsaw. His research interests include the cult of saints, papal canonization, queenship, and the role of women in the Early and High Middle Ages.

**Jón Viðar Sigurðsson** • is Professor in medieval history at the Department of Archaeology, Conservation and History, University of Oslo. He has published several books.

*The Cult of Saints and Legitimization of Elite Power in East Central and Northern Europe up to 1300*, ed. by Grzegorz Pac, Steffen Hope, and Jón Viðar Sigurðsson, *Comparative Perspectives on Medieval History*, 2 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2024), pp. 15–48

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10.1484/M.CPMH-EB.5.137529

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their ancestral religions with Christianity, and had established their own ecclesiastical institutions.

The regions of Northern and East Central Europe (that is, in the period in question, Denmark, Norway, Iceland, Sweden, Poland, Bohemia, and Hungary) are often considered to be peripheral in the history of Latin Christendom. This peripheral status is partly due to the fact that the polities of these two regions were included relatively late in the history of the religious and cultural geographical entity that is Latin Christendom, but also because the events of these territories were seen as largely irrelevant to the developments at the centre where Christianity had been a key element for centuries.<sup>1</sup> This centre was comprised of the realms that had become Christian in the period c. 300–c. 800, and where the cultural, institutional, and ideological sophistication of the elite cultures was sufficiently well established to influence elite cultures in regions that were considered peripheral. To a certain extent, the peripheral status of Northern and East Central Europe is justified in that the most impactful ecclesiastical councils, military movements, and cultural vogues developed in the centre, and affected the peripheral polities through their dissemination via mercantile, ecclesiastical, or diplomatic networks. Moreover, in the period under consideration, the elites of the so-called peripheral regions looked to the centre of Latin Christendom for new impulses in culture, jurisprudence, and iconography, and in so doing these elites accepted their peripheral status, at least in part.

We emphasize the agency of peripheral elites in this process in contrast to the vision of Europeanization proposed by Robert Bartlett, which focuses on the more or less passive reception of cultural influences from the centre to the border regions.<sup>2</sup> Instead, in discussing the peripheral areas which are of interest to us, we refer instead to the idea of ‘Younger Europe’ proposed by Jerzy Kłoczowski. For him, it was that they joined the *christianitas* at the same time that made areas ‘between the Adriatic and the Baltic sea on the one hand [...], and of all of Scandinavia to Iceland on the other’ comparable.<sup>3</sup> Stressing the Christianization process, Kłoczowski admitted the importance of the impulses that came to the periphery from the centre. However, as he notes, cultural models that were transmitted to Younger Europe had to coalesce with local traditions and languages, and as a result ‘the processes of Occidentalization [...] gave specific, often original results.’<sup>4</sup> So instead of a vision of a rather passive reception, we have a view of a situation in which impulses from outside were adapted to internal conditions and processed in peripheral

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1 For a general overview, see Berend (ed.), *Christianization and the Rise of Christian Monarchy*.

2 Bartlett, *The Making of Europe*.

3 Kłoczowski, *Młodsza Europa*, p. 12.

4 Kłoczowski, *Młodsza Europa*, p. 13.

areas. This approach, in contrast to Bartlett's, focuses on understanding the similarities and differences between the peripheral polities discussed, which were concurrently engaged in similar processes.<sup>5</sup>

Taking a centre–periphery perspective, one has to be aware, however, that the emphasis on the peripheral status of Denmark, Norway, Iceland, Sweden, Poland, Bohemia, and Hungary tends to overshadow their cultural and religious membership of Latin Christendom. Moreover, this emphasis tends to diminish the effect of the impulses disseminated from the centre, and to see them as secondary to the events that brought about the impulses in the first place. This means that the impact of these impulses from the centre is seen and understood from the central rather than the peripheral perspective. In these aforementioned so-called peripheral polities, however, the impulses received from the centre were far from secondary, but instead became starting points for events that unfolded in their own societies. Consequently, we do well to remember that to the people of polities such as Norway, Iceland, Bohemia, or Poland, even if they were conscious of their peripheral position, these polities were their own centres after all.<sup>6</sup>

While several academic volumes of the past twenty years have addressed this imbalance in our perception of the past (see this Introduction below), there are still aspects of the history of Northern and East Central Europe that require more study. The phenomenon of the cult of saints is one such aspect, and this volume is a contribution to move the status quo forward. While much scholarly attention has been directed to research on the cult of saints in Carolingian and post-Carolingian Europe, the same phenomenon on the periphery of Latin Christendom remains comparatively less well known. While such studies *have* been conducted, mainly by scholars from the regions in question, they continue to be limited in number and, more importantly, less well known to the wider scholarly audience because of the language barriers. Not only, then, do scholars from the outside have limited access to that research, but those from Northern and East Central Europe — that is, regions that in the Middle Ages belonged to the European periphery — also often find it difficult to follow the scholarly debate. Inside each of the regions there is, however, at least some scholarly tradition of comparative research. More striking, therefore, is the weakness of such traditions between Northern and East Central Europe, which results in the strict limitation of most studies to regional perspectives. Simply speaking, in medieval studies, publications discussing both regions together are still rare.

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<sup>5</sup> Here we merely outline the problem of centre–periphery relations in the High Middle Ages. We discuss it more extensively in other works resulting from the ELITES project.

<sup>6</sup> Mortensen, 'Introduction', pp. 13–15.

A few exceptions, which try to bridge this research gap, should be mentioned here. First is the ground-breaking *Christianization and the Rise of Christian Monarchy: Scandinavia, Central Europe and Rus' c. 900–1200* (ed. by Berend, 2007) which analyses the processes in question in the politics of both regions (and also Rus'), using one and the same template and main topics for all chapters. Recently, in the volume *Christianity and War in Medieval East Central Europe and Scandinavia*, another phenomenon, namely crusading, was the topic of comparative studies between the regions (ed. by Kotecki, Jensen and Bennett 2021). Sometimes sources from one region have been used for a comparative study that focuses on one country in the other region. A prime example of this approach is the recent volume on Polish political and religious culture in the High Middle Ages (*Oryginalność czy wtórność? Studia poświęcone polskiej kulturze politycznej i religijnej (X–XIII wiek*, ed. by Michałowski and Pac 2020), whose authors readily use Scandinavian analogies. Finally, we should also mention the ongoing project, 'Symbolic Resources and Political Structures on the Periphery: Legitimization of the ELITES in Poland and Norway, c. 1000–1300',<sup>7</sup> of which this volume is a part. Its goal is to comparatively analyse Northern and East Central Europe in the High Middle Ages in a broad sense and in various aspects, focussing on the examples of two countries belonging to the regions in question, Poland and Norway.

As for the cult of saints on the peripheries of the medieval world, a few important contributions should be mentioned here. Omitting books covering only one church province or realm, we should note two anthologies: *Sanctity in the North* (ed. by DuBois, 2008) and *Les saints et leur culte en Europe centrale au Moyen Âge* (ed. by de Cevins and Marin, 2017). Discussing books that focus on the cult of saints in one of the regions in question, we should also mention *Of Chronicles and Kings* (ed. by Bergsagel, Riis, and Hiley, 2015), which deals mainly (though not exclusively) with this phenomenon in Scandinavia, as well as two collections which provide both editions and English translations of lives of saints from East Central Europe written between tenth to thirteenth century (ed. by Klaniczay, 2013; ed. by Klaniczay and Csepregi, 2023).<sup>8</sup>

In recent years, moreover, a few anthologies have been published, which focus on both Northern and East Central Europe. A Baltic perspective is provided by *Saints and Sainthood around the Baltic Sea* (ed. by Jensen and others, 2018), while *Symbolic Identity and the Cultural Memory of*

<sup>7</sup> See <<https://elites.historia.uw.edu.pl/>>.

<sup>8</sup> *Vitae sanctorum aetatis conversionis Europae centralis (saec. x–xi) – Saints of the Christianization Age of Central Europe (Tenth–Eleventh Centuries)*, ed. by Gábor Klaniczay, and *Sanctitas principum. Sancti reges, duces, episcopi et abbates Europae Centralis (saec. xi–xiii). The Sanctity of the Leaders. Holy Kings, Princes, Bishops and Abbots from Central Europe (Eleventh to Thirteenth Centuries)*, ed. by Gábor Klaniczay and Ildikó Csepregi.

*Saints* (ed. by Petersen and others, 2018) looks at the examples from both regions together. Another important contribution, *Saints and their Lives on the Periphery: Veneration of Saints in Scandinavia and Eastern Europe (c. 1000–1200)* (ed. by Haki Antonsson and Garipzanov, 2010), represents a different geographical scope, as it mainly focuses on Scandinavia and Rus', while also paying some attention to the contacts between them. Considering the cult of saints, Gábor Klaniczay's publications also need to be mentioned here, especially his *Holy Rulers and Blessed Princesses: Dynastic Cults in Medieval Central Europe* (2000), in which dynastic cults are analysed in a broad, European, including Scandinavian, context. And last but not least, there is the anthology *The Making of Christian Myths in the Periphery of Latin Christendom (c. 1000–1300)* (ed. by Mortensen, 2006) which is largely devoted to the cult of saints in East Central and Northern Europe, and appears to be one of the most systematic attempts to discuss issues related to the periphery and its place in Latin Christianity in the High Middle Ages. As a few chapters of the present volume prove, it remains an inspiring point of reference.

The present volume fits within these research approaches that consciously take a comparative look at both of these peripheral regions of Latin Christendom, Northern and East Central Europe. It is important to make it clear why we believe that the issues of medieval religious culture in Northern and East Central Europe should be researched in comparison, and why such a perspective may be beneficial for a better understanding of processes taking place in both regions. Obviously, the cult of saints was a phenomenon that had deep roots in Christianity, since it developed mainly in the Roman and post-Roman world. Its adoption in the territories in question began with their conversion to Christianity, which took place decisively and lastingly in both Northern and East Central Europe around the year 1000. Effectively, in the period under consideration, 1000–1300, parallel processes of Christianization took place in both regions. This long-lasting process did not end in the year 1300.<sup>9</sup> However, by this point in time, a network of parish churches and monastic foundations had been developed, and new, dynamic changes had emerged in the way Christianization was carried out, something that is perhaps most clearly seen in the efforts of the mendicant orders. Consequently, by the beginning of the fourteenth century, the character of the process had changed, and it had entered into a new and different stage.

In our opinion, which follows Kłoczowski's observation, it is precisely that these regions entered Latin Christendom in the same period, as well as the peripheral position shared by both regions in the High Middle Ages, which make the process of the adaptation of religious phenomena

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<sup>9</sup> Ellis Nilsson, 'Creating Holy People', pp. 2–3.

in Northern and East Central Europe, such as the cult of saints, especially suitable for comparison. Consequently, although some contacts or bilateral influences between these peripheral regions are interesting for us when investigating the veneration of saints, it is the similarities and differences in the processes of the adoption and adaptation of this phenomenon in the East Central and Northern peripheries of Latin Europe that comprise the very core of our interest in this volume.

For both regions under consideration, the reference point for the Christianization process was, generally speaking, the same, namely the post-Carolingian world. Denmark, Norway, Sweden, and Iceland on the one hand, and Poland, Bohemia, and Hungary on the other, joined Latin Christendom, and these newly-Christianized polities thereby came to share an ecclesiastical infrastructure, host the same monastic institutions, follow similar religious practices and traditions, and use the same main language of worship, Latin, as did the older, more established Christian polities. Similarly, Northern and East Central Europe also came under the influence of the Papacy, whose role in Latin Christendom increased enormously between 1000 and 1300, especially with respect to the cult of saints.<sup>10</sup> All these similarities suggest that the veneration of saints in Northern and East Central Europe may and should be analysed together.

Despite our emphasis on the shared religious and cultural framework of Latin Christendom, it is important to note that there were significant differences between its various polities. Both in the central regions of Latin Christendom, as well as its peripheries, there were several traits and features that were unique to distinct polities, and there were also historical trajectories that were not replicated elsewhere. Consequently, we must be attentive not only to those features that facilitate comparison, but also to those features which make comparative study more complicated.

One such complicating factor is the question of the church organizations of the peripheral realms. While both Northern and East Central Europe belonged to the Latin Church, the emergence of a church organization followed an individual trajectory in each polity. Initially, the churches of Northern Europe were subject to the archbishop of Hamburg-Bremen until the establishment of new archdioceses in the twelfth century. From 1104, Denmark, Sweden, and Norway together with Iceland and the Faroe Islands were all subject to the newly established archdiocese of Lund, while separate church provinces with archbishoprics in Nidaros (Trondheim) and Uppsala were created half a century later. This trajectory is in contrast to the early establishment of metropolitan sees in East Central Europe, at least in Poland, where the archbishopric was created in Gniezno in the year 1000, and in Hungary, where the archbishopric of Esztergom

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10 e.g. Morris, *The Papal Monarchy*; Vauchez, *La sainteté en Occident*.

was established around the same time, and where from the turn of the twelfth century, at the latest, there was also a second church province headed by the archbishopric of Kalocsa. Bohemia is, however, a separate case. Although it was converted relatively early, it was subordinate to the bishopric of Regensburg until the diocese of Prague was established in 973. The latter became a part of the Mainz church province until it became an archbishopric as late as 1344.<sup>11</sup> From the point of view of ecclesiastical organizations, there were significant variations between both peripheral regions, Northern and East Central Europe, but also between the polities of each region.

Another feature, and perhaps the most important of them all, is the question of language. Latin remained the main religious language for both the liturgical veneration of saints and the primary hagiographical texts throughout all of Latin Christendom, which is why we employ this name to describe this cultural and religious entity.<sup>12</sup> However, in Northern Europe there was a strong culture of vernacular writing, and the vernacular languages were employed in several contexts connected with the cult of saints, such as hagiography, jurisprudence, and historiography. However, in East Central Europe, the use of vernacular languages was, in our period, limited to only a few exceptional cases, predominantly in Bohemia.<sup>13</sup> This difference is crucial for understanding the challenges of undertaking comparative studies of these two regions, as the available source material is extremely lopsided and points to very different developments.

Another aspect that indicates the differences between the various territories and realms of Northern and East Central Europe is the matter of cultural and religious reference points. While we talk about the older, central regions of Latin Christendom as the post-Carolingian world, the impulses that affected the peripheral regions were not disseminated equally from the old, established centre. Denmark, Bohemia, and Poland, for instance, had significant cultural and religious influence from the German Church, while the English Church had an important impact on developments in Norway, Sweden, and Iceland, and periodically also in Denmark. In the case of Hungary the complicated nature of the situation is very apparent, since developments there were drawn from Germany, Northern Italy, and even Byzantium.<sup>14</sup> When we also take into account the exchange of influences that took place between these so-called peripheral polities, both within and across these two regions, we clearly see a very complex picture that can hardly be summarized as simply 'the periphery of Latin Christendom'.

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11 Berend, Laszlovszky, and Szakács, 'The Kingdom of Hungary', pp. 331–33.

12 Bø and Jón Viðar Sigurðsson, 'Introduction', pp. 5–10.

13 Sommer, Treštk, and Žemlička, 'Bohemia and Moravia', pp. 214–62.

14 See the contributions in Berend (ed.), *Christianization and the Rise of Christian Monarchy*.

While those differences should be taken into account when comparing the two regions and their various polities, the geographical and chronological frames of the volume allow us, more importantly, to examine how similar features of Latin Christendom evolved in the two regions. Examples of such features are the establishment of native church organizations, the Christianization of kingship, the emergence of a Latin writing culture, and the various stages of Western monasticism. However, the chronological and geographical frames also enable a comparative study of how local and regional elements came to shape the development of the Latin features in different ways. These frames enable us to see how conditions in each individual polity contributed to developments that shared certain traits with other realms, but that also ensured that the development within, say, Denmark or Hungary unfolded in ways that were different from the situation in Sweden or Bohemia. The frames have been chosen because they facilitate comparative study between elite ideologies, and in particular ideologies that looked to the older part of Latin Christendom and its centres of influence for impulses and inspiration for how to express their legitimacy. Royal elites looked to the rulers of Germany, England and France for inspiration on rituals, iconography, and behaviour, while the nobility modelled themselves on the aristocratic hierarchies of Latin Christendom's central regions and also imitated their own, already Christian, rulers. The religious elites similarly turned to the Latin centres for impulses, inspiration, and guidance. Bishops were in more or less intensive contact with their counterparts in the central regions, as well as with the Papacy, while the monastic elites ran their abbeys and friaries according to the rules and customs developed elsewhere. Although the impulses came from different directions, as stated above, the models for royal, aristocratic, ecclesiastical, or monastic behaviour were generally the same for each elite culture and were common throughout the whole of Latin Christendom. However, the influences had different results depending on the conditions of the individual polity of Northern and East Central Europe, where they were adopted and adapted to the local conditions, including the old, pre-Christian views, ideas, and social relations.

While it is easy enough to argue for the comparison between Northern and East Central Europe, the question of whether, and to what extent, Rus' should also be a part of this analysis is more complicated. In the classical view, based on Dimitro Obolensky's idea of the Byzantine Commonwealth, polities that in our period were mainly influenced by Greek Christianity, centred on Constantinople, should be treated separately from Latin Christendom.<sup>15</sup> Obolensky's idea has gained support from many scholars, including those from East Central Europe, who tend to treat

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<sup>15</sup> Obolensky, *The Byzantine Commonwealth*.

the polities of their particular region as a part of the West, albeit a peripheral part.<sup>16</sup> This division has, however, received much criticism from scholars who emphasize the many shared traits between Rus' and Latin Christian polities.<sup>17</sup> While these shared features and commonalities must be acknowledged, it should be noted that there are also many significant differences. These differences are particularly notable when considering religious affairs, such as ecclesiastical infrastructure, monastic life, religious practice, the language of public worship and the role of the Papacy. In addition to these dissimilarities, it is important to keep in mind that there was an increasing distance between Latin and Eastern Christendom in the High Middle Ages, which often caused open hostility.<sup>18</sup> These factors, the differences and the divergence in the period under considerations, justify, in our opinion, the limitation of our analysis to the peripheries of Latin Christendom. Even so, it has to be remembered that both Eastern and Latin Christendom continued to influence one another in various ways, and perhaps particularly with respect to the cult of saints. Due to the geographical and, in some cases, cultural proximity, those contacts were particularly notable in East Central and Northern Europe.<sup>19</sup> Consequently, although we concentrate on the peripheries of the Latin Christendom only, we find their connections with Rus' to be an important topic of research.

While this volume focuses on the relationship between the elite cultures of these two regions and the elite cultures of the Latin Christian central regions, we also acknowledge that the boundaries suggested by the chronological and geographical frames of the volume are anything but watertight. Movement also occurred in other directions, and there were various contacts — through diplomacy, war, trade, and family ties — between the polities of Northern and East Central Europe, and also between them and polities outside Latin Christendom: not only Rus', but also the Byzantine Empire, and the Balkan kingdoms. Additionally, it is important to note that contacts with non-Christian groups such as the Sami, Wends, Cumans, Khazars, and Tatars also influenced legitimization efforts in Northern and East Central Europe. In order to allow for a more stringent comparative investigation, however, we have chosen to operate

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16 See Raffensberger, 'Situating Medieval Eastern Europe', pp. 14–16 for further reading.

17 Raffensberger, 'Situating Medieval Eastern Europe', p. 15; Raffensberger, *Reimagining Europe*; Mikhailova, *Property, Power, and Authority*.

18 See, for example, in the context of Rus': Colucci, 'The Image', pp. 577–79. Podskalsky, 'Der Beitrag', pp. 500–08.

19 See Ingham, 'Czech Hagiography in Kiev', pp. 166–82; Ingham, 'The Litany of Saints', pp. 121–37; Ingham, 'The Martyred Prince', pp. 31–53; Lind, 'The Martyria of Odense', pp. 1–21; Lind, "'Varangian Christianity'", pp. 107–35; Лосева, 'Праздники', pp. 17–33; Garipzanov, 'Novgorod', pp. 115–45; Jackson, 'The Cult of St Olaf', pp. 147–67; Pac, 'Kult świętych', pp. 375–434; Pac, 'Communities of Devotion', pp. 123–54.

within the frames that corresponds to the elite ideals of the time. In order to further ensure that the comparative approach is both comprehensive and cohesive, we have chosen to focus on the legitimization of elite cultures.

## The Process of Christianization, the Social Elites, and their Legitimization

Conversion always brings significant changes to how power is legitimized in newly converted societies. Consequently, we have chosen this cultural shift as the starting point for the chronological frame of our study. However, Christianization, which follows conversion, is not a single event at a specific point in time, but a development which unfolds over time.<sup>20</sup> In both regions under consideration here, Christianization was one of the key factors in how elite cultures developed in the period 1000–1300.

The conversion of the societies in the Northern and Eastern peripheries of Europe was part of a widespread and strenuous process that started with the followers of Jesus. The new faith spread steadily, and by the end of the fourth century, Christianity had become the official religion of the Roman Empire. The Christianization of Europe continued, with Ireland converting in the fifth century and England during the seventh and eighth centuries. By the eighth century, missionaries had begun their activities in Friesland and Germany, and around the year 800, the Elbe marked the northern frontier of the Christian world. From this point, the conversion process became possible in the North and East. Bohemia and Moravia was converted in the second half of the ninth century, Denmark and Poland in the 960s, Rus' in the 980s, Hungary at the end of tenth century, Iceland 999/1000, Norway c. 1020 and Sweden c. 1090. The greatest resistance to Christianity in Europe was in the Baltic region, which converted during twelfth and the fourteenth centuries.<sup>21</sup>

The pre-Christian religions in Europe were *ethnic* religions, not universal religions like Christianity. That is, they belonged to a certain people, and in most cases encompassed a large number of female and male gods. The *ethnic* religions in Europe did not have a central organizing body and trained priests. In Northern Europe, the pre-Christian religion can

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20 For definitions of conversion, which we understand in the social context as an act of the recognition of a new faith by the community, and Christianization, which we see as the process of inculturation of the Christian doctrine and its norms, see especially Dumézil, *Les racines chrétiennes*, pp. 9–15, and Jón Viðar Sigurðsson, *Kristninga í Norden*, pp. 24–25.

21 Cf. Brown, *The Rise of Western Christendom*; Fletcher, *The Barbarian Conversion*; Wood, *The Missionary Life*; Berend (ed.), *Christianization and the Rise of Christian Monarchy*; Jón Viðar Sigurðsson, *Kristninga í Norden*, p. 5.

be labelled as an elite religion, meaning that the upper ranks of society controlled communication with the gods (probably with the help of ritual specialists for the greatest feasts) and who could establish friendships with them.<sup>22</sup> As for East Central Europe, the paucity of written sources about the pre-Christian religion precludes any firm outline of the religious structures in the societies in question.<sup>23</sup>

Among contemporary scholars working on the Christianization of Europe, there is a consensus that Christianization was a slow process that lasted for centuries. When and to what extent Christian ideas began to infiltrate and affect social developments in the Northern and Eastern peripheries is and will remain uncertain due to the dearth of sources. For Northern Europe, however, we can easily point to examples of pre-conversion contacts with Christianity due to the mobility of lords, merchants and warriors in the period in question. One well-known case is the chieftain and merchant Ohthere from the north of Norway, who was a member of the retinue of Alfred the Great of Wessex (r. 871–899).<sup>24</sup> It is very likely that Ohthere was baptized at Alfred's court, and he was not the only merchant, chieftain, or warrior who travelled to England from Scandinavia. Another example of Scandinavian warriors coming into contact with Christianity is the Varangian guard in Constantinople.<sup>25</sup> We can also highlight instances when various rulers from Northern and East Central Europe were baptized abroad, but where the ruler's baptism did not cause the successful conversion of their realms. This was the case with Harald Klak in Denmark and fourteen Bohemian dukes baptized in 845.<sup>26</sup>

In the societies of Northern and East Central Europe, those rulers who were powerful enough to successfully introduce Christianity after their own conversion used a simple method to do so. If they managed to baptize the chieftains or other local leaders in the different parts of the country, or gained control over them via their already-converted retinue of warriors, then the rest of the population would follow. The Norwegian Christianizing kings, especially Olaf Trygvason and Olaf Haraldsson, were, at least according to our sources, brutal in Christianizing the country, or more precisely when conducting forced baptism.<sup>27</sup> If someone refused to be baptized, they were tortured or murdered. Similarly, the Polish king

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22 For an overview of the Norse religion and the Norse gods, see Schjødt, Lindow, and André (eds), *The Pre-Christian Religions of the North*; Steinsland, *Norron religion*; Sundqvist, *Kultledare i fornskandinavisk religion*; Sundqvist, *An Arena for Higher Powers*.

23 Cf. contradictory visions of Slavic paganism: Łowmiański, *Religia Słowian*; Gieysztor, *Mitologia Słowian*.

24 *Two Voyagers*, pp. 18, 20.

25 Sigfús Blöndal, *Væringjasaga*; Garipzanov, 'Wandering Clerics', pp. 7–16.

26 *Annales Fuldenses*, a. 845, p. 35; Trěstík, 'The Baptism of the Czech Princes', pp. 7–59; Noble, 'The Christian Church as an Institution', pp. 256–57.

27 Birkeli, *Tolv vintrer*.

Bolesław Chrobry used drastic methods to introduce Christian morals and habits,<sup>28</sup> and similar approaches can also be seen in the early Bohemian and Hungarian legislation.<sup>29</sup> The elites who accepted the new religion probably believed it was in their best interest to do so. In this way they established or maintained friendships with the ruler. We are dealing here with a strategic change of faith. These elites could later count on both political and economic support from the king or duke. It was better to be the ruler's friend than to be his enemy and thereby risk losing both landed goods and positions of power.<sup>30</sup>

The transition to a new religion also had obvious disadvantages for some members of the elites, however. By accepting the new religion, their status as subjects of the ruler was even more visible, as we have seen above. The king or duke was the leader and protector of Christianity, and it was under their aegis that new Christian laws were introduced. Consequently, the ruler's position, and the ruler's legitimacy, was significantly strengthened if the chieftains or other elite members were to accept the new faith. On the other hand, resistance and opposition to conversion was a form of political resistance against the ruler. The rulers could not override the powerful chieftains or tribe leaders in this process, however. If the resistance against them became too great, the rulers had to give up. This is most evident in the failed attempt of Hakon Adalsteinfostre to introduce the new religion to Trøndelag (Central Norway), or the overthrowing of the Bohemian duke Bořivoj after his conversion on the Great Moravian court, as described in the late tenth-century *Legenda Christiani*.<sup>31</sup>

After the elite had been baptized, the common people were next, which often entailed mass baptism. The same pattern is seen all over Western Europe during the periods of Christianization.<sup>32</sup> It is, however, worth emphasizing that baptism was not simply, nor necessarily primarily, a matter of personal choice, but what we might call a public act or statement. Nora Berend has noted that 'as religion both before and after Christianization was central to social life' the 'conversion was a question of collective identity'.<sup>33</sup> Rodney Stark has made the same point in the following way: '[t]he basis for successful conversionist movements is growth through social networks, through a *structure of direct and intimate interpersonal attachments*.'<sup>34</sup>

28 Michałowski, 'The Nine-Week Lent', pp. 5–50; Michałowski, 'Christianisation of the Piast Monarchy', pp. 14–32.

29 Pauk, 'Washing Hands in a Sinner's Blood', pp. 11–22; Pauk, 'Ergo meum maxium et primum sit decretum', pp. 27–44; Bak, 'Signs of Conversion', pp. 115–24.

30 Jón Viðar Sigurðsson and Riisøy, *Norsk historie 800–1536*, pp. 91–97.

31 *Legenda Christiani*, ch. 2, pp. 20–24; Jón Viðar Sigurðsson, *Kristninga i Norden*, pp. 27–28, 41.

32 Fletcher, *The Barbarian Conversion of Europe*, pp. 336, 349, 385, 466; Jón Viðar Sigurðsson, *Kristninga i Norden*, p. 29; Abrams, 'Germanic Christianities', pp. 111–12.

33 Berend, 'Introduction', p. 3.

34 Stark, *The Rise of Christianity*, p. 20.

Conversion was about adapting one's religion and religious behaviour to fit with that of one's friends and relatives, or simply with the whole community. This signifies that it was the network which was crucial. The change of religion happened because individuals felt compelled to maintain or strengthen their social networks. People most likely did not begin to actually believe in the new doctrine until *after* they had converted.<sup>35</sup> No sources suggest that the introduction of the new faith was done in order to meet the demands of the people. Characteristically, conversion was often described in the sources as changing the law. While the paganism was described as the 'law of ancestors', 'Christianity' — as Robert Bartlett noted — 'was often termed "the Christian law (*lex christina*)"', and the phrase usefully conveys the sense of Christianity involving rules of social conduct as well as cultic belief and practice.<sup>36</sup>

The social role of religion meant that it was important for the legitimacy of the rulers and other elites that they retained control over it. We define legitimacy, a key aspect for this volume, simply as 'the idea of a ruling class that does not just rule, but *deserves* to do so', as Franco Moretti put it.<sup>37</sup> In this sense, legitimacy constitutes an immaterial resource which provides the conviction or belief in the legitimacy of the claims of certain individuals and groups.<sup>38</sup>

While discussing the effects of conversion on the elites of peripheral territories, it is important, however, to begin with the obvious observation that Christianization changed the form of elite culture itself in any given newly converted polity, as after conversion ecclesiastics started to be the part of this group. Thus in this book (and in the ELITES project, to which it belongs) we define elites as those members of a society who hold socially privileged positions, as Laurent Feller set out.<sup>39</sup> Who, then, belonged to the elites in East Central and Northern Europe in the High Middle Ages? Evidently, the elites in East Central and Northern Europe included the rulers and members of their kin, the aristocracy, knights, bishops, abbots, and other prominent ecclesiastics, as well as collective and institutional bodies such as monasteries or cathedral chapters. The elites therefore should not be conceived of as a coherent or homogenous class in any sense.<sup>40</sup>

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35 Stark, *The Rise of Christianity*, pp. 20, 68; cf. Rasmussen and Thomassen, *Kristendommen*, p. 61.

36 Bartlett, 'From Paganism to Christianity', p. 65.

37 Moretti, *The Bourgeois*, p. 20.

38 Weber, *Economy & Society*, pp. 31–38, 213–16, 247–54.

39 Feller, 'Crises et renouvellements des élites au haut Moyen Âge', pp. 5–21.

40 See articles in Jezierski and others (eds), *Nordic Elites in Transformation, c. 1050–1250: Volume III*. The above presentation of our understanding of elites in the High Middle Ages is taken from Jezierski, Orning, and Pac, 'Introduction' (in press).

In the period under consideration, the social hierarchies in the whole Latin Christendom were therefore comprised of several different elite groups and elite cultures. The relationship between these groups and cultures were in constant flux. While each group typically acknowledged that the other groups had their place in the order of things, the exact place of one group in relation to the others could be a matter of contention. Moreover, while medieval visions of the social order typically operated with clear-cut distinctions between the various strata of society, there were significant overlaps and connections between elite groups. For instance, the idea of the strict division of the elites into two elite groups — secular and ecclesiastical — does not always reflect historical reality, even if this division is in accordance with historical ideals. It was especially so due to the close, familial relationships between members of the secular and ecclesiastical elites: bishops and abbots, as a rule, were drawn from the secular aristocracy or even sometimes were of royal lineage, while the *goði* in the early stage of Iceland's Christianization served as chieftains and, at the same time, received the same education as priests, even though they did not serve as priests.<sup>41</sup> In this way, the focus on legitimization across all the elite groups and elite cultures enables us to investigate these overlaps. But it also means that whilst we acknowledge that there were distinct elite functions, we also avoid compartmentalizations that are too rigid and artificial.<sup>42</sup> At the same time, as we shall show in the conclusions of this volume, in the case of the elites' relationship with saints the division into secular and ecclesiastical elites may serve as an useful analytic tool, which allows us to compare particular cases discussed in this volume from an alternative perspective.

Because the relationship between elite groups and cultures was in flux, there was also a perennial need for each group to legitimize its current standing in the social order. As stated, this legitimization was rarely, if ever, concerned with proving a group's legitimacy within society. Kings accepted that secular aristocrats, bishops, abbots, and guilds all had their function and place, and vice versa. It was in the mechanics and in the details that elite groups and their individual members could be called into question, and where the need for legitimization arose. In choosing legitimization as our theme, therefore, we have enabled an investigation that can capture the complexities of these elite groups and the elite cultures of Northern and East Central Europe on two levels. On the one hand, we are attentive both to the features which the elites of these two regions shared with their peers in the Latin central regions, and also with the features

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41 Jón Viðar Sigurðsson, 'Introduction: The Goðar and "Cultural Politics".'

42 See articles in Poulsen, Vogt, and Jón Viðar Sigurðsson (eds), *Nordic Elites in Transformation, c. 1050–1250, Volume 1*; Jón Viðar Sigurðsson, 'The Christianization of the North Atlantic', pp. 1675–79.

through which these elites differed from those in the centre. On the other hand, we are also attentive not only to the differences between periphery and centre, but also to the differences between individual polities and regions on the Latin Christian periphery. In other words, we are conscious of both the shared Latin culture as well as the regional and local particulars of the elites.<sup>43</sup>

By focusing on legitimization, in short, we are able to provide a comprehensive view of elite cultures within the relevant geographical and chronological frames, and to explore both the distinctive features of particular elite cultures as well as the aspects shared by all or several elite cultures. Moreover, this approach enables us to capture the nuances of these fluctuating overlaps and relationships more fully, especially because legitimization requires an audience. Since elite groups and individual members of a specific elite group addressed their efforts and strategies of legitimization towards someone, the shape, form and vehicles for conveying legitimacy can allow us to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the relationship between elite groups. Moreover, because there could be several audiences for the same legitimization effort, we can capture a web of intricate relationships through this theme. For instance, audiences could be comprised of members of the same elite group, prospective members of the same elite group, members of a different elite group, the wider populace — including non-elites — as well as God and the saints.

With Christianization, the newly incorporated members of Latin Christendom also gained access to tools and terminology that allowed the elites of these peripheral polities to formulate their place in Latin Christendom, partly on their own terms and partly on pre-existing terms. Among such tools were rituals (such as coronation), iconography (such as the cross), media (such as coins), liturgy, history-writing, and typology (through which aspects of a polity's history could be connected to biblical typology).<sup>44</sup> Granted, several of these tools were already in existence in the newly converted realms, and in addition there were other tools that belonged to the pre-conversion religious norms and practices. But it was through Christianization that some tools were discarded, others were introduced, and some were consciously adapted to display membership in Latin Christendom. And through many, perhaps all, of these tools, the elites could display connections to saints.

Moreover, in addition to the tools themselves, Christianization also came with a particular terminology that aided the use of such tools. For instance, by addressing a local or regional saint as a protomartyr or apostle,

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43 Jezierski and others (eds), *Nordic Elites in Transformation, c. 1050–1250: Volume III*. See perhaps especially Bandlien, 'Travels, Translations, and Cultural Brokerage'.

44 Kretschmer, 'Y a-t-il une "typologie historiographique?"', pp. 14–18; Bagge, 'Typologie biblique', pp. 171–72.

that local or regional saint — and by extension the polity or region in question — was typologically linked with the events of biblical history. This link connected the area, as well as its elites, to the universal history of Christendom.<sup>45</sup> In this way, saints were important parts of the legitimizing efforts of the elites, both as audiences and as guarantors of legitimacy, and to this end the cult of saints can be used as a vantage point that opens up a broad range of ways in which elites sought to legitimize their standing in their own society. Christianity became, as mentioned, probably the most important of the symbolic resources for (self-)representation that the members of the elites employed to demonstrate such deservedness to themselves and others. In this volume, we consider closely one element of Christian doctrine and practice, namely the cult of saints as a tool, and apparently a very handy one, which was used to legitimize the Northern and East Central European elites.<sup>46</sup>

In Latin Christendom, be it in the peripheral or the central regions, the cult of saints was a ubiquitous aspect of society, and this ubiquity provides an excellent vantage point for researching the complexities and nuances within and between various groups of any medieval society, be they elite groups or others.<sup>47</sup> For the elites in the relatively recently Christianized polities of Northern and East Central Europe, the cult of saints provided a good framework for legitimizing efforts and strategies. Through the cult of saints, the elites could display their deservedness to occupy their place in the social order, and this deservedness is a cornerstone of elite legitimacy. Such displays of deservedness could be executed as part of the ritual framework provided by the cult of saints. Participation in liturgical ritual, the observation of feast days, pilgrimages, pious foundations and charitable donations, naming practices, dedication of churches, and the patronage of the production of texts or works of art were all acts performed with the saints as one of the intended audiences, and these were acts that provided arguments for the legitimacy of the elite group or the elite individual in question. By connecting these acts to saints, not only did the actor ensure the protection of the saints in Heaven and their services as intermediaries before God, but the saints also became guarantors of the actor's legitimacy in the eyes of the other intended audiences.<sup>48</sup>

The cult of saints, moreover, provided the elites with a framework that connected the local and regional with the universal. In other words, by

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45 Mortensen, 'Introduction', pp. 13–15; Bláhová, 'The Function of the Saints', pp. 95–99; Bagge, 'Theodoricus Monachus', pp. 77–87; Dalewski, 'A New Chosen People?', pp. 145–48. See also Kacper Bylinka's chapter in this volume.

46 In the ELITES project we cover a much broader set of different measures of elite legitimacy in the High Middle Ages. However, we limit ourselves geographically to Poland and Norway.

47 Vauchez, *La sainteté en Occident*, pp. 145–60.

48 Bartlett, *Why Can the Dead Do Such Great Things?*, pp. 103–12; Hope, 'Strategies', pp. 10–12.

participating in the cult of saints, the elites formulated and demonstrated their place not only in the given society but also in the universal Christian world. The ability to connect the local and regional on the one hand with the universal on the other, was of great importance for the elites of the newly incorporated members of Latin Christendom. Through such connections, they could thereby express their belonging in a shared Latin Christian culture by adapting the universal tools and terminology to the local and regional conditions. For regardless of whether the devotional practices of the elites were addressed to non-native or native saints, the very fact of their participation in the cult of the saints included the elites in a phenomenon of a universal nature, with a long tradition in Christendom.

### The Cult of the Saints in Northern and East Central Europe

By the time Christianity was systematically disseminated throughout the northern and eastern peripheries of Latin Christendom, the devotion to saints had been a key element of the Christian cosmology for centuries, having grown out of the early persecutions of Christians. From Late Antiquity, martyrs and other friends of God, an epithet common and well established in Latin hagiographical writing, were treated by the faithful as intermediaries between them and the Almighty. The fourth-century poet Prudentius, in his *Liber Peristephanon*, formulated the relationship between the holy and the living in terms of the Roman social system of patrons and clients, and presented the saints as *advocati*, mediators.<sup>49</sup> This appears to have been a widespread understanding of the role of saints.<sup>50</sup>

The roots of the phenomenon of the cult of saints, and the reasons for its popularity in ancient and medieval Christianity are still discussed. It seems, however, that part of this popularity stemmed from an idea of the saints as being closer to the lived experiences of ordinary Christians than Christ, whom some Christians considered divine and others at the very least perfect. While the lives of the saints, as related by hagiographers, were extraordinary in various ways, the saints also shared many of the quotidian uncertainties and hardships common to everyone. Moreover, thanks to their relics, church dedications, and feast-days, saints continued to be present in everyday life, not only for the clergy but for all of the faithful. Saints were also addressees of prayers in critical circumstances, and many of them were believed to be particularly efficacious helpers in times of personal or communal need, a belief which resulted in the establishment of pilgrimages to certain sanctuaries.

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<sup>49</sup> Bartlett, *Why Can the Dead Do Such Great Things?*, pp. 103–12.

<sup>50</sup> Brown, *The Cult of the Saints*, p. 7.

While the cult of saints was a universal and ubiquitous phenomenon in Latin Christendom, the dissemination of one saint's cult could follow a very different trajectory from the cult of another saint. Two saints could therefore differ widely in popularity or in the remit of their *fama sanctitatis*. Differences in popularity must be explained by a variety of factors: for instance, whether the saint was disseminated from a peripheral or a central location. It was, in general, more difficult for a saint who started out as a local saint in a peripheral region to achieve universal fame, than one whose cult was based in a well-connected cult centre with sufficient skilled labour and resources to facilitate a wide dissemination. As an example, we could compare the cults of St Olaf and St Thomas of Canterbury. The cult of St Olaf was spread across the North Atlantic and the Baltic over several generations. Since the cult centre was only in its institutional infancy for most of the eleventh century, the dissemination of Olaf's cult was largely a decentralized process until the late twelfth century, and even then much of the dissemination occurred outside the control of the Norwegian metropolitan church.<sup>51</sup> In contrast, the cult of Thomas of Canterbury was disseminated from his cult centre at Canterbury, and with the added institutional support of the Cistercian order, but also, probably even more importantly, leverage from the very centre of the Latin Christendom in the form of papal canonization. These factors ensured that his cult spread rapidly not only throughout Western Europe, but also Northern and East Central Europe within a few decades.<sup>52</sup>

The cases of Olaf and Thomas also serve to illustrate the distinction between native and non-native saints. While this distinction is modern rather than medieval, it is one of our most important tools for a comparative study of Northern and East Central Europe. We acknowledge that there is a difference between, on the one hand, saints who emerged within a specific peripheral territory and who connected that polity with the wider Christian history, and, on the other hand, saints who were brought from the outside. The difference, however, lies not in the saint's importance within a newly Christianized polity: non-native saints could attain greater fame than native ones, and even eclipse them. Instead, the difference may lie in how a cult functioned in the legitimization efforts of various elite groups and to what extent it is a point of reference only for the local faithful (including the elites), and to what extent for people from other areas of Latin Christianity as well. While Olaf may have served to legitimize both representatives of the Church as well as the secular elites primarily in Norway, and to some extent more broadly in Scandinavia, in the case of Thomas, his role as a legitimizing figure for the ecclesiastical elites was similar in different areas, both peripheral and central.

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<sup>51</sup> Hope, 'Saint Olaf and the Danish Saints'.

<sup>52</sup> Slocum, *The Cult of Thomas Becket*, pp. 67–82.

At the same time, the success of cults that were disseminated from older, well-established Christian regions into more recently converted areas did not depend only on the trajectory from centre to periphery. The specific trajectory of the cult was important for shaping its impact in the region into which the cult was brought, but various local factors in these regions also played a decisive role. For instance, while the cults of some English saints, such as Botolph or Etheldreda of Ely, were present in Northern Europe due to influence from the English church,<sup>53</sup> these saints are rarely, if ever, found in East Central Europe. Similarly, in the calendars of East Central Europe, we sometimes find German saints such as, for example, St Ulrich of Augsburg, whose cults do not appear in the Northern European sources.<sup>54</sup> Such differences between cults disseminated from the same well-established region into a newly converted area show that each cult had its own trajectory, and that factors at the receiving end were influential for the outcome. Among such factors are the local or regional elites and their connections and preferences.

In order that we might better understand the cult of saints in the polities of Northern and East Central Europe, it is necessary to keep in mind that both the dissemination of individual cults as well as their reception could differ markedly from cult to cult, as well as from region to region. For this reason, it is important to emphasize that a saint's status in the older, more established parts of Latin Christendom did not necessarily guarantee a similar status in the newly converted areas. Similarly, saints from the newly converted regions were not always saints of solely local or regional importance, but could achieve a more widespread fame across a wider geographical area. Due to the complexities of the dissemination of saint's cult to, from and within the more recently converted regions of North and East Central Europe, it is helpful to employ some general categories for how the cults of certain saints should be understood.

In the case of the present volume we decided to organize according to the division of native and non-native saints. The reason for this is also a desire to respond to the previous research tradition, which, when studying the cult of saints in Northern and East Central Europe, pays much more attention, as it seems unjustifiably, to native saints. However, as we are interested in saints whose cults enjoyed the support and maintenance of an institution, be it within the diocese, within the polity, or across several polities, we would like to propose the division of these institutionally supported saints into five categories, organized within the overarching

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<sup>53</sup> Toy, 'St Botolph', pp. 565–70; Styler, 'The Story of an English Saint's Cult', pp. 176–80.

<sup>54</sup> Włodarski, *Chronologia polska*, p. 258; Dragoun, 'Česká středověká kalendária: St Ulrich does appear in the fifteenth-century calendar Sveriges Riksarkiv Fr 25629 (see <<https://saints.dh.gu.se/quote/12077>>). This, however, appears to be a unique, and late, case in the Swedish liturgical material.

distinction between native and non-native saints. Like all categories, however, these are flexible and imperfect, but serve to facilitate a less muddled, more nuanced view of the geographies and the period in question. Our five categories are intended as a supplementary alternative to other categorizations already found in the scholarship rather than to replace them.<sup>55</sup>

The first category is established universal saints who were the subject of veneration everywhere in Latin Christendom, including in Northern or East Central Europe. These are saints whose cults and whose canonical status were established in the central parts of Latin Christendom in the period before the conversion of the Latin peripheries. In other words, these saints were part and parcel of the cult of saints when it was introduced into new regions through missionaries. Saints such as the Virgin Mary, Peter and other apostles, Catherine of Alexandria or Laurence, Benedict, or Martin all became universal within Latin Christendom in the course of Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages, and were therefore ubiquitous features in calendars and the feasts of the liturgical year within the Latin Christian dioceses, including those of our two peripheral regions. Some such universal saints became patrons of individual churches and were therefore held in even higher regard. As an example of this, we see the cathedral church of Lund, which was dedicated to St Laurence,<sup>56</sup> or the Virgin Mary, a patron saint of Plock cathedral, to mention just two from many other examples.<sup>57</sup> More importantly, universal saints, well known everywhere within the Latin Christendom, sometimes became particularly popular on the periphery. This might be the case of the cult of St Nicholas, whose veneration enjoyed special interest from Polish as well Danish and Norwegian dynastic circles, even in the period before the cult became significantly more popular in western Europe as a result of the saint's translation from Myra to Bari in 1087.<sup>58</sup> Other examples, discussed in this volume, are the special place of the cult of the Virgin in high medieval Hungary, or St Giles, who for some time was important for the Polish elites.

The second category consists of new universal saints, i.e., saints who became subject to universal veneration at about the time when Northern and East Central Europe were already part of Latin Christendom. The universal nature of these new saints was made possible by the administrative expansion of the Latin Church and, in many cases, the emergence of papal

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55 For other divisions and definitions of categories, see especially the following publications: Thacker, 'Loca sanctorum'; Cubitt, 'Universal and Local Saints'; Ciardi, 'Saints and Cathedral Culture'; Ellis Nilsson, 'Creating Holy People'.

56 Ciardi, 'Saints and Cathedral Culture', p. 54.

57 Skwarczyński, 'The Beginnings', pp. 117–62.

58 Pac, 'Communities of Devotion', pp. 135–41; Pac, *Women in the Piast Dynasty*, pp. 165–92; Garipzanov, 'The Cult of St Nicholas', pp. 229–46.

canonizations. A typical representative of this category is the aforementioned Thomas of Canterbury, who was venerated in every corner of Latin Christendom, and in some regions, like Northern Europe, his cult was especially well established. However, as noted above, the cult of a universal saint did not flourish equally well in every part of Latin Christendom, and regional differences might sometimes be significant. One good example is Elizabeth of Thuringia. Her cult was recognized in the whole of Latin Christendom and, as discussed by Kirsty Day in this volume, she was very popular in East Central Europe. In Northern Europe, however, her cult arrived relatively late and rarely, if ever, amounted to anything more than her inclusion in calendars and popularity of *Legenda Aurea* (also in its vernacular translations) in the Later Middle Ages. St Elizabeth was popularized by Franciscans, which shows the importance of the role of new, centralized orders in the popularization of new cults throughout Latin Christianity. Other examples of new universal saints are the Dominican saints discussed in this volume by Eszter Konrád, namely St Dominic and St Peter of Verona.

The third category we have called other non-native saints, a term based on the perspective of the regions under our consideration. We understand them to be saints from outside the Northern and East Central Europe whose cults can hardly be treated as universal in Latin Christendom, but who had a certain amount of popularity in the peripheries, either across the region or in specific localities within the region. It is important to note that this category is very close to those of established and new universal saints, because some non-native saints achieved a status which was practically universal. For the medieval venerators of some of these other non-native saints, the modern scholarly distinction between universal and other non-native would probably be nonsensical.

In Northern Europe, this third category is represented by the aforementioned St Botolph, whose cult was brought to Denmark, Norway and Sweden from England. His feast is typically included in Scandinavian calendars, and often with a high liturgical rank. Additionally, several churches are dedicated to him. Similarly, St Swithun belongs to this category. Yet despite their practically universal status within Northern Europe, both these saints were more-or-less unknown on the continent, including East Central Europe.

Other non-native saints also highlight that the distinction between this category and the first two is not always clear. For instance, St Gotthard of Hildesheim was not universally popular in West Europe outside Germany, even though he was canonized by the pope in 1131. In Northern Europe, his feast is not attested in Norway, and we are only familiar with one

Danish and one Swedish source containing his feast.<sup>59</sup> We see here that institutional support at a specific point in time was not enough for a saint's universal status to be upheld, it required sustained institutional efforts, also beyond the saint's cult centre. While Gotthard was not universally venerated, in spite of his canonization, his cult did have a significant impact in East Central Europe. Shortly after the canonization, pilgrims from the whole region of East Central Europe began to visit his shrine, while in the following decades a great number of churches were dedicated to St Gotthard in East Central Europe, where he was also commonly included in calendars.<sup>60</sup>

The fourth category is native saints whose cults had a regional impact. These are saints who were connected to one polity within the region, and whose cult spread beyond the borders of that realm. In Northern Europe, the most famous example from our period is St Olaf, who was venerated throughout the North Atlantic region, Sweden, and even parts of the Baltics under the control of Danish or Swedish power. It is not a coincidence that such a role was played by a saint whose cult was well established in one polity, since that made the cult strong enough to be disseminated beyond the borders of that polity.<sup>61</sup> The same also happened in East Central Europe where, for instance, St Stephen of Hungary was commonly included in Polish and Bohemian calendars, the 'Bohemian' St Wenceslas was popular in Poland, while the figure of St Adalbert, a holy patron of Poland and Bohemia, was well known also in Hungary.<sup>62</sup>

Hagiographies of St Wenceslas were also produced outside of Bohemia, as David Kalhous demonstrates in his chapter in this volume, while the cult of St Adalbert was important for imperial circles for a period after his death. However, none of the cults in this category can be treated as universal in the strict sense. Although the sanctity of Wenceslas, Stephen, Adalbert, or Olaf was acknowledged beyond the region, their cults were neither significant nor had any notable impact throughout all of Latin Christendom, at least from a long-term perspective. Some of the saints in this category were canonized by papal decree, such as Cnut Rex (1101) or Cnut Dux (1169) in Denmark. Their cults were venerated beyond Denmark, especially Cnut Rex who can be found in both Swedish and Norwegian calendars, but they did not achieve actual universal veneration, and their cults remained regional.<sup>63</sup> Similarly, St Stanislaus, who is discussed

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59 In Denmark, Gotthard's feast can be found in *Breviarium Roschildense* from 1517 (f.4r) and two Swedish calendar fragments (Sveriges Riksarkiv Fr 25600 (twelfth century) and Fr 25602 (thirteenth century); cf. Ellis Nilsson, 'Creating Holy People', p. 146).

60 Figurski and Pac, 'Saints and Relics', p. 342 for further reading.

61 Jón Viðar Sigurðsson, *Kristninga i Norden*, pp. 84–92.

62 Figurski and Pac, 'Saints and Relics', pp. 345–46 for further reading.

63 Wangsgaard Jürgensen, 'One of Us'; Hope, 'Saint Olaf and the Danish Saints'.

in this volume and who was papally canonized in 1253, was indeed also venerated outside of Poland, where he was treated as a second holy patron of the country. Nonetheless, his name rarely appeared in calendars outside East Central Europe.

It must be emphasized, moreover, that the regional position of all those saints in our fourth category was, without exception, based on their extensive veneration in one polity and their positions as a polity's holy patron. Olaf was above all a Norwegian saint, while Stephen was a Hungarian one.

In the fifth category, which we have labelled *local saints*,<sup>64</sup> we place only those saints whose cults were maintained and perpetuated through institutional support, but whose veneration was predominantly limited to the remit of the metropolitan church or the polity in question, or which sometimes did not even cross the boundaries of one diocese or a particular ecclesiastical institution.<sup>65</sup> In general, just as the regional saints, these saints are by default native (although sometimes they might be foreigners, who acted, died or rested in the land in question).

This category includes most of the saints whose cults emerged within the geographical and/or chronological frames of the present volume. From the Danish metropolitan see of Lund (established in 1104), we have examples such as Liufdag of Ribe, Kjeld or Ketillus of Viborg,<sup>66</sup> Margaret of Roskilde, and Erik Plovpenning. From the Norwegian metropolitan see of Nidaros (established in 1152/53), members of this category include Sunniva, Ragnvald of Orkney, Thorlak, and Gudmundur Arason. From the Swedish metropolitan see of Uppsala (established in 1164), we can mention Botvid of Södermanland, Elin (Helen) of Skövde, Magnhild of Fulltofta, Sigfrid of Växjö, and Henry of Finland.<sup>67</sup>

From the Polish metropolitan see of Gniezno we have, for instance, the Five Martyred Brothers, or the thirteenth-century holy duchesses

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64 For the term 'local', see also Cubitt, 'Universal and Local Saints' and Sara Ellis Nilsson's contribution in this volume.

65 By emphasizing institutional support, which entailed liturgical veneration, we have excluded those saints whose cults emerged outside the control of the Church, and who were not acknowledged (one way or another) by the Church. Such saints are typically called popular saints, yet despite this label we should not presume that their cults could not be embraced by the elites and used to strengthen legitimacy. Such potential legitimization efforts, however, operated outside the framework of the institutionally sanctioned cults, and cannot be ascertained in the surviving source material. Consequently, these cults are not included here.

66 The case of Ketillus is complicated. He was canonized by Pope Clement III in 1188 and there are traces of his veneration in Norway, Sweden, and Northern Germany. His cult does not appear to have become universal in any practical sense, and so he is included in this category (cf. Ellis Nilsson, 'Creating Holy People', pp. 72–73).

67 Sara Ellis Nilsson notes that there are also traces of other saints whose cults are only known through later and rather vague literary references (Ellis Nilsson, 'Creating Holy People', pp. 94–95). These are as yet uncategorized, as it is unclear whether they are popular cults or cults with some basic institutional support on the diocesan level.

like Kinga (Cunigunde) or Salomea. In Bohemia, which in our period belonged to the church province of Mainz, examples of local saints might include the monks Procopius of Sázava and Gunther, or the royal daughter and Poor Clare nun Agnes of Bohemia, mentioned in this volume. In Hungary we might point to a group of saints proclaimed in 1083 together with St Stephen, but primarily venerated locally: his son Prince Emeric, bishop and martyr Gerard, as well as two hermits, Andrew Zoerard and Benedict.<sup>68</sup> From Hungary we also have a case which shows that even extraordinary popularity in one realm does not necessarily lead to regional, let alone universal, popularity. Such was the case of St Ladislaus, who, despite his papal canonisation in the 1190s<sup>69</sup> and the fact that he soon became ‘the most popular saint in Hungary,’<sup>70</sup> is only occasionally mentioned even in the calendars of neighbouring Bohemia and Poland,<sup>71</sup> not to even mention any wider cult of the holy king.

Some cases illustrate that the line between local and regional saints might be rather fluid. For instance, all the regional saints mentioned above began as local saints, but later on they came to be venerated in other parts of the region in question. Another example of the fluidity of local cults is the group of hermits of Italian and Polish origin, known as Five Martyred Brothers, who after the translation of their relics to Bohemia in 1030s were mainly venerated there; paradoxically it is possible that their cult in Poland in the thirteenth century and later was influenced by this Bohemian cult.<sup>72</sup> Furthermore, in some instances local cults could exert influence beyond their cult centre, without gaining the status of a regional saint. We see this in the cases of two holy women discussed in this volume: Ludmila of Bohemia and Hedwig of Silesia. The former was in the first place a local, Bohemian saint, while the latter was a local Polish saint, or more precisely a Silesian one. Yet despite the initially local remit of their cults, their commemorations are to be found in Polish as well as German calendars respectively.<sup>73</sup>

Obviously, therefore, categories such as these are essentially tools that help us make sense of a complex situation, and it is important to note that they will not fully capture the nuances of the cult of saints as a whole in this period and in these regions, and neither will they provide

68 Figurski and Pac, ‘Saints and Relics’, pp. 343–45 for further reading.

69 Solymosi, ‘Die Hailigsprechung’, 135–46.

70 Klaniczay, ‘Saints’ Cults in Medieval Central Europe’, p. 28, similarly: Solymosi, ‘Die Hailigsprechung’, p. 146. Cf. also Veszprémy, ‘Royal Saints’, p. 239.

71 Włodarski, *Chronologia polska*, p. 244; Dragoun, ‘Česká středověká kalendária’.

72 Jasiński, ‘Pięciu Braci’, pp. 360–62; Górska-Golaska, ‘Kult Pięciu Braci Męczenników’, pp. 112–16; Matla, *Czeskie wpływy*, p. 322.

73 On Ludmila, see Pac, ‘The Cult of St Ludmila’ (forthcoming). On Hedwig, see Grotefend, *Zeitrechnung*, II.2, p. 113; see also Bohemian and Hungarian liturgical sources mentioning St Hedwig: <<https://usuarium.elte.hu/>>.

a perfectly accurate view of the individual cults and their historical trajectories. However, despite these shortcomings, our overarching distinction of native and non-native saints, and the five categories of saints, serve to highlight that the various cults had different degrees of importance to various elite groups. For the ecclesiastical elites as a whole, some saints could be of tremendous importance as the guarantors of the legitimacy of the Church in relation to other social groups. But for the individual bishop, the saint whose cult centre was situated in his diocese, or the saint or saints to whom the cathedral church was dedicated, could be of far greater importance, especially when asserting legitimacy within the diocese. Similarly, for the monastic elite there could be saints who held a particularly high position either for the individual house or within the monastic order in question, even though this saint might be of little importance in the rest of the church province or the polity. For various secular elites, the favouring of saints from different categories could also depend on factors such as whether their claims of legitimacy were directed on a local, regional, or trans-regional level, and to whom these legitimizing efforts were addressed.

In this way, by categorizing the saints venerated in Northern and East Central Europe in the period *c.* 1000–*c.* 1300 as we have done here, we hope to have established tools that facilitate a much more nuanced understanding of the relationship between various elite groups and elite cultures and the cult of saints. Perhaps most importantly, these categories enable us to approach the topic in a more holistic way. Scholarship on the cult of saints, especially but not exclusively in the so-called peripheries of Latin Christendom, tends to focus on native saints. However, we believe it is very important to show and engage with the whole variety of saints venerated in these regions, in order to understand the complexities and developments of the cult of saints and its role in the polities in question. Our volume therefore includes studies of saints from each of the categories formulated here.

Granted, despite our efforts to ensure that this anthology presents as broad a picture as possible of the eponymous phenomenon, both in terms of the categories of saints and the groups of elites involved in their cult, and finally in terms of geography, there are obvious and significant shortcomings. Many, sometimes very important, medieval cults of native saints are not discussed here, and the number of omitted cults of non-native saints presented in East Central and Northern Europe in the High Middle Ages is certainly even greater. However, if we may quote the kind words of one of the anonymous reviewers of this volume, ‘one should not forget that this volume is not a synthesis, but a collection of interrelated comparative inquiries, which provide together a varied and in many respects innovative

insight'. Leaving it to the reader to judge the adequacy of this gracious opinion of our anthology, let us conclude by noting that the phenomenon of the cult of saints in East Central and Northern Europe in the High Middle Ages still awaits its synthesis.

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PART I



# Non-native Saints



## Non-native Saints: Introduction\*

The first saints to find their way into the newly converted areas of Northern and East Central Europe were non-native saints. In some cases, these saints were little more than names in a litany, a calendar, or a breviary, brought by the first clerics as part of their efforts to establish a church organization in the polity. In other cases, however, their legends, their feasts, and their roles as intercessors for the living made them important figures in the religious and social fabric of these societies that had recently been added to the expanding Latin Christendom. Many of the more important saints were those known throughout Christendom, such as the Virgin Mary, the apostles, or famous ancient martyrs. Yet sometimes important non-native saints were more local ones, typically associated with the areas from which the first clergy came (often bringing relics of those saints with them). The role of the cult of non-native saints and, especially, their importance in legitimizing the elite in the peripheral areas of Latin Christendom, seems to have been underestimated in previous research, and is therefore the focus of the chapters included in this part of the anthology.

In an attempt to compare and summarize the insights of these chapters, it is necessary to stress some elements specific to the use of non-native saints for purposes of legitimization. Some aspects of these non-native saints made it easy to employ them, since their cults were already established and recognized by the ecclesiastical authorities throughout Latin Christendom. Examples of such cults include the Virgin Mary in Hungary discussed by Karen Stark, or the apostles in Iceland, whose veneration

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\* The research leading to these results has received funding from the Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2014–2021 (2019/34/H/HS3/00500). This chapter is part of a joint research project of the University of Warsaw and the University of Oslo ‘Symbolic Resources and Political Structures on the Periphery: Legitimization of the ELITES in Poland and Norway, c. 1000–1300’.

is examined by Haraldur Hreinsson, or, finally, the relics of the Crown of Thorns, whose importation to Norway is the subject of Jerzy Pysiak's chapter. Indeed, it was the esteem in which the apostles were held that allowed their cult to be used to propagate the Gregorian hermeneutic in Iceland before the cult of the native fighter for *libertas ecclesiae*, Thorlak of Skálholt, discussed by Haki Antonsson in the part on native saints, started. In turn, the prestige that surrounded the Passion relics of the Crown of Thorns allowed the rulers to use them as a tool to counterbalance the cult of the native St Olaf, a cult guarded and controlled by the Norwegian archbishop.

The matter was not always so simple, however. In several cases — such as that of St Giles, whose cult in Poland, discussed by Miłosz Sosnowski, or the cult of Dominican saints in Hungary examined by Eszter Konrád — the cults that were introduced from the outside only required local dissemination to become strong tools of legitimization. Sometimes, however, a cult brought from afar was not well known or notably popular. One gets the impression that this was the case with St Florian in Kraków, discussed by Karolina Morawska, and this is suggested by doubts about the saint's identification. In other words, here, the legitimizing function was based less on the saint's popularity than on their association with antiquity and 'Romanness', which allowed local elites to spread the cult and use it for their purposes, connecting themselves with an older Christian history.

It seems, moreover, that the prominence of non-native cults may have posed some challenges for local elites who tried to exploit them, simply because most of these cults were difficult to monopolize locally, since these saints were often universal and venerated in many places. Karen Stark illustrates this well, showing that it is clear that the Virgin Mary was important for the legitimacy not only of the Arpad dynasty, but also of many other Latin Christian rulers, not to mention other elite groups within Hungary.

When a non-native saint was not universally venerated, peripheral elites might find similar difficulties in using them for legitimizing purposes. The main reason why this could prove challenging was simply that the majority of non-native saints had their most famous and important cult centres in other polities, and these older centres could only very rarely be overshadowed by a more recently established centre in the peripheries — although there were exceptions, as we shall see below. For example, regardless of the importance of Saint Giles's Abbey in Somogyvár in Hungary, the main centre of his cult remained Saint-Gilles in southern France. Peripheral centres of non-native saints thus often continued to be the less important ones, and this lesser status could possibly diminish the legitimizing potential of the peripheral cult centre. This does not mean, however, that peripheral elites were powerless to make their own religious centres where a non-native saint was particularly venerated more

important. Indeed, the attempts of peripheral elites to bolster the fame of such centres could cause controversy. One example of how such efforts could be noted outside of the peripheral polity is Somogyvár Abbey. In order to strengthen its legitimacy as an important cult centre, the abbey claimed to be in possession of the body of St Giles. This claim caused consternation outside Hungary, and it is mentioned in Book v of the twelfth-century *Codex Calixtinus*, a sort of guide for pilgrims, whose author refutes Somogyvár's claim in no uncertain terms.<sup>1</sup>

Despite the potential for controversy, however, the main centre of a cult could also consider peripheral, lesser cult centres as a way of increasing their own legitimacy. That a saint venerated in France, Spain, or England was known in the furthest reaches of the known Latin Christian world was a reflection on the saint's fame. As Miłosz Sosnowski shows, it was important for the French abbey of Saint-Gilles that St Giles was venerated even in distant, peripheral Poland. Similarly, Eszter Konrád's chapter makes it clear that the Dominican Order considered it immensely important that St Dominic and St Peter of Verona experienced veneration not only in Italy or France, but also in Hungary. This importance was especially based on the order's ambitions to use Hungary as a starting point for missionary work among the Cumans and heretic movements in the Balkans.

Finally, it is necessary to notice another phenomenon. Peripheral centres of cults of non-native saints sometimes could become the most important centre. We seem to be dealing with this situation in the late Middle Ages in the case of the cult of St Florian, for which, at least in East Central Europe, Kraków became the primary centre. This is illustrated by the story described by Karolina Morawska: in the first half of the fourteenth century an envoy from the centre of the saint's cult, Sankt-Florian near Linz, arrived in Kraków to collect some relics. What we have here is a peculiar paradox, since these envoys from a former Roman province, Noricum, sought the relics of a Roman martyr in a location that had never been part of the Roman Empire.

Despite the differences between non-native and native saints, we should not exaggerate how these differences affected how the peripheral elites could employ non-native saints in their legitimization efforts. After all, those saints whose relics were present in a given polity, bishopric, or town were part of the local religious fabric, and these saints belonged just as much to the common people and the elites of the peripheries as to the central polities of Latin Christendom. For the venerators, in other words, the distinction between non-native and native was often insignificant. This situation is brilliantly illustrated by a passage from the *Passio Sancti Kanuti*,

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<sup>1</sup> *Le codex de Saint-Jacques-de-Compostelle. Livre IV* [book V [sic!]], VIII, p. 26.

where we read that ‘in particular places some [saints] are considered [...] especially worthy of veneration and surrounded by veneration by their countrymen’, and this proximity can be as much ‘common residence’ as ‘the presence of holy relics’ given to the inhabitants of a particular place.<sup>2</sup> Certainly therefore, the non-native saints present in the relics may have served no worse in legitimizing the elites controlling their cult than the native ones, even if this sometimes required slightly different means.

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<sup>2</sup> ‘Licet per totius orbis ecclesias conueniat omni populo christiano festa sanctorum celebrare, uictorias martirum laudare uitamque istorum imitari, in singulis tamen locis propter familiaritatem cohabitantium et propter sanctorum presentiam reliquiarum, que in solacium istis uel illis habitatoribus condonate sunt, ueneratione (inquam) speciali apud ciues populosue suos digni habentur atque honorantur’, *Passio Sancti Kanuti Regis et Martyris*, I, p. 62.

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## 2. The Authority of the Virgin

### *The Use of the Marian Cult in the Legitimization of Power in the Kingdom of Hungary before 1300*

#### Introduction

In the medieval world, as today, legitimacy is a key aspect in the relationship between the elite — be they kings, popes, or prime ministers — and the rest of society. It is the vehicle by which rulers substantiated their right to rule by means of virtues or qualities such as lineage, wealth, connections to powerful individuals, and prowess on the battlefield. Saints' cults were another means by which rulers could prove their legitimacy. What better advocate than a saint? If a saint had a special relationship with a ruler, did that not demonstrate the ruler's worthiness above all others?

As a universal saint whose importance and authority were widely understood, the Virgin Mary could be a particularly powerful tool for legitimization. The Virgin's cult was integrated into imperial and royal rhetoric throughout the Christian world. In the Byzantine Empire the figure of Mary was central to 'the imperial vision of authority and orthodoxy', and Rome also promoted her imperial traits and used her image to demonstrate their independence from secular authority, especially through images.<sup>1</sup> In the Carolingian Empire the coronation rites of the empresses

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<sup>1</sup> Rubin, *Mother of God*, pp. 68, 98; Boss, 'The Development of the Virgin's Cult', pp. 156–57; Stroll, 'Maria Regina: Papal Symbol', p. 173; Pac, 'The Attire of the Virgin Mary', p. 22.

**Karen Stark** • received her PhD in Medieval Studies from Central European University and is currently a fellow with the Austrian Academy of Science's Post-Doc-Track Program. Her research interests are medieval religious history, especially the cult of saints, pilgrimage, and the concept of 'sacred space', material culture, and Digital Humanities.

*The Cult of Saints and Legitimization of Elite Power in East Central and Northern Europe up to 1300*, ed. by Grzegorz Pac, Steffen Hope, and Jón Viðar Sigurðsson, *Comparative Perspectives on Medieval History*, 2 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2024), pp. 57–80

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10.1484/M.CPMH-EB.5.137531

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made allusions to the Virgin Mary, and Marian imagery was adopted into the 'imperial sphere' of the Ottonian and Salian dynasties.<sup>2</sup>

The figure of the Virgin Mary was also used to legitimize the independence of the Kingdom of Hungary as well as the rule of Hungarian kings already during the reign of the first Christian king of Hungary, Stephen I (r. c. 997–1038), who supposedly offered the Hungarian Kingdom to the Virgin. Beginning with the death of Stephen I's only son, Prince Emeric, the rulership of Hungary during the first century of its existence as a Christian kingdom was fraught with issues of succession. Concurrently, efforts were made by both the Empire and the Papacy to gain power and control over Hungary, especially by Emperor Henry III and Pope Gregory VII, respectively.<sup>3</sup> It is against this backdrop that the development of the idea of the Virgin Mary being Hungary's patron and the source of legitimate power began to develop. Hungarian rulers connected themselves to the Virgin — and thereby to King Stephen I and his lineage — through the commissioning of Marian iconography and the foundation of Marian churches, a trend that was particularly noticeable during succession crises. The Hungarian aristocracy, composed of family groups known as *nemzetség* or kindreds, emulated royal support of the Marian cult in order to demonstrate their own relationship with the ruler and the source of royal power — Mary — in order to legitimize their own roles in society as holders of important ecclesiastical, military, and political positions both to their peers and to those they held power over.

In the following chapter I will analyse the circumstances in which the original legend of Stephen's dedication arose and how it functioned to assert Hungary's independence from external powers. I will also discuss how later rulers used Marian imagery — namely, the Marian coinage of King Béla III — and foundations — in particular, the burial place of King Samuel Aba and the Cistercian foundations of Béla III — to establish a physical representation of their connection to Stephen, the Virgin Mary, and the authority she represented, and, thus, their right to rule. Evidence for how nobles used the Marian cult to legitimize their own power is unfortunately sparser and indirect. However, by looking at the foundation activities of kindreds we can start to see how kindreds also used Marian foundations to connect themselves to royal power.

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2 Boss, 'The Development of the Virgin's Cult', pp. 156–57; Hehl, 'Maria und das ottonisch-salische Königtum', pp. 271–310.

3 Engel, *The Realm of St Stephen*, p. 29; Berend, Laszlovszky, and Szakács, 'The Kingdom of Hungary', p. 343.

## The Virgin Mary, St Peter, and Papal Power

The foundational narrative behind the concept of Mary as patroness of Hungary is recorded in the *Legenda maior* (or *Vita maior*) of King Stephen, composed c. 1083, the year he was canonized.<sup>4</sup> It states that: ‘by an oath and offering, amidst unceasing prayers, [Stephen] placed himself with his kingdom under the protection of the everlasting Virgin Mary, the Mother of God ...’<sup>5</sup> Stephen’s dedication of the country to Mary has been viewed as a method to evade the claims of both the Empire and the Papacy.<sup>6</sup> In a letter written in 1074 to King Solomon of Hungary, Pope Gregory VII made the claim that Rome had suzerainty over Hungary, since ‘Hungary, which King Stephen of old offered and handed over to St Peter with all right and power, belongs to the Holy Church of Rome.’<sup>7</sup> A later letter written by Pope Urban II in 1096 to King Coloman made similar claims; he urged Coloman to obey and honour Sts Peter and Paul, the apexes of divine authority, just as Stephen, he insisted, had done.<sup>8</sup>

No document — from a non-papal source — survives that records St Stephen entrusting his kingdom to the protection of St Peter. Claiming that a ruler had entrusted their lands to St Peter (or Sts Peter and Paul) was not without precedent, however. Several examples are known from the ninth century. In 880 a bull issued by Pope John VIII, known as the *Industriae tuae*, claimed that Svatopluk I of Moravia (c. 840–894) had made St Peter the patron and defender of himself and his lands, a claim repeated five years later in a letter sent by Pope Stephen V to Svatopluk.<sup>9</sup> According to another letter from Pope John VIII, Duke Branimir of Croatia (r. 879–892) also put himself and his lands under the protection of Sts Peter and

4 The consensus in the relevant research is that the date of its composition is shortly before or in 1083, the date of the canonization of King Stephen. Nora Berend puts its composition between 1077 and 1083 (Hartvic, *Life of King Stephen*, p. 375). See also Kristó, ‘A nagyobbik és a Hartvik-féle István-legendá’, pp. 175–94; Thoroczky, ‘Szent István legendái’, p. 28; Varjú, *Legendae Sancti Regis Stephani*, pp. 83–89; Klaniczay, ‘Szent István legendái a középkorban’, pp. 185–96.

5 ‘Erat vir iste fidelis, in omnibus actibus suis deo perfecte deditus, per votum et oblationem semet cum regno suo sub tutela perpetue virginis dei genitricis Marie precibus assiduis conferens, cuius honor et gloria tam celebris inter Ungaros habetur, quod etiam festivitas assumptionis eiusdem virginis sine additamento propria nominis ipsorum lingua regine dies vocitetur’ (*Legenda maior*, p. 385). This account was repeated in the legend by Bishop Hartvic (*Legenda S. Stephani regis ab Hartvico*, p. 417).

6 Thoroczky, ‘Szent István legendái’, p. 28; Geric, ‘Politikai és jogi gondolkodás Magyarországon’, pp. 144–64.

7 28 October 1074. Makkai and Mezey (eds), *Árpád-kori és Anjou-kori*, p. 88. See also Klaniczay, *Holy Rulers and Blessed Princesses*, p. 140.

8 Györfy (ed.), *Diplomata Hungariae Antiquissima*, pp. 317–18.

9 Iohannes VIII, *Epistolae*, ep. 255, p. 222; Figurski and Pac, ‘Saints and Relics’, p. 340; Curta, *Eastern Europe in the Middle Ages*, p. 124; Betti, ‘Una chiesa romana per la Moravia’, p. 38.

Paul.<sup>10</sup> Anastasius Bibliothecarius noted that Boris I of Bulgaria (r. 852–889) had sent a lock of his hair to Rome as a symbol of his servitude to St Peter, the pope, and God.<sup>11</sup> Poland was also supposedly placed under the protection of St Peter at the request of Duke Mieszko I of Poland (r. 960–992), as noted in an eleventh-century papal register.<sup>12</sup> Notably, all of these supposed dedications to St Peter are known only from papal documents, indicating that these rulers may have made these dedications at papal ‘recommendation.’<sup>13</sup> It is also possible that the idea of entrusting oneself and one’s lands to St Peter was simply a papal formula and the above rulers never actually formally made such a statement.

A similar connection between rulers and/or kingdoms and St Peter is attested in a non-papal source, however. In the letter from Bruno of Querfurt to Henry II written c. 1008, Bruno refers to Duke Mieszko I’s son Bolesław I Chrobry (r. 992–1025) as a tributary of St Peter, in reference to the tax the duke paid to Rome.<sup>14</sup> The letter also credits the conversion of the ‘Black Hungarians’ to the *legatio* of St Peter.<sup>15</sup> The idea of the Holy See being the source of the royal crown also appears in non-papal sources, including Peter Damian’s *vita* of St Romuald, written in 1042, and Bishop Hartvic’s life of St Stephen, which was commissioned by King Coloman (r. 1095–1116), though St Peter is not explicitly mentioned as the source of the royal crown in either text.<sup>16</sup> Though the Hartvik legend includes an episode linking the Hungarian crown to Rome, it doubles down on the dedication of the kingdom to the Virgin Mary. In addition to the earlier dedication of the Hungarian Kingdom to the Virgin noted above, the legend claims that on his deathbed Stephen cried, ‘Queen of heaven, renowned restorer of the world, I commit the holy Church with its bishops and clergy, the kingdom with its chief lords and people to your protection in my last prayers, and saying my final farewell to them, into your hands I commend my spirit.’<sup>17</sup> It makes sense that Coloman would commission

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- 10 Iohannes VIII, *Epistolae*, esp. 190, p. 152; Betti, *The Making of Christian Moravia*, p. 130.
- 11 Anastasius Bibliothecarius, *Preface to the Eighth Oecumenical Council*, p. 11; Figurski and Pac, ‘Saints and Relics’, p. 340.
- 12 Starnawska, ‘Kult św. Piotra’, pp. 27–28; Figurski and Pac, ‘Saints and Relics’, p. 340.
- 13 Figurski and Pac, ‘Saints and Relics’, p. 340.
- 14 Figurski and Pac, ‘Saints and Relics’, p. 340. On Bruno of Querfurt’s letter, see Falkowski, ‘The Letter of Bruno of Querfurt’, esp. pp. 433–34.
- 15 ‘Audiui etiam de Nigris Ungris, ad quos que nunquam frustra uadit, sancti Petri prima legatio uenit . . . quia conuersi omnes facti sunt christiani’. Bruno of Querfurt, *Epistola Brunonis ad Heinricum regem*, p. 100.
- 16 Petrus Damiani, *Vita Beati Romualdi*, p. 62 (English translation: Peter Damian, *Life of St Romuald of Ravenna*, p. 306); *Legenda S. Stephani regis ab Hartuico*, p. 413 (English translation: Hartvic, *Life of King Stephen*, p. 384).
- 17 ‘Regina celi, reparatrix inclita mundi, tuo patrocinio sanctam ecclesiam cum episcopis et clero, regnum cum primatibus et populo subpremis precibus committo, quibus ultimum vale dicens minibus tuis animam meam commendo’. *Legenda S. Stephani regis ab Hartuico*, p. 431.

a *vita* of Stephen that underlined Mary's role as patroness of the kingdom in light of the letter written by Pope Urban II in 1096. By promoting the idea that Stephen had offered the kingdom to the Virgin Mary instead of St Peter, Hungarian rulers were able to circumvent the Papacy's claim, deriving their authority instead from the Blessed Virgin herself.<sup>18</sup>

The Árpáadian dynasty continued this 'instrumentalization of the figure of the Virgin in the service of royalty', and it developed into a substantive part of the Hungarian Kingdom's identity.<sup>19</sup> By the thirteenth century the *Gesta Hungarorum* noted that it is 'the holy Mary, His mother, through whose grace the kings of Hungary and noblemen have the kingdom for happy purpose here and ever after'.<sup>20</sup> A century later the Styrian rhymed chronicle (written between 1300 and 1320) recorded that King Andrew III (r. 1290–1301) named Hungary the property of Mary in his coronation oath.<sup>21</sup> Earlier evidence for the use of the Virgin Mary as a tool of legitimization can be identified in the kingdom's *patrocinia*. In the early county seats of Hungary, the church located in or near the castle of the count (*ispán*) was often dedicated to the Virgin, so there was early on an association between a Marian church and the local authority, and this Marian church usually developed into the cathedral of the diocese.<sup>22</sup>

It is at one of these cathedrals, the cathedral of the Virgin Mary and St Adalbert in Esztergom, where the first visual manifestation of the Virgin's role as the source of authority can be found. This image adorns the tympanum of the main gate of the cathedral, known as the *Porta Speciosa* (Fig. 2.1). It was commissioned by King Béla III (r. 1172–1196) — under whom the cult of the Virgin Mary would develop significantly in Hungary — and Archbishop Jób of Esztergom between 1185 and 1196. On the outer tympanum the Virgin Mary and the Christ Child are depicted seated on a throne, framed by the spiritual and temporal founders of Hungary

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English translation from Hartvic, *Life of King Stephen*, p. 392. On the Hartvic legend, see also Gericz, 'A Hartvik legenda mintáiról és forrásairól', pp. 175–88.

18 Dezső Dümmerth argues that the idea of Stephen dedicating Hungary to the Virgin was not invented solely for these political ends, and that it probably arose from existing traditions of Stephen's devotion. Dümmerth, 'A Mária országa-eszme és Szent István', pp. 171–97.

19 Lionnet, 'Mise en images', p. 52.

20 '...sancte Marie matri eius, per gratiam cuius reges Hungarie et nobiles regnum habeant felici fine hic et in evum'. Anonymous and Master Roger, *Anonymi Bele regis notarii Gesta Hungarorum & Magistri Rogerii, Epistola in miserabile carmen*, p. 5.

21 Gombos (ed.), *Catalogus Fontium Historiae Hungaricae*, p. 1868.

22 On the connection between Marian churches and early county seats, see Németh, 'Civitas et suburbium', pp. 59–67. The Virgin Mary can be identified as patron or co-patron at four of the eleven cathedrals of Hungary — at Esztergom (with St Adalbert), Vác, Oradea, and Győr. Some scholarship contends that the cathedral of Zagreb was also originally dedicated to the Virgin Mary, before later being rededicated to St Stephen (see, for example, Šimunić and Buršić, 'Svod sakristije zagrebačke katedrale', p. 346 n. 1 and Ivandija, *Stara zagrebačka katedrala*, p. 29), but this contention is not widely supported.

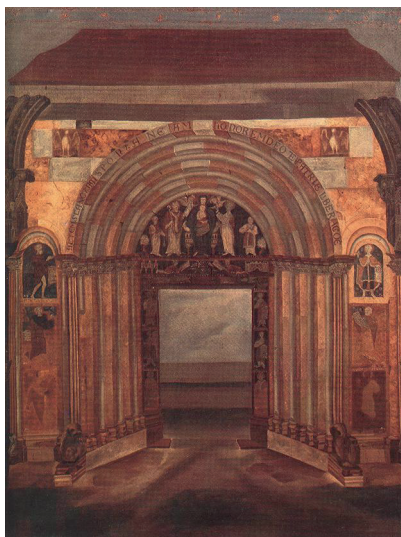


Figure 2.1. Porta Speciosa, Esztergom. Depicted in a painting commissioned by György Klimó, canon of Esztergom (1741–1751), and later bishop of Pécs. c. 1190. Image courtesy of Képzőművészet Magyarországon.

— St Stephen stands to the Virgin’s left and St Adalbert to her right, King Béla III and Archbishop Jób are pictured on the lintel below — and inscriptions accompanying these three allude to the dedication of the Kingdom of Hungary to the Virgin Mary.<sup>23</sup>

### Marian Coinage under Béla III

It was also under King Béla III that the Virgin would first appear on Hungarian coinage, namely, on the so-called Byzantine type copper coins (Fig. 2.2).<sup>24</sup> Unlike the *Porta Speciosa*, the Marian coins of Béla III have not been analysed in the context of the legitimization of royal power. Béla III, the younger son of King Géza II, had been made heir to the Byzantine Emperor Manuel I Komnenos when he was betrothed to the emperor’s daughter and so spent several years in the Byzantine Empire and even participated in Byzantine military actions against Hungary. When Manuel I’s son was born, however, Béla lost his position as heir. This, along

<sup>23</sup> Lionnet, ‘Mise en images’, p. 52. For the most recent literature on the *Porta Speciosa*, see Marosi, ‘Az esztergomi Porta speciosa’; Raffay, ‘Az esztergomi Szent Adalbert székesegyház.’

<sup>24</sup> Tóth, ‘Minting’, p. 286.



Figure 2.2. Reverse of the copper coin of King Béla III, type CNH. I. 98. c. 1172–1196. Photo courtesy of Pannonhalmi Főapátság Múzeum, Numismatic Collection.

with the death of Béla III's brother Stephen III in 1172, led to Béla's return to Hungary and eventual coronation as king. Béla's accession to the throne was not without difficulties. While Béla's attachment to the Byzantine Empire and participation in campaigns against Hungary may have left a bad taste in some mouths within the Hungarian elite, more devastating for Béla was the refusal of Archbishop Lucas of Esztergom to crown him, since it was necessary for the archbishop of Esztergom to perform the coronation in order for it to be legitimate (Béla's commissioning of the *Porta Speciosa* following his later reconciliation with the archbishop of Esztergom also gains further significance in this context).

Béla's employment of the image of a regal Mary in his coinage was one way in which he sought to connect himself to the source of Hungarian royal authority and signify his legitimacy. In medieval Hungary royalty had a monopoly on the minting of coins and the imagery used on coinage was reflective of royal discretion, in contrast to coinage produced in other regions, such as particular cities of the Empire, where the imagery used on coins could have been determined by the city and its religious institutions that were granted the right to mint coins.<sup>25</sup> Hungarian coinage, thus, could be a 'vehicle of royal power'. The Marian coins produced by Béla III circulated throughout the Carpathian Basin, and to some extent Moravia and Silesia, where they would be seen by both Hungarians and foreigners, in whose minds a connection would be made between Béla III and the

<sup>25</sup> Berend, Urbańczyk, and Wiszewski, *Central Europe in the High Middle Ages*, p. 156.

Virgin Mary and in so doing help to legitimize his rightful place as king of Hungary.<sup>26</sup>

The Virgin Mary is pictured on the reverse of the coin with the inscription *Sancta Maria*; on the obverse two seated royal figures are illustrated, one being Béla himself.<sup>27</sup> The stylistic choices in the depiction of the Virgin on these copper coins suggest both Eastern and Western influences. Stylistic parallels to Byzantine coinage, as well as the fact that Béla had previously been heir to the Byzantine throne, point to Byzantine influence on the choice and representation of Mary on the copper coins of Béla III.<sup>28</sup> However, Western parallels have also been identified.<sup>29</sup> Mary is represented seated on the coin; in her left arm one would expect to see the infant Jesus, and there is an abstract depiction of something made of a series of repeated circles at Mary's left shoulder. Some have interpreted this abstract image to be the Christ Child; however, others have identified it as an ornamental belt or sash draped over her shoulder.<sup>30</sup> The latter seems more likely, especially as the pattern seems to repeat on the garment horizontally just below the knees. The decoration might be an interpretation of the *loros*, a Byzantine imperial garment often pictured on Byzantine coinage.<sup>31</sup> The Virgin Mary was notably depicted in a *loros* in the mid-sixth-century *Maria Regina* fresco in the Santa Maria Antiqua church in Rome,<sup>32</sup> but other such representations of the Virgin are rare in the West. Though the repeated geometric pattern on Mary's garb on the coin of Béla III is reminiscent of a *loros*, the way it is draped on Mary's form is not typical of the way a *loros* would have been worn in the twelfth century or earlier. We can also look to Western examples for parallels to

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- 26 Berend, Urbańczyk, and Wiszewski, *Central Europe in the High Middle Ages*, p. 156; Gyöngyössi, 'Szentkultusz középkori', p. 92. On the locations of these coin finds, see: Jeszenszky, 'Az első magyar rézpénzek', pp. 38–39; Schulz, 'Ein Fund mittelalterlicher ungarischer Kupfermünzen', p. 18; Ujszászi, *A XII. századi magyar rézpénzek*, pp. 145–62.
- 27 The identification of the other figure differs in the literature; some suggest that it is his predecessor Stephen III (1162–1172), while others claim that it pictures one of the saintly kings of Hungary, perhaps Ladislaus I. On the competing interpretations, see Jeszenszky, 'Az első magyar rézpénzek', pp. 34–47; Gyöngyössi, 'Szentkultusz középkori', pp. 90–91; Tóth, 'Minting', pp. 285–86.
- 28 Gyöngyössi, 'Szentkultusz középkori', pp. 90–91; Jeszenszky, 'Az első magyar rézpénzek', p. 35.
- 29 Stanislaw Suchodolski argues that the coin's inspiration comes from the Staufan art circle, see Suchodolski, 'East or West?', pp. 267–73.
- 30 On the latter interpretation, see: Jeszenszky, 'Az első magyar rézpénzek', p. 36; Ujszászi, *A XII. századi magyar rézpénzek*, pp. 14, 96; Suchodolski, 'East or West?', pp. 269–70.
- 31 Ujszászi, *A XII. századi magyar rézpénzek*, pp. 97–98.
- 32 This is an exceptional case amongst *Maria Regina* type images in Rome, created when Byzantine influence was still significant there. When this influence later weakened, subsequent representations of the *Maria Regina* in Rome deliberately omitted this piece of Byzantine imperial attire. On this subject, see Pac, 'The Attire of the Virgin Mary', pp. 19–23; Pentcheva, *Icons and Power*, pp. 22–26.



Figure 2.3. Obverse of silver pfennig produced in Aachen under Frederick Barbarossa, Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum Wien. c. 1152–1190. Photo courtesy of KHM-Museumsverband.



Figure 2.4. Obverse of silver bracteate produced in Frankfurt under Frederick Barbarossa, Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum Wien. c. 1151–1190. Photo courtesy of KHM-Museumsverband.

Mary's attire on the coin of Béla III, for example, on the depiction of the emperor on a pfennig produced in Aachen under Frederick Barbarossa (r. 1155–1190) (Fig. 2.3),<sup>33</sup> and on images of the Virgin on the *follaro* of Roger I (r. 1072–1101) and the bronze doors of the so-called Magdeburg gates produced in the mid-twelfth century.<sup>34</sup>

Mary holds what appears to be a sceptre in her right hand. Géza Jeszenszky has suggested that Mary is not holding a sceptre on the Hungarian coin but, rather, a lily, a symbol of her purity.<sup>35</sup> A lily is also one of the attributes of the Árpáadian prince St Emeric (1007–1031), also the namesake of Béla's firstborn son.<sup>36</sup> If the object in Mary's right hand is indeed a lily, it is possible that Béla was drawing a connection between the Virgin Mary, St Emeric, and possibly by extension his own son, and thereby underlining the source of Hungarian royal power — the Virgin Mary — and the place of himself and his family in the line of the Árpáadian royal family. However, there is no way to confirm this, and I am not aware of any examples of medieval imagery connecting the Virgin Mary and St Emeric in a similar way. Further, it would be unusual to depict Mary holding a lily at this time, and certainly no parallel can be found on coinage. While it is possible

<sup>33</sup> Wit and Spreu, *Künker Auktion 130*, p. 150.

<sup>34</sup> Suchodolski, 'East or West?', p. 269.

<sup>35</sup> Jeszenszky, 'Az első magyar rézpénzek', p. 36.

<sup>36</sup> On the medieval imagery of St Emeric, see Barna, 'A középkori Szent Imre-kép'; Kerny, *Szent Imre 1000 éve*.

that the Virgin is holding a lily on the coin, I think it is far more likely to be a lily-shaped sceptre like those held by the two kings on the obverse of the coin, and which can also be seen on other contemporary coinage. Depictions of Mary holding a sceptre are unknown in Byzantine coinage;<sup>37</sup> however, the depiction of the Virgin on the coin of Béla III seems to evoke rather the imagery of rulers holding sceptres on contemporary coins. For instance, a coin of Frederick Barbarossa, a bracteate produced in Frankfurt, depicts the emperor in much the same way the Virgin Mary is presented on the coin of Béla III: seated with the right knee protruding slightly, wearing a cloak that is fastened with a fibula on the right shoulder, and holding a lily-shaped sceptre in his right hand (Fig. 2.4).<sup>38</sup> It is her queenly role — as both Queen of Heaven and the source of Hungarian royal power — that is emphasized in her depiction on the coin.<sup>39</sup> Despite the potency of this image and coinage's ability to spread the connection between the Virgin and Hungarian rulers over great distances and to numerous people, no other Hungarian ruler would choose to depict the Virgin on their coinage until King Matthias Corvinus (r. 1458–1490).

### The Burial Place of King Samuel Aba

While only Béla III used the figure of the Virgin Mary on coinage before the fifteenth century, Hungarian rulers frequently demonstrated their Marian piety through the foundation of Marian churches and monasteries. This trend began with Stephen I, who founded several Marian monasteries and churches, most notably the Church of the Virgin Mary at Székesfehérvár, 'the sacral centre of the Hungarian Kingdom,' and probably the most important church in the kingdom connected to Hungarian royal power because of its role as the site of valid coronation.<sup>40</sup> Further, both Stephen and his son Emeric were buried here, and it developed into one of the most important pilgrimage sites in the kingdom. It also lay on the overland route to the Holy Land, meaning that foreign pilgrims would also encounter this Marian site. Thus, nobles, the general populace, and even foreign visitors would have understood that there was a connection between this Marian place and Hungarian royal power.

Emulation of royal devotional trends, including the foundation of Marian churches, was one way in which individual nobles or kindreds demonstrated their connection to royal power and thus the legitimacy of

37 Suchodolski, 'East or West?', p. 269.

38 Frederick also holds an orb in his left hand. Suchodolski, 'East or West?', p. 269; Wit and Spreu, *Künker Auktion 130*, p. 228.

39 Gyöngyössi, 'Szentkultusz középkori', p. 91.

40 Laszlovszky, 'Local Tradition or European Patterns?', p. 86.

their position in society. Kindred monasteries often served as family burial places and played important spiritual, economic, and social roles for the kindred as well as the local population and were therefore important vehicles of prestige representation.<sup>41</sup> The earliest Marian monastery founded by secular elites — though still connected to royal power — is the Benedictine monastery of Sár (Heves County). It was founded between 1040 and 1045 by the Aba kindred;<sup>42</sup> others attribute its foundation to a specific member of the Aba kindred, King Samuel Aba (r. 1041–1044), who was buried at the monastery, but, regardless, it functioned as a private, not a royal, foundation because it was under the patronage of the Csobánka branch of the Aba kindred.<sup>43</sup>

Samuel Aba was a relative of King Stephen I — though through marriage, not blood. He came to power during the tumultuous period following Stephen's death after Stephen's chosen successor, Peter Orseolo, was deposed partly because he filled his court with foreigners. The noble kindreds elected Samuel as king, but Samuel's ruthlessness as a ruler drove some nobles back into Peter's camp.<sup>44</sup> After fewer than four years as king Samuel Aba was defeated in battle and executed by Peter and his ally Emperor Henry III, and the Aba kindred's briefly held elevated position dissipated as quickly as it had come.

While not much is known about the early history of the Sár monastery, it makes sense that the Aba kindred would found and promote their own Marian monastery as the burial place of their royal family member in the area of Sár, which is considered the ancestral estate of the Aba kindred.<sup>45</sup> It was meant to demonstrate — probably to the other powerful noble kindreds most of all — how Samuel was like Stephen I, and how they respected Hungarian religious traditions, unlike Peter who had favoured foreigners. Their ancestor was the legitimate king, and as his kindred they deserved the respect and power that came with that connection. The Aba kindred may have been particularly sensitive to demonstrating their

41 Szócs, 'Private Monasteries of Medieval Hungary', p. 3.

42 Romhányi, *Kolostorok és társaskáptalanok*, p. 56.

43 Samuel's burial at Sár is recorded in the fourteenth-century *Illuminated Chronicle*, which states that he was buried 'in his own monastery at Abasár' (*in proprio monasterio in Sarus*) (Bak and Veszprémy, eds and trans., *The Illuminated Chronicle*, p. 145). Though the monastery would always be associated with King Samuel Aba, in its operation and patronage rights it was considered a private foundation of the Aba kindred during the Árpáadian period. Nevertheless, this did not stop King Charles I (r. 1301/1308–1342) from seizing the monastery and giving it to a certain Paul, son of Emeric, in whose family it then remained as a private monastery. Szócs, 'Private Monasteries of Medieval Hungary', p. 39; Hervay, 'A bencések és apátságai története', p. 509.

44 Engel, *The Realm of St Stephen*, p. 29.

45 Karácsonyi, *A magyar nemzetségek a XIV. század közepéig*, p. 40; Anonymous and Master Roger, *Anonymi Bele regis notarii Gesta Hungarorum & Magistri Rogerii, Epistola in miserabile carmen*, p. 71.

'Hungarian-ness' since, according to the thirteenth-century *Gesta Hungarorum*, their ancestors were actually pagan 'dukes of the Cumans' who joined the Hungarians in the second half of the ninth century.<sup>46</sup> Members of the Aba kindred would go on to found three additional monasteries dedicated to the Virgin Mary (all belonging to the Benedictines) before 1300, the most of any noble kindred.

## Kindred Monasteries and Marian Patrocinia

In addition to the monastery of Sár, eighty-four monasteries dedicated to the Virgin Mary were founded before 1300. About thirty-two of these were founded by individual nobles or kindreds, about the same number of royal foundations, and the rest were ecclesiastical foundations. Mary was by far the most popular *patrocinium* of all the monasteries founded in Hungary until the end of the thirteenth century, representing about 30 per cent of all monasteries with known *patrocinia*, followed by St Peter and the Holy Cross (each with c. 5 per cent of the total).<sup>47</sup> The Virgin Mary was likewise the most popular *patrocinium* of the other churches and chapels founded in the kingdom, though the records of their foundations are far less complete and thus more difficult to analyse than monastic foundations.

When nobles chose the Virgin Mary as the *patrocinium* of their newly founded church they were making a deliberate choice based on multiple factors. Though the bishop had to give his permission to use a determined *patrocinium*, in medieval Hungary the highest ecclesiastical leadership did not have a decisive role in the choice of *patrocinia* for village churches.<sup>48</sup> Sometimes the namesake of the founder could determine the choice of *patrocinium*, but in the case of churches dedicated to the Virgin Mary in

46 Anonymous and Master Roger, *Anonymi Bele regis notarii Gesta Hungarorum & Magistri Rogerii, Epistola in miserabile carmen*, pp. 70–71.

47 I calculated the total amount of Marian *patrocinia* from data gleaned from over one hundred collections of royal, papal, monastic, and family charters. For a full account of these sources and the results, see my doctoral dissertation, "The garden watered by the Virgin Mary". While my dissertation focuses on the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries all extant examples of medieval Marian *patrocinia* are recorded in the thesis. The estimates of non-Marian *patrocinia* are based on the data included in Romhányi, *Kolostorok és társaskáptalanok* and Mező, *Patrociniumok a középkori Magyarországon*, the most comprehensive collections of monastic and overall Hungarian *patrocinia*, respectively. Because I was able to add a substantial amount of Marian *patrocinia* data to that included by Romhányi and Mező it stands to reason that more focused studies on the *patrocinia* of other individual saints in Hungary could alter my conclusion that St Peter and the Holy Cross were the most popular monastic *patrocinia* after the Virgin in Hungary before 1300.

48 Tari, *Pest megye középkori templomai*, p. 209; Szabó, 'Adatok a patai főesperesség korai történetéhez', p. 74.

Hungary this does not seem to be the case. What does appear to have been influential in the choice of Marian *patrocinia* were a personal devotion to the Virgin on the part of the founder and/or their community and a desire to emulate royal promotion of the Marian cult. As in the case of the Aba kindred's monastery of Sár, emulation of St Stephen and other Hungarian rulers' foundation of Marian houses illustrated to their peers as well as those of lower social standing — to whom for the sake of steady power relations they often had to convince of their right to authority — that they possessed the same pious habits of the original Hungarian king. Further, if Mary was chosen as the patron of the church of a particular kindred, she then was especially present there and was entrusted with the spiritual, and to some extent physical, well-being of that family. Being under Mary's special protection signified that they deserved and were worthy of their positions of power.

By the thirteenth century there were 108 kindreds in the Hungarian Kingdom.<sup>49</sup> Fewer than 10 per cent of these families founded kindred monasteries dedicated to the Virgin Mary before the year 1300. According to István Petrovics, the more monasteries a kindred possessed the older, richer, and thus probably more powerful, the kindred was.<sup>50</sup> The Aba and Csák kindreds founded the most Marian monasteries before 1300 (each with four), and indeed members of both families held important positions in the royal court and both claimed connections to Hungarian kings.<sup>51</sup> Marian monasteries were not only founded by the most influential kindreds, however. About half of the Marian kindred monasteries founded before 1300 were the only foundation made by a particular kindred, signifying that it was not only the most important and wealthiest kindreds that participated in the practice of founding kindred monasteries dedicated to the Virgin.

Though direct evidence of the continued Marian devotion of the kindreds is sparse, especially before the fourteenth century, an example can be identified in the patronage efforts of the Hahót kindred. One of the first private foundations of a Franciscan convent dedicated to the Virgin was made by Count Michael of Varasd of the Hahót kindred in Szemenye (Muraszemenye) in 1248. Devotion to Mary appeared to continue to be closely tied to the Hahót kindred's self-representation; three of the five monasteries they founded during the Middle Ages were dedicated to the Virgin. The convent at Szemenye was still owned by Michael's descendants — in particular, the Bánfi (Bánffy) de Alsólendva branch of the Hahót kindred — in the mid-fourteenth century. The convent was enlarged by Nicholas Bánfi, who also made a large donation to the said convent in

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<sup>49</sup> Rady, *Nobility, Land and Service*, p. 28.

<sup>50</sup> Petrovics, 'Nemzetségi monostoraink problematikája'.

<sup>51</sup> Szócs, 'Private Monasteries of Medieval Hungary', p. 43.

1355.<sup>52</sup> The continued Marian devotion of the Bánfi family is also apparent in a mural painted in 1383 on the northern wall of the choir of the family's church, also dedicated to the Blessed Virgin, in Bántornya (Turnišče, Slovenia, about thirty kilometres north-west of Szemenye). The mural depicts the Bánfi family — represented by three male family members of three generations, including the afore-mentioned Nicholas Bánfi — at the feet of the enthroned Virgin Mary.<sup>53</sup>

## The Cistercian Order

Marian *patrocinia* are probably most closely tied with the Cistercian Order. Every Cistercian house was traditionally dedicated to the Virgin, likely a tradition inherited from Molesme Abbey, which was dedicated to the Virgin Mary and founded by Robert of Molesme, one of the founders of the order.<sup>54</sup> Royal support of the Cistercians beginning in the twelfth century helped to further foster a connection between the Virgin and royal power, and both Hungarian royals and noble kindreds used the foundation of Cistercian houses as a tool for legitimizing their power.

The first Cistercian foundations in Hungary were made by Hungarian rulers. King Géza II made the first Cistercian foundation in 1142, but Béla III was particularly responsible for the success of the order in Hungary, making a total of five Cistercian foundations during his reign. None of the houses founded by Béla were connected to nearby Cistercian houses but were, rather, directly affiliated with French mother houses, possibly because of 'the complex correlation between royal power and the Cistercian order' and/or the influence of his second wife, Margaret of France.<sup>55</sup> One Hungarian ruler and two of his wives were eventually buried in Cistercian monasteries: King Andrew II (r. 1205–1235) and his second wife Queen Yolande de Courtenay in the Cistercian abbey of Egres (Igrış, Romania) and Andrew's first wife Queen Gertrude in the abbey of Pilis.<sup>56</sup> By promoting the Cistercian Order — this new, exciting devotional trend from abroad — Hungarian rulers demonstrated their relevancy on the wider stage of European politics and devotion.

52 Lionnet, 'Les peintures murales en Hongrie', p. 372 n. 1458.

53 Lionnet, 'Les peintures murales en Hongrie', pp. 120–21. On the mural, see also Wehli, 'Bogyay Tamás és Johannes Aquila', pp. 341–57.

54 Jamrozik, *The Cistercian Order*, p. 14.

55 However, two of these — Szentgotthárd and Pilis — were connected to the house at Clairvaux through one and two additional houses in France, respectively. Laszlovszky, 'Local Traditions or European Patterns?', p. 83.

56 On these burials, see Laszlovszky, 'Local Traditions or European Patterns?', pp. 81–98; and on the death and burial of Gertrude in particular see Majorossy, *Egy történelmi gyilkosság margójára*.

Following royal promotion, the foundation of Cistercian houses in Hungary became fashionable with Hungarian nobles.<sup>57</sup> Their foundations could reap economic rewards, given that the vast majority of Cistercian foundations in Hungary were located on major commercial routes and were engaged in important commercial activity.<sup>58</sup> Political interests could also play a role in their spread because of the continual contact between Hungarian abbeys and their mother abbeys as far afield as France and England. Because the foundation of Cistercian houses in Hungary became a 'movement of the elite', if one wanted to be considered a member of the elite one had to participate in elite trends.<sup>59</sup> Founding a Cistercian house could serve to legitimize a nobles' position in the eyes of his peers, the ruler, and the ruler's circle.

The first secular elite who made a Cistercian foundation was *bán* (governor) Dominic (Dominicus, Domonkos) of the Miskolc kindred, who founded the Cistercian abbey of Borsmonostor (today's Klostermarienberg, Austria) in 1194. Dominic had previously vowed to go on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land; he never fulfilled this vow so his foundation may have been an effort to make up for this as well as to serve as the burial place for himself and his descendants.<sup>60</sup> Dominic's choice to found a Cistercian abbey does not appear to reflect a shared appreciation for the cult of the Virgin Mary or Cistercian ideals, at least from the extant evidence. Rather, he appears to have been emulating the current Hungarian ruler, Béla III.<sup>61</sup>

Historians have long suggested that there was a familial connection between *bán* Dominic and Béla III.<sup>62</sup> While the exact nature of their kinship is debated, it makes sense that the first non-royal foundation of a Cistercian abbey would be made by a noble with familial ties to the ruler, and in fact may have represented an effort to signify this relationship. The fact that the abbey of Borsmonostor was later bequeathed to the king — who was by then the grandson of Béla III, Béla IV — by the son of

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57 It took some time for this trend to develop, however, since no Cistercian houses were founded by secular elites in Hungary until 1194. The first royal Cistercian foundations were 'roughly contemporaneous' with the expansion of the order in the rest of Europe, so the absence of noble foundations until the late twelfth century 'could be seen as a conservative attitude among local nobility towards monastic reform ideas' (Szócs, 'Private Monasteries of Medieval Hungary', p. 41). However, it is also possible that the Cistercian Order had higher requirements for founders than older monastic communities, at least in its early history, which would dissuade non-royal founders in Hungary (Szócs, 'Private Monasteries of Medieval Hungary', p. 41).

58 Romhányi, 'The Role of the Cistercians in Medieval Hungary', p. 184.

59 Romhányi, 'The Role of the Cistercians in Medieval Hungary', p. 198.

60 Kádár, 'Egy régi keletű genealógiai talány', pp. 50–51.

61 In addition to his four new foundations, he also gave the Cistercians the Benedictine monastery of Pásztó, which was dedicated to St Nicholas (Romhányi, *Kolostorok és társaskáptalanok*, p. 50).

62 On this topic, see Kádár, 'Egy régi keletű genealógiai talány', pp. 49–58.

Dominic in 1237 underlines the connection between Dominic and the ruling dynasty.<sup>63</sup>

In terms of the foundation of Cistercian houses as a tool of legitimization, it may appear that it was the presence of the Cistercian Order itself, not the fact that they were known for their Marian devotion and that their houses were dedicated to the Virgin Mary, that was the key factor. It should also be noted that the presence of a Marian *patrocinium* was not a certainty in the Cistercian houses of medieval Hungary, despite it being a considered a 'rule' of the order. All of the male Cistercian abbeys that did not assume control of existing monasteries in Hungary were dedicated to the Virgin Mary. The Cistercian abbeys of Pásztó and Pornó are exceptions. The abbey of Pásztó was originally a Benedictine monastery dedicated to St Nicholas.<sup>64</sup> The monastery was given to the Cistercians by King Béla III in 1191, but it was not referred to as the abbey of the Virgin Mary until the fourteenth century.<sup>65</sup> The Cistercian abbey of Pornó had also originally belonged to the Benedictines but was transferred to the Cistercian Order between 1219 and 1221.<sup>66</sup> The original *patrocinium* of St Margaret appears to have been kept, but in 1499 it is referred to as 'monasterio beatissimae Virginis Mariae aliter in honorem sanctae Margarithae Virginis fundando in Pornó'.<sup>67</sup>

The *patrocinia* of the Cistercian nunneries of Hungary are unusual. Only the Cistercian nunnery of Veszprémvölgy was dedicated to the Virgin, but this *patrocinium* was inherited in the early thirteenth century from the Greek nunnery that had previously occupied the site.<sup>68</sup> The other three

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63 After a few decades the patronage rights over the abbey were transferred from the king to the Rosd kindred. This was an exceptional occurrence. The transfer of patronage rights from private hands to the king or ecclesiastical officials or vice versa was unusual. Szócs, 'Private Monasteries of Medieval Hungary', p. 37.

64 Romhányi, *Kolostorok és társaskáptalanok*, p. 50.

65 Békefi, *A pásztói apátság története*, p. 262.

66 Horváth, *A pornói apátság története*, pp. 12–13; Romhányi, *Kolostorok és társaskáptalanok*, p. 53.

67 Budapest, National Archives of Hun., MOL, MS 20827.

68 It is uncertain when the Greek nunnery ceased being active and when exactly the Cistercian nuns received the site (Stojkovski, 'The Greek Charter of the Hungarian King Stephen I', p. 129 n. 5). The foundation of the Greek nunnery is known from King Coloman's 1109 transcription of the original Greek foundation charter of unknown date, though it probably originated in the first decades of the eleventh century. The text of the 1109 copy indicated that a community still existed there at that time of the copy's creation (Czebe, *A veszprémvölgyi oklevél görög szövege*, p. 102). Though the bishop of Veszprém took away the tithe due to the convent in the 1180s, it was returned in 1210 by Bishop Robert of Veszprém at the request of the abbess of the convent, denoting that there was a female community there at least until that time (Fülöp and Koppány, 'A veszprémvölgyi apácakolostor', p. 7; Fejér, *Codex diplomaticus Hungariae*, 3.1, p. 103). Beatrix Romhányi dates the procurement of the convent by Cistercian nuns to around 1220, while Fülöp and Koppány put the date at 1240 (Romhányi, *Kolostorok és társaskáptalanok*, p. 73; Fülöp and Koppány, 'A

nunneries were dedicated to other saints: one to St Catherine and the other two to St Mary Magdalene. The non-Marian *patrocinia* may be a result of the Cistercian nuns moving into already existing (probably Benedictine or Premonstratensian) nunneries.<sup>69</sup> Certainly in Hungary it appears to be the norm that when a male or female community of a new order moved into an existing monastery or nunnery, respectively, the *patrocinium* was not changed; only a handful of cases show otherwise. However, it is possible that one or more of these nunneries chose non-Marian *patrocinia* due to the strength of particular cults in the area or their founders' inclination. 'Among Cistercian nunneries there was a great variety of "being Cistercian"' not only in 'frontier' regions but throughout the order, so we do not necessarily have to assume that a non-Cistercian community had originally occupied a Cistercian house that was not dedicated to the Virgin.<sup>70</sup>

Even so, we cannot overlook the Marian cult's primacy of place in the Cistercian houses of Hungary. She was still the patron of the vast majority of the abbeys, and though the abbeys of Pásztó and Pornó were called by their original *patrocinia* until at least the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, respectively, the fact that their *patrocinia* were later also noted as the Virgin Mary — in Hungary where *patrocinia* very rarely changed with a change in the resident community — might actually indicate the strength of the Marian cult at those sites.

## Conclusion

In the years following its foundation, the nascent Christian Kingdom of Hungary had to contend with succession crises as well as attempted power grabs by the nearby Empire and the increasingly powerful papacy. Amongst Hungarian rulers' strategies to impose their independence was the development of the legend of King Stephen I dedicating the kingdom to the Blessed Virgin. Mary's position as a powerful but malleable saint, who already had an established association with imperial and royal power

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veszprémvölgyi apácakolostor', p. 7). On the foundation of the Greek convent, see also Patlagean, 'Une donation royale hongroise', pp. 127–34; Berend, Laszlovszky, and Szakács, 'The Kingdom of Hungary', pp. 353–54.

69 Istrate, 'Betrachtungen zur Entwicklungsgeschichte der Schwarzen Kirche', p. 15 n. 32; Romhányi, *Kolostorok és társaskáptalanok*, pp. 53, 73.

70 Personal communication, Emilia Jamrozik, 21 June 2021. Further, Brian Patrick McGuire notes that 'every Cistercian *male* monastery took its name from Mary' [my emphasis], again indicating that there was more flexibility in the choice of *patrocinia* for female Cistercian houses, at least in some regions (McGuire, 'Cistercian Nuns', p. 178). For other examples of Cistercian convents with non-Marian *patrocinia*, see Röcklein, 'Founders, Donors, and Saints', pp. 215, 220.

in other regions and contexts, made her an ideal vessel through which to funnel and direct legitimate power in the Hungarian Kingdom, and circumvent the authority of external powers. Future rulers used Marian imagery, such as that on the coins of Béla III, and Marian foundations, like that of the Aba kindred, to manifest and express their similarity to Stephen I and his royal line — their right to rule — to the Hungarian populace. The Cistercian foundations of Béla III could have been made with a similar goal; however, they were also made to exhibit King Béla III's relevancy as an important player on the European religio-political stage.

Hungarian royals' use of the figure of Mary did not go unnoticed by Hungarian nobility. The noble kindreds who made up the Hungarian aristocracy were quick to imitate royal devotional trends, especially the foundation of churches dedicated to the Virgin. These sites were the physical manifestation of their connection to royal authority, demonstrating to their peers — with whom they were often in competition — and those of lower social classes — over whom they held power — that they deserved to hold their positions in society.

The way that the Marian cult manifested in Hungary did not always follow expected patterns, as evidenced by the fact that before the mid-fifteenth century only Béla III chose to depict the Virgin on Hungarian coinage, as well as by the unexpected pattern of Cistercian *patrocinia* in the kingdom. Nevertheless, Mary's role as the source and giver of authority in Hungary would only intensify in the later Middle Ages, culminating in the granting of the official title of *Patrona Hungariae* to the Virgin in late fifteenth-century Hungary.

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### 3. Aegis of Aegidius — The Cult of St Giles in Eleventh- and Twelfth-Century Poland

The eleventh–twelfth-century relationships between the Piasts, a ruling Polish dynasty, and Saint-Gilles, a Benedictine monastery and shrine in the south of France (Midi), as well as the cult of St Giles in Poland were already a fascinating topic for medievalists in the mid-nineteenth century.<sup>1</sup> Since then, both phenomena have received a lot of scholarly attention.<sup>2</sup> At the same time, the bulk of the research on the cult in Poland predates three important publications — Ulrich Winzer’s 1988 study and edition of Saint-Gilles *Necrologium*,<sup>3</sup> Amy G. Remensnyder’s book on monastic foundation legends in southern France published in 1995, and finally the 2007

1 Przeździecki, ‘O Bolesławie’, pp. 33–54; Teissonnier, *Notice historique sur Saint-Gilles*, pp. 119–33; ‘Séance du 6 novembre 1869’, pp. 10–14; Malinowski, ‘L’Ambassade de Ladislas I<sup>er</sup>’, pp. 241–72. Girault and Girault, *Introduction*, pp. 17–21 give a brief history of the shrine.

2 The most focused are David, ‘La Pologne’, pp. 217–26; Plezia, *Kronika*, esp. pp. 149–62; Zathey, ‘Z dziejów kultu’; Dunin-Wąsowicz, ‘Saint-Gilles et la Pologne’; Dunin-Wąsowicz, ‘Saint-Gilles a Polska’; Bober, *Kult*; Banaszkiewicz, ‘Książę polski Bolesław’; see also Derwich, *Monastycyzm benedyktyński*, pp. 86–87; Wunsch, ‘Kultbeziehungen’, pp. 365–66, 369–73; Kersken, ‘God and the Saints’, pp. 173–74, 186; Michalowski, ‘Die Heiligenkulte’, pp. 350–51; Bagi, *Królowie*, pp. 116–29; Wiszewski, *Domus Boleslai*, esp. pp. 245–50, 408–09, 520–21; Benyskiewicz, *Władysław*, esp. pp. 116–20, Krawiec, *Król*, esp. pp. 101–02, 110–12.

3 Winzer, *S. Gilles* studied how the necrology (BL, MS Add. 16979) displays the abbey cultivating contacts far and wide. He also included a series of remarks on the contents of abbey’s martyrology (BL, MS Add. 16918). Both manuscripts were written before 1129 by Pierre Guillaume, who also composed the first redaction of *Liber miraculorum* (see also references in n. 4).

**Miłosz Sosnowski** • is Assistant Professor at the Faculty of History, Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań. He is interested in (and has published articles on) manuscript studies, textual criticism and medieval cultural history.

*The Cult of Saints and Legitimization of Elite Power in East Central and Northern Europe up to 1300*, ed. by Grzegorz Pac, Steffen Hope, and Jón Viðar Sigurðsson, *Comparative Perspectives on Medieval History*, 2 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2024), pp. 81–112

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10.1484/M.CPMH-EB.5.137532

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edition and study of *Liber miraculorum sancti Egidii*.<sup>4</sup> Both the *Necrologium* and *Liber miraculorum* are obviously of prime importance for the study of the cult and the monastery at its centre. Remensnyder added to these a close reading of the twelfth-century *Bullarium* of Saint-Gilles, which had been previously edited and used by historians but had never been considered as a collection produced within and responding to its particular historical context.<sup>5</sup> In the last decades as well, further research has been undertaken on Polish ecclesiastical foundations and their religious and socio-political role.<sup>6</sup> Taken together, these new approaches and editions allow for a number of corrections and new hypotheses. They also enable us to recontextualize the Polish cult of Giles and its impact, as well as setting it within the framework of research on the legitimization of the elites. Apart from the relatively well-known use of St Giles by the Piast dynasty to legitimize themselves during succession crises, and the use by the Polish elites to stress their position and proximity to the dynasty, the Polish cult was in turn utilized by Saint-Gilles abbey to raise and legitimize its own imperilled status.

### A View from Poland: 'there is a certain saint in the south of France'

The oldest substantial piece of historiography composed in Poland, the *Gesta principum Polonorum* (henceforth GpP),<sup>7</sup> which was written between 1112–1116 by an anonymous foreigner, begins each of its three books with an *epilogus* — a verse summary of the most significant events of the book that follows.<sup>8</sup> In the first book, which covers the rulers from the beginning of the dynasty until the birth of the current prince, it is the miraculous nativity of the latter, Bolesław III Wrymouth, that takes up the

4 Remensnyder, *Remembering; Livre des Miracles*.

5 The edition in *Bullaire* comprises charters not analysed by Remensnyder.

6 Michałowski, *Princeps fundator*; Manikowska, 'Princeps fundator', pp. 37–57; Dobosz, *Monarcha*; Skwierczyński, 'Fundacje', pp. 63–93; these and other important publications are also translated, summarized, or reworked into German in *Monarchische und adlige Sakralstiftungen*.

7 I henceforth quote — as GpP — the bilingual *Gesta principum Polonorum*. The Latin text closely follows the 1952 critical edition *Galli Anonymi Cronicae*.

8 The literature on the GpP is immense — for a discussion of its structure and dating, see GpP, pp. xxxi, xxxiii–xliv; Żmudzki, 'A Short History', pp. 306–18. The authorship remains elusive, despite the lengthy and ongoing discussion, summarized by Gacka, 'Przegląd', pp. 23–57 and Quéret-Podesta, 'Travaux philologiques'. One hypothesis links the author with St Giles, as a monk at Saint-Gilles or at its daughter abbey established in 1091 in Somogyvár, Hungary. The issues examined here have some bearing on the problem of authorship, but discussing them together would make this chapter unacceptably long and therefore it requires a separate study; cf. Quéret-Podesta, 'Le Gallus'.

whole of *epilogus*. It summarizes the story that appears in fuller form in the last chapters of the first book.<sup>9</sup> Bolesław's parents, Władysław Herman and Judith of Bohemia, married (c. 1080) and after a couple of years 'lacking offspring, gave themselves to fasting and prayer, giving alms generously to the poor, in order that Almighty God [...] might give them such an heir who should fear God, exalt holy Church, exercise justice, and hold the kingdom of Poland to the honor of God and the salvation of the people.'<sup>10</sup> With the bar set so high, the couple was approached by a 'Polish bishop called Franco', who promised that if they 'do what I say with full devotion, without doubt' their desires will be granted. He explained to the eager would-be parents:

Est, inquit, quidam sanctus in Gallie finibus contra austrum iuxta Massiliam, ubi Rodanus intrat mare, terra Prouincia et sanctus Egidius nominatur, qui tanti meriti apud Deum existit, quod omnis, qui in eo devotionem suam ponit et memoriam eius agit, si quid ab eo petierit, indubitanter obtinebit. Ad modum ergo pueri ymaginem auream fabricate, regalia munera preparete, eaque sancto Egidio mittere festinate. Nec mora puerilis ymago cum calice de auro purissimo fabricatur. Aurum, argentum, pallia, sacre vestes preparantur, que per legatos fideles in Prouinciam cum huiusmodi litteris deferentur.

(There is a saint in the south of France near Marseilles, where the Rhône enters the sea, in a land called Provence. His name is St Giles, and he has found such merit with God that those who show him their devotion and remember him will unquestionably obtain whatever they seek from him (*quid ab eo petierit, indubitanter obtinebit*). So have an image of gold fashioned in the shape of a boy, and prepare gifts worthy of a king, and send them in haste to St Giles'. Without delay an image of a child, as well as a cup, was fashioned from the purest gold. Gold, silver, robes, and holy garments were made ready, which faithful messengers were to bear to Provence, along with the following letter.)<sup>11</sup>

This is followed by a missive to 'O(dilo), the venerable abbot of St Giles and to all the brothers'<sup>12</sup> — its precise form was certainly not genuine (the author fashioned it, as everything else, into rhymed and rhythmic prose<sup>13</sup>), but the overall tenor might well have corresponded to the letter that was

9 GpP, pp. 6–11; Wiszewski, *Domus Boleslai*, pp. 244–50 highlights the differences between *epilogus* and the fuller form of the story; cf. n. 28 below.

10 GpP, pp. 104–05.

11 GpP, pp. 104–07.

12 GpP, pp. 106, 107.

13 Kozłowska-Budkowa, *Repertorium*, p. 13.

actually sent some thirty years earlier.<sup>14</sup> In any case, it is short and draws on what Bishop Franco had already stated above, in his exposition — to use the formulation by Jacek Banasziewicz — on ‘practical hagiology’: ‘having heard the report that St Giles stands above all in piety (*prerogativa pietatis premineat dignitate*) and is ever swift to help (*promptus sit adiutor, sibi data divinitus potestate*)’.<sup>15</sup> These are qualities that also notably appear in other texts, to be discussed below. Consequently, the pair prepared gifts and sent legates. The itinerary from Poland to Saint-Gilles was described in the *epilogus*<sup>16</sup> as unfamiliar to the participants, and perhaps to the secular and ecclesiastical ducal circles in general, assuming that anyone acquainted with it would have been added to the group. This implied novelty was also highlighted in Bishop Franco’s explanation. I will come back to this later.

The abbot and brothers ‘perform a three-day fast with supplications and prayers’ so ‘that the glory of His name might be exalted among peoples unknown, and the fame of His servant St Giles be spread far and wide’ (*longe lateque dilataret*).<sup>17</sup> The need to increase the range of Giles’s impact — written down in the GpP in 1110s but supposedly expressed already in mid-1080s — is something that will also resurface regularly in the other texts discussed below. The community then launches into collective prayer, with a whiff of Christian magic, asking Giles to accept and swap the golden statue for a boy:<sup>18</sup>

Euge, serve Dei, caput huius materie | Perfice servorum que poscunt  
vota tuorum, | Pro puero puerum, pro falso perfice verum | Confice  
carnalem, retinens tibi materiale.

(Hurray, servant of God! This matter’s leader, | bring about the  
vows that your servants pray for | A boy for a boy, for false convey

14 Scholars usually doubted the historicity of the letter, drawing the dates of abbatial tenures from Goiffon, *Saint Gilles* and *Bullaire* (see above, n. 5). As Winzer has shown, these dates are far from certain — Odilo was first mentioned as an abbot in 1088 (Oddo in *Miracula of Giles*), while his predecessor, Beraldus, was explicitly named for the last time in 1074 — and the purported Benedict may be the result of Goiffon’s misunderstanding (Winzer, *S. Gilles*, pp. 230–33, 280 and n. 4). As already noted by Bagi, *Królowie*, pp. 119–20 and Banasziewicz, ‘Książę polski Bolesław’, p. 357 n. 24, despite Winzer’s reservations (Winzer, *S. Gilles*, p. 232 n. 1) the letter in GpP might as well be the first confirmation of Odilo’s abbacy. Additionally, Oddo of *Miracula* could have been an abbot between Beraldus and Odilo.

15 GpP, p. 107; Banasziewicz, ‘Książę polski Bolesław’, 349.

16 GpP, p. 8: *per terras, quas non nouerant*. Quéret-Podesta, ‘Le Gallus’, pp. 250–54 argues that the chronicler’s descriptions of the geography of Midi and routes leading to it seem correct but imprecise.

17 GpP, pp. 108–09.

18 Banasziewicz, ‘Książę polski Bolesław’, pp. 362–67 discusses numerous analogies and highlights the transactional nature of this prayer and gift-giving; see also Michałowski, ‘Restauratio Poloniae’, p. 27 n. 62 who argues that this statue was a gift, something which was previously doubted by Dembińska, ‘Ex-voto dans une chronique’, pp. 89–97.

the real one | Bring the carnal one, and keep the artificial for yourself.)<sup>19</sup>

Before the fast was complete, Judith was 'rejoicing to conceive a son.'<sup>20</sup> Delivered *per preces Egidij*, the boy was sure to become a great ruler, whose acts the author is eager to write.<sup>21</sup>

Despite Church legislation prohibiting votive offerings fashioned into likenesses of people or parts of the body, A.-M. Bautier was able to find more than fifty descriptions of such pieces from the late tenth- to late twelfth-century — almost all of them in wax, so the Polish pair's golden statue seems 'the most [...] lavish ex-voto with figuration of the Middle Ages.'<sup>22</sup> Intriguingly, an undated foundation legend of the convent of St Adrian in Lamspringe in Saxony,<sup>23</sup> handed down in a sixteenth-century chartulary contains a similar account (a golden statue of a boy swapped for a daughter).<sup>24</sup> I will not hazard an answer as to whether the Lamspringe legend predated and influenced the suggestion that Bishop Franco gave in 1080s. Conversely, the impression the gift of the Polish ducal pair subsequently made was one of marvel and delight, and it even made its way into epic.<sup>25</sup> The twelfth-century Old French *Lai del Désiré* contains an account about a pair advised that in order to request a progeny, they should prepare *une ymage tote d'argent* and send it to *Seint-Gile*.<sup>26</sup> Mirroring

19 GpP, pp. 108–09 (translation in brackets modified from the one by B. Reynolds, who translated verses in GpP).

20 GpP, pp. 108–09.

21 GpP, pp. 10–11; cf. Banaszkiwicz, 'Książę polski Bolesław', p. 348.

22 Bautier, 'Typologie des ex-voto', pp. 253–59; Banaszkiwicz, 'Książę polski Bolesław', p. 369; Girault and Girault, *Commentaire*, pp. 281–82; cf. Krawiec, *Król*, p. 111 doubts whether the statue was solid gold.

23 Römer, 'Lamspringe', pp. 331–32.

24 Hildesheim, Dombibliothek, MS 530, partially edited in *Germania Pontificia*, v, 2, 6, pp. 110–11. Count Riddag and his wife Imhildis pledge to spend all their riches on a pious foundation, if God bestows on them a progeny of 'whatever sex'. Lacking a suitable saintly intermediary locally, they go on a pilgrimage to Rome, where they offer a figure of a boy made from pure gold to St Peter. The pair then meet Pope Sergius II (884–847), who advises them to go to Constantinople *ad limina beati Adriani martyris*. After arrival and prayer, they receive a vision: their requests have been answered and they will have a daughter. Back in Rome, the pope presents them with relics and having returned to Saxony they establish the monastery of St Adrian in Lamspringe, a female convent due to the sex of their child. On other aspects of the legend, see Giese, 'Die Gründungsberichte', pp. 27–28.

25 Dunin-Wąsowicz, 'Saint-Gilles et la Pologne', p. 126 and n. 14 highlighted how the St James Guidebook mentions a golden effigy of a certain noble affixed next to the tomb of Giles (cf. *Le Guide*, p. 44); cf. Bautier, 'Typologie des ex-voto', p. 255; Girault, 'La chasse', pp. 190–91; Banaszkiwicz, 'Książę polski Bolesław', pp. 367–68. The account could have influenced the way the fifteenth-century Polish chronicler Jan Długosz described the statue sent by Władysław and Judith.

26 Banaszkiwicz, 'Książę polski Bolesław', pp. 353–54, 357–58 (who nevertheless sees both accounts as stemming from common tradition, by then already grounded); *The Lays of*

the GpP account, before the travellers make it home, the lady is pregnant. This story was subsequently translated into Old Norse for the court of Hakon IV Hakonsson.<sup>27</sup>

The predicament of ducal pair was portrayed, almost concurrently to GpP, by Cosmas of Prague. Both accounts are similar, but there are important differences.<sup>28</sup> Cosmas begins with Judith's passing, which spurs him to talk about her sterility and the devotional schemes she tried in order to obtain 'what nature denied her'. The agency shifts to Judith alone — she sends her chaplain Peter to bring *vota et alia munuscula* to Giles's sepulchre. Later, when Peter was about to leave for Poland, the abbot *quasi prophético ore* told him that his lady would conceive, because 'there is none who would not obtain whatever they sincerely asked of Egidius. I even worry, if we will not offend God, when we fatigue him against the fate, even if thanks to Giles' merits he sometimes grants that what nature denies.'<sup>29</sup> Accordingly, the duchess dies on the third day after giving birth. The power of Giles is so great as to cause the abbot apprehension. Both narratives therefore present Giles as an especially powerful saint, which — as we will see — is in accord with other types of texts, especially those coming from Saint-Gilles.

The account in the GpP strongly highlights the two principal themes of legitimization, variously linking the secular and the sacred. The first — well explored in the historiography — is connected to what Thomas Bisson succinctly called 'dynastic anxiety'.<sup>30</sup> The sending of gifts and establishing a relationship with Giles might have been intended as a display of generosity on part of Władysław,<sup>31</sup> even if the shrine was remote and the saint novel. It was also, through the reciprocity of gift-giving, a divine endorsement of his ducal power,<sup>32</sup> which was precarious due to

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*Desiré*, p. 49 — similarity noticed by the editor; cf. Girault, 'Pèlerins chevaliers', p. 57; Girault and Girault, *Commentaire*, p. 275.

27 *Strengleikar eda Lioðabok*, p. 38; I was unable to consult the bilingual Old Norse – English edition *Strengleikar. An Old Norse Translation*, pp. 109, 111.

28 Those below and others are exhaustively discussed by Banaszekiewicz, 'Książę polski Bolesław', pp. 346–48.

29 Cosmas of Prague, *Cosmae Pragensis Chronica*, pp. 133–34: 'Nullus est enim qui non obtinuit, quod sanctum Egidium fideliter petivit. Sed timeo, ne forte Deum offendamus, cum contra fata precibus eum fatigamus, licet ipse per merita huius nostri patroni nonnumquam petentibus annuat, quod natura vetat'. English translation adapted from Cosmas of Prague, *The Chronicle of the Czechs*, trans. by Wolverton, p. 159 and the Latin-English: Cosmas of Prague, *The Chronicle of the Czechs*, trans. by Mutlová, Rady, and Švanda, pp. 246–49.

30 Bisson, *The Crisis of the Twelfth Century*, pp. 183–91.

31 Michałowski, 'Restauratio Poloniae', pp. 26–28, 30.

32 Michałowski (previous n.) noticed the recurrent ideas of gifts and reciprocity in the GpP. The internecine dynastic component has been argued recently by Bagi, *Królowie*, pp. 116–29; Wiszewski, *Domus Bolesłai*, pp. 408–09, 521 sees 'no reason to link this with any

the particularly knotty succession crises of the 1080s.<sup>33</sup> The favourable outcome could have been deliberately arranged, if Judith had already been pregnant when the legates were sent to Saint-Gilles.<sup>34</sup> The previous ruler, Bolesław II, had died in exile in Hungary in the first years of the decade, but his son, Mieszko (d. 1089), returned to Poland.<sup>35</sup> The situation was also overshadowed by the recent violent conflict of Bolesław II with the bishop of Kraków; it was the latter's gruesome death in 1079 that contributed to Bolesław's removal from power. When the GpP was being composed all of these problems were long-resolved, but this does not affect the intentions behind the original act in the mid-1080s. With the miraculous conception and birth of Bolesław, Giles sanctioned the ducal couple's need for an heir, even though Władysław already had a male child, Zbigniew, whose mother was probably a concubine and who had a weaker claim than Mieszko's.<sup>36</sup> Zbigniew in the 1110s has lost not only the drawn-out contest for power with Bolesław III, but also his very life. It was the ensuing crisis of power that formed the background for the GpP, long recognized as an exercise to legitimize the branch of the Piasts that was currently in power and Bolesław III in particular.<sup>37</sup> In those circumstances, *Dei dono progenitus per preces Egidij* Bolesław was born — no reader would fail to notice — *sicut Deus uoluit*, in order to crush his enemies.<sup>38</sup> This first legitimizing theme — the sanctioning of Bolesław's birth, and the Piast dynastic line originating with him, through Giles's intervention<sup>39</sup> — is the focal point in the GpP. And yet, it is the visible and abundant gifts and the votive offerings of a remote Polish ducal pair that manifestly legitimize the saint's community and increase the *fama sanctitatis* of Giles. The words of the abbot and monks make clear that a successful mediation will exalt

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broader political context' and thinks that only later the 'initially particularly private gesture was turned [...] to political advantage'. This 'purely family character' (Wiszewski, *Domus Boleslai*, p. 521) seems unlikely, as the devotion of the ruler is never quite private.

- 33 As argued by Maleczyński, *Bolesław III Krzywousty*, pp. 15–16; Kętrzyński, 'Na marginesie', pp. 167–72; Krawiec, *Król*, esp. pp. 95–102, 115; detailed analysis in Benyskiewicz, *Władysław*, Chapters 2, 3.
- 34 Kętrzyński, 'Na marginesie', pp. 163–66 stops short of suggesting this. The date of birth of Bolesław (1085 or 1086) is contested — Jasiński, *Rodowód*, pp. 164–68, 185–87; cf. Krawiec, *Król*, pp. 112–13; Benyskiewicz, *Władysław*, p. 119.
- 35 An additional complication could have been brought by Vratislav II of Bohemia claiming the Polish crown in 1085, which is nevertheless only mentioned in a highly dubious account — see Mischke, 'Polska korona', pp. 155–66; Krawiec, *Król*, pp. 102–07; Benyskiewicz, *Władysław*, e.g. pp. 120, 263–89.
- 36 Maleczyński, *Bolesław III Krzywousty*, p. 16; Kętrzyński, 'Na marginesie', p. 167.
- 37 The literature is enormous, but see Dalewski, *Ritual and Politics*; Wiszewski, *Domus Boleslai*, pp. 257–342 (esp. pp. 258–332); cf. Skibiński, *Przemiany władzy*.
- 38 Banaszekiewicz, 'Książę polski Bolesław', pp. 371–73 and 360–61: pointing to an 'extraordinary status' shared by Bolesław with other children born through the intercession of Giles.
- 39 Bagi, *Królowie*, pp. 116–29.

God's name among unknown peoples (*apud gentes incognitas*), but also will disseminate Giles' name far and wide. What is more, for elite pilgrims and benefactors, the miraculous is largely incidental, in the sense of pertaining to one-off events — even if they have long-term effects — but for the monastery it is cumulative. A similar dynamic is obviously related to the work of legitimization. At the centre of this interplay is Giles himself — both as the focus of this double legitimizing effort and as an intermediary of God's power to enable it.

The GpP unequivocally presents Giles as having been previously unknown in Poland, so Bolesław's birth — a visible sign of the saint's power — and the ensuing ducal support legitimized the introduction of his cult. Władysław Herman and his son founded a number of churches dedicated to Giles and in this they were followed by members of Polish aristocratic elites, some of whom are known by name, such as Peter Włostowic, whom I will discuss below. For others the only evidence is from the later Middle Ages, and there is still a lot of research to be done on establishing the chronology of those foundations.<sup>40</sup> Importantly, despite the ongoing contacts of Bolesław with Saint-Gilles (evidenced by *Miracula* and by the lost twelfth-century charter in abbey's archive<sup>41</sup>), even the earlier foundations seem to have no connection to the Midi shrine, in contrast to the Somogyvár abbey founded in 1091 by Ladislaus I in Hungary.<sup>42</sup>

That Giles was not previously venerated in Poland is quite plausible. *Aegidius* is first listed in a Premonstratensian calendar from thirteenth-century Wrocław (Berlin, Staatsbibliothek Preußischer Kulturbesitz, MS. theol. lat. fol. 378), a copy of an earlier one from the Benedictine Ołbin abbey, established in 1120s or 1130s by Peter Włostowic, who was also known for his devotion to and support of the cult of Giles.<sup>43</sup> Approaching Giles was suggested by Bishop Franco, who was introduced as the 'Polish bishop' (*episcopus Poloniensis*): this title in the GpP seems to mean the

40 Dobosz, *Monarcha*, pp. 160, 179–83 gives a source-oriented discussion; cf. Maleczyński, *Bolesław III Krzywousty*, pp. 262–63. These are mostly small churches (e.g., naves in Inowłódz: 10.4 × 7.4 m; Krobia: 9 × 5.5 m; Wrocław: 10.5 × 7.35 m). Dunin-Wąsowicz, 'Saint-Gilles et la Pologne', pp. 132–34 and especially Bober, *Kult* enumerate ones that are demonstrably later (Różański, *Jednoprzestrzenne kościoły*, esp. pp. 162–206 and pp. 143–44).

41 Przeździecki, 'O Bolesławie', pp. 43–45, 51–53 discussed a note about the theft in the Saint-Gilles chapter in 1663. It mentioned a supposedly original charter issued in 1128 by Bolesław and written in Saint-Gilles. Incidentally, some decades earlier the chapter was visited and endowed by an ambassador of the Polish king, but Przeździecki convincingly denies that the lost charter was a seventeenth-century forgery.

42 Dobosz, *Monarcha*, p. 180; on Somogyvár see n. 110.

43 Jasiński, 'Kalendarz opactwa', pp. 45–58. The late eleventh–early twelfth-century 'calendar of Gertrud' (Cividale del Friuli, Museo Archeologico Nazionale, Archivi e Biblioteca, codex CXXXVI) does not list Giles, opting for Priscus instead (Pac, 'Kalendarz z Kodeksu Gertrudy', pp. 37–38), just like other oldest extant calendars used in Poland (*Chronologia*, pp. 210, 216).

bishop of the territory of 'Greater Poland' (Wielkopolska), with its seat in Poznań.<sup>44</sup> He is assumed to have been the first bishop after the reconstruction of the diocese in 1075; and in the 1110s — when GpP was being composed — he was no longer alive.<sup>45</sup> The origins of Franco, his ecclesiastical milieu before coming to Poland, are unknown, but he was not a locally born and educated cleric:<sup>46</sup> the commonly held assumption is that he has come from abroad, perhaps from the Empire, but this is only conjecture.<sup>47</sup>

In any case, for geographical reasons the intensive Polish cult and relations with the remote shrine in 1080s are early and difficult to explain.<sup>48</sup> Jerzy Zathey tried to contextualize it by mapping the sacred placenames and church titles in Europe, but did so without clearly delineating their chronology, thus coming to a number of sweeping and extravagant conclusions.<sup>49</sup> Conversely, it seems that the cult in Poland influenced some of the foundations Zathey listed. A prime example is Bamberg. When the Polish cult took off in 1080s, a young Otto of Bamberg was a chaplain in Poland. It was perhaps partly due to this experience that decades later Otto founded a chapel with a hospice dedicated to Giles in the foothills of Michelsberg, even if the whole affair was spurred by a certain Wicbodo (canon of Sankt Jakob) who brought the relic of the saint's finger from Saint-Gilles.<sup>50</sup> Zathey suggested that the spread of Giles's cult in general was stimulated by milieus invested in the Gregorian reform,

44 Jurek, *Biskupstwo*, pp. 148, 280–81 nn. 61, 62.

45 Jurek, *Biskupstwo*, pp. 148–51: with as many as three other bishops between him and the then-current Paul.

46 Franco became *antistes Cracoviensis* in a fifteenth-century manuscript (Kraków, Biblioteka Czartoryskich, MS 2767; *Vita s. Stanislai*, pp. 283–84 n. 2), where the note also says, that Giles was then (*tunc*) — in the past — famous in Poland for his miracles.

47 Older scholarship (e.g. David, Zathey, Stiennon) identified him with a certain *Franco episcopus Bellegradensis*, appearing in Saint-Hubert abbey in Ardennes in the vita of its abbot Theodoric, who coincidentally made a pilgrimage to Saint-Gilles in 1060 to obtain relics and built a church dedicated to Giles (*Vita Theodorici*, p. 50; — see especially Stiennon, 'La Pologne', pp. 462–63. Seemingly putting all the pieces of the puzzle in place, this was convincingly refuted by Leśny, 'Franco', pp. 19–31; cf. Jurek, *Biskupstwo*, pp. 280–81.

48 This point has been rarely raised (e.g. Plezia, *Kronika*, pp. 152). The abbey hosted popes and secular rulers, but decades later than the inaugurating legation from Poland; cf. Girault, 'Pèlerins chevaliers', pp. 54–55: Pope Gelasius II in 1118 and Erik I of Denmark with his wife Bodil in 1103.

49 Zathey, 'Z dziejów kultu', pp. 287, 293–94, 297, 300–03, 310.

50 Thus Kętrzyński, 'Na marginesie', pp. 163–64 and Fried, 'Czy Gall Anonim', pp. 490, 500 (overstates the role of Otto in bringing the relics and makes Wicbodo a monk at Michelsberg — both against evidence); cf. Hiller, *Die Kirchenpatrozinien*, p. 110 (interested solely in local circumstances); Girault, 'Pèlerins chevaliers', pp. 54–55. This is first mentioned in *Relatio de piis operibus Ottonis*, p. 1163; cf. Zathey, 'Z dziejów kultu', p. 279. Otto's cult of Giles is highlighted by his hagiographer Ebo — *Ebonis Vita s. Ottonis episcopi Babenbergensis*, pp. 34–35.

and his hypothesis squares with the observations of Patrick Corbet on the diffusion of the cult north of the Midi.<sup>51</sup> To be sure, there is no evidence that the veneration of Giles was a demonstration of Władysław Herman siding with the ‘Gregorian camp’.<sup>52</sup> However, in more general terms, it seems quite conceivable — even if the fragmentary sources do not suggest it — that the initial pursuit of the miraculous birth (1080s) as well as the subsequent cult (Bolesław III) had diverse aims. They may have been directed towards both the local ecclesiastical circles, which were still aggrieved by the death of bishop of Kraków in 1079, and Rome, where successive popes were very much interested in Saint-Gilles as their own monastery.<sup>53</sup>

Instead of trying to trace the actual route by which the cult reached Bishop Franco, I would like to consider the reasons why it was the remote Midi saint who was suggested to the ducal pair. Seemingly vague, this question is actually directly tackled by the primary sources and touches upon the problem of legitimization.

### **A Very Special Saint — *dator hilaris, promptus adiutor***

The narratives produced in Poland and Bohemia as well as those in the Midi agree that Giles was considered a very special saint. Reading those texts together, one can easily argue that not only was Giles designed to invite appeals from all quarters — this is obvious — but also that Franco and the ducal pair were responding to this purposeful creation, an image of Giles which was already in circulation in the eleventh century. That such a dynamic was at work was recently suggested by Dániel Bagi, who proposed a specific Central European understanding of Giles’s power to remit the sins of intra-dynastic violence, and by Jacek Banaszekiewicz, who suggested that Piasts were responding to an already-current narrative ‘script of a child born through the intercession of Giles’.<sup>54</sup> There is a lot to be said for both approaches, even if — as I argue below — the first one is highly speculative and the second cannot account for the chronology of the evidence.

In the environment filled with a multitude of saints and their shrines, the successful introduction of a new cult — such as Giles’s in tenth-century Midi — almost necessitated the creation of a distinguishing

51 Zathey, ‘Z dziejów kultu’, pp. 277, 285, 293, 297, 299, 303, 309; Corbet, ‘La diffusion’, esp. pp. 23–26); accepted by Magnani, ‘Réseaux monastiques’, pp. 12, 15–16, 18–19.

52 Benyskiewicz, *Władysław*, pp. 251–52, 269 n. 167.

53 See below, where I discuss Remensnyder’s reading of the Saint-Gilles manuscript sources and *vita*.

54 Bagi, *Królowie*, pp. 116–29; Banaszekiewicz, ‘Książę polski Bolesław’, esp. pp. 375–76.

feature, or a set thereof, for the saint.<sup>55</sup> As noted by Marcel and Pierre-Gilles Girault, but also by Banaszkievicz based on a number of twelfth-century examples, one of the central characteristics of Giles was his apparently boundless and reliable generosity — he was a ‘very helpful saint’.<sup>56</sup> However, it is already in his oldest tenth-century hagiography,<sup>57</sup> and what quickly made it to chants for his feast as far as Prague — whence Judith came — that Giles is fashioned primarily as a ‘joyful giver’ (*dator hilaris*),<sup>58</sup> who since his childhood was successfully invoked by those in need. Starting from Greece, through various places in Septimania and even through Rome, the power of Giles is on display, providing assistance for all ailments and wants.

In the *vita* this crescendo of miracles is topped by the account of the unspeakable, disgraceful sin (*turpe facinus*) of Charlemagne.<sup>59</sup> The turpitude was supposedly so terrible, that the ruler could not divulge it to anyone, not even to Giles, whom he asked for help. Instead, a divine letter, conveyed by angels and put on an altar, described the sin (the reader does not learn what it was) and added a stipulation that ‘whoever invokes St Giles for whatever crime, if they cease from it, the sin will be undoubtedly remitted by the Lord’.<sup>60</sup> This proviso is one of the most reworked passages in later redactions. For some, it was apparently not explicit enough — a prolix *vita*, edited by the Bollandists, enhances it, saying that the remedying power of Giles is not limited to kings, as if to make sure that audiences do not hesitate.<sup>61</sup> The version that survives in

55 On fashioning of the foundation legends in southern France and their historical background, see Remensnyder, *Remembering*, esp. pp. 19–86; see also Franklin, ‘The Reception’, pp. 67–74 with a discussion of hagiographic models utilized in the oldest *vita* (BHL 93).

56 This is the title of the relevant chapter in Girault, *Commentaire*, pp. 339–42; cf. Banaszkievicz, ‘Książę polski Bolesław’, pp. 349–50, 358–60. The authors discuss *Liber miraculorum*, *Codex Calixtinus*, GpP, *Lai del Désiré*, *Raoul de Cambrai*.

57 On the oldest *Vita Aegidii* (BHL 93), its redactions and subsequent legends as well as their manuscript tradition see Jones, *Saint Gilles*, pp. 1–9, 95–98 and Franklin, ‘The Reception’, pp. 76–81, 118–22; cf. Bonnassie, Sigal, and Iogna-Prat, *La Gallia du Sud*, 930–1130, pp. 313–14. The new critical edition by Franklin significantly expands the knowledge of manuscript variants, but the fragments of interest — at least for my purposes — are identical with the old edition by Jones. Below, I quote both editions.

58 *Vita s. Aegidii* (BHL 93), p. 100; Franklin, ‘The Reception’, p. 125; *Acta Sanctorum Septembris*, I, p. 299; see also Cantus Index, id 602395a, with the oldest, twelfth-century witness being a breviary from St George monastery in Prague (Prague, NK, VI E 13) — <<http://cantusindex.org/ci/602395a?c=1&#x0026;refresh=1>> [Accessed 22 March 2022]. The expression alludes to II Corinthians 9.7.

59 *Vita s. Aegidii* (BHL 93), p. 109; Franklin, ‘The Reception’, p. 134; cf. Plezia, *Kronika*, pp. 152–53; Bagi, *Królowie*, p. 120. The idea and its rich afterlife were discussed by Hafner, ‘Charlemagne’s Unspeakable Sin’, pp. 1–14.

60 *Vita s. Aegidii* (BHL 93), p. 109; Franklin, ‘The Reception’, p. 135; *Acta Sanctorum Septembris*, I, p. 303. See also the Old French *Vita s. Aegidii* in Jones, *Saint Gilles*, p. 146.

61 *Vita s. Aegidii* (BHL 95), p. 188. The passage ends with a similar exhortation.

a fourteenth-century exemplar from Ägidienkloster in Brunswick makes it explicit that it is due to Giles' merits that the divine remittance takes place.<sup>62</sup>

Recently, Dániel Bagi has suggested that the East Central European cult of Giles — in Poland and in Hungary — actually stemmed from the knowledge of this passage and is a specific local response due to ducal family power dynamics, when internecine feuds resulted in the violent removal of the rightful claimants.<sup>63</sup> This would have been perceived as an extremely severe sin, and consequently the story of Charlemagne, Bagi's argument runs, must have been understood in East Central Europe to be either a fratricide or, more generally, a removal of a rightful successor (e.g. the Piast strife in the 1070–1080s described earlier). Bagi supposes that childlessness could have been perceived as a divine punishment for such sins, so the birth of progeny would be an obvious sign of divine forgiveness, and of legitimizing the altered power structure. While this is quite appealing, especially considering the theme of legitimization, none of the primary sources — local or otherwise — make the connection suggested by Bagi,<sup>64</sup> and Susan Hafner's tracing of the afterlife of the unspeakable sin story does not point in this direction either.<sup>65</sup> The Charlemagne context, attractive as it surely was, could have therefore had the drawing power on more vague terms, associated with success and status, rather than with specific sin and its remittance.<sup>66</sup>

Looking at local sources, it was rather this more general characteristic of Giles as an able, 'joyful giver', that the GpP alludes to in Franco's recommendation, in the French monks' unsurprised reaction and finally in Władysław's letter, where the chronicler renders the vita's idea of *dator hilaris* into an equally catchy *promptus adiutor*.<sup>67</sup> This is quite similar to the delivery of a somewhat later twelfth-century *Iter pro peregrinis ad Compostellam*, which stresses Giles's habit of coming — before other saints

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62 Wolfenbüttel, Herzog August Bibliothek, MS Cod. Guelf. 1049 Helmst., fol. 50r. This is similar to the rendition in Iacopo di Varazze, *Legenda Aurea*, p. 988.

63 Bagi, *Królowie*, pp. 116–29 with summary on p. 126; Bagi, 'Szent László', pp. 146–56 (esp. pp. 153–55); Banaszkiwicz, 'Książę polski Bolesław', pp. 374–75 discusses the cult of Giles as bonding the dynastic aristocracy of the region (Poland, Hungary, Bohemia, Rus').

64 Bagi, *Królowie*, esp. p. 126 ('the Central European reception of the cult of St Giles is understandable only in the light of dynastic struggles and subsequent family conflicts'); cf. Benyskiwicz, *Władysław*, p. 119.

65 The themes of sexuality, hence also fertility, are predominant, but the actual sin, when noted, is either homosexuality, incest, or necrophilia, rather than fratricide, homicide and suchlike — Hafner, 'Charlemagne's Unspeakable Sin'.

66 As in Fried, 'Königsgedanken Heinrichs', pp. 324–25: Henry the Lion's cult of Giles as grounded in the former's royal ambitions and as stemming from Henry's cult of Charlemagne.

67 GpP, pp. 104, 106; cf. Girault and Girault, *Commentaire*, p. 341.

— to assist the ones who cry out for his help.<sup>68</sup> Also later than the GpP, the condensed account in the martyrology of Pierre Guillaume highlights the same trait; that ‘famous for his miracles [...] he became so renowned everywhere for filling out the votes of all those who faithfully implored him, that for this reason crowds from all over the world rushed to his sepulchre.’<sup>69</sup> That Giles is an especially powerful intermediary, who was always favourable to those who pray for his intercession, was a worn-out idea in the thirteenth century — *Hrafn saga* of the 1200s attributes this to common knowledge and an old saying.<sup>70</sup>

Jacek Banaszkiewicz, highlighting the similarities in those narratives, suggests that Franco, or perhaps only the GpP author, was acquainted with the purportedly already well-known (Banaszkiewicz writes of *fama notoria*) methods employed at Giles’s shrine, but he does not take into account the early chronology of the Polish legation.<sup>71</sup> One can easily accept that the ‘script of a child born through the intercession of Giles’ — as aptly described by Banaszkiewicz — was current in the later twelfth century,<sup>72</sup> but in the 1080s it was too early for Franco to have been simply motivated by such specific hearsay. I would argue that the ‘Polish bishop’ rather read — and had at hand — a copy of Giles’s *vita*, which Władysław’s letter alluded to (and was subsequently paraphrased in the GpP). Even if this exemplar does not survive any more,<sup>73</sup> the chant in Prague attests to the early circulation of Aegidian hagiography. As we have seen, Cosmas also has a similar reliance on this idea. This image of a saint of boundless ability and generosity, already constructed in the early *vita*, made it to Central Europe and was understood in accordance with the original intentions of its authors. Consequently, the success of the Piast legation of the 1080s could have been instrumental in developing a particular feature of this

68 *Le guide*, p. 38; Girault and Girault, *Commentaire*, pp. 339–40; cf. Girault, ‘La chasse’, p. 180.

69 Winzer, *S. Gilles*, p. 122: ‘miraculis satis clarus [...] omnium se fideliter expetentium uota complendo tanta est ubique uirtutum operatione famosus, ut ad sepulcrum illius mirabilis pro hoc ipso ex toto pene fiat orbe concursus’.

70 Ásdís Egilsdóttir, ‘Hrafn Sveinbjarnarson’, pp. 29–39 (here: p. 35). Hrafn, a saintly would-be priest destined to become a chieftain, embarks on a meandering pilgrimage from Iceland to Compostela (Úlfar Bragason, ‘The Structure and Meaning’, pp. 268, 278; Ásdís Egilsdóttir, ‘Hrafn Sveinbjarnarson’, pp. 31–33; Haki Antonsson, *Damnation*, pp. 111–12, 139). I would like to thank Haki Antonsson for drawing my attention to this text.

71 Banaszkiewicz, ‘Książę polski Bolesław’, esp. pp. 348–50, 352–54, 356, 358 (*fama notoria*), 359–62, 375–76.

72 Banaszkiewicz, ‘Książę polski Bolesław’, pp. 375–76; cf. n. 74 below.

73 Combing the ‘Polish’ exemplars of *Legenda Aurea* for any deviations from the Aegidius-legend originally included by Jacobus de Voragine could point to an earlier local tradition. For another possible trace of Aegidian hagiography in GpP, see Wiczorek, *Galla*, pp. 52–53 n. 93.

image by Midi monks — one connected with child-bearing and fertility, and which was to gain currency and become particularly attractive only later.<sup>74</sup>

## A View from Saint-Gilles: The Roman Monastery Besieged by Enemies

What is also unambiguous in Giles's hagiography is the Roman connection — the purported ancient gifting of the monastery to the pope prophetically and prophylactically defends the future shrine from incursions by the laity or other unspecified enemies.<sup>75</sup> As demonstrated by Remensnyder, this and various other themes in the *vitae* are unmistakably geared towards legitimizing the community in distress. What remains unmentioned in the research on the Polish cult of Giles are the various disputes the monastery found itself embroiled in at the time of its contacts with the Piast court. When the monks were praying for the safe conception and delivery of the ducal heir, they as a community were fighting to regain, or rather to obtain, and protect the abbey's independence.<sup>76</sup> Through the saints' merits, the defensive power of their relics — as concurrently described by Theofried von Echternach — shielded their holders against both the visible and invisible enemies.<sup>77</sup> For Saint-Gilles the enemies were very visible.

As demonstrated principally by Winzer and by Remensnyder, the abbey had been entangled in several lingering legal tussles. Some twenty years earlier, the count of Toulouse, Raymond IV, donated the abbey to Cluny and it took until 1132,<sup>78</sup> six years before Boleslaw III's death, for the abbey to succeed in removing the threat: the relationship remained precarious until a century later. The abbey's claims to autonomy — from the bishop of Nîmes and the predatory aristocratic laity — are fittingly reflected in the hagiography.<sup>79</sup> Remensnyder has demonstrated how the conflict with the bishops of Nîmes could have already begun in the ninth century, when Pope John VIII claimed lordship over Saint-Gilles. The diplomas in *Bullarium* that testify to this claim seem to be based on some

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74 Cf. Girault and Girault, *Commentaire*, pp. 275, 304: a similar understanding of the vector of influence, but without suggesting this scenario.

75 Remensnyder, *Remembering*, pp. 83–84; *Acta Sanctorum Septembris*, I, p. 303; *Vita s. Aegidii* (BHL 93), pp. 109–10; Franklin, 'The Reception', pp. 135–36.

76 In the remarks below I generally follow Remensnyder, *Remembering*, Chapter 6 (Saint-Gilles and the Three Enemies) and Winzer, *S. Gilles*; brief overview Dubois and Renaud, 'Influence des Vies', pp. 495–97.

77 Naß, 'Der Auctorkult', p. 192 citing PL 157, col. 405.

78 Winzer, *S. Gilles*, p. 92.

79 Remensnyder *Remembering*, Chapter 6.

early form of a tradition, which is known more fully from the later *vita*.<sup>80</sup> If those diplomas are later forgeries, then the first authentic papal bull comes from 1014, when the *vita* was already in circulation.<sup>81</sup>

The third enemy — as Remensnyder points out, rarely mentioned as such — was Cluny.<sup>82</sup> Winzer dated the introduction of *consuetudines cluniacenses* in Saint-Gilles to the 1070s and by 1076 the monastery had its abbot chosen by Cluny.<sup>83</sup> Because the first major disagreement over this dependence occurred only in 1097, one can cautiously assume that at least in 1080s, when Odilo — a Cluniac himself — was receiving an embassy from Poland, the tensions were not severe or that Odilo was on good terms with the rest of the community.<sup>84</sup> What was intended to be a one-off event became a custom until 1132, with the abbots either being Cluniac monks or at least professing their obedience to the abbot of Cluny. Produced c. 1129, the necrology of Saint-Gilles mostly stayed silent on Cluny, and it conspicuously omitted the lords of Toulouse and the bishops of Nîmes, but keenly noted its own network of *familiares* — close to home as well as far away, with more-remote kings and counts of England, Aragon, and Sicily or Poland and Hungary as well as the local *milites*.<sup>85</sup> The monks also produced a number of forged charters, which were meant to highlight their ‘primordial’ and continuously confirmed independence, with the popes as its guarantors — the first such arrangement was supposed to have been made by St Giles himself on a trip to Rome.<sup>86</sup> The ideological and narrative aspect of this struggle seems at least as important, with the abbey vigorously engaging in the production of hagiographical texts that were geared towards creating their preferred image of the past and that supported the communal identity and liberty.<sup>87</sup>

The interplay of the mutual legitimization of the monastery and the Polish elites is best seen against the background reconstructed by Winzer and Remensnyder. It is visible in the *necrology*, with its clear identification of the benefactors, and their role in legitimizing the abbey’s pretensions is spelt out in writing and was intoned annually in the convent. Winzer identified and described ‘the group of Poles,’ correcting the somewhat

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80 Remensnyder, *Remembering*, esp. pp. 220–24, 231–32, 241–42.

81 Franklin, ‘The Reception’, pp. 72–74.

82 Remensnyder, *Remembering*, pp. 236–39. Remensnyder identifies ‘federating monasteries, such as Cluny’ as the sinister, often unmentioned enemy of individual monasteries’ freedom; Remensnyder, *Remembering*, pp. 217–18; cf. Winzer, *S. Gilles*, p. 83.

83 Winzer, *S. Gilles*, pp. 58–61, 68, 231–33.

84 Winzer, *S. Gilles*, pp. 77–78; Remensnyder, *Remembering*, pp. 237.

85 Winzer, *S. Gilles*, esp. pp. 364–66, 386–92, 416–19; on this cf. the review of Winzer’s book by Geary, *Speculum*, 66.1 (1991), 247–48.

86 See n. 75 above; Dubois and Renaud, ‘Influence des Vies’, pp. 495–97 (on forgeries) and Remensnyder, *Remembering*, pp. 215, 220–43 (charters in BNF, lat. 11018).

87 Remensnyder, *Remembering*, pp. 63–65, 71, 322–24.

larger list that David has proposed earlier.<sup>88</sup> Unsurprisingly, it includes Bolesław III, his mother Judith, and her brother Břetislav II. Importantly, it also contains the names of Polish benefactors from outside the ducal family — *Petrus comes Polonie* and *Maria comitissa Polonie*. These last two are long-identified as Peter Włostowic (d. 1153), mentioned above when discussing the first local calendars with Giles, and his wife Maria.<sup>89</sup> One of the few non-dynastic individuals known relatively well from Poland of the first half of the twelfth century, Peter was a powerful aristocrat in Silesia and a count palatine, hence Bolesław's high official, who also played an important role in the first years after the duke's death.<sup>90</sup> He was already known as a pious founder in the twelfth century — in later accounts of a staggeringly large and improbable number of churches. Certainly, some of these can be safely confirmed as Aegidius-churches, but since the titles of others are only known from later sources and frequently they have not been properly explored by archaeologists, it is impossible to give a sound estimate of their number.<sup>91</sup> Peter and Maria were speculated<sup>92</sup> to have contacted the shrine in order to ask for male heir, following the example of Władysław and Judith, because according to a much later tradition their son was named Idzi [= Giles].<sup>93</sup> An authoritative study on the Silesian knights however, while allowing that the legend might be a distorted echo of real events, cautions that the supposed son of Peter is never named Giles in charters, but solely Świątosław.<sup>94</sup>

The reasons why Peter and Maria appear in the *necrologium* remain unknown. It is assumed that their cult and gifts were not simply an imitation of ducal veneration — after all, Giles was only one of the saints included in Peter's founding effort, which also comprised the introduction of new cults to Poland. The mutual legitimation of both them and the Midi community was obviously at work, as attested by the *necrology*, yet Peter's gestures toward Giles are not seen by recent scholars as jumping on the ducal bandwagon, but rather as presenting himself to the saint, the abbey,

88 Winzer, *S. Gilles*, pp. 369–73; David, 'La Pologne', pp. 217–26; Banaszkiewicz, 'Książę polski Bolesław', pp. 374–75 convincingly on the identification of the Rus' dynasts in the *necrologium* and their connection to the early Piast example.

89 This has been uncontroversial since David, 'La Pologne', pp. 223–24; see previous n.

90 Dunin-Wąsowicz, 'Saint-Gilles et la Pologne', pp. 124, 130–35; Skwierczyński, 'Fundacje', esp. pp. 83–85. For a recent overview, which nevertheless does not mention Saint-Gilles, see Mühle, 'Czym były elity', pp. 65–83. On Peter in general, see Trawkowski, 'Piotr Włostowic', p. 358.

91 For a discussion of those foundations, see Dobosz, *Monarcha*, pp. 265–77; Michałowski, *Princeps fundator*, pp. 110–12; Manikowska, 'Princeps fundator', pp. 37–57; Skwierczyński, 'Fundacje', esp. pp. 83–85, 87–88.

92 Dunin-Wąsowicz, 'Saint-Gilles et la Pologne', p. 132.

93 *Cronica Petri*, pp. 15, 18, 19, 21, 33.

94 Cetwiński, *Rycerstwo*, pp. 15–17; see also Cetwiński, 'Piotr'; cf. Banaszkiewicz, 'Książę polski Bolesław', p. 375.

the duke and his fellow aristocrat-officials as participating in the same cult and in a similar way to the ruler.<sup>95</sup> Peter's largesse therefore, as proposed by Michałowski, could have been aimed at emulation — a manifestation of having a prestige and virtue comparable to that of the duke — and in this respect he would be similar to Henry the Lion (d. 1195), who was also known for his devotion to the cult of Giles.<sup>96</sup> Importantly, the oldest evidence for aristocratic foundations, as recently highlighted by Skwierczyński, seems to be contemporaneous with the very emergence of substantial landholding by the elite non-ducal families at the end of the eleventh century.<sup>97</sup>

The *necrology* thus permits us to see the legitimizing mutuality of Giles's cult as not limited to the Polish ducal family, but extending — on perhaps comparable terms — to the powerful aristocrat and official, whose participation in the veneration of Giles can be understood as an emulation of the ducal activity, as well as a means of fortifying and legitimizing the cult established in Poland, and of supporting the central shrine in Midi. We do not know whether Peter and Maria ever made it to Saint-Gilles, exchanging gifts and praying at the shrine. However, earlier in the twelfth century another of Bolesław's officials made exactly such a journey, leaving an impact which the surviving sources record.

### **A View from Saint-Gilles: 'so our ferocious enemies will come to their senses'**

As the scholarship of the last decades has shown, the threatened monastery cultivated its 'Roman' freedom, trying to extract written guarantees from the popes or forging the charters, as well as seeking the visible signs of its heavenly patron's power. Just as the *vitae* described and re-described the foundational wonders belonging to the remembered past, the recent showering of signs of Giles's *virtus* were gathered, also for the use of the community, in the twelfth-century collections of miracles. At the centre of this effort was Pierre Guillaume, the librarian in Saint-Gilles in 1110–1124, who not only authored the first redaction of *Liber miraculorum s. Aegidii*, but also took a decisive part in forming the surviving necrology, martyrology — and perhaps the *bullarium* — as well as writing a continuation of *Liber pontificalis*, the latter of which was written already

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95 Skwierczyński, 'Fundacje', pp. 63–64, 71–74, 90–92; Banaszkiewicz, 'Książę polski Bolesław', pp. 371–72 similarly on Peter, but also on Sieciech.

96 Michałowski, *Princeps fundator*, p. 111.

97 Skwierczyński, 'Fundacje', pp. 71, 79–81.

in the priory of Saint-Gilles' d'Acy.<sup>98</sup> To quote Pierre-Gilles Girault, 'Pierre Guillaume thus appears as the pillar of the historiography and memory formation of the abbey in the first half of the twelfth century'.<sup>99</sup> When he was composing *Liber miraculorum*, the monastery was seemingly at a low point in its struggles.<sup>100</sup> An anonymous author of the second redaction of *Liber miraculorum* worked in the latter part of the century, and was very much interested in recording the miracles which took place in Germany, as told by grateful pilgrims visiting the abbey.<sup>101</sup>

The text has been long recognized as primary evidence for the continuation of Giles's cult in twelfth-century Poland. Striking the familiar theme of *dator hilaris/promptus adiutor*, Pierre insisted that so many people came to the shrine from so far away because they were sure that their needs would be granted Giles's assistance.<sup>102</sup> One of the miracles related to and by Pierre was the story of Sieciech, the cupbearer of Bolesław III.<sup>103</sup> During the military expedition in Pomerania, Sieciech, terrified of dying, was saved multiple times thanks to the unmentioned Giles, but he repeatedly failed to confess his sins, even finally boasting — much to the dismay of his companions — that his actions were of no consequence. On the way back from Pomerania, St Giles appeared to Sieciech in a vision — unmistakably he, recognized by the cupbearer — and warned him of impending death. The cupbearer nevertheless remained unmoved by this admonition, further offending the saint. Having arrived in Poland, during a hunt organized by the duke, Sieciech was grievously wounded by an auroch. Only then did he appeal to Giles, made vows, and after surviving this near-death experience, he travelled to the shrine to fulfil the vows he had made. According to Pierre, the pilgrimage was anonymous and

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98 Girault and Girault, *Commentaire*, pp. 211–15. The important controversy between the editors and Patrick Henriët as to whether the text as recently edited is a conflation of two separate traditions that never existed in the Middle Ages does not seem to be relevant to the questions posed in this article. The miracles of interest to us are present in both traditions (*sensu* Henriët); Baillet and Henriët, 'Gallia, 1130-fin XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle', pp. 782–86.

99 Girault, 'Pèlerins chevaliers', p. 50.

100 Winzer, *S. Gilles*, pp. 240–42; Girault, Girault, *Commentaire*, pp. 219–25.

101 Girault, 'Pèlerins chevaliers', p. 50; Baillet and Henriët, 'Gallia, 1130-fin XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle', pp. 786–87; Girault and Girault, *Commentaire*, pp. 215–17, 219.

102 *Livre des Miracles*, p. 36; Girault, 'Pèlerins chevaliers', pp. 50–51 and Girault and Girault, *Commentaire*, pp. 244–27 discussion of pilgrims' geographical origins, with c. half of them coming from Germany, and with a surprisingly insignificant number of pilgrims coming from the territories near the shrine.

103 *Livre des Miracles*, pp. 72, 74, 76; on Sieciech see Kurtyka, 'Sieciech cześnik', pp. 509–12; on the social stratification in miracles see Girault, 'Pèlerins chevaliers', pp. 52–53 and Girault and Girault, *Commentaire*, pp. 247–53. The fifteenth-century Jan Długosz repeats it almost verbatim, suggesting that he had a copy of *Miracula* at hand, or that the Sieciech miracle-story was originally written in Poland; cf. Dunin-Źasowicz, 'Saint-Gilles et la Pologne', pp. 123–24, 130–31, 134–35.

it was only from later Polish travellers, ‘both ecclesiastics and laymen,’ who arrived there to pray (*orationis causa*) that the community learned of Sieciech’s story.<sup>104</sup> As shown by Remensnyder, the two sources of the abbey’s peril, the powerful laymen and the local ordinary, are represented in the *vita* of Giles, where the hunt organized by King Flavius and the bishop of Nîmes results in the wounding of the saint, and in subsequent acts of contrition and atonement. The hunting party, chasing the doe, or perhaps the hind, whose milk was Giles’s sustenance, inadvertently wounded the saint himself. The analogy with miracle of Sieciech seems significant; the latter was injured during the hunt, while he was slighting Giles — wounding him symbolically — and he subsequently atoned, similarly to Flavius in the hagiography. The hunt motif, in literal and in symbolic sense, connects the *vita* of Giles — perhaps available in Poland at the time, as suggested earlier — and the miracle describing the story of the cupbearer.

Teresa Dunin-Wąsowicz rightly noted that Sieciech and Peter Włostowic were members of aristocratic families, an elite who imitated the ducal veneration. Less convincingly, she also offered a typology of saints’ cults in twelfth-century Poland, where St Adalbert was venerated by the ‘masses’, St Laurence by the military, and St Giles by the elite.<sup>105</sup> Apart from the obvious difficulty in distinguishing between the military and the elite, what this hypothesis does not take into account is a severe source bias. The GpP is disinterested in anything not directly related to the Piasts — aristocrats start appearing in the account of Władysław Herman’s rule, but they are mentioned sparsely, only when needed for the ducal story.<sup>106</sup> The *Liber miraculorum*, on the other hand, only noted the events and people who made it — themselves or by proxy — to the Midi shrine and both authors, as highlighted by Girault, observed a certain ‘communication strategy’, carefully selecting the described beneficiaries to ‘deliberately position the shrine’ as the place of elite pilgrimage.<sup>107</sup> Due to the distance between Poland and Saint-Gilles, only the elite had the resources to undertake the pilgrimage. The scarcity of the local Polish narrative sources in the eleventh and twelfth centuries and their thematic specificity — being interested in the Piasts and some members of the

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104 *Livre des Miracles*, p. 76; Banaszekiewicz, ‘Książę polski Bolesław’, pp. 370–71: the story as written down by Pierre could have been ‘an assemblage’ of a number of oral accounts; Girault, ‘Pèlerins chevaliers’, p. 58: the Poles are the sole example of pilgrims arriving *orationis causa*.

105 Dunin-Wąsowicz, ‘Saint-Gilles et la Pologne’, p. 134.

106 Skwierczyński, ‘Fundacje’, p. 71.

107 Girault, ‘Pèlerins chevaliers’, pp. 54–60 (cited at p. 59). Although Girault asserts that the GpP ‘observes that in Poland the choice of devotions depends on the social condition of the faithful’, his claim seems based solely on Dunin-Wąsowicz’s typology.

highest elite<sup>108</sup> — hardly enable any discussion of the impact of any of the cults on the general populace, even that of St Adalbert, who was described in the GpP as the ‘patron of Poland’ but also, significantly, of a Polish military unit.<sup>109</sup>

The Midi monks annotated Sieciech’s miracle-story with information that he was the cupbearer of Boleslaw, who was the benefactor of the abbey. But his story in itself was useful to the community, since it was a visible sign of Giles’s *virtus* far away from the shrine, and it invited similar events and stories, and gave solace — as Pierre tells us — to the besieged abbey. Obviously, the miracle also had an impact in the Piast lands; after all, the ecclesiastics and lay pilgrims must have learned the story in Poland in order to retell it in the Midi. The miracle reinforced the cult introduced by the ducal family and made the cupbearer into a notable and divinely affected participant. The fact that Sieciech immediately recognized St Giles, despite the fact that he had only heard about him thus far, and apparently knew which saint to pray to, clearly suggests that Giles had a certain vogue among the elite: participation in his cult could have been a marker of status and close relations with the dynasty.

One can only imagine that a similar use of the Polish elite’s veneration of Giles was made in the Hungarian daughter monastery of Saint-Gilles founded in Somogyvár in 1091 — no suitable sources survive from this eleventh-century abbey.<sup>110</sup> We are more fortunate in this respect with Sankt-Aegidius in Brunswick, founded in 1115.<sup>111</sup> At the end of the fourteenth-century Brunswick copy of *Liber miraculorum*, another hand added a passage from Cosmas of Prague on the miraculous conception of Boleslaw.<sup>112</sup> The cathedral church of St Blaise in Brunswick was a place of composition of an epitome of Cosmas,<sup>113</sup> but here the passage was copied wholesale, so the apograph seems to have been a copy of the chronicle itself. The passage is not only substantial but is also the only such

108 See Skwierczyński, ‘Fundacje’, pp. 67, 82 who also stresses that due to the source bias one can rarely correlate the smaller foundations attested archaeologically with specific people.

109 GpP, pp. 262, 264; see Wunsch, ‘Kultbeziehungen’, pp. 362–63, 365–66, 369, 371, 373; Kersken, ‘God and the Saints’, pp. 173–78. More generally cf. Graus, ‘Der Heilige’, pp. 345–46.

110 On this foundation see Magnani, ‘Réseaux monastiques’ (esp. pp. 14–17, stressing the ‘Gregorian reform’ aspect); cf. Quéret-Podesta, ‘Les plus anciens contacts’, pp. 78–79 (stressing the familial Arpad-Piast relations); Banaszkiwicz, ‘Książę polski Boleslaw’, pp. 327–73 (highlighting the fame of saintly power). I was not able to consult Kiss, ‘La fondation’.

111 Naß, ‘Der Auctorkult’, pp. 169–75; Winzer, *S. Gilles*, p. 418.

112 Wolfenbüttel, Herzog August Bibliothek, MS Cod. Guelf. 1049 Helmst, fol. 38r; cf. *Die Helmstedter Handschriften*, III, p. 31; cf. Jaffè’s remark in *Miracula beati Egidii*, p. 323 n. 90; cf. Girault and Girault, *Introduction*, p. 24.

113 Bláhová, ‘Cronica Boemorum’; cf. Sosnowski, ‘Święci’, pp. 18–19.

addition in the manuscript.<sup>114</sup> Although it is impossible to be sure about the reasons for such a keen interest in the then-historical Polish ducal pair (and the addition can obviously be attributed to interest in Giles' miracles in general), the cult- and shrine-legitimizing aspect of the note is unambiguous.

The legitimizing role of the miracles and the visible signs of Giles's power were twofold. First and foremost, as the *Liber miraculorum* unabashedly tells us, they were needed for the community's internal use — they brought consolation and identity reinforcement to the weary monks, enabling them to 'remember' what their effort was all about and why it mattered. The second aspect, an external one, is not explicitly stated, but can be safely derived from the fact that the *vitae* as well as the *Liber miraculorum* were copied or variously rewritten. Important secular and ecclesiastical pilgrims and visitors had the stories of miracles read to them, or sometimes perhaps paraphrased in the vernacular, and the visible signs of Giles's power shown to them as material votive offerings, like the solid-gold statue sent by Władysław and Judith. Just as the remote saint and his miracles became a symbolic asset for the Polish elites, one that could be used and subsequently manipulated, equally the faraway Polish dukes and aristocrats, together with their munificence and miraculous experiences were added to the rich repertoire of the symbolic assets of the shrine.

## Concluding Remarks

Relations with remote shrines enabled the aristocracy of the peripheries to participate in an important feature of Latin Christendom. Behind the remnants those relations left behind in miracle collections and necrologues, we see not only the individual events — manifestations of piety and opulent beneficence — but also, in the long run, the process of the growing collective understanding of Christian theory and practice by the elite.<sup>115</sup> Their belonging was, and still remains, certified by the said remnants in literary and commemorative texts — and at the shrine it was reconfirmed annually through liturgical practices of memory and prayer. Back home, the elite not only preserved their souvenirs (memories, learned prayers,

<sup>114</sup> The latter part of which ends with a unique copy of *Historia de duce Henrico*, compiled c. 1283–1294 chiefly from the *Chronica Slavorum* by Arnold of Lübeck, a sometime member of Giles's convent (after Naß, 'Der Auctorkult', p. 177 n. 125).

<sup>115</sup> This is well demonstrated by *Hrafns saga* of the 1200s (see above, n. 70). As pointed out by Haki Antonsson, *Damnation*, pp. 111–12: Hrafn's prayer to Giles is a careful act of harmonizing a crave for secular glory with an overwhelming desire for the eternal, as the pilgrim asks to be become the best chieftain possible but only to point of not endangering his salvation. Such displays of a developed internalization of a Christian worldview are quite absent — at least at this depth — in the stories on Polish aristocracy a century earlier.

tangible relics or pilgrim badges, attested archeologically somewhat later), but sometimes tried to sustain and cultivate the established ties — be it by revisiting the remote shrine, by inciting others to do so, by prayer, and through pious foundations.

This book highlights the elite participation in (instead of simply an imitation of) Latin Christendom through the cult of saints. St Giles's cult in Poland (as elsewhere) together with its reception in the Midi shrine is a good case in point. The successful exchange of the 1080s seemingly allowed the monks to develop a particular aspect of their saint's image — what Banaszekiewicz described as a narrative 'script' of a powerful intercessor for childless couples. Whereas the cult in Poland is primarily seen as a legitimization effort of the ducal family (the divinely sanctioned offspring) and then of the elites (participation as legitimizing the elite's belonging), its eager reception in Saint-Gilles unmistakably lies in the domain of ecclesiastical legitimization. The drawn-out struggle of the religious community for its independence required various strategies and diverse planes of conflict management and resolution.<sup>116</sup> Here the peripheral Polish elites, whose remoteness was deliberately highlighted, were used in the abbey's legitimization efforts, which presented it as a central, and as Remensnyder pointed out, distinctly 'Roman' institution. The mutuality of this symbolic relationship was also emphasized by reciprocal textual production, with the *vitae* of the Midi influencing the Piast pious gestures, with the latter embedded in the reworked *Liber miraculorum*, which already in its original form testified to the process of implanting the cult among the Polish elites. This reciprocity is what makes the cult of St Giles in Poland so striking.

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<sup>116</sup> On using and resolving conflicts in the Midi, see Geary, 'Living with Conflicts'.

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## 4. The Apostles and Ecclesiastical Elites in Medieval Iceland

### *A Gregorian Hermeneutic Turn in the Medieval North*

As elsewhere in Christian Europe, the apostles were very prominent in the religious landscape of medieval Iceland. Ranked in the top tier of the cult of saints, second only to the Virgin Mary, they were among the most depicted figures of Christian medieval iconography and their feast days were highly celebrated in the liturgical calendar. All around the Christian West, churches were devoted to the apostles, including some of the most important pilgrimage sites. In Iceland, the apostles, individually and as a group, were the patron saints of numerous churches.<sup>1</sup> Statues, tapestries, and other ecclesiastical ornamentation showed the apostles, emphasizing their power and glory and stories about them, hagiographic *sagas*, circulated in manuscripts around the country; these stories constituted an important element of the Christian religious discourse when the Roman Church was gaining ground in the country.

The growth of the Christian religion and the establishment of the Church in Iceland was an event of immense cultural, social, and political importance, and the apostles (as did the other ‘international’ saints accompanying the Church to the North) played an important part in the process. As elsewhere in the North, the establishment of the Christian religion in Iceland was a long-standing, gradual process which began with

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<sup>1</sup> For an overview, see Cormack, *Saints in Iceland*.

**Haraldur Hreinsson** • is Assistant Professor in the history of the Christian religion and religious studies at the University of Iceland. His research interests include the cultural history of the political and the study of historical secularities. He has recently published *Force of Words: A Cultural History of Christianity and Politics in Medieval Iceland (11th-13th cts.)*, Northern World, 90 (Leiden: Brill, 2021).

*The Cult of Saints and Legitimization of Elite Power in East Central and Northern Europe up to 1300*, ed. by Grzegorz Pac, Steffen Hope, and Jón Viðar Sigurðsson, Comparative Perspectives on Medieval History, 2 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2024), pp. 113–134

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informal exchanges between Christians and non-Christians through travel and commerce in the centuries leading up to the eleventh century when the first Christian institutions were formally founded. An indispensable element in the process was the introduction of literacy and the production of diverse Christian religious texts. As will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter, a sizeable part of the earliest Christian texts preserved from medieval Iceland are stories and homilies about the apostles; these survive in manuscripts which can be dated to as early as the middle of the twelfth century.<sup>2</sup> Given that these manuscripts are copies and sometimes even copies of copies, it can be assumed that the content was being translated and was in circulation at least some decades earlier.

In these first centuries of Christianity in Iceland, the figure of the apostle was entwined with social and political power and it is this aspect of the apostles which will be explored in this chapter. It focuses on the significance of religious discourses related to the apostles in a socio-political and socio-religious landscape undergoing the wide-ranging and long-standing change known as Christianization, with a particular emphasis on the development of the ecclesiastical elites. With a chronological focus on the twelfth century, it argues that religious discourses about the apostles provided an important discursive backdrop for the shifts which occurred in the composition of the ecclesiastical elites with the advent of the Gregorian reform in Iceland in the last quarter of the twelfth century. Until then, ordained chieftains, who had promoted the growth of the Christian religion in Iceland through a variety of means, had been an important group within the ecclesiastical elites. In the process of reform, the chieftains came to be distanced and excluded from the ecclesiastical elites in Iceland who in turn became more homogenized, consisting of men who had devoted themselves exclusively to a career within the Church.

## Historiographical Background and Important Terms

For a long time, scholarship on the Christian religion and the Church in medieval Iceland was not very interested in religion as such. Rather, scholars were preoccupied with the administration of the church as an institution, its organization, its relationship with the political system, and finances. The content of the religion has not enjoyed much attention from historians although this has been changing in recent years and decades.<sup>3</sup>

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2 Important manuscripts containing material on the apostles include AM 655 IX 4to, AM 645 4to, and AM 652/630 4to.

3 For recent contributions by historians, see for example Jón Viðar Sigurðsson, *Viking Friendship*, pp. 86–102 and Haki Antonsson, *Damnation and Salvation in Old Norse Literature*.

Central to how this history has been written is the figure of the chieftain. The chieftains (Icel. *goði*, *goðar*) were the most influential men in the country with power over people and land. Their power also extended to the Church itself, since the beginnings of Christianity in Iceland, the chieftains had had major influence on how the new religion was organized. And the new religion also had an impact on the power of the chieftains: 'the Christian religion was important for their power', as Jón Viðar Sigurðsson states in an article on the ideology of the chieftains and other rulers in medieval Scandinavia.<sup>4</sup> They built and owned churches and in the twelfth century there was a church on practically every chieftain's residence.<sup>5</sup> Gradually they gained control over other churches which lay within the proprietary church system that existed in Iceland.<sup>6</sup> The chieftains also controlled who would be nominated as bishops for the two Icelandic bishoprics and as a rule the bishops came from the chieftains' families. And to further add to the influence of the chieftains over the church in Iceland, a considerable number had been ordained. It has been customary in the historiography of medieval Iceland to speak of chieftain priests who ran their own form of chieftain church which has also been termed a chieftain church supremacy.<sup>7</sup> Corresponding terms from the Icelandic-language scholarship are *kirkjugoðar*, *goðakirkja* and *kirkjugoðaveldi*.

In the twelfth century, there were a considerable number of ordained chieftains, and they constituted a sizeable proportion of the total number of priests. As Orri Vésteinsson states in the most extensive study of the topic to date, 'towards the middle of the twelfth century significant numbers, and even a majority, of chieftains and aristocratic householders were ordained.'<sup>8</sup> At the beginning of the twelfth century, Orri Vésteinsson maintains it had become 'almost a norm' for chieftains to have their sons ordained and around the middle of the century, it seems to have become common that not only would the sons become priests, but the daughters would also marry priests or the sons of priests. As a result of such developments, the number of ordained chieftains increased significantly during the

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4 Jón Viðar Sigurðsson, 'Kings, Earls, and Chieftains', p. 91.

5 Jón Viðar Sigurðsson, 'Kings, Earls, and Chieftains', p. 91.

6 For the most thorough study of the Icelandic system to date, see Magnús Stefánsson, *Staðir og staðamál*. Versions of this system, the so-called *Eigenkirchensystem*, were common in Western Europe in the Early Middle Ages leading up to the Gregorian reform. For wide-ranging scholarly accounts of the subject, see Wood, *The Proprietary Church in the Medieval West* and, more recently, Patzold, *Presbyter*, where he gives more place to the episcopal power within the system than had been allowed for in earlier formulations, originally set forth by legal historian Ulrich Stutz in the 1890s.

7 Translations of terms are based on Orri Vésteinsson's, *Christianization of Iceland*.

8 Orri Vésteinsson, *Christianization of Iceland*, p. 187.

course of the twelfth century and reached a high point between 1150 and 1200.<sup>9</sup>

Previous scholarship has dealt extensively with the question of why the chieftains were willing to involve themselves so thoroughly in the operation of the new religion.<sup>10</sup> Scholars have striven to show how the chieftains managed to increase their social, political, and economic capital through their involvement. The Christian religion and the Church were a means to an end. It is rarely assumed that the Christian religion might have had a religious appeal. This chapter attempts to depart from the social and political reductionism which has characterized previous scholarship, and instead will take seriously the potential for the content of the religion to have been one factor which may explain the socio-political developments taking place in Iceland. One approach is therefore to consider that chieftains were authentically religious men, who were practising Christians, well-versed in the content of the Christian religion of eleventh- and twelfth-century Iceland.

This discussion links into the topic of the present volume insofar as the ecclesiastical elites in Iceland — bishops, abbots, and influential clerics — overlapped significantly with the political elites. It did not only consist of men who had solely devoted themselves to the Church. It also included chieftains who in addition to the religious authority had a great deal of secular power, if such a differentiation is in general applicable for the socio-religious context of eleventh- and twelfth-century Iceland. Thus, the ecclesiastical elites were diverse in the sense that the degree to which the Christian religion and affiliation to the church shaped the identity and social appearance of its members differed. It can be assumed, for example, that there was a considerable difference between bishops and abbots and ordained chieftains who were more involved in temporal affairs.<sup>11</sup> At the same time, bishops and abbots were by no means unimportant players in the political game, albeit not to the same extent or in the same way as the ordained chieftains. Furthermore, during this period there were also individuals who seem to have managed to represent the best of both worlds, as it were: chieftains with power over land and men who through their reputation for wisdom and erudition had a great deal of influence in

9 Orri Vésteinnsson, *Christianization of Iceland*, p. 190.

10 Sigurður Nordal, *Íslensk menning* 1, pp. 285–305; Jón Jóhannesson, *Íslendinga saga I*, pp. 178–80; Björn Þorsteinsson, *Íslensk miðaldasaga*, pp. 92–93; Magnús Stefánsson, 'Kirkjuvald eflist', pp. 60–62; Jón Viðar Sigurðsson, *Chieftains and Power*, pp. 185–94; Orri Vésteinnsson, *Christianization of Iceland*, pp. 85–92 et passim; Gunnar Karlsson, *Godamenning*, pp. 411–28.

11 There is no agreement amongst scholars as to how much priestly work was part of the daily routine of ordained chieftains and how many of their priestly duties were carried out by lower-class priests. All ordained clerics would, however, when needed, have possessed the minimal skills to keep up appearances in front of a congregation. For an overview of this discussion, see Haraldur Hreinsson, *Force of Words*, pp. 89–95.

the church.<sup>12</sup> Despite the apparent diversity of this group, and because of the conceptual ambiguity this diversity must have produced, for example with regard to distinguishing between religious and secular power, all members of the ecclesiastical elites were entitled to comparable strategies for legitimizing their authority through Christian religious discourse. As will become clear in what follows, towards the end of the twelfth century, this was going to change.

## The Apostles in Eleventh- and Twelfth-Century Iceland

The apostles were an important part of the Christian religion from its beginning in Iceland. The apostle Peter is explicitly mentioned in an eleventh-century skaldic poem — *Knútsdrápa* — by Sigvat Thordarson:

Rauf ræsir af  
Rúms veg suman  
kærr keisara  
klúss Pétrúsi.<sup>13</sup>

(The leader  
dear to the emperor,  
close to Peter,  
enjoyed some of the glory of Rome.)

In this part of the poem, composed in honour of King Cnut the Great (994–1035), the apostle Peter represents the Roman Church. Peter's close connections to Rome do not have to be explained in any detail here; one had only to be slightly familiar with the hagiographic discourses surrounding the apostle to know that Peter and Rome were inseparably linked. What should be highlighted, however, is that this is an early example of the idea that being on good terms with an apostle would confer glory upon the individual in question (in this case King Cnut). This was the glory of Rome, not only a place in the far distance, visited by well-off pilgrims, but a theological construct as the *caput mundi* and 'power-house' of the Christian world. As the first bishop and pope of Rome, Peter was the eternal city's figurehead.

When compared to other regions of Europe, there is nothing unexpected about the representation of the apostle Peter in the early Icelandic Christian discourse. He has all the traditional saintly attributes and the most important Petrine texts are preserved in the Icelandic manuscript

<sup>12</sup> Sæmundur Sigfússon the Wise of Oddi in Rangárvellir constitutes a prime example thereof.

<sup>13</sup> *Poetry from the Kings' Sagas* 1, part 2, p. 661.

tradition.<sup>14</sup> Peter was the leader of the other apostles, *princeps apostolorum* or ‘*hofðingi annarra postola*’ as he is described in the Old Icelandic *Saga of the Apostle Peter*. To him belonged the keys to the kingdom of heaven and the power to bind and loose. As is well known, according to the canonical gospel narratives, Peter can be read as a somewhat ambiguous figure, oscillating between faith and despair, fortitude and fear. In the Old Icelandic religious discourse, there is a tendency to emphasize the more ‘positive’ traits of faith and fortitude at the expense of the more ‘negative’ traits, fear and despair. For instance, in the Old Icelandic *Saga of the Apostle Peter*, the translator adds to the original Latin source text that by cutting the ear of one of the high priest’s servants in the garden of Gethsemane (Luke 22.50–51; John 18.10–11), Peter showed great fortitude (‘*syndi sva óruggleik sinn*’).<sup>15</sup> It can be argued that such characteristics were also likely to be received favourably in the eleventh- and twelfth-century Icelandic socio-political context — attracting the devotion of chieftains like Sturla Thordarson and others — where honour and revenge were important factors.<sup>16</sup> In any case, it seems clear that it was Peter who was the most prominent, individual apostle. In Iceland, he was the apostle to whom most churches were dedicated.<sup>17</sup> He was the patron or co-patron of seventy-eight churches around the country and in forty-five of these there was an image of him — a statue or a painting for example. In addition, there are records of images of Peter in twenty-two churches who were not specifically devoted to him.<sup>18</sup>

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14 Haraldur Hreinsson, *Force of Words*, pp. 162–65.

15 *Postola sögur*, p. 161.

16 The apostle Peter is said to have been Sturla Thordarson’s favourite at the end of *Sturlu þáttur*. *Sturlunga II*, p. 769. Although of a different source value than *Sturlu þáttur*, it can also be mentioned that in an episode from *Ljósvetninga saga*, Thorvarðr Höskuldsson’s intention of avenging his brother, is framed with reference to the apostle Peter and even his favour: ‘Ok verði nú sem Pétr postoli vill’ [Now let the will of apostle Peter be done]. *Ljósvetninga saga*, Íslenzk fornrit x, p. 103. For accounts of the place of honour and revenge in Icelandic medieval culture, see e.g. Miller, *Bloodtaking and Peacemaking*, pp. 189–220; Meulengracht Sørensen, *Fortælling og ære*, pp. 188–203; Nordal, *Ethics and Action*, pp. 70–73.

17 Around 1200, the total number of churches in the country had reached the number it would stay at throughout the Middle Ages: about 220–30 in the southern diocese of Skálholt and 90–100 in the northern diocese of Hólar. Orrí Vésteinsson, *Christianization of Iceland*, p. 93.

18 Margaret Cormack has pointed out that the sources show that an image of Peter is recorded in fewer churches than were devoted to him. This fact, Cormack speculates, could either point to the cult of Peter having been stronger in the early centuries of Christianity than later or that Peter’s position in the hierarchy of saints had led to more churches being devoted to him than corresponded to his actual popularity. Given the lack of sources, especially material sources, from this period it is difficult to deduce much from the statistical discrepancy from Cormack’s primary source material, i.e. the church charters (*máldagar*) and Peter was, in any case, one of the most prominent saints in the Iceland at the time. Cormack, *Saints in Iceland*, p. 30.

Despite Peter's prominence, there were of course other apostles who were also visible on the religious stage in medieval Iceland.<sup>19</sup> The three who were more prominent than the other apostles included John, Andrew, and Paul (Fig. 4.1). John was the patron or co-patron of thirty-one churches and his image is recorded in ten more. Furthermore, two churches are known to have been dedicated to 'John' although it is not known whether these particular churches were devoted to the apostle John or John the Baptist, whose cult was also widespread in the first three centuries of Christianity in Iceland.<sup>20</sup> Unsurprisingly, the apostle John seems to have been in many instances closely connected with Mary mother of Jesus. The two of them, Mary and the beloved disciple, were according to the passion narratives of the gospels present at the crucifixion, one of the most frequent motifs of religious art in the Middle Ages. The relationship between Mary and John is reflected in the fact that Mary and John were co-patrons of a considerable number of churches in Iceland.<sup>21</sup> The connection between these two saints is demonstrated by a poem, which honours the apostle John, written by the chieftain Kolbeinn Tumason (1173–1208) who was known for his devotion to the Virgin Mary.<sup>22</sup>

Many of the apostles are known to have been revered to a greater or lesser extent in Iceland but none like Peter and John. After them, Andrew and Paul were probably those who were best known. The cult of Andrew seems to have been well established in the north of Iceland and in the south-west in Árneshing. Andrew also figures in an interesting episode from *Sturlunga* which can be read as testifying to how hagiographic discourses relating to particular apostles could be used amongst laypeople outside ecclesiastical spaces. When experiencing difficulties falling asleep — probably due to fear and worry — the chieftain Hrafn Sveinbjarnarson asks for a poem about the apostle Andrew (*Andrésdrápa*) to be recited to him.<sup>23</sup> Granted that this reading took place at a particularly dramatic moment in *Hrafns saga Sveinbjarnarsonar* — Hrafn was killed that very night — one should be careful to not overestimate the historical value of such details in the narrative. Nonetheless it reflects the fact that people, in this case a lay chieftain, could be imagined and shown to turn to the reading of hagiographic material in their homes in times of difficulty, either read from a manuscript or recounted from memory. As for the apostle Paul, he was obviously well known as the author of the canonical epistles

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19 As for 'non-apostolic' saints popular in church dedications, the Virgin Mary was by far the most popular, outnumbering all other saints, including the apostles. The cults of Olaf Trygvason and Nicholas were also widespread.

20 Cormack, *Saints in Iceland*, pp. 109–12.

21 Cormack, *Saints in Iceland*, p. 114.

22 *Postola sögur*, pp. 511–12.

23 *Sturlunga I* (*Hrafns saga Sveinbjarnarsonar*), p. 242.



Figure 4.1. A statue of the apostle Andrew with the apostle's X shaped cross missing. The statue belonged to the church at Teigur in Fljótshlíð, Southern Iceland. Reykjavík, Þjóðminjasafnið. Thirteenth century. Photo courtesy of the National Museum of Iceland.

but his *cultus* was not extensive at all and his place in the cult of the saints was strongly connected to the apostle Peter. Other apostles who are recorded to have been revered in medieval Iceland are Bartholomew, James the Greater, Matthew, Thomas, and Matthias.<sup>24</sup>

While the cults of individual apostles remain an interesting and understudied topic of research *per se*, it is, however, not necessarily the most productive way to explain the socio-political significance of the apostles in medieval Iceland. The apostles were part of and enjoyed a central position in a consistent religious discourse which was being produced and diffused around the country. From such a perspective, the iconographical attributes and special characteristics of individual apostles are not as important as the characteristics the apostles have in common, i.e. the nature of their authority, its divine legitimation and the way in which the apostles exercised this authority when they encountered opposition. These characteristics which are common to the apostles (and other saints) constitute the way they are represented in the discourse as dominating figures invested with religious authority, of which historical agents in the Icelandic commonwealth could make use in various ways.<sup>25</sup>

The sources for this religious discourse are diverse but prominent amongst them are hagiographic and sermonic texts which can be taken as representative of how the Christian religion was being presented to the people living in Iceland in the eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth centuries.<sup>26</sup> These texts had been circulating in both Latin and Old Icelandic from an early stage in the Christianization process and in a country like Iceland where Christianity was still relatively young, such texts were very important for the growth of the religion. It was through encounters with the discourses contained in and derived from such texts — within but also outside the framework of the cult of the saints — that people would be introduced to the main tenets of the Christian religion as it was presented at the time. Scholars of medieval Icelandic culture have tended to assume that the audiences for these texts were restricted to ecclesiastical circles but

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<sup>24</sup> Cormack, *Saints in Iceland*, p. 29.

<sup>25</sup> In order to explain the socio-political weight of the apostles in the sense of dominating figures in medieval Icelandic culture, I have elsewhere made use of the feminist religion scholar Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza's critical theoretical model of kyriarchy. See Schüssler Fiorenza, *Power of the Word*. Instead of the Greek term *kyrios* used by Schüssler Fiorenza, I have chosen to adapt it to the Latinized linguistic environment of Western Christianity and refer to the position of the apostle in the power configuration of medieval Christianity as *dominus*. Haraldur Hreinsson, *Force of Words*, p. 55.

<sup>26</sup> Important manuscripts include the *Icelandic Homily Book*, Stock. Perg. 15. 4to, a collection of diverse religious but primarily sermonic texts dating to around 1200, and two collections of hagiographic texts where the so-called sagas of the apostles are preserved most intact, AM 645 4to and AM 652/630 4to.

there is good reason to believe that there was a much wider audience.<sup>27</sup> They were also produced in such numbers that they were bound to reach more people than, for example, any work of saga literature. Furthermore, bearing in mind that the content of many of these texts follows a very similar narrative structure which depicts their apostolic protagonists in a very homogenous way (described by earlier scholars as repetitive and tedious<sup>28</sup>) — especially when it comes to the hagiography of the apostles and other saints — it is all the more likely that it had an impact on the audience.

## The *Veldi* of the Apostles

Inherent to the religious discourse found in these sources was a particular configuration of power. This configuration consisted of several elements which cannot be explored in detail in this chapter.<sup>29</sup> One element, however, which needs particular attention for the present argument is the construction of a certain type of authority, i.e. apostolic authority, with a special emphasis on the Old Icelandic word *veldi*. By extension this authority could be applied to the authority of the representatives of the Christian religion, its ordained servants as well as the Roman Church as an institution. In the discursive framework of the hagiographic and sermonic texts mentioned above, the authority of the apostles not only consists of how they are represented as fearless emissaries of God who enter into every situation with the aim of overcoming any opposition either through conversion or other less peaceful methods. Their authority is legitimized through their special relationship with the divine and with reference to a particular religious doctrine (in Icelandic *kenning*) which can be traced to the teacher of the apostles, Christ himself (Fig. 4.2).

The power of the apostles is referred to in the Old Icelandic word *veldi* (also *veldi* and *veldde*) which can be translated as either power, authority or what belongs to or falls under someone's power or authority.<sup>30</sup> In the hagiographic and sermonic texts Latin words such as *potestas*, *dominatio*, *regnum*, and even *imperium* are translated as *veldi*.<sup>31</sup> Thus, in the context of religious discourse on the apostles, the word can have a broad range of meanings. It can denote the apostle's special powers to perform wonders

27 Haraldur Hreinsson, *Force of Words*, pp. 103–14.

28 Finnur Jónsson, *Den oldnorske og oldislandske litteraturs historie*, pp. 865–66.

29 For a more detailed account, see Haraldur Hreinsson, *Force of Words*, pp. 132–229.

30 Fritzner, *Ordbog over det gamle norske Sprog*, pp. 737–38.

31 For examples from relevant source texts for Old Icelandic sagas of the apostles, see, *Sanctuarium Seu Vitae Sanctorum 1*, pp. 142 and 144. The most thorough source critical analysis of these texts is Philip Roughton's dissertation, 'AM 645 4to and AM 652/630 4to: Study and Translation.'



Figure 4.2. A fragment of a wooden board from a church, probably in Flatatunga in Skagafjörður, Northern Iceland. It depicts two figures with halos, possibly Christ and an apostle. Reykjavík, Þjóðminjasafnið. Twelfth century. Photo courtesy of the National Museum of Iceland.

and other supernatural deeds which they received from God. More importantly for the purposes of this chapter, it can refer to the rather intangible notion of God's *power over* people as opposed to the Devil's power over people. In a political sense, furthermore, it can refer to the dominion of God as a polity or a body of ruled people in a way which is very similar to the political notion of the dominion of a king or a bishop. An example of this use of the word can be found in a speech of the apostle Bartholomew in *The Saga of the Apostle Bartholomew*:

Ok sva sem þu ser, at konungr stigr yfir ovin sinn ok sendir riddara sina ok liðsmenn i alla staði, þa er ovinr hans hafði velldi yfir ok leggr sitt mark ok eigu a allt, sva gerði ok Jesus Kristr, þa er hann ste yfir fiandann, at hann sendi oss i oll lond, at ver rekim a braut alla þiona djöfuls, þa er byggja i hofum og í skurðgoðum, en ver leysim menn or anaud þeira og fra velldi þess er yfir var stiginn.<sup>32</sup>

(And just as you have seen, when a king overcomes his enemy and sends his knights and troops to all the places over which his enemy had power, and places his sign of victory and ownership

<sup>32</sup> *Postola sögur*, p. 748. Translation in Roughton, 'AM 645 4to and AM 652/630 4to: Study and Translation', p. 763.

of everything, Jesus Christ did the same, when he overcame the fiend, for he sent us into all lands, that we should drive away all the servants of the devils that dwell in temples and in idols, and we free men from their misery and from the power of the one who was overcome.)

In this passage, the apostles are compared to the soldiers of a king who have been commissioned to expand the dominion of God around all countries of the world (*i all lond*). In the process, they would encounter resistance and disobedience which is also an important corollary of the application and execution of authority. In turn, those who do not succumb to it have to be accounted for in a way which makes sense within the religious discursive framework. Those who resist, as one can see in the passage above, are inspired by and under the control of the Devil, and have in the early Christian discourse the traditional attributes of the church's enemies: blind, stupid, and stubbornly clinging to old and outdated customs. Overcoming the resistance of the disobedient was central to the apostolic project of expanding the *veldi* of God.

This they did by means of the divine power given to them by Christ, as can be seen from the following passage from *The Saga of the Apostle Thomas*:

Heilagur, ósýnilegur, óskiptilegur guð, er sendir oss hið himneska ljós drottin vorn Jesúm Krist son þinn, en hann gaf oss postulum sínum það veldi, að vér græddum allar sóttir og gætum það allt, er vér bæðum guð föður í nafni hans sonar.<sup>33</sup>

(Holy, invisible, indivisible God, who sends us the heavenly light our Lord Jesus Christ your son, who gave to us his apostles the power to cure all ills and accomplish all that we ask God the Father in the name of his son.)

Also later in the same saga, it says that God gave them the 'veldi' for the sake of the son: 'Þú Guð, skapari allra hluta sýnilegra og ósýnilegra, er oss gafst það veldi fyrir son þinn ...'<sup>34</sup> (You, God, creator of all things seen and unseen, who through your son gave us the power ...).

In addition to the extent of the apostles' authority already mentioned, one should also not forget the geopolitical scope of the apostolic *veldi* which through the ecclesiastical hierarchy extended south to Rome. In the North, as in other marginal areas of the Christian world, the most important centres for the maintenance of the power were the metropolitan

33 *Postola sögur*, p. 718. Also in *Frá Sýrlandi til Íslands*, p. 302. Translation in Roughton, 'AM 645 4to and AM 652/630 4to: Study and Translation', p. 726.

34 *Postola sögur*, p. 723. Translation in Roughton, 'AM 645 4to and AM 652/630 4to: Study and Translation', p. 734.

sees. Until the beginning of the twelfth century, the closest one was the archiepiscopal seat of Hamburg-Bremen, the old centre of the Scandinavian mission, but in 1104, Norway, along with Iceland, Greenland, and the Northern Islands, was added to the administrative rule of the new metropolitan in Lund. It should be noted, that given the size of the archdiocese at this point, it was not possible for the church authorities to stay fully on top of things in the peripheral areas although there was some ongoing communication between Lund and Iceland, for instance.<sup>35</sup> During a visit of the papal legate, Nicholas Breakspear (later Pope Hadrian IV, 1100–1159, r. 1154–1159), the Norwegian church province was founded. From this point onwards, the geopolitical aspect of the apostolic *veldi* was brought even closer to the margins as archiepiscopal intervention in such regions would only increase. It is particularly important to bear this in mind in the next section of this chapter, where the introduction of the Gregorian reform in Iceland which was instigated by archbishops Eysteinn Erlendsson and Eiríkr Ívarsson is discussed.

As part of the ecclesiastical hierarchy, through his ordination, every cleric enjoyed a share in the apostolic authority which, as is thoroughly recorded in the medieval sources for early Christian discourse, was ultimately safeguarded by the apostle Peter, the first bishop of Rome, whose cult was, as noted, well established in medieval Iceland. *The Saga of the Apostle Peter* details the form of words used by Peter, when he left his office, to hand over his power to his successor Clement:

Fyrir því sel ek honum þat veldi, er guð gaf mer at leysa ok binda, ok hans atkvæði skal standa um alla kristni.<sup>36</sup>

(Therefore I give to him the power that God gave me to release and to bind, and his decisions shall stand throughout all of Christendom.)<sup>37</sup>

These words exhibit the religio-political dimension of the apostolic authority as it was being constructed in medieval Iceland. As Jan Assmann has pointed out, fundamental to the function of whatever authority is its point of origin, be it a place or a person.<sup>38</sup> As for the authority vested in the figure of the apostle, it had both a place and a person as a point of origin. The place (if not the only place, a very prominent one) of origin was Rome. And the person, of course, was the apostle Peter whose authority spread down the ecclesiastical hierarchy, channelled through the office of the pope, the earthly successor and *vicarius* of the apostle. This much is

35 See for example, Agnes S. Arnórsdóttir, 'Danske dronninger i de islandske sagaer', pp. 60–61.

36 *Postola sögur*, p. 181.

37 *Postola sögur*, p. 181.

38 Assmann, *Das kulturelle Gedächtnis*, p. 71.

clear from Sigvatr Thordarson's stanza cited earlier. And as evidenced by the passage above, Peter's *veldi* had no other limits than the boundaries of Christianity and, as can also be seen from the previous quotation from *The Saga of the Apostle Bartholomew*, these boundaries were supposed to expand into all countries of the world — *i oll lond* — until the entire world had been subsumed.

On this note, it is important to bear in mind the authority of the apostle as when it was formulated in the early Christian discourse in Iceland, it did not allow for any balancing or negotiation with other powers. It would not be tempered and not subordinated to any other authorities. The Church's discourse was also consistently repeating the idea that the Church as an expanding religio-political entity was bound to reach its zenith in an eschatological *imperium* of Christ.<sup>39</sup>

### The Gregorian Reform as a Hermeneutic Turn

Returning to the figure of the chieftain and his position within the Church in medieval Iceland, the above discussion of the apostles and the construction of authority in early Christian discourse can throw light on the tension-filled context in which the changes in that regard took place in the twelfth century. As noted, there were chieftains in Iceland who had devoted themselves to the church and who had received ordination and then there were also chieftains who were not ordained but were still pious Christians, favouring particular apostles and saints, and if they owned a church they were in all likelihood keen on maintaining a good relationship with the *kirkjudröttinn* of the farmstead, i.e. the church patron. In this light, it seems clear that many chieftains must have been very familiar with the content of texts such as the hagiographical writings and sermons relating to the apostles and other saints and, notwithstanding the performative function of such texts, must have participated in the reproduction of the central discursive themes contained within.

Despite such an emphasis on the religiosity of the chieftains as clerics or as closely affiliated with the church in other ways, it should be remembered that they were of course also the most powerful men in the country with much influence over the non-ecclesiastical sphere of society. Through their roles in the legislative and judicial system and as mediators in conflict, they were thoroughly engaged in the political wheeling and dealing of

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39 In the *Saga of the Apostle Bartholomew* Christ's eternal 'veldi' as described in *Postola sogur*, p. 748 is a translation of the Latin 'imperium', see 'ubi solum eius regnat imperium' from *Passio Sancti Bartolomaei Apostoli*, in *Sanctuarium Seu Vitae Sanctorum* 1, p. 142. For source critical observations, see Roughton, 'AM 645 4to and AM 652/630 4to: Study and Translation', 1, pp. 301–02.

Icelandic society. And even though the chieftains did not adopt the Christian religion *in order to* increase their authority in the non-ecclesiastical realm, it is correct, as scholars have pointed out, that it contributed to their authority and added to their glory. During this period, as Jón Viðar Sigurðsson states, ‘a new kind of chieftain emerged who legitimised his power with the help of the new faith.’<sup>40</sup> So far, however, the relationship between the chieftain’s power and the Christian religion has primarily been investigated with regard to the ways in which the institutional structures of the Church became politically and economically advantageous for the political elites. The content of the religion itself — for example, how the notion of authority or power was understood within the framework of the Christian religion as it was being presented in medieval Iceland and how that might have played into the chieftains’ authority — has not received much attention.

One reason for the limited attention given to such questions might be the lack of source material where such issues are directly addressed. It is not known exactly how ordained chieftains understood their power, particularly as regards a differentiation between the religious and secular spheres. It is also unclear if it was understood very exactly. One should, for example, be wary of applying notions of Christian kingship to the power of the Christian chieftain in Iceland. One historian of medieval Iceland has stated that ‘the division between religious and secular power was vague.’<sup>41</sup> In her book on the proprietary church system in the medieval West, Susan Wood states that ‘ambiguity, fuzziness, and even paradox may bring us closer to the proprietary church than logic or legal analysis.’<sup>42</sup> On a similar note in a discussion of the relationship between the Church and the king in the early Middle Ages, Gerd Althoff emphasizes the importance of an indifference towards ambiguity by which he means the lack of clarity and plurality of meaning with which central principles, customs, and rules were treated in this period.<sup>43</sup>

What is clear, however, is that there were discourses being produced, reproduced, and diffused in which this relationship was quite clear, namely as they appear in hagiographic and sermonic texts related to the apostles and other saints. The conceptualization was not necessarily very elaborate; on the contrary, it was relatively simple, but it was clear. They make an uncompromising claim for the authority — ultimate authority even —

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40 Jón Viðar Sigurðsson, *Chieftains and Power in the Icelandic Commonwealth*, p. 189.

41 Sverrir Jakobsson, ‘The Territorialization of Power in the Icelandic Commonwealth’, p. 112.

42 Wood, *The Proprietary Church in the Medieval West*, p. 739.

43 Althoff, ‘*Libertas ecclesiae* oder die Anfänge der Säkularisierung im Investiturstreit?’, p. 86. With the concept of ‘indifference towards ambiguity’ (G. Ambiguitätsindifferenz), Althoff seems to be inspired by a similar concept, i.e. ‘tolerance towards ambiguity’, developed by Islam scholar Thomas Bauer (G. Ambiguitätstoleranz). See Bauer, *A Culture of Ambiguity*.

of the representatives of the Christian religion and the Church as an institution. As devoted Christians, the chieftains knew such discourses well and those who were ordained had a justified claim to an authority which boosted their power as members of the ecclesiastical elites and the political as well.

In the last quarter of the twelfth century, this situation began to change. A shift began to occur in Icelandic church politics as ideas inspired by the Gregorian reform reached Icelandic shores. Until then, the relationship between the religious and political authorities had, as elsewhere in Europe before the Church had begun to claim its liberty from secular rulers, been characterized by *pax* and *concordia*, peace and harmony. This equilibrium was sustained and made possible to a considerable extent by the general indifference towards ambiguity as rulers went about their activities and operations, which is often difficult to categorize as either political or religious.<sup>44</sup> It is likely that the chieftains in Iceland profited from this vagueness in a similar way. From the late 1170s, the archbishops of Nidaros, Eysteinn Erlendsson and later Eiríkr Ívarsson, who until then had not involved themselves in any way in Iceland, sent a series of letters demanding obedience to their authority: as a result the peaceful cooperation between the religious and the secular began to crumble. These letters were sent in support of the local bishop of Skálholt, Þorlák Þorhallsson, who seems to have been the first to consciously advocate for the *libertas* of the Church and against the chieftain church supremacy although the details of his demands remain debated.<sup>45</sup> What is clear, however, is that after these skirmishes, at the end of the twelfth century, the participation of chieftains in the church and as part of the ecclesiastical elites faced restrictions. The ownership of churches by the chieftains had become a problem and the demands for moral reforms resulted in the refusal to permit chieftains to be ordained.

What should be emphasized is that the shift taking place at this point, beginning in the late 1170s, should not only be described as an ecclesiastical political shift coming from above and far away. It was also, and no less importantly, a hermeneutic shift, and this hermeneutic shift was grounded in the discursive landscape which had come into being through the church's production of texts, for example hagiographic and sermonic texts. In their letters, the archbishops introduced both their demands and a particular hermeneutic framework for understanding the discourses of the Christian religion as it was being presented in medieval Iceland. What the chieftains had allowed to remain ambiguous was now in the process of being clarified — on the initiative of the Church authorities in Nidaros.

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44 Althoff, 'Libertas ecclesiae oder die Anfänge der Säkularisierung im Investiturstreit?', p. 85.

45 Orri Vésteinsson, *Christianization of Iceland*, p. 119.

This hermeneutic framework was of course largely shaped by themes and rhetoric which had been part of the Church reform from the beginning and which are encountered already in the writings of Popes Leo the IX and Gregory the VII, for example on apostolic authority, *primatus Petri* and the demand for obedience.<sup>46</sup> What these letters also contain is a particular construction of the other, the enemies of the church, who are described as arrogant — full of *superbia* that is — stubborn, and stuck in ancient customs — *fyrnska*. Those who are described in such a way in the Old Icelandic hagiography on the apostles are arch heretics like Simon Magus and cruel emperors like Nero. In the letters of the archbishops, it is the Icelandic chieftains who find themselves in the role of disobedient heretics, and who are described in the same way.

The hermeneutic shift directed the spotlight to themes in the religious discourse which were bound to specify the nature of the power that the chieftains had been enjoying as ordained servants of the church. This component of the archbishops' message should not be underestimated and it is likely that Bishop Thorkel was arguing along the same lines as his superiors in Nidaros. For example, the topic of authority was explicitly brought up by Archbishop Eysteinn in a letter dated 1180. In the letter, the archbishop begins by addressing the chieftains and proceeds to expound on the notion of authority and how misled and careless the chieftains have been in employing it:

Sprvtt hofvm vier þat vellde er gud hefur ydur gefit yfer þui folke er land þetta bygger. og af þui þikivmzt ver vita j hverre abyrgd þier ervt vit gvd bundner. er hverr á sinne viskv at svara. og þa skyn fyrri at giallda. at engi er kostur leidrettingar. og er fyrri þui hverivm rad vit at taka at kostgæfast medan volldin hefur j hendi. vitvm vier at hier ero vittret menn j landi þessv. og væri þa sanvittret. Ef þat stad tæke vitzka þeirra. vit þeirra rædu er Gvds lóg kunna. og vitv ydra misferd. og er þeim mal hættazt er sina misferd sia og annarra og mecgu leidretta.<sup>47</sup>

(We have heard of the power given to you by God over the people who live in this country and have come to learn about the responsibility with which you are bound to God, a responsibility which demands from everybody a prudent response and a requital of good sense because a later amendment is not an option. Therefore, everybody should be advised to perform diligently while holding the power. We know that there are wise men in this country, and they would be truly wise if their wisdom would be susceptible to the message of those who have knowledge of God's

<sup>46</sup> Tierney, *Crisis of Church and State*, pp. 31–73.

<sup>47</sup> *Diplomatarium Islandicum* 1, p. 262.

laws and realize your wrong doing. And in this case the most liable are those who see one's own misdeeds, and those of others, and are capable of correcting them.)

As can be read in this passage, the archbishop acknowledges the great power the chieftains held over the people of Iceland. He also carefully emphasizes that this authority is given to them by God so they cannot go about with it as they like as they seem to have been doing in Archbishop Eystein's opinion — a little later in this letter the archbishop compares their reckless behaviour to that of livestock (*lifet bufiar life*). The main point, however, in this opening passage is simply to convey to the chieftains that they did not understand the nature of the power they held and furthermore, that their misunderstanding had to be corrected by those who know better and adapted to a proper understanding, i.e. as postulated by the church authorities.

Interestingly for the present argument, this letter provides clear information about its addressees. The chieftains who now found themselves on the dark side of the Church are named in the letters and all of them were in one way or the other connected with the Church.<sup>48</sup> The best known was Jón Loptsson (d. 1197), the renowned chieftain of Oddi who was also an ordained deacon. Later sources described him as a man who had good knowledge of the clerical arts and church music. He bore the name of a saint, John, and one medieval source tells that he was planning to build a monastery in name of John the Baptist.<sup>49</sup> Other named chieftains are Ormr Jóansson (d. 1191), an elderly chieftain who had become a monk; Oddr Gizurarson (d. 1180), an ordained chieftain from the Eastern Quarter; Gizurr Hallsson (d. 1206), for many years a lawspeaker but who spent his old age at the Skálholt episcopal seat; and Bödvar Thordarson (d. 1187), the owner of a chieftaincy in Gardar in Akranes and the son of a priest. As can be seen from the addressees and the nature of their relationship with the Church and the Christian religion, these men were all 'good Christians', to come back to a question posed (and answered) by Régis Boyer in 1994.<sup>50</sup> They were well acquainted with the Christian religion and consequently the writings about the apostles and other saints. Through their knowledge of such texts and their rhetoric, all these men would have understood the turn of the tides marked by the message of the archbishop and the consequences of opposing it.

48 *Diplomatarium Islandicum* 1, p. 262.

49 *Biskupa sögur* II (Oddaverja þátr in Þorláks saga B) *Íslenzk fornrit* XVI, p. 180.

50 Boyer, 'Were the Icelanders Good Christians, According to the Samtidarsögur?', pp. 111–22.

## Concluding Remarks

In the last decades of the twelfth century, as the letters from the archbishops of Nidaros show, the Icelandic chieftains were being forced to acknowledge that their position in the hierarchy of the Church was not comparable with the social hierarchies of their Commonwealth. In this exchange, they were confronted with the practical reality of the institutional structures of the Roman Church and the limits they imposed on their power. Through the hermeneutic shift taking place in this period, which happened through the highlighting of discursive themes embedded into the early Christian religious discourse, it was made clear that they were not entitled to use the same strategies to legitimize their power that the conceptual ambiguity of the previous centuries had permitted.

The Gregorian hermeneutic turn in Iceland, at the northernmost margins of the Christian world, was brought about through powerful rhetorical strategies like the call for obedience and the hereticizing of the disobedient which would have been unintelligible if not for the religious discourse that had been mass produced and spread via texts such as the apostolic sagas. The chieftains were, in this light, being convinced with religious arguments, reasoning, and power structures which they knew well. They were, after all, shaped by these same religious discourses.

Coming back to the tendency in the historiography of medieval Iceland to see the history of Christianity first and foremost in political and economic terms, it must be conceded that things would probably have played out differently if the only arguments acceptable to them were grounded in *Realpolitik* and economic gain. Though it was not without push-back or conflict, it gradually dawned upon the chieftains that they could not continue to make use of the Christian religion for their own political aims in the same way as before. Without a doubt, they would still maintain a fair degree of influence over the Church but no longer as part of the ecclesiastical elites.

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## 5. From St Florian to St Stanislaus\*

### *The Legitimization of Ducal and Episcopal Power in Kraków in the Late Twelfth and Early Thirteenth Century*

#### Introduction

'Below them rests a third martyr, namely St Florian, yet him, fearful of the inhabitants of Rome, I dare not touch, and more so give away, since he performs more miracles than those two others' — the pope is said to have told the Polish emissaries when they arrived to collect the body of the martyr.<sup>1</sup> The relics of St Florian were brought to Kraków in 1184, thanks to the efforts of Kazimierz II the Just (High Duke in the years 1177–1191) and Gedko (Gedeon), the bishop of Kraków (1166–1185) with the mediation of the legate Giles, and brought about a marked improvement in Kraków's position within a fragmented Poland. But before the cult of the new patron saint could properly spread within the country, a significant rival appeared on the horizon — the former bishop of Kraków St Stanislaus (Stanisław).

\* The research leading to these results has received funding from the Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2014–2021 (2019/34/H/HS3/00500). This chapter is part of a joint research project of the University of Warsaw and the University of Oslo 'Symbolic Resources and Political Structures on the Periphery: Legitimization of the ELITES in Poland and Norway, c. 1000–1300'.

<sup>1</sup> 'Tertius subter utrumque requiescit sanctus Florianus, quem pre timore Romanorum tangere non audemus, quia ille pluribus, quam istorum uterque, coruscet Rome miraculis', *Translatio sancti Floriani*, pp. 755–62; cf. Gacka, 'Literackie przejawy', p. 176 (Polish translation).

**Karolina Morawska** • is Research Assistant at the Faculty of History, University of Warsaw and in the Tadeusz Manteuffel Institute of History of the Polish Academy of Sciences. Her research interests include social history in the Middle Ages, with a special emphasis on sexuality, married life, clerical celibacy, and prostitution, as well as narrative of marriage and virginity in hagiography.

*The Cult of Saints and Legitimization of Elite Power in East Central and Northern Europe up to 1300*, ed. by Grzegorz Pac, Steffen Hope, and Jón Viðar Sigurðsson, Comparative Perspectives on Medieval History, 2 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2024), pp. 135–158

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10.1484/M.CPMH-EB.5.137534

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The success of the latter, canonized in the mid-thirteenth century, stopped the cult of St Florian spreading and to a large extent caused its disappearance for many years.

The purpose of this chapter is to analyse the translation of St Florian and the beginnings of his cult in medieval Poland (from the 1180s onward) from the perspective of the legitimization of the ducal power of Kazimierz II the Just in Kraków — one of the most important centres of power at the time. We shall also attempt to answer the question of why the cult of St Florian waned so rapidly. Was it so weak that it was merely a question of time, or did it perhaps encounter obstacles it was unable to overcome? In order to answer the latter it will be necessary to take a closer look at the figure of St Stanislaus, bishop of Kraków, whose cult was promoted mostly by ecclesiastical circles, while the translation of St Florian was — as I aim to prove in this chapter — the result of ducal efforts and his cult was strongly connected to ducal power.

Historical sources tell us relatively little about the translation of the saint and the spread of his cult in Poland. The first information we have appears in annals. The existence itself of the cult of St Florian is attested in the pages of *Chronicle* of Vincent Kadłubek (Master Vincentius) from the turn of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, but it does not provide any detailed information on the relics of the martyr brought to Kraków. Jan Długosz, when writing his *Annals of the Famous Kingdom of Poland* (*Annales*) from 1450s to 1470s at the court of Kazimierz IV Jagiellon, described the circumstances of St Florian's translation and the reception of the martyr in Kraków. A quite detailed, yet somewhat less than credible source is the *Translatio sancti Floriani*, written the most probably in the fourteenth century. But when examining the issue of St Florian, we should certainly start with these sources.<sup>2</sup>

The issue of the arrival of St Florian's relics in Kraków appears on the margins of the works of several Polish scholars. Generally, this is in relation to the circumstances surrounding the arrival of the patron saint and his reception in Poland. Yet almost none of these scholars have considered the reception of Kadłubek's *Chronicle* among those close to the ducal court, or on his quite telling silence concerning St Florian and his translation to Kraków (the chronicler mentions only his feast). The motives of the rulers trying to obtain this translation were analysed, yet the reasons

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<sup>2</sup> On the figure of St Florian and the translation of his relics to Kraków: see Dobrowolski, *Dzieje kultu*; Ulicki, *Święty Florian*. Gacka, 'Literackie przejawy', Kuzmovà, 'The Old and the New'. The books of Józef Dobosz are also incredibly helpful when studying this cult: *Działalność fundacyjna, Monarchia i możni, Kazimierz II Sprawiedliwy*; useful information on the position of Kraków in the twelfth century: Wyrozumski, *Kraków do schyłku*; see also Wyrozumski, 'Skąd pochodził'.

behind Kazimierz II the Just's attempt to obtain the remains of a foreign patron saint were not fully examined. These issues will be examined in the following sections.

## Advent of a Patron Saint to Kraków

'In response to these words uttered by the pope, we know not whether seriously or in jest, an outstretched hand appeared from the tomb in which the body of the venerable St Florian had been laid to rest, who exhorted, indicated, pointed and by extending his hand signified that he be given to the Poles and the cathedral in Kraków'— such a miracle, as described by Jan Długosz, was supposed to confirm the acceptance by the saint of his bodily remains being gifted to the Poles.<sup>3</sup> By extending his hand, Florian was supposed to have indicated his desire to be sent to Poland. This allowed Giles, the bishop of Modena, to send the relics to Kraków, where the new protector was received with great honours and joy by Duke Kazimierz II the Just, Bishop Gedko, and the populace.<sup>4</sup> This is how Długosz described the translation, yet to discover the genesis of the events which took place in 1184, it is necessary to refer to older sources. Nearly all the Polish annals list the transfer of St Florian's relics to Kraków. The date oscillates between 1183 and 1197. Yet the most credible information would seem to be contained in the *Annals of the Kraków Chapter* (*Rocznik kapituły krakowskiej*), of which a copy written in 1267 is preserved.<sup>5</sup> Because of the place and date of its creation, which is that closest to the events, we consider it the baseline for determining the date.<sup>6</sup> The fact that nearly all narratives note the participation of Gedko, the bishop of Kraków, in the translation of the relics would also indicate 1184, since we know he died in 1185. That is also the same year in which the Cistercian abbey in Koprzywnica, dedicated to St Florian, was founded. Jan Długosz provides the precise date of the arrival of the relics in Kraków — 27 October 1184. We cannot be certain where he obtained this information, but we can suppose he found it in an old calendar inscription.<sup>7</sup> Inscriptions in the annals are very similar to each other, nearly all repeat the version in the *Annals of the Kraków Chapter*, which leads us to believe that it must have

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<sup>3</sup> 'Ad quam vocem, serione an ioco, incertum est, a summo pontifice prolatam, ex tumba, in qua corpus sacrum beati Floriani conditum erat, manus protensa summo pontifici vocitantis, designantis et indicantis se apparuit, donarique Polonis et ecclesie Cracoviensi huiusmodi manus protensione corpus suum signavit', Jan Długosz, *Ioannis Długossii Annales*, VI, p. 135.

<sup>4</sup> Jan Długosz, *Ioannis Długossii Annales*, VI, p. 135, VI, p. 135.

<sup>5</sup> *Rocznik kapituły krakowskiej*, p. 65.

<sup>6</sup> Dobrowolski, *Dzieje kultu*, p. 9.

<sup>7</sup> Dobrowolski, *Dzieje kultu*, p. 9.

formed the basis for all these accounts. According to its entry, in 1184 ‘saint Florian, holy martyr, was brought [to Kraków] by Giles, bishop of Modena, and welcomed most devoutly by Gedko, bishop of Kraków.’<sup>8</sup>

### Political Context of the Translation: Rivalry between Kraków (Lesser Poland) and Gniezno (Greater Poland)

‘Whatever we could say about the reasons for the translation, one thing is true — we shall discover the motives in the socio-political rights applicable in medieval Europe’ — wrote Bogusław Ulicki when analysing the circumstances which led to the transfer of the *corporis sancti Floriani*.<sup>9</sup> The possession of relics was of great importance to the urban centres of the time. According to what the inhabitants of medieval Europe believed, saints were meant to act as intermediaries in their contacts with their Creator and also inspire them through their example.<sup>10</sup> They also possessed the power to heal and perform miracles, which was in extremely high demand. The resting places of relics were pilgrimage destinations for the faithful from all around Poland, which in turn stimulated the development of urban centres. The possession of the whole body of a martyred saint was seen as particularly significant, yet even the presence of small fragments of it in a given place played an important role in ensuring divine support and favour.<sup>11</sup> As a generous benefactor of the Church, Kazimierz II the Just, during whose principate the relics of St Florian were brought to Poland, fitted perfectly within the standards of his era. He undertook extensive initiatives for the benefit of the Church, and many references have survived which indicate that the duke made many endowments for the salvation of his own soul and those of his loved ones.<sup>12</sup>

In mid-twelfth-century Poland, there was a marked increase in the tendency to own holy relics. According to Józef Dobosz ‘it is certainly on the back of precisely this phenomenon that the idea of bringing the relics of some saint to Kraków appeared’, although he rightly adds that the exact motives for bringing a patron saint to Poland should be considered much more broadly.<sup>13</sup> In 1145, Peter Włostowic presented the Benedictine abbey in Olbin (Wrocław) with relics of St Vincent of Lérins received from the

8 ‘Sanctus Florianus martir per Egidium episcopum Mutinensem apportatur et per Gedkonem episcopum Craco[uiensem] devotissime suscipitur’, *Rocznik kapituły krakowskiej*, p. 65; see Dobrowolski, *Dzieje kultu*, p. 11.

9 Ulicki, *Święty Florian*, p. 22.

10 Ulicki, *Święty Florian*, p. 30.

11 Dobosz, *Kazimierz II Sprawiedliwy*, pp. 192–93; cf. Michałowski, *Princeps fundator*.

12 Dobosz, *Kazimierz II Sprawiedliwy*, p. 192.

13 Dobosz, *Działalność fundacyjna*, p. 149.

Conrad III, king of Germany.<sup>14</sup> Shortly after, Werner, the bishop of Plock, attempted to introduce new cults. Returning in 1165 from a diplomatic mission to the court of Frederick Barbarossa, during which he took part in the canonization of Charlemagne, he returned to Plock with relics of St Henry II, who had been canonized twenty years earlier, and which had been given to him by the emperor. It is possible he also returned with the head of St Sigismund, yet there is a lack of evidence which could confirm his veneration in Poland before the fourteenth century.<sup>15</sup> In Werner's case, it is worth pointing out an additional motive: the cults of saints he promoted had an evident pro-imperial overtone, in the context of papal–imperial struggles of the period. Between the 1150s and 1180, there was a disruption in the contacts between the Polish Church and the Holy See, due to the close links between the Polish dukes and the Empire, which supported the popes backed by the emperor, opposing Alexander III after his election in 1159. The arrival of the remains of Henry II (and possibly St Sigismund) took place in this time period. The point was therefore to promote the veneration of new saints backed by the Empire. However, everything would seem to indicate that these cults never attained any significant popularity within the Polish territories. The possibility of closer links between the Polish Church and the Papacy only appeared after Frederick Barbarossa's defeat against the Lombard League and the end of the papal schism in 1178.<sup>16</sup>

When examining the arrival of St Florian's relics, it is also difficult not to consider the emerging rivalry between Kraków, the capital of Lesser Poland and Gniezno, the capital of Greater Poland — and, consequently, the question of the legitimization of its rulers' power — in the second half of the twelfth century. In his work, Krzysztof Skwierczyński devoted much space to the conflict between Mieszko III the Old, who represented Greater Poland, and Kazimierz the Just, who controlled Lesser Poland. He added that 'the manifestation of this rivalry would be the Gniezno Doors and the rebirth of the cult of St Adalbert on one side, and on the other, the importation of the body of St Florian and later efforts to have Bishop Stanislaus canonized.'<sup>17</sup> Józef Dobosz is of a similar opinion, remarking that both Bishop Gedko, who took part in the events linked to the translation, and Duke Kazimierz must have been interested in creating

14 Starnawska, *Świętych życie po życiu*, p. 74.

15 Deptuła, *Niektóre aspekty stosunków*, pp. 47–52, 60–63; Rojewski, 'Zarys dziejów kultu'; Starnawska, *Świętych życie po życiu*, p. 597.

16 Szczur, 'Referat z sesji naukowej poświęconej 1700-leciu śmierci St Floriana, zorganizowanej na Uniwersytecie Jagiellońskim 15 kwietnia 2004 r.' <<https://www.swflorian.net/index.php/historia/swiety-florian/okolnicznosc-sprowadzenia-relikwii-sw-floriana-do-krakowa>> [Accessed 13 August 2022]; Starnawska, *Świętych życie po życiu*, pp. 75, 238.

17 Skwierczyński, *Recepcja idei gregoriańskich*, p. 240.

a counterbalance to the cult of St Adalbert in Kraków.<sup>18</sup> Gedko strove to increase the importance of Kraków, as well as that of its bishop within the Polish Church. Meanwhile, Kazimierz's position was constantly threatened by Mieszko the Old's ambitions and pretensions.<sup>19</sup> The cults of saints were therefore used to counterbalance the renewed cult of St Adalbert radiating from Gniezno. Gniezno lost its central role when the crisis within the Piast monarchy broke out in the 1030s. When rebuilding the Piast monarchy after its downfall, Kazimierz I the Restorer concentrated his activities on Kraków. The city started to play an important role from then on, which is attested by numerous events which took place there during his rule.<sup>20</sup>

However, Kraków only achieved prominence over the other provincial capitals because of the statute of succession created by Bolesław III Wrymouth, which officially made Kraków the place directly connected to the power of the High Duke. It would soon transpire that within the new order created by Bolesław, possessing Kraków would become much more important than dynastic seniority. After Mieszko the Old was overthrown in Kraków, which was equivalent to defying the principle of seniority, Kazimierz II the Just assumed the authority of the high duke, and he was recognized as such throughout Poland, as attested by the synod of Łęczycza in 1180. Jerzy Wyrozumski supposes that if the decision to accept the principate of Kazimierz II the Just was really taken during the synod, then the dukes of the various Polish provinces also had to have taken part in it. The importance of Kraków grew tremendously at that point.<sup>21</sup> In light of the events listed above, the attempts by the bishops of Kraków to gain an advantage over Gniezno would seem justified. However, it would also seem that Duke Kazimierz could have had other, equally strong motives pushing him to bring these holy relics to Poland. This could have been a move to prevent the potential growth of the cult of St Stanislaus and the idea of having him canonized, which might already have been present in the minds of the members of the Kraków cathedral chapter. But we shall examine the probability of this hypothesis later on.

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18 Błażej Śliwiński agrees with part of Dobosz's conclusions. He emphasizes the political motives and Kazimierz's desire to match his elder brother as the main reasons behind bringing the relics of St Florian to Poland. He adds that before turning to a foreign saint for help, Kazimierz had tried to employ the cult of St Adalbert for his own purposes; Śliwiński, 'Na marginesie działalności'; see also Dobosz, *Działalność fundacyjna*, p. 177.

19 Dobosz, *Działalność fundacyjna*, p. 149; see also Starnawska, *Świętych życie po życiu*, p. 50.

20 See Wyrozumski, *Kraków do schyłku*, pp. 92–108.

21 Wyrozumski, *Kraków do schyłku*, p. 113.

## The Translation as Described in the Sources

A question might arise as to whether the Polish side was interested in obtaining a specific saint. Let us refer to the account of Jan Długosz at this point: according to the chronicler, Pope Lucius III, wishing to accede to the constant requests of Duke Kazimierz, decided to give him the body of some holy martyr. The donation of the body was approved by a miracle manifested by God:

Pope Lucius, according to an old tale which has reached even our times, having entered the chapel hiding the bodies of many martyrs, asked who among the saints resting there wished to be transferred to Poland. In response to these words uttered by the pope, we know not whether seriously or in jest, an outstretched hand appeared from the tomb in which the body of the venerable St Florian had been laid to rest, who exhorted, indicated, pointed and by extending his hand signified that he be given to the Poles and the cathedral in Kraków. Pope Lucius, admonished by this miracle revealed to him then, immediately donated the body of the holy martyr to the Poles and to Kraków Cathedral.<sup>22</sup>

From the account above it transpires that no specific body was requested from the pope, and that the selection of Florian was determined by the saint himself, as confirmed by the miracle described. The first legation about obtaining the relics of a saint for Kraków was sent to Pope Alexander III in 1181. At the time, the pope promised Kazimierz to accede to his request, yet it took until Pope Lucius III for this promise to be fulfilled.<sup>23</sup> On what did Długosz base his account of the transfer of St Florian's relics? According to Józef Dobosz, he used sources which are unknown to us today.<sup>24</sup> It is quite improbable that he would have used a tale, the *Translatio sancti Floriani*, about the transfer of the relics, which most probably dates from the fourteenth century and is preserved in three divergent versions.<sup>25</sup> Although some scholars consider the *Translatio* to be a purely literary and legendary tale, it constitutes a definite link between Długosz's work and the lost documents which he used, since it is most probably older than the *Annales* and describes the events around the transfer of St Florian's

22 Jan Długosz, *Ioannis Długossii Annales*, VI, pp. 134–35.

23 The position of the new pope was quite critical, since he urgently needed funds for his war against Rome. We know that he asked England, Bohemia, and the emperor for financial assistance, did he also ask Poland? It is possible this was one reason to give one of the saints resting in the catacombs to the Poles; see Dobrowolski, *Dzieje kultu*, p. 23.

24 Dobosz, *Działalność fundacyjna*, p. 43.

25 Dobrowolski, *Dzieje kultu*, p. 107. On the dating of *Translatio*: Gacka, 'Literackie przejawy', pp. 173–81; Starnawska, *Świętych życie po życiu*, p. 141.

body to Kraków in a relatively detailed manner.<sup>26</sup> Two relatively similar versions from Lesser Poland recount a friendship between Gedko, the future bishop of Kraków, and Lucius, the future pope, initiated during their studies together in Padua; they were supposed to have promised each other that whoever achieved a prominent position first would support the other. When his friend became pope, Gedko asked if he would give him the body of a saint. The pope acquiesced to his friend's request, and secretly went with the Polish envoys to the Basilica di San Lorenzo fuori le mura, outside Rome, where he used his crozier to touch the bodies of Laurence and Stephen, who turned their faces away as a sign of refusal. The pope then explained to the Polish envoys that apart from these two saints, the basilica also contained the body of St Florian, whom he was reluctant to touch, fearing the anger of the people of Rome.<sup>27</sup> At that moment, St Florian extended his hand, holding out a card with the words 'I want to go to Poland'. This miracle was interpreted as the saint agreeing to his translation, so the pope secretly gave him to the Poles. This account is consistent with that of Długosz, since according to his account, the selection of Florian was not the result of an effort to secure a specific saint, but rather the outcome of the martyr's consent.

But before accepting the idea that there were no precise expectations in Kraków as to the identity of the new patron saint as the version of what happened which was closest to the truth, let us first consider the actual provenance of the relics brought to Poland in 1184. It is certain that St Florian's remains could not have come from Rome, as the *Translatio* relates, since Pope Lucius III spent almost all of his papacy (1181–1185) exiled from Rome due to a conflict with its inhabitants. He initially stayed in Campania, then in northern Italy. In 1184, the presence of the pope is attested in Florence and Bologna, as well as in Modena (from 12 July). Could the Polish delegation have therefore found him in one of those cities and brought back the relics from there? In Italian sources, the name of St Florian appears for the first time in 550, on a list of relics in Ravenna. Significantly, St Laurence and St Stephen appear on this same list. Meanwhile, the provinces of Ravenna and Aquileia are the centres of the oldest cult of St Florian in Europe.<sup>28</sup> The remains could also have come from Bologna, where the relics of many saints were found in 1141 in the church of San Stefano (including those of St Florian). However, as Maria Starnawska writes, the skull of the saint was still being venerated

<sup>26</sup> Dobosz, *Działalność fundacyjna*, p. 38.

<sup>27</sup> 'Ecce, filii, videtis divinam voluntatem; hic habemus insignes martires duos, quorum unum voluimus dare vobis, qui hoc renuerunt. Tercius sub utroque horum requiescit, videlicet sanctus Florianus, quem per timore Romanorum tangere non audeo neque dare, quia ipse pluribus choruscat miraculis quam alter horum', *Translatio sancti Florianiani*, p. 758.

<sup>28</sup> Dobrowolski, *Dzieje kultu*, p. 14.

in fourteenth-century Bologna, as if it had never left the city.<sup>29</sup> This could serve to confirm the trustworthiness of the *Translatio*, according to which Lucius III had sent the relics to Kraków in secret. Either the inhabitants of Bologna were ignorant of the saint's absence, or the fact that the remains of the saint had been sent to Poland had faded from their memory.<sup>30</sup> From this analysis, it emerges that the relics brought back to Kraków came from northern Italy, most probably Bologna. It is therefore likely the pope gave the envoys of Duke Kazimierz the relics stored in one of the churches in the city where the Polish delegation had encountered him.<sup>31</sup>

## The Beginning of St Florian's Cult: A Time of Glory

After analysing the circumstances surrounding the transfer of St Florian's relics to Kraków, the question arises of how the new patron saint was received in his new resting place. Jan Długosz describes the splendid welcome: according to his *Annales*, Florian was received with great honour, amidst signs of universal joy and festivity by Duke Kazimierz, Bishop Gedko of Kraków, all the provinces and monasteries without exception, who came out to meet him seven miles from the city. The body was brought to the cathedral in a multitudinous popular procession and laid to rest there. Moreover, Bishop Gedko built him a church of exquisite workmanship outside the walls of Kraków.<sup>32</sup>

According to Kazimierz Dobrowolski, Długosz's colourful account of the official welcome is not based on an unknown source, but rather on the conviction that it could not have been any different — a new patron saint, who was supposed to protect the city from then on, had arrived in Kraków, and was supposed to act as an intermediary with God and ensure that campaigns against the enemy were more successful.<sup>33</sup> Part of the relics were taken to Kraków Cathedral and placed in the main altar, becoming the tomb of the martyr and the oldest place of pilgrimage in the Kraków diocese. The aforementioned church outside the walls of Kraków is the collegiate church of Kleparz, consecrated in 1185. It is worth reminding ourselves that in the Middle Ages the seats of ecclesiastical institutions were surrounded by a ring of churches that were supposed to protect the inhabitants from both physical and spiritual dangers. Church

29 Starnawska, *Świętych życie po życiu*, p. 141.

30 On the provenance of St Florian's relics, see also: Starnawska, *Świętych życie po życiu*, p. 141.

31 According to the author of the *Translatio*, the relics were supposed to have travelled by ship from northern Italy to Poland, which is not credible for reasons of geography. However, the transport of relics by ship is a conventional element of translation tales, requiring its own explanation; on this subject see Starnawska, *Świętych życie po życiu*, pp. 282–83, 312.

32 Jan Długosz, *Ioannis Dlugossii Annales*, VI, pp. 135–36.

33 Dobrowolski, *Dzieje kultu świętego Floriana*, p. 30.

founders wanted to ensure the divine protection of urban centres through the careful positioning of the churches. The ideal arrangement, which is found in some instances, was a cross shape composed of a central church, which was itself surrounded by four additional ecclesiastical foundations.<sup>34</sup> The locations of St Florian's relics fit perfectly into this pattern: from our perspective, the Kleparz church had a particular significance precisely because the church was *ex civitate*, which was indicative of an exceptional cult. This was probably the joint effort of Gedko, the bishop of Kraków, and Duke Kazimierz.<sup>35</sup> St Florian's shoulder was placed in the Kleparz church. From the calendar inscriptions, we learn that from the moment of the translation on 4 May this date was celebrated as a *festum fori* — an obligatory feast not just for the church, but for society as a whole, indicating a deeply held veneration. Another factor which confirms the great importance of the new patron saint is the spread of his cult beyond Kraków Cathedral. We have already mentioned the founding of the Kleparz church, yet it would be impossible to fail to mention the abbey in Koprzywnica dedicated to St Florian, founded in that same year 'by Duke Kazimierz of Poland' — at least this is how the foundation was described by Jan Długosz. However, it is probable that contrary to his account, the founder of the abbey was *comes* Nicholas.<sup>36</sup> Where does the chronicler's error come from? It would seem that the Cistercians themselves preferred to see their founder as a member of the ruling dynasty, in particular since he displayed great generosity towards them.<sup>37</sup> Even if we consider that the abbey in Koprzywnica was founded by Nicholas, the participation of Kazimierz II the Just in its foundation cannot be doubted. Although the oldest document issued for Koprzywnica contains no information about its patrons, the privilege granted by Bolesław V the Chaste in 1268 clarifies the matter somewhat. St Florian's name first appears in a diploma in 1277, yet according to Kazimierz Dobrowolski his primacy as patron is certain. Cistercian monasteries never changed the patron assigned to them during their foundation.<sup>38</sup> The monastery must therefore have been consecrated to the new patron saint from the very beginning, in accordance with the words of Jan Długosz: 'he also built a church of hewn stone and saw to it that it was dedicated to the newly-arrived martyr.'<sup>39</sup> Part of St Florian's relics were transferred to the church, which shows how strongly his cult

34 Skwierczyński, 'Custodia civitatis', p. 3; Skwierczyński, 'Santi e città in Polonia', pp. 409–31.

35 Dobrowolski, *Dzieje kultu*, p. 39.

36 'Anno eodem monasterium Coprzywniczense in Cracoviensi diocesi per Casimir Polonorum ducem fundatum et dotatum est et fratribus Cisterciensibus consignatum', Jan Długosz, *Ioannis Długossii Annales*, VI, p. 138.

37 Dobosz, *Działalność fundacyjna*, p. 78.

38 Dobrowolski, *Dzieje kultu*, pp. 36–38.

39 'fabricavitque ecclesiam quadro lapide, eamque sancto Floriano martiri, novo hospiti, procuravit dicari' Jan Długosz, *Ioannis Długossii Annales*, VI, p. 138.

initially expanded — we are witnessing here the creation of its new outpost. It is therefore clear that the initial stage of the veneration of the new patron saint was an era marked by splendour. This is hardly surprising, considering the fact that Kraków had never had its own patron saint before, while Florian to Poland was brought in response to the great demand for the relics of saints. Initially, the cult was local in nature, with Kraków Cathedral, where his tomb was located, at its centre, and then it spread to the churches in Kleparz and Koprzywnica.<sup>40</sup> But the feast of St Florian, celebrated with an octave, was obligatory for the entire diocese from the very beginning.

A further manifestation of St Florian's success in Poland was the acceptance of his cult by the population; this is particularly evident with the inclusion of Florian on the list of thirteenth-century Polish baptismal names. As Jan Długosz writes, 'from that time onwards Poles, knights and burghers and peasants, in honour and memory of St Florian, began to baptize their sons with this name.'<sup>41</sup> This clearly demonstrates the fame achieved by the new patron saint, in particular since his name had been unknown in Poland until that time. Kazimierz Dobrowolski analysed the methods used by the Church for choosing Christian names. He points out that the choice of a name was guided by love and veneration for the patron saint, since that saint was supposed to play the role as a special protector. Significantly, the name Florian only began to be used after the saint was brought to Poland.<sup>42</sup> This is a further argument to substantiate the hypothesis that the new patron saint gained substantial recognition within Polish society.<sup>43</sup>

Dobrowolski also notes a diploma from 1220, in which Bishop Iwo approves tithe endowments for the monastery of the Canons Regular in Mstów. The diploma shows that the bishop and chapter had gathered to carry out legal duties 'before the altar of St Florian'. As Dobrowolski points out, since these acts took place before the greatest saint of the cathedral, this testifies to Florian's elevated position. It is also significant that this detail is of a chronicled, incidental nature — it is therefore likely that similar acts regularly took place in front of St Florian's tomb.<sup>44</sup>

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40 Dobrowolski, *Dzieje kultu*, p. 45.

41 'Ab eoque tempore in sancti Floriani decus et memoriam ceperunt Poloni tam militares quam civiles et agrestes filios suos in baptisate huius nominis appellatione insignire', Jan Długosz, *Ioannis Długossii Annales*, VI, p. 135.

42 Dobrowolski, *Dzieje kultu*, p. 53.

43 It is important to mention the two urban features which were given hagiotoponyms after St Florian in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries: St Florian's Gate, mentioned as early as 1307, and St Florian's Street. see Kolpak, 'Rola patronów', p. 185.

44 Dobrowolski, *Dzieje kultu*, pp. 47–48.

## St Stanislaus: The Rise of a Rival Cult

Unfortunately for the newly transplanted cult of St Florian, the appearance of yet another patron saint did not take long. The year 1253 is seen as the milestone in the prominence of Florian's cult, because this is when Stanislaus, the former bishop of Kraków, was also made a saint.<sup>45</sup> His energetic promotion by the clergy pushed Florian aside. The local population began to intensively venerate the tomb of the new saint.<sup>46</sup> In one of her studies, Danuta Borawska hypothesizes that 'we find incontrovertible traces of the cult of St Stanislaus only after St Florian was brought to Poland and his cult did not take hold [...] after the unsuccessful attempt with the foreign Florian, the ecclesiastical circles in Kraków chose a martyred Pole and former bishop of Kraków'.<sup>47</sup> This finding reduces the translation of St Florian to a failed experiment.<sup>48</sup> A fundamental question therefore needs to be answered: was St Florian's cult really so weak that it spontaneously became extinct, or is it more likely that it faced an obstacle it could not overcome, namely St Stanislaus? If we accept the second possibility, it is worth asking what the subsequent development of the cult would have looked like, had it not been hindered. To answer these questions, it is necessary to take a closer look at the development of the cult of St Stanislaus. The first account of the conflict between the bishop of Kraków and King Bolesław II the Generous which resulted in the bishop's death, can be found in the work of Gallus Anonymus, but there are no precise details concerning this bishop, not even his name. The chronicler wrote his work around thirty years after Bolesław's reign (1076–1079), so we might therefore be entitled to expect an account. Gallus evidently avoided providing the details of this conflict and the circumstances surrounding Bolesław's banishment from Poland, stating that these events *longum existit enarrare*. The chronicler only mentions that Bolesław should not have, whatever the sin, punished Stanislaus corporally ('non debuit [...] corporaliter vindicare'). Yet he did so, condemning the bishop to have his extremities cut off for his treason.<sup>49</sup>

45 For the circumstances of the canonization of St Stanislaus: see Kuzmová, 'The Old and the New'. Regarding the cult of St Stanislaus see also: Rożnowska-Sadraei, *Pater Patriae*; Kuzmová, *Preaching Saint Stanislaus*.

46 Dobrowolski, *Dzieje kultu*, p. 66.

47 Skwierczyński, *Recepcja idei gregoriańskich*, p. 240; see Borawska, *Z dziejów jednej legendy*.

48 Dobosz, *Kazimierz II Sprawiedliwy*, p. 198: 'the cult of the new saint was quickly taken over by Cistercian institutions, yet whether it fully met the expectations of those promoting it should be doubted'.

49 'Qualiter autem rex Boleslaus de Polonia sit eiectus, longum existit enarrare, sed hoc dicere licet, quia non debuit christus in christum peccatum quodlibet corporaliter vindicare. Illud enim multum sibi nocuit, cum peccato peccatum adhibuit, cum pro traditione pontificem truncacioni membrorum adhibuit. Neque enim traditorem episcopum excusamus, neque regem vindicantem sic se turpiter commendamus, sec hoc in medio deseramus et ut

The chronicler thus did not deny the king the right to punish the rebellious bishop.

Vincent Kadlubek (Master Vincentius) provides a much more detailed account of the conflict between Stanislaus and Boleslaw II the Generous, introducing the concept of a sudden transformation of the ruler. It is in his *Chronicle* that Stanislaus appears as a martyr for the first time: Kadlubek mentions the revolt by the serfs who, taking advantage of the prolonged stay of the king in Rus', took over the properties of the lords, cohabited with their wives and daughters, and then even declared war on those coming back from the campaign. Both the rebels and the unfaithful wives were cruelly punished. Stanislaus, described as *sacerrimus* (most sacred), tried to dissuade Boleslaw from his cruel designs, threatening him with a curse, in response to which the king ordered the bishop to be taken from the church, yet the servants were unable to fulfil his demand, since each time they tried to pounce on Stanislaus, they fell to the ground in remorse. Finally, the impatient king killed the bishop by his own hand and hacked his body into tiny pieces.<sup>50</sup> This detailed description was most probably modelled on the account of the death of Thomas Becket, the archbishop of Canterbury, whose conflict with King Henry II was widely discussed at the time of the creation of Kadlubek's *chronicle*. Becket's residence was invaded by four of Henry II's knights, whom the archbishop welcomed by assuring them that he did not fear death: he then went to the cathedral. The knights ran in after him, and when Becket refused to lift Henry II's excommunication, they pounced on him and cut him to pieces with their swords. Only a few months later, in the second half of 1171, the process of Becket's canonization started in Rome. After his canonization in 1173, his cult spread rapidly throughout all of Europe. It is nearly certain that the description of the Stanislaus's martyrdom was inspired by the Thomas Becket affair. In both stories, the conflict with a ruler is the core of the cult.<sup>51</sup>

The development of the cult of St Stanislaus marks the era of the gradual decline of that of St Florian. Kraków Cathedral became the main centre of the veneration of its bishop, with the cults of all other saints being pushed onto the sidelines. For the second half of the thirteenth century, the following main feasts are recorded for Kraków Cathedral: the anniversary of the death of its patron, Stanislaus; the feast of its other patron saint, Wenceslas; the day of the church's consecration and the *anniversarium* of St Florian. These were all *festas fori*. Additionally, for the

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in Ungaria receptur fuerit, disseramus'; Gallus Anonymus, *Galli Anonymi cronicae*, p. 53.

English translation see Gallus Anonymus, *Gesta principum Polonorum*, book 1, 27, p. 96.

<sup>50</sup> Vincent Kadlubek, *Magistri Vincenti*, pp. 56–59 Skwierczyński, *Recepcja idei gregoriańskich*, pp. 193–95.

<sup>51</sup> Skwierczyński, *Recepcja idei gregoriańskich*, pp. 238–42.

feast of St Stanislaus, a twenty-day indulgence was recorded for those visiting his tomb. Significantly, the feast of St Florian no longer had an octave at the time (the chapter calendar does not mention it).<sup>52</sup> Sometime later, his celebration became a *festum semiduplex* — the term used for the feasts of cults of lesser importance.<sup>53</sup> Florian was thus no longer considered a patron saint of the cathedral, while Stanislaus was described as *patronus noster celerrimus*. As a result of the subsequent regulations, 4 May even lost its status as a *festum fori*. Kazimierz Dobrowolski notes that St Florian, a foreign martyr, did not stand a chance on Polish soil against such strong competition as the former bishop of Kraków. The figure of Stanislaus fulfilled all the criteria to become Poland's patron saint. First of all, he was Polish and a former bishop of Kraków. Secondly, there was a legend celebrating his life. It is also significant that all the noble lineages that claimed kinship with the bishop could participate in the development of his cult.<sup>54</sup>

But nothing linked Florian to the place where he was venerated. Additionally, it is not certain whether any *passio* was known.<sup>55</sup> It is understandable that due to the circumstances in which the pope gave away the relics of St Florian, no legend exalting his martyrdom may have reached Kraków. Yet it is worth asking if any *vita* was in fact written after the transfer of his remains. The demand for it must have been enormous. The *vita* played an essential role in a cult, as well as in liturgy, it would therefore be somewhat strange if no one in Poland had attempted to write a *passio* of St Florian. Jerzy Wyrozumski was surprised that Jan Długosz, who apart from chronicling Polish events wrote biographies of bishops and saints, did not attempt to write a life of St Florian. Wyrozumski wrote that 'for Długosz the empiricist, the complete lack of any historical material in this regard must have weighed in.'<sup>56</sup> A complete lack of a *passio*, even a short one, created for the purposes of liturgical use, is hard to imagine though. We therefore should not exclude the possibility that a legend was compiled within the Kraków community, and was then lost, possibly as a result of the canonization of the new patron saint of Poland.<sup>57</sup>

52 Dobrowolski, *Dzieje kultu*, p. 71.

53 Separating feasts into *festum duplicia*, *semiduplicia* and *simplex* aimed to order them. It appears in Bishop Nanker's statute in 1320. The point was to quantify the veneration each saint was entitled to; Dobrowolski, *Dzieje kultu*, p. 78.

54 Dobrowolski, *Dzieje kultu*, pp. 67–74.

55 A *vita* of a St Florian only reached Poland in the first half of the fourteenth century; see Dobrowolski, *Dzieje kultu*, p. 100.

56 Wyrozumski, 'Skąd pochodził', p. 57.

57 According to the newest findings by Miłosz Sosnowski, a thesis about the lack of *passio* is not entirely true; due to his comparison of the handwritten copies of Florian's *passio*, Sosnowski convincingly demonstrated that some legend describing Florian's life was brought to Poland between 1184 and 1270s (paper in preparation).

The reason why Master Vincentius was so eager to first spread the cult of St Stanislaus and then to have him canonized does not seem complicated to grasp. The cult of Kadłubek's predecessor in the Kraków bishopric was the ideal way to distinguish the city from the other Polish bishoprics, which had been the goal of the cathedral chapter for a long time (and which had earlier led to the importation of St Florian's relics). Their efforts were finally rewarded when Urban III issued a special bull in 1186 guaranteeing the Kraków Church first place after the archbishopric, and the bishop of Kraków the right of precedence over all other Polish bishops.<sup>58</sup> Yet it is possible that the gradual emancipation of the Polish Church from ducal power was a more important factor than the rivalry between Kraków and Gniezno. Skwierczyński notes this, adding that the canonization of St Stanislaus was made possible by the success of the Gregorian reform in Europe and its gradual acceptance in Poland. Thus, the improvement in the position of Kraków's clergy contributed to the posthumous victory of Bishop Stanislaus.<sup>59</sup>

It is necessary to question why Master Vincentius remains silent on an event of the importance of the bringing of St Florian's relics to Kraków. Taking into account his part in the promotion of St Stanislaus, it seems unlikely that he would have shown any scepticism towards saints in general. We should assume that the most probable answer to Kadłubek's silence on the subject of St Florian was his desire to further propagate the cult of St Stanislaus. Mentioning a great achievement by another saint, such as St Florian's translation and his formal reception in Kraków, would undoubtedly have provided competition for the cult of St Stanislaus, which Kadłubek probably wished to avoid. It is puzzling, however, that the chronicler allowed himself to omit such an important piece of information. And what must have been even more glaring, to present Bolesław II the Generous, the ancestor of the reigning duke after all, as the cruel murderer of a saint.

The only mention of the cult of St Florian in Kadłubek's chronicle, and an indirect one at that, concerns Kazimierz's attitude towards the saint. The duke was an ardent adherent of the cult of St Florian. After his return from the expedition against the Yotvingians, 'he dedicated all of St Florian's day to the Lord, spending it in worship, prayer and thanksgiving.'<sup>60</sup> The entire court took part in the festivities, as well as Pelka, the bishop of Kraków and Vitus, the bishop of Płock. The fact that the feast of St Florian

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<sup>58</sup> Wyrozumski, 'Skąd pochodził', p. 53.

<sup>59</sup> Achieving the canonization of St Stanislaus proved quite difficult, since at the turn of the thirteenth century, the Holy See was promoting the figure of the bishop as a good shepherd, while that of the martyr, killed in the struggle against secular authority, had already become outdated; Wyrozumski, 'Skąd pochodził', pp. 245–46.

<sup>60</sup> Dobosz, *Działalność fundacyjna*, p. 150.

was chosen as the day to give thanks shows the high regard in which the saint was held. The banquet itself was postponed until the next day, as the feast of St Florian was supposed to be serious and purely devotional in nature.<sup>61</sup> Unfortunately, St Florian soon lost this impassioned benefactor of his cult, since on 5 May 1194, the day after the devotional festivities in his name, Duke Kazimierz died during the banquet, in what were rather mysterious circumstances.

It does not seem probable that Kadłubek's silence concerning a saint venerated by Kazimierz II the Just with such fervour would have met with his approval. In fact, perhaps this was not the case at all, taking into account the sudden interruption of the work on the chronicle in 1208, which some scholars have suggested may be explained by Kadłubek's promotion to the bishopric of Kraków.<sup>62</sup>

In order to discover the court's version of events, it is necessary to take another look at the account of Gallus Anonymus. Although it is quite laconic, it should be considered trustworthy since Gallus wrote it around thirty years after the reign of Bolesław II and the eyewitnesses to these events were quite probably still alive. The memory of the trial and death of the bishop of Kraków must still have been vivid. But Gallus does not end his account of Bolesław II the Generous with the ruler's death. The next chapter is devoted to Duke Mieszko, the exiled king's son. The description of the young duke's funeral would seem to indicate the great esteem with which he was held in Poland. It seems evident that the chronicler also shows great sympathy towards him. It is possible that Władysław I Herman, Bolesław II's brother, who obtained the throne after him, initially saw his nephew as his successor, since he recalled him from Hungary and married him to a Rus' princess. According to Gallus, unspecified enemies had the youth poisoned, since they were afraid that he would avenge the wrongs done to his father.<sup>63</sup> It would therefore seem that Bolesław II's enemies, who may have been instrumental in his exile, were still in Poland and feared his son's revenge.<sup>64</sup> It is very probable that these *unspecified enemies* were the rebels who led to the king's exile. Therefore, the idea that two separate traditions existed at the turn of the thirteenth century is convincing: one was nurtured by the cathedral chapter and led to the canonization of Stanislaus, while the other must have existed within the court milieu.<sup>65</sup>

Master Vincentius is considered to be the main propagator of the saint's cult, yet the epitaph on the tomb of St Stanislaus demonstrates that

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61 Dobrowolski, *Dzieje kultu*, p. 33.

62 Dobosz, *Kazimierz II Sprawiedliwy*, p. 216; Dobosz, *Monarchia i możni*, p. 315.

63 Gallus Anonymus, *Galli Anonymi cronicae*, p. 53.

64 Skwierczyński, *Recepcja idei gregoriańskich*, pp. 120–21, 131.

65 Skwierczyński, *Recepcja idei gregoriańskich*, pp. 196–200.

the fame of his sainthood already existed within the Kraków cathedral chapter even before the creation of the *Chronicle*. Jan Długosz provided us with the contents of the epitaph: ‘This grave contains the remains of the blessed Stanislaus. Since he could not accept the impious deeds of King Bolesław, he departed for the heavenly palaces, which he deserved through his martyrdom. Fortunate he, for whom God is the reward, and heaven his home.’<sup>66</sup> Why would Kazimierz have tried to import an unknown, foreign patron saint, since the Church circles in Kraków already had a legend of a local bishop’s sainthood? Perhaps the development of the cult of the bishop of Kraków was inconvenient for the duke, since he might have taken part in the revolt against Kazimierz’s ancestor and his intervention could have played a major role in Bolesław II’s banishment, while his milieu was, according to all available evidence, hostile to the ruler. After his unfortunate conflict with Stanislaus, the figure of Bolesław II was not reviled in the least within court circles. Several facts point to this: firstly, from an inscription in the *Calendar* of the Kraków chapter<sup>67</sup> (created just after the canonization of St Stanislaus), which for 3 April shows ‘Bolesław, king of Poland, who established bishoprics in Poland, died’, we can see that in Kraków Cathedral, prayers were held each year for the soul of King Bolesław, the presumed murderer of the saint. This was also the case in several Benedictine abbeys, probably due to the king’s largesse towards the order. Secondly, it is probable that Władysław I Herman, the brother of the king who died in exile in Hungary, also brought back his remains when he sent for his nephew, Mieszko, c. 1086.<sup>68</sup> A further argument is provided by the fact that Władysław Herman named his son Bolesław — like his great-grandfather Bolesław I Chrobry (the Brave), and his exiled uncle. After bringing back Mieszko, son of Bolesław, Władysław Herman arranged his marriage and possibly gave him his own province. This all suggests that Herman had a benevolent attitude towards his brother. Those around him evidently remembered Bolesław as a ruler worthy of respect and prayer, not as the murderer of the bishop of Kraków. Bolesław’s black legend was maintained by his enemies, those who poisoned Duke Mieszko.<sup>69</sup>

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66 ‘Tumba Stanislaus cineres tegit ista beati, / Regis Boleslai quia non favit impietati / Martirio meritas celi migravit as aedes / Felix, cui deistas merces, cui sidera sedes’, Jan Długosz, *Vita sanctissimi Stanislai*, p. 157. Translated from Polish by Michał Hamerski, Polish translation from: Plezia, *Dookoła sprawy*, p. 102.

67 Skwirczyński, *Recepcja idei gregoriańskich*, p. 202.

68 After being brought back to Poland, the remains of Bolesław II the Generous were probably laid to rest in the Tyniec church, in the place reserved for the church’s founder. It is thought that after the canonization of St Stanislaus, they were exhumed and transferred elsewhere; see Skwirczyński, *Recepcja idei gregoriańskich*, p. 204.

69 Skwirczyński, *Recepcja idei gregoriańskich*, pp. 205–06.

We thus have numerous reasons to believe Kazimierz II the Just did not share the opinion of Kraków's ecclesiastical circles as to the sainthood of Bishop Stanislaus and that the steps he took to import the relics of a foreign patron saint were aimed at limiting the spread of his cult. Kraków would obtain its patron saint, who would fully fulfil its need for a holy protector, while also limiting the aspirations of the members of the cathedral chapter, which is in all likelihood what the duke wanted. Marian Plezia and Jerzy Wyrozumski emphasize these aspirations.<sup>70</sup> The latter notes the fact that the intentions of people such as Matthew, the bishop of Kraków, or John, the archbishop of Gniezno, can be divined from the epitaph of St Stanislaus.<sup>71</sup> Yet contrary to the intentions of Florian's rival's adherents, the cult of the imported martyr failed to completely die out, even while the cult of St Stanislaus continued to spread. The continuity of the cult was attested, if somewhat unintentionally, in a work that aimed to glorify St Stanislaus, the *Vita maior*, as well as in the *Miracula sancti Stanislai*. The creation of both texts is directly linked to the canonization of the bishop of Kraków. Jerzy Starnawski dates the *Vita maior* to around 1251–1261.<sup>72</sup> Its creation is linked to the sending of a representative of the Holy See to Poland, the Franciscan Jacob of Velletri, to examine the miracles of Bishop Stanislaus. The *Vita maior* (an expanded version of the earlier *Vita minor*) is attributed to Vincent of Kielce/Kielcza.<sup>73</sup> The third part of the *Vita maior*, *Miracula sancti Stanislai*, contains the miracles attributed to St Stanislaus. For our purposes, the most pertinent tale is the miracle concerning the girl whose lips had become paralysed, which is present in both sources.<sup>74</sup> She had come to Kraków on St Florian's feast day, to beg him for help. Yet she was only healed when she had made her way to the tomb of St Stanislaus. Evidently, apart from underlining the healing powers of Stanislaus, the author also attempted to sow doubt about Florian's abilities. But at the same time, he demonstrated the continued existence of his cult. The sick girl first went to St Florian's grave, which demonstrates that people saw it as a miraculous place, one of pilgrimage. This confirmation of the spread of the cult throughout society shows its continued success. Therefore for us, it is not really significant that Florian could not heal her. The fact that she sought his help, in the first place, is significant in and of itself.

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70 'Some signs of the early cult of St Stanislaus were most probably visible earlier in the circles of the Kraków cathedral', see Wyrozumski, 'Skąd pochodził', p. 54.

71 Plezia, *Dookoła sprawy*, p. 103.

72 See Starnawski, *Drogi rozwojowe*.

73 Starnawski, *Drogi rozwojowe*, p. 35.

74 *Miracula sancti Stanislai*, p. 305.

## Conclusions

Based on the above analysis, it is impossible to agree with the view that the cult of St Florian was unsuccessful in Poland and that its disappearance was only a matter of time. It is also hard to accept that this experiment with an unknown, foreign saint was a failure and that it would have stopped expanding, even without competition from St Stanislaus. In propagating the cult of the imported saint, the ruling duke played a significant role. Shortly after the translation, several ecclesiastical foundations were consecrated to St Florian. Finally, we also know that his cult found its place within society, through children being named after him and in the numerous pilgrimages to his tomb, as well as the belief in his powers of healing. Florian's cult would surely have grown deeper roots in Poland and spread extensively, if it had not been dampened so early on to make room for his competitor, the former bishop of Kraków. The foreign saint could not compete with such a rival, in particular after the death of one of his most fervent protectors — Duke Kazimierz. A very noticeable aspect of the attempt to suppress St Florian's cult was the choice of 8 May — an octave after St Florian's feast — as that used to celebrate St Stanislaus.

After years of relative neglect, the cult of St Florian flourished again in the fifteenth century, thanks to the efforts of Zbigniew Oleśnicki, bishop of Kraków (1423–1455). The fourth article of Oleśnicki's statute in 1436 was reserved exclusively for St Florian. In it, the bishop and his chapter decided to make the veneration of the 'famous martyr and our patron saint' equal to that of St Stanislaus. By virtue of this, 4 May was included within the *festā duplicia* and begun once again to function as a *festum fori* within the whole diocese, not just in Kraków.<sup>75</sup> Florian's feast also regained its previously removed octave. Florian was included among the main patron saints of Poland, alongside St Stanislaus, St Adalbert, and St Wenceslas.<sup>76</sup> The fact that in the mid-fourteenth century a *vita* of some undetermined Florian reached Poland and began to be identified with the martyr buried in Kraków must also have played a significant part in the rebirth of his cult. It is estimated that this legend was written in the mid-thirteenth century. Its main protagonist, Florian of Noricum, is conscripted into the army of the Roman Emperor Diocletian (284–305); during Diocletian's persecution of the Christians, Florian decides to join

<sup>75</sup> Dobrowolski, *Dzieje kultu*, pp. 92–93.

<sup>76</sup> Oleśnicki's increased efforts to promote the cults of saints is well attested. He sought to have both a Dominican, Jacek, as well as Bishop Prandota canonized. He also introduced the feasts of Cyril and Methodius as patron saints and apostles of the kingdom. Furthermore, during his time the cult of St Stanislaus became deeply rooted among Poles and the fear that some rival could supplant him finally faded; see Dobrowolski, *Dzieje kultu*, p. 94; Kołpak, 'Rola patronów', pp. 182–83, Kołpak, *Kult świętych patronów*; cf. Koczerska, *Zbigniew Oleśnicki*, p. 268.

them, for which he is sentenced to death in 304. His body was thrown into a river, but was soon found and buried by Valeria, a Roman matron. Numerous miracles and instances of spontaneous healing then began to occur near its resting place. This legend became very popular. It was linked to several Florians, each without their own *vita*. The bodies of other Florians identified with Florian of Noricum were buried in Venice, Vicenza, Bologna, Westphalia, and Münster. The Florian who had been brought to Kraków also came to be identified with Florian of Noricum. In the first half of the fourteenth century, the centre of his cult (Sankt Florian, near Linz) rose in prominence and became painfully aware of the absence of the body of its patron, to whom the monastery owed its fame. The idea arose that the Florian resting in Kraków might in fact be the correct one. His relics thus need to be recovered, and so Albrecht von Waldkirchen (von Aschach) travelled to Poland twice in 1323–1324, most probably bringing with him a copy of *Passio Floriani*.<sup>77</sup> Although he failed to obtain the relics, from that time onwards, Sankt Florian and Kraków maintained contacts. For the first time, Albrecht's mission drew the attention of Kraków's clergy to the possibility that Florian of Noricum and the one buried in Kraków could be one and the same. In this way, the *vita* of a foreign saint, who came to be identified with the martyr resting in Kraków, came to be popular.<sup>78</sup> The revival of the cult of St Florian is also evidenced by the fact that from the fourteenth century onwards, the Kleparz settlement began to be called Florentia. It is thought that King Kazimierz III the Great (d. 1370) chose this name to strengthen the martyr's cult.<sup>79</sup>

As I have attempted to show, the importation of St Florian's relics to Poland at the end of the twelfth century should be examined within the context of the legitimization of the power of the elites and the strengthening of individual centres of power. The fact that Kazimierz II the Just attempted to have this translation arranged at the exact moment that his greatest opponent, Mieszko the Old, ruled Gniezno is certainly not without significance. The rivalry between these two nearly equal centres of power could not fail to leave its mark on religious matters: in other words, if Kraków aspired to rise above Gniezno and legitimize the power of the high duke, it could not do so in the absence of a patron saint.<sup>80</sup> Since St Florian's cult was a 'ducal' one, strongly connected with ducal power and to some extent legitimizing it, a question might arise as to why the sources

77 Dobrowolski, *Dzieje kultu*, pp. 97–99; Sosnowski, 'Oryginalność i wtórność', pp. 526–27.

I would like to thank Miłosz Sosnowski for his remarks about St Florian's *passio* — his paper devoted to this issue in preparation.

78 Ulicki, *Święty Florian*, p. 53.

79 The legend of Florian of Noricum is included in Jacobus de Voragine's *Golden Legend*. It does not appear in the original version, but was added to a later one. [...]; see Ulicki, *Święty Florian*, p. 9.

80 Starnawska, *Świętych życie po życiu*, pp. 49–50.

describing his *translatio* mention the bishop's involvement in particular and some do not even refer to the duke. A fully satisfactory explanation of this issue requires an in-depth analysis, at this point we can briefly say that the involvement of a bishop in any translation is not surprising, nor is his participation in the accompanying events.

It is also significant that Kraków received the relics of St Florian as a gift from the pope, and that the translation took place in the presence of his representative, Canon Giles (later the bishop of Modena and archbishop of Ravenna). The arrival of St Florian's relics was therefore also proof of good relations between the bishop of Kraków and the Holy See. From this perspective, as correctly noted by Stanisław Szczur, the ideological significance of the relics was completely different from that of the earlier translations of the remains of holy rulers to Płock.<sup>81</sup> It should therefore be underlined again that the cult of St Florian did in fact have an excellent opportunity to become the national cult of Poland. Its temporary extinction was not because Florian lacked the right attributed to be a patron saint, but the result of the consistent suppression of his cult and the simultaneous promotion of the sainthood of Stanislaus of Szczepanów.

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81 Szczur, 'Referat z sesji naukowej poświęconej 1700-leciu śmierci St Floriana, zorganizowanej na Uniwersytecie Jagiellońskim 15 kwietnia 2004 r.' <<https://www.swflorian.net/index.php/historia/swiety-florian/okolicznosci-sprowadzenia-relikwii-sw-floriana-do-krakowa>> [Accessed 13 August 2022].

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## 6. From St Olaf to the Relic of the Crown of Thorns\*

### *The Legitimization of Royal Power in Thirteenth-Century Norway*

In the second half of the thirteenth century, King Magnus VI of Norway adopted the cult of the Crown of Thorns, which legitimized the King as the earthly vicar of Christ. The cult was inspired by Capetian royal culture and served to replace the cult of St Olaf as the main legitimizing feature of Norwegian kingship. The introduction of the cult of the Crown of Thorns constituted an attempt to reduce ecclesiastical control over the legitimacy of the Norwegian kingship. From 1161 onwards, the coronation of Norwegian kings had entailed the king receiving the crown as a vassal of St Olaf, and the king had to swear his coronation oath on the relics of the saint-king. Since the relics of St Olaf were looked after by the Norwegian archbishop, the cult of the saint-king provided the Church with a control mechanism to ensure that the monarch would collaborate with the ecclesiastical authorities. This chapter sets out to explore how the cult of the Crown of Thorns served to provide divine legitimacy for the

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\* The research leading to these results has received funding from the Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2014–2021 (2019/34/H/HS3/00500). This chapter is part of a joint research project of the University of Warsaw and the University of Oslo ‘Symbolic Resources and Political Structures on the Periphery: Legitimization of the ELITES in Poland and Norway, c. 1000–1300’.

**Jerzy Pysiak** • is Professor at the Faculty of Arts and Culture, University of Warsaw. His research interests include royal ideology and the cult of saints and relics in medieval Europe, especially in Capetian France. He has recently published *The King and the Crown of Thorns: Kingship and the Cult of Relics in Capetian France* (Peter Lang: Berlin-Bern-Brussels-New York-Oxford-Warsaw-Vienna, 2020).

*The Cult of Saints and Legitimization of Elite Power in East Central and Northern Europe up to 1300*, ed. by Grzegorz Pac, Steffen Hope, and Jón Viðar Sigurðsson, Comparative Perspectives on Medieval History, 2 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2024), pp. 159–182

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10.1484/M.CPMH-EB.5.137535

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Norwegian king as an alternative source of legitimacy to the cult of St Olaf and how the cult of relics could become a tool for reducing ecclesiastical control over the ruler.

### **A New Model of Norwegian Kingship (1161–1184): The Earthly King of Norway as St Olaf's *locum-tenens***

In 1161, after the Battle of Oslo, Erling Skakke, with the support of Archbishop Eystein Erlendsson, proclaimed his juvenile son King Magnus V. A series of political reforms legitimizing the new king's accession was put in place.<sup>1</sup> Divided succession was abandoned in favour of a centralized monarchy. The new rules were codified in the Law of Succession promulgated by Magnus V. From then on, Norway was to have only one king, and this was confirmed by a state-wide *Thing*: this meant that the existing right of the provincial *Things* to proclaim kings was abrogated, which was one of the main rules defended by the proponents of a divided succession. According to the Law of Succession promulgated by Magnus V, only a son born from a marriage blessed by the Church could become king. Primogeniture was also introduced but it could be bypassed if the eldest king's son turned out to be 'bad' or 'unwise'.<sup>2</sup> Further concessions to the Church were included in the coronation oath sworn by Magnus, and in the charter issued by the new monarch for the archbishop of Nidaros. In his oath, Magnus Erlingsson swore fidelity and obedience to the Church, to Pope Alexander III, and to his rightful successors.<sup>3</sup> The concessions included a reaffirmation of the freedoms granted to the Norwegian Church at the synod in the recently erected metropolitan archdiocese in Nidaros (1152)<sup>4</sup> and a promise to rule both according to the law of the land as well as in compliance with canon law, which in turn granted the Church

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- 1 For more on political manoeuvres of Erling Ormsson, see Svenungsen, 'The Saint and the Wry-Neck', pp. 96–112.
  - 2 Tobiassen, 'Tronfølgelov og privilegiebrev', pp. 181–273, in particular: 221–58; see also: Gunnes, *Kongens are*, pp. 132–47; Gunnes 'Rex iustus och iniustus, Norway'. See also: Coviaux, 'Les évêques norvégiens', pp. 40–41. On *rex inutilis* see also Peters, *The Shadow King*: on the notion of *rex inutilis* in Gregorian political theory pp. 30–80; for post-Gregorian canonists: pp. 116–34.
  - 3 *Latinske Dokumenter til Norsk Historie*, no. 10, p. 62. *Norske middelalderdokumenter*, no. 7, pp. 30–33. For a detailed study of Magnus Erlingsson's coronation oath: Holtzmann, 'Krone und Kirche in Norwegen', pp. 341–400; also contains text of oath (pp. 376–78); Vandvik, 'Magnus Erlingssons kroningseid'.
  - 4 Hoffmann, 'Coronation and Coronation Ordines', p. 126; Wilson, *History of the Church and State in Norway*, pp. 132–55. On the origins of the metropolitan See of Nidaros see: Ekroll, 'St Olav, Nidaros, and Jerusalem'; Ekroll, 'The Saint, the Cathedral and the Town'; Ekroll, 'The Shrine of St Olav'; Imsen (ed.), 'Ecclesia Nidrosiensis'; Imsen, 'The Nidaros Church and its Province', pp. 15–25.

jurisdiction in clerical matters.<sup>5</sup> Finally, the king would no longer require the Church to pledge allegiance (*obsequia*), excepting those duties which were previously in effect. Indeed, it would be the king who would owe *obsequia* to the Church.<sup>6</sup> Thus a new form of legitimacy for Norwegian royal power emerged, defined by the Gregorian reform of the Church, which viewed the mission and ethical ideal of a legitimate king in a different light. By delegitimizing the old order, the Church sought to impose a new type of monarchy in place of the traditional legitimacy of the king, one which had derived from the rights of royal blood (the hereditary right to rule), combined with the ruler's talent and military fortunes as well as his ability to achieve a consensus with the elites.

The charter for the Nidaros archbishopric,<sup>7</sup> issued by Magnus V shortly after his coronation, but penned by Archbishop Eystein, clearly indicated that the cult of St Olaf was becoming a key element in the legitimacy of royal power in Norway. In this document, Magnus vowed allegiance to God.<sup>8</sup> To perform his duty, the king considered himself to be a knight (*miles*) of St Olaf, who was deemed to be the perpetual King of Norway (*perpetuus rex Norvegiae*), and declared that he only ruled Norway as St Olaf's deputy. These words must undoubtedly be interpreted in the context of the effort to legitimize Magnus V's accession to the throne. Yet at the same time, it made the archbishop of Nidaros, as the custodian of the saint's relics, the depository of the *virtus* of the Kingdom's patron saint. From this point of view, it made the archbishop the overseer of the justness of the temporal king's rule, or even a delegator of royal power. By placing the royal diadem on the altar of St Olaf in Nidaros Cathedral, Magnus V explicitly expressed the idea of the eternal subordination, or even subjection (*subieccio*), of royal authority to that of the Norwegian Church, in his own name and that of his successors.<sup>9</sup> Placing the monarchy in such an ideological and legal context with regard to the archbishop was the logical consequence of the conviction, confirmed by Pope Alexander III, that the reforms to the Church and the Kingdom of Norway were

5 On Archbishop Eystein's activity in the implementation of the Canon Law in Norway in its Gregorian edition, see Duggan, 'The Decretals of the Archbishop Eystein of Trondheim', and Duggan, 'Eystein and the World of the Learned Law', pp. 427–55; Ekroll, 'St Olav, Nidaros, and Jerusalem', p. 282.

6 Orning, *Unpredictability and Presence*, p. 53.

7 *Latinske Dokumenter*, no. 9, p. 58 and *Norske middelalderdokumenter*, no. 10, pp. 51–54; Coviaux, 'Les évêques norvégiens', p. 39. The coronation oath of Magnus V was also promulgated, along with the privilege accorded to the metropolitan archdiocese of Nidaros, as a diploma issued by Magnus V for the Archbishop of Nidaros in 1176 in: *Diplomatarium Islandicum*, I, 834–1264, no. 40, pp. 226–30.

8 'cui seruire regnare est, cuius seruitus summa computanda ingenuitas', *Norske middelalderdokumenter*, no. 10, pp. 50–55; *Latinske Dokumenter*, no. 9, pp. 58–63; Orning, *Unpredictability and Presence*, p. 63.

9 See Vandvik, *Magnus Erlingssons privilegiebrev og kongevigslé*.

a consequence of the implementation of the principles contained in the *Constitutum Constantini*.<sup>10</sup>

In 1163 or 1164, one of the regional laws of Norway, the law of the Gulathing province, was expanded to include laws attributed to Magnus V, although they were formulated and initiated by his guardians, such as Eystein Erlendsson. These additions were made to the laws that pertained to Christian religious life, which were attributed to St Olaf. These augmentations should be seen as an act of further legitimization of royal authority with regard to historical and sacral traditions: the rightful King and successor to St Olaf, Magnus, renews and reissues the laws once established by the holy ruler. The additions granted the Norwegian Church the right to freely elect bishops and abbots, judicial immunity, and the extension of tithe collection to all Norwegian dioceses.<sup>11</sup>

As part of the implementation of the Gregorian principles in Norway, the ideals of a perfect royal rule and its relationship with the Church were expressed in the *Passion and Miracles of Blessed Olaf* (*Passio et miracula beati Olavi*), a text that came into being in the milieu around Archbishop Eystein.<sup>12</sup> This hagiographic text rendered St Olaf as a biblical *rex iustus*, derived from the Old Testament model of kingship, and transmitted through numerous hagiographies and political writings from St Augustine onwards. It seems Eystein, who oversaw the composition of this text, used St Olaf to illustrate the Gregorian ideal of a holy ruler, obedient towards the Church, respecting divine law and meting out justice in accordance with it.<sup>13</sup> It is clear that, notwithstanding the intended restraints to the monarchy put in place by the Gregorian concept of royal power, the archbishop in effect co-created a new model for the legitimacy of royal power in Norway. Under his guidance, the Norwegian Church thus became the guarantor of internal peace within the Kingdom: the wars of succession which had plagued Norway for decades were to be resolved by a unitary monarchy, with St Olaf as its patron saint. However, the price for legitimizing the unification of Norway under the sceptre of the newly anointed King and his descendants were in practice not only the granting

10 See Vandvik, 'Donatio Constantini and Early Norwegian Church Policy', pp. 131–37; Vandvik, 'Konstantins dâp og Magnus Erlingssons kroning', pp. 121–29. Alexander III's decretals were published by Holtzmann, 'Krone und Kirche in Norwegen', p. 385.

11 Pulsiano and Wolf, *Medieval Scandinavia*, p. 91.

12 *Passio et miracula beati Olavi*. See also Ekroll, 'St Olav, Nidaros, and Jerusalem', p. 282. On the origins and the evolution of the cult of St Olaf see: Jiroušková, *Der heilige Wikingerkönig*; Ekroll, 'The Cult of St Olav', pp. 45–52; Hoffmann, *Die heiligen Könige*, pp. 58–89; Hoffmann, 'König Olav Haraldsson', pp. 35–43; Hoffmann, 'Politische Heilige', pp. 280–84, 293–96.

13 See Hope, 'Reformulating the Sanctity of Olaf Haraldsson', pp. 65–69, and bibliography there; Coviaux, 'Les évêques norvégiens', pp. 40–41. On the use of the *rex iustus* notion in medieval Norway, see also: Beuermann, 'Conclusions', pp. 376–77.

of Gregorian liberties to the Church, but also the subordination of royal power to the ecclesiastical authorities. While in ideological terms, which had a direct consequence on the exercise of royal power, it signified recognizing the archbishop of Nidaros as the spiritual leader of the Kingdom and as the guardian and guarantor of the continued political and sacral patronage of St Olaf, which was defined anew and which legitimized the renewed monarchy.

### **Royal Refutation of the Vassalage to St Olaf (1184–1247)**

However, the new political order was not to last long. In 1184, the new king, Sverre, took power and rejected the privileges granted to the Norwegian church by Magnus V. The civil war began again, where the two opposed parties were Bagler and Birkebeinar. Sverre's House maintained its role as a dynasty, although it momentarily lost the throne after King's death (1204–1217), and Norway was again divided between three kings, reigning in Oslo, Bergen, and Nidaros. In 1217, the Birkebeinar chose as king the last of Sverre's grandsons, Hakon IV. He then had to spend over twenty years attempting to end the civil war, to consolidate the Kingdom, and defeat the remaining pretenders. At its start, the reign of Hakon IV was contested by the bishops, who refused to recognize his election by the *Thing* and prompted Rome to do likewise. The situation was further complicated by the fact that in the preceding years, the Bagler had made Norway a fief of the Holy See. The pope and the bishops, therefore, thought it evident that the rightful King could only be one approved by the pope, something the victorious Birkebeinar refused to accept.

In 1223, Hakon IV was again elected King, this time with the support of the bishops. However, the situation was far from stable. The Bagler faction, which was already independent of the bishops, refused to recognize Hakon's new election and proclaimed Sigurd Ribbung, a grandson of Magnus V, as king. At that point, Hakon IV had still not been anointed King. In 1217, the clergy of Nidaros Cathedral had refused to provide Hakon with St Olaf's reliquary, on which the King was supposed to swear his coronation oath in Bergen Cathedral. Although the relationship between the Norwegian bishops and the new king had improved, the Holy See would not recognize Hakon, since he had refused to proclaim himself a vassal of the Holy See. As a consequence, successive popes would not allow the archbishop of Nidaros to crown and anoint Hakon. The archbishop himself, conscious of his need to legitimize his own position within the Norwegian Church as a representative of the Papacy, which had bestowed his pallium upon him, declined to disobey the Holy See, despite his good relations with Hakon. It was only in 1247 that Innocent IV, due

to his conflict with Emperor Frederick II, decided to obtain the Norwegian king's support and sent a legate, Cardinal William of Modena, to anoint and crown Hakon IV in Bergen cathedral on the feast of St Olaf (29 July). If we are to believe the *Saga of King Hakon Hakonsson (Hákonar saga Hákonarsonar)*,<sup>14</sup> written some twenty years later, William demanded that Hakon swear Magnus V's coronation oath. The king refused, claiming that Magnus had no right to the throne, and as a result, his concessions to the Norwegian Church had no legal force.<sup>15</sup> Hakon merely agreed to promise that the Church would have no lesser rights and honours in Norway than in other Kingdoms. The legate relented in the end.

Setting the date of the coronation for the feast of St Olaf was an attempt at legitimization on several ideological levels. On the one hand, like Magnus V, Hakon IV became an anointed King by the Grace of God, with the support of the pope. On the other, this was a clear reference to the patronage of St Olaf over the united Norwegian monarchy. This legitimized not only Hakon's rule but also Norwegian kingship as defined by Eystein Erlendsson. However, this was all a pretence. Hakon failed to agree to any concessions which would have affirmed his vassalage to the 'perpetual king of Norway'. He also refused to confirm the Gregorian privileges granted by Magnus V to the Norwegian Church, which according to the Norwegian bishops and the pope, were supposed to be a consequence of the recognition of St Olaf's patronage over the monarchy.

During the reign of Hakon IV, royal ideology was formulated in ways which were very similar to that propounded during the reign of Sverre. This similarity can be seen in *Konungs skuggsjá* (The King's Mirror), written in the period 1247–1250,<sup>16</sup> which builds on the royalist thought expressed in *A Speech Against the Bishops*, a pamphlet written by an anonymous author about half a century earlier, albeit without the anticlerical tenor. *Konungs skuggsjá* underlines the divine origins of the monarchy and claims that the mediation of the bishops, or even anointment, is not necessary for the king to be anointed by God, *christus Domini*.<sup>17</sup> The king is seen as the earthly image of God's authority.<sup>18</sup> Notably, however, the ideal of the *rex iustus* was still employed, but now utilized as a way for the kings to define themselves rather than for clerics to use the image as a critique of kings. This is seen in how Hakon IV's successor, Magnus VI (1263–1280),

14 Sturla ThOrdarson, *Hákonar Saga Hákonarsonar*, chs 253–57, pp. 141–45, see Hoffmann, 'Coronation and Coronation Ordines in Medieval Scandinavia', p. 128.

15 Bagge, *The Political Thought of The King's Mirror*, pp. 149–50.

16 Bagge, *The Political Thought of The King's Mirror*, pp. 153–54.

17 Bagge, *The Political Thought of The King's Mirror*, pp. 43–49.

18 Orning, *Unpredictability and Presence*, p. 67.

in his lawgiving similarly presented himself as a true successor of St Olaf's as *rex iustus*.<sup>19</sup>

Magnus's self-presentation came about in the context of negotiating the jurisdiction of the king and the Church. The king agreed to the canonical election of bishops and abbots, and to leave full jurisdiction over members of the clergy, as well as subjects on church lands, to the archbishop and bishops. Approved by the Norwegian synod in Bergen in 1273, the concordat was presented for the pope's assent at the Second Council of Lyon in 1274. Pope Gregory X, however, mandated the Norwegian archbishop to add new clauses to the agreement. Not only was the royal crown to be placed on the altar of St Olaf in Nidaros Cathedral, as a sign of the temporal monarch's vassalage to the *rex perpetuus Norvegiae* (as in the privilege granted by Magnus V in 1164), but the bishops were also to be granted dominion over the Kingdom if the king were underage. Magnus VI refused to accept the modified terms of the concordat.<sup>20</sup> Yet negotiations went on and ended with the Tønsberg Agreement (1277), this time without asking for Rome's consent. The archbishop, in the name of the Norwegian Church, renounced all claims to dispose of the royal crown, to its placement on the altar at Nidaros cathedral and to the election of a king, as long as the king had a rightful heir. But without one, the bishops would have the determining vote during the election, on the condition that they pledged to be guided by the good of the Kingdom. In return for relinquishing the constraints imposed on royal authority by the patronage of St Olaf, the Norwegian bishops were granted wide-ranging institutional, legal, and economic immunity. We might say that the Tønsberg Agreement finally introduced the Gregorian principles to Norway and made the Church independent of the king and the authority of local magnates. In this sense, it was a great success for the episcopate, yet the bishops also had to once and for all forswear any claims to suzerainty or guardianship over the monarchy. Yet this was not the end of the controversy over St Olaf's patronage over the Norwegian Crown, and its consequences.<sup>21</sup>

## After Magnus VI

Some sort of conflict had already erupted during the preparations for the coronation of the son and successor to Magnus VI, Erik II (1280–1299).

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19 Sunde, 'The Virtues Building Jerusalem', pp. 501–19. See also Bandlien, 'Multiple Spaces, Multiple Selves?', and Syrstad Andås, 'Art and Ritual in the Liminal Zone', pp. 58–75.

20 Wilson, *History of the Church and State in Norway*, p. 212.

21 *Norges gamle Love*, II, p. 462. On the see also: Haug, 'The Metropolitan, the King and the Bishops', pp. 69–74.

This is noted in the charter,<sup>22</sup> issued by Erik right after the coronation on Archbishop Jón Raude's demand, and confirmed by the seals of the archbishop and his seven suffragans. In the royal charter, we can read that unspecified doubts were raised before the anointment with regard to the coronation oath; the text of the oath finally sworn by the new king was added to the charter in both Latin and Norse and we should presume that this was supposed to be the text of the coronation oath for all subsequent kings, as confirmed by the Norwegian bishops. There is no mention in it of the vassalage of the monarch to St Olaf or to the king's allegiance to the archbishop of Nidaros or Norwegian Church. Erik II swore to show due respect to the bishops and the clergy, to keep intact all laws that the Church had received from previous kings (this was undeniably a reference to the Tønsberg Agreement), to overturn unjust laws and to pass just ones. It is possible that Erich Hoffmann was correct in thinking that Erik II's oath was the result of a compromise with the archbishop, who may have initially demanded that the king renew his vassalage to St Olaf by swearing the oath of Magnus Erlingsson.<sup>23</sup> Regardless of whether this hypothesis is correct, it draws attention to the fact that the king swore an oath on the Gospels, while the text of the oath, noting the king's reverence for God and his Saints, fails to name any, even St Olaf. Furthermore, Erik II's coronation took place on the Feast of St Swithun (15 July), despite that of St Olaf being only two weeks away (29 July). The royal charter was issued on 25 July 1280. One cannot help feeling that during Erik II's coronation, the *perpetuus rex Norvegiae* was deliberately omitted. We cannot know if this was done on the king's initiative, to knowingly avoid any association with vassalage to the 'perpetual king', or if it was the archbishop who did not want to reference the patronage of St Olaf with regard to a king who refused to be a vassal of the *perpetuus rex*.

The issuance of a royal charter with a new coronation oath, confirmed by the seals of the bishops, did not turn out to be of great use. During the first two years of Erik II's reign, who was twelve by the time of his accession to the throne, the Royal Council, who ruled in the king's name and was composed of lay magnates led by the Queen-mother, revoked the universal tithe and ordered lay judges to adjudicate according to the 'old custom', i.e. also in cases pertaining to the Christian Law (*kristinn réttur*). Archbishop Jón was finally forced to leave his diocese to go into exile to Sweden. After Jón died in exile in 1282, the see of Nidaros was vacant for next six years. In 1283, Erik II and his brother Hakon issued a proclamation in which both took the archbishopric under their protection and restored the universal tithe. In 1289, after the enthronement of the new archbishop, Jørund, Erik II, and Hakon undertook a pilgrimage to the

22 *Diplomatarium Norvegicum*, I, no. 69, Bergen, 25 VII 1280, pp. 62–63.

23 Hoffmann, 'Coronation and Coronation Ordines in Medieval Scandinavia', pp. 128–29.

tomb of St Olaf in Nidaros. In turn, the archbishop also relented, recognizing that concessions were necessary.<sup>24</sup> From now on, it was the king and the magnates who invoked St Olaf, as the patron of the Norwegian legal order, to revoke the absolute judicial immunity of the Church, with the exception of the privilege enjoyed by the Church in terms of free canonical elections within the Norwegian Church.

### The Holy Crown of Thorns in Norway: The King as Christ's Vicar (1274–1319)

Indeed, at the time the monarchy was already in possession of an ideological arsenal useful in confronting the belatedly-Gregorian Norwegian bishops. During Hakon IV's reign, relatively close diplomatic contacts were established with France. In 1247, Louis IX tried to persuade the King of Norway to take part in a Crusade and lead its fleet.<sup>25</sup> When returning from the Second Council of Lyon in 1274 (during which the Norwegian bishops tried to obtain pope's approval for the concordat), Archbishop Jón Raude and the royal emissaries stayed for some time in Paris. Philip III the Bold, the king of France, granted the Norwegian envoys an audience in the Palais de la Cité. In the Sainte-Chapelle, the chapel royal of the Capetian palace, the Passion relics were stored, including the Crown of Thorns, brought from Constantinople in 1239. Louis IX had created a special royal liturgy in its honour, celebrated several times a year, in which the ideological message was the identification of the authority of the king of France with the Kingship of Christ.<sup>26</sup> Louis also initiated the tradition of the kings of France gifting pieces of the Crown of Thorns to foreign churches as well as sovereigns. It would seem that often, this type of gift was a means for St Louis to promote the Crusade.

The king of Norway certainly seemed worthy of such a gift, possibly in relation to the conquest and Christianization of Lapland initiated under Hakon IV, or perhaps because of his status as the *in spe* commander of the crusader fleet (which the pope had ordered prepared at the Second Council of Lyon for 1278).<sup>27</sup> Another propitious circumstance was that the presence in Paris of the Norwegian mission fell at the same time (30 September) as the *festum reliquiarum*, a feast celebrated at the court, in Paris and in the whole of the Sens province, in honour of the Passion relics kept in the Capetian chapel royal — the Sainte-Chapelle of the Palais de la Cité. The feast in honour of the Crown of Thorns itself fell on

24 Wilson, *History of the Church and State in Norway*, pp. 216–23.

25 Matthew Paris, *Chronica majora*, IV, pp. 651–52.

26 Pysiak, *The King and the Crown of Thorns*, pp. 376–445, 459–74.

27 Richard, *Histoire des Croisades*, p. 502.

11 August, when Louis IX, and surely his successors as well, performed the public exhibition of the Passion relics (*ostensio reliquarium*) at the court. Still, on 30 September, all of the relics of the Passion translated by Louis IX used to be commemorated and venerated during a solemn liturgy at Sainte-Chapelle. And so, on 30 September 1274, in the presence of Philip III in the Sainte-Chapelle, a thorn was cut from the Holy Crown and placed in a reliquary, which the French king presented to the Norwegian emissaries as a gift for Magnus VI.<sup>28</sup>

The relic reached Bergen by ship on 8 November 1274, and was temporarily placed in the cathedral. The following year, Magnus VI founded a new chapel royal of the Holy Apostles next to the Royal Palace in Bergen. Its architecture was believed to be modelled on that of the Sainte-Chapelle, and so it was there, as in Paris, that the relic was to be finally placed. According to the *Icelandic Annals*, which place both events a year earlier, the king ordered a procession to meet the relics in Bergen, which left from the old collegiate church of the Holy Apostles. A year later, Magnus VI laid the foundations for a new chapel royal in the garden of the Royal Palace in Bergen.<sup>29</sup> The historical circumstances of the translation were described quite extensively in the lections of the liturgy for the Feast of the Crown of Thorns (*De spinea corona/In festo spinee corone*), celebrated in Bergen (and probably in Nidaros too, since it is preserved in the early sixteenth-century Breviary of the Nidaros Cathedral) as an anniversary feast (*festum anniversarium*, 9 November).<sup>30</sup> We find in this *officium* a description of the reliquary gifted by the king of France and containing the thorn cut from the Holy Crown: a silver Angel holding with both hands a crystal — the ostensory where the thorn was placed.<sup>31</sup>

But what is largely more interesting than the shape of the reliquary, is the commentary by its author:

In this work of art, in the shape of the Angel holding the relics of the [Holy] Crown, the King devoted to God is represented, who,

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- 28 *Lectiones Bergenses*, p. 5. The name of *Lectiones Bergenses* is arbitrarily given by Comte Riant, who believed that the office must have been composed for Holy Apostles Collegiate Church in Bergen, although these lections are only known by the Parisian printed edition of the Breviary of Nidaros Cathedral (1519): *Breviaria ad usum ritumque sacrosanctae Nidrosiensis ecclesiae*, fols 33.Vv<sup>o</sup>–33.VIv<sup>o</sup> (424v<sup>o</sup>–426v<sup>o</sup>); a digitized edition: see ProQuest. Early European Books. See Liepe, ‘The Crown of Thorns and the Royal Office’, pp. 170–71.
- 29 *Íslenzkir Annálar sive Annales Islandici*, pp. 144–45; Liepe, ‘The Crown of Thorns and the Royal Office’, pp. 174–75.
- 30 *Exuviae sacrae Constantinopolitanae*, I, pp. cxxi–cxxii; see: Liepe, ‘The Crown of Thorns and the Royal Office’, pp. 177, 186–87.
- 31 *Lectiones Bergenses*, p. 5.

accomplishing the angelic ministry (*angelicum ministerium*), shows the teaching of the Gospels and the insignia of the Passion to his subjects.<sup>32</sup>

This commentary testifies to the conviction, repeated during the annual service in honour of the Crown of Thorns, that the king had a special religious mission to fulfil towards his subjects: transmit the doctrine of faith and incite them to revere the Passion of Christ. And if this is so, then the king, like the bishops, takes part in the redemptive magisterium of the Church. This interpretation in the liturgy in honour of the Crown of Thorns of the shape of the reliquary also brings to mind the personal commitment of St Louis to present the relics of the Holy Cross and the Crown of Thorns to his subjects during the annual *ostensio reliquarium* at the court in Paris, a commitment emphasized by the fact that it was called *regale sacerdotium sive sacerdotale regimen* (royal priesthood or priestly reign).<sup>33</sup> From an ideological perspective, these words would seem to be close to the royal *angelicum ministerium* quoted in the Norwegian feast of the Crown of Thorns. A Capetian inspiration for Norwegian liturgy would seem probable, if only because of this analogy. This probability increases further if we compare the first lections of the Norwegian office, which presents the reasons why Magnus VI received the relic of the Crown of Thorns, with a fragment from the chronicle of Guillaume de Nangis, written at the Abbey of Saint-Denis, either contemporaneously or shortly afterwards. When presenting the circumstances surrounding the translation of the relic, both authors paid particular attention to the piety of both kings, for which God rewarded them with the mercy of reigning in peace, by not permitting enemies to attack their Kingdoms. The fact that in both accounts it is the French king who initiates the translation could also indicate that it was inspired by the Capetian court: St Louis undertakes this pious act to thank God for the graces received;<sup>34</sup> this leads to the translation of the Crown of Thorns to Paris. The Norwegian translation comes to pass since God has blessed Magnus VI for his generosity and piety with the grace of ruling in peace and allowing the fame of his goodness and godliness to spread throughout the world. Philip III, having learnt of the Norwegian king's virtues, and inspired by the Holy Spirit, decides to gift him a piece of the Crown of Thorns, wishing to further strengthen his saintly intentions.<sup>35</sup> We can only guess what the pious endeavours which the relics were supposed to inspire Magnus VI and his successors

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32 *L[e]c[tio]* 4. *Imitatus est in hoc artificio angeli coronae reliquias tenentis rex Deo devotus doctrinam evangelicam, Dominice Passionis insignia angelico ministerio cunctorum tunc aspectui presentando, Lectiones Bergenses, p. 5.*

33 Pysiak, *The King and the Crown of Thorns*, in particular pp. 313–474.

34 Guillaume de Nangis, *Gesta Sancti Ludovici*, pp. 326–27. A nearly identical account is found in Guillaume de Nangis, *Chronique latine*, p. 548.

35 *Lectiones Bergenses*, pp. 4–5.

to accomplish were. Yet it is highly probable that the author meant the aforementioned *angelicum ministerium* of the king, since the description of the reliquary and the explanation of its shape follows precisely these words.

The lection from the office for the Feast of the Crown of Thorns in Bergen indicates an important new current in the ideology of the Norwegian monarchy, which was addressed to the ecclesiastical elites of the Kingdom. It is worth remembering that it was written by a priest and intended for the clergymen, who were supposed to learn from the liturgy that the king, in no lesser degree than the clergy, was tasked with demonstrating the teachings of the Gospels and mediating in the economy of salvation. Although the relic was located in the chapel of the Royal Palace in Bergen, and the Feast of the Crown of Thorns is only attested with certainty in Bergen, it should be noted that the feast and its office can only be found in the early sixteenth-century breviary of Nidaros Cathedral,<sup>36</sup> yet, most probably absent from all known medieval manuscript *ordines* of the Nidaros Cathedral.<sup>37</sup> It, therefore, cannot be ruled out that they were also celebrated there. It is not possible to indicate either the author of the office or the date of its creation. The office must have been composed shortly after the translation, maybe even during the reign of Magnus VI, and was perhaps written by a member of the royal chancery at the chapel royal in Bergen. The use of the numeral *quartus* next to the king's name, officially used by Magnus the Lawmender, would seem to support this.<sup>38</sup>

What followed the translation of the fragment of the Crown of Thorns to Bergen and the office describing the royal *angelicum ministerium*, with regard to the intervention of Gregory X in the relationship between the Norwegian king and bishops, must also be noted. Let us remember that during the Second Council of Lyon, from which Jón Raude and the Norwegian delegation were returning through Paris, the pope had demanded that the vassalage of the king of Norway to St Olaf be restored to the concordat, which was to be expressed not only by placing the royal crown on the altar of the saint in the archbishopric's cathedral but also by letting the bishops rule the Kingdom while the king was still a child. Magnus VI rejected the pope's demands, while the translation of the thorn served to introduce a new feast, competing with that of St Olaf. The Palace Chapel of the Holy Apostles in Bergen was set to become the location for the

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36 *Breviaria ad usum ritumque sacrosanctae Nidrosiensis ecclesiae*, fols 33.V.v<sup>o</sup>–33.VI.v<sup>o</sup> (424v<sup>o</sup>–426v<sup>o</sup>).

37 Lilli Gjerløw, editor of the medieval liturgical ordo of Nidaros Cathedral based on preserved manuscripts finds no mention of the Feast of the Crown of Thorns. See *Ordo Nidrosiensis ecclesiae*.

38 *Diplomatarium Norvegicum*, I, no. 64a, Bergen 1 VIII 1273, pp. 52–57; similarly, in Hakon V's charter freeing the Archbishop of Nidaros from paying homage to the King, with regard to Hakon's father, *Diplomatarium Norvegicum*, I, no. 125, Oslo, 13 I 1310, pp. 113–14.

liturgical veneration of the Crown of Thorns, which would redefine the royal mission, imbuing it with sacrality and adding a new legitimacy to the monarch's authority — not merely different to the patronage of St Olaf, but also placing the royal authority incomparably higher — following the example of the same cult, as it was introduced by the Capetians in France.<sup>39</sup>

## The Chapels Royal and the 'Royal Church' (1274–1319)

The chapel royal in Bergen had already existed before and since 1271 it had held the rank of a collegiate church, but after receiving the thorn from the Holy Crown, Magnus VI decided to re-found it, aiming to erect a new church, intentionally in the shape of the Capetian Sainte-Chapelle. The new Holy Apostles collegiate church was only consecrated in 1302, during the reign of Hakon V, Magnus's younger son. The new chapel royal in Bergen must be understood in the light of French models, but also the history of such chapels in Norway. The first two Norwegian chapels royal were established in Bergen and Nidaros by Eystein I (1103–1123), at a time when such chapels were common in Latin Christendom.<sup>40</sup> In the thirteenth century, Hakon IV and Magnus VI increased the number of chapels royal to fourteen, founding them near all of the most important royal residences. Four of them were collegiate churches where the chaplains-notaries received canonical prebends.<sup>41</sup> Hakon's expansion of royal chapels might have drawn on influences from England.<sup>42</sup>

The collegiate church of the Holy Apostles in Bergen played a particularly significant role within the context of chapels royal in thirteenth-century Norway, since the city had been chosen as the main royal residence since the time of Hakon IV and until 1299. Hakon built a new royal palace in Bergen (Håkonshallen) and was crowned in Bergen cathedral, as was his son. The translation of the Passion relics to Bergen and the

39 It is worth noting that Philip IV the Fair of France gave also a thorn of the Holy Crown to the Swedish King Magnus Birgersson (1288), and that Norwegian kings imitated the French kingship as donors of relics: Hakon V gifted a thorn from the Holy Crown to the Swedish Bishop of Skara in 1311, see: Liepe, 'The Crown of Thorns and the Royal Office', pp. 171–72. The reliquaries gifted by both Philip the Fair to Magnus Birgersson and by Hakon V to the Bishop of Skara were manufactured — as in Bergen — in the shape of silver Angels holding (and presenting) the Holy Thorn, see Liepe, 'The Crown of Thorns and the Royal Office', p. 172. On the Angel-shape reliquaries in thirteenth- and fourteenth-century Europe, see Braun, *Die Reliquiare des christlichen Kultes*.

40 Above all: Lemarignier, 'Aspects politiques des fondations des collégiales', pp. 23–34.

41 Bagge, *Den kongelige kapellgeistlighet 1150–1319*. The chapels are listed in Clemence V's brief of 5 February 1308 (see below).

42 Helle, 'Anglo-Norwegian Relations in the Reign of Håkon Håkonsson'.

re-founding of the palace chapel, in which the fragment of the Crown of Thorns was kept together with the coronation insignia (they were no longer sent back to the altar of St Olaf at Nidaros),<sup>43</sup> should therefore be interpreted as Magnus VI enriching the policy of creating a new centre for the monarchy, one which served a double function with new ideological aspects. The Royal Palace in Bergen became a residential and sacral complex similar to contemporary examples from England and France, such as the Palace of Westminster or the Palais de la Cité, underlining the religious foundations of monarchical ideology, as well as the centre of the Kingdom's administration, institutionally rooted in Carolingian traditions, according to which the *capella palatina*, apart from its religious functions, also served the royal chancery. This role as chancery, played by the chapel royal of the Norwegian kings, became even more pronounced after Hakon V acceded to the throne. And this was certainly not unrelated to the cult of the Crown of Thorns. During Erik II's reign, as a prince, Hakon resided in Oslo, and that is where the main seat of the court was moved when he became king in 1299. In 1304, after receiving from Philip IV of France a reliquary containing another thorn of the Holy Crown and a fragment of a finger bone of St Louis in a silver gilded image of the holy French king,<sup>44</sup> Hakon V presented it to the collegiate church of St Mary in Oslo which, like the collegiate church in Bergen, was also a chapel royal (and in terms of size, it was the third largest church in fourteenth-century Norway, after Nidaros cathedral and the collegiate church in Bergen).<sup>45</sup> The chapel royal in Oslo, therefore, received royal relics *par excellence*. Its role in the system of royal power in Norway was emphatically confirmed by Hakon V in 1314 when the king decided that the post of Chancellor of Norway would in perpetuity be linked to that of the provost of the Collegiate Church of St Mary in Oslo.<sup>46</sup>

Despite losing its political primacy within the Kingdom, Bergen remained an important centre of royal power, in particular with regard to the Norwegian Church. In 1308, at the request of Hakon V, Pope Clement V issued a papal brief granting a privilege to the provost of the Church of the Holy Apostles in Bergen, as a result of which the prelate became the superior of all chapels royal in Norway, with the title of Master of Chapels Royal (*magister capellarum regis*). As a result, he could now inspect the

43 de Mély, *Exuviae sacrae Constantinopolitanae*, III: *La Croix des premiers croisés*, p. 328.

44 *Comptes royaux (1285–1314)*, II, no. 23914; Billot, 'Le message spirituel et politique de la Sainte-Chapelle', p. 135. See Liepe, 'The Crown of Thorns and the Royal Office', pp. 167–68 and Johnsen, 'Ad Filip IV's relikviengaver til Håkon V', pp. 153–54, and *Diplomatarium Norvegicum*, IV, no. 128.

45 Roaldset, *Mariakirken i Oslo, de religiøse funksjonene*.

46 *Diplomatarium Norvegicum*, I, no. 143, Oslo, 31 VIII 1314, pp. 126–27. See also: Bagge, 'Kanslerembedet og Mariakirken i Oslo'; Liepe, 'The Crown of Thorns and the Royal Office', p. 175.

other chapels royal and absolve sins committed by their prelates, canons, and chaplains in lesser offences (*circa minora*), provided that the rights of the diocesan bishops in all other matters were preserved. Furthermore, the *magister capellarum* had the right to carry the crosier and wear the episcopal mitre and ring in the collegiate church of the Holy Apostles, as well as to issue episcopal-like blessings (*more pontificum*) — but solely in the presence of the king and only if none of the bishops were present in the church.<sup>47</sup> On the same day, Clement V granted three other privileges to chapels royal in Norway, including establishing indulgences for the faithful who made pilgrimages to any of them and allowing each of the Norwegian bishops to ordain chaplains to the chapels royal under the right of presentation (*ius patronatus*) of the Master of Chapels Royal.<sup>48</sup> On 13 March 1311, at the subsequent request by Hakon V, the pope expanded the rights of the *magister capellarum*, allowing him to carry the crosier and wear the mitre and ring during liturgy celebrated according to the *duplex* rite (*in singulis duplicibus festis*), perform the liturgy in this attire and to give benediction as bishops do in all chapels royal (during visitations) and in any place if only the king was present, without regard to the presence or otherwise of a bishop.<sup>49</sup> Although none of the *duplex* feasts was singled out in the brief, we can undoubtedly expect that the Feast of the Crown of Thorns must have been among them and — apart from Easter, Christmas, Pentecost, and Ascension — it would certainly have been the most important feast in that church, equal with All Saints' Day and four greater Marian feasts.

## Conclusions

In the 1160s, the patronage of St Olaf seemed to be an ideal binder for the reformed ideological foundations of the Norwegian monarchy, since his cult in a politically renewed shape both brought benefits for the Church and allowed the consolidation of the royal authority, which was marked by civil wars. Making Magnus V Erlingsson a knight of St Olaf and the temporal locum-tenens of the *perpetuus rex Norvegiae* not only made it

47 *Diplomatarium Norvegicum*, I, no. 113; Poitiers, 5 II 1308, pp. 100–01. See Liepe, 'The Crown of Thorns and the Royal Office', pp. 186–87.

48 *Diplomatarium Norvegicum*, I, nos 114 and 115 pp. 101–03. Indulgences for pilgrims visiting the collegiate church of the Holy Apostles in Bergen had already been granted by Nicholas IV (*Diplomatarium Norvegicum*, xvii/1, no. 17, Quirinal, 1 II 1292, p. 17). The fourth letter allowed the bishops of Bergen and Oslo to ordain ten royal chaplains, out of a total of sixty, who were sons of clergymen (presbyters), on condition that they were not born within another sinful union, such as with a monk or as the result of incest (*Diplomatarium Norvegicum*, vi, no. 70, pp. 65–66).

49 *Diplomatarium Norvegicum*, I, no. 129, Avignon 13 III 1311, pp. 116–17.

possible to legitimize the usurpation of the throne with the support of the Church but also to pacify a Kingdom in the throes of civil war. The reference to St Olaf, seen as the unifying figure of the state, also legitimized the departure from the divided succession and the placing of authority in the hands of one king for the entire Kingdom. While for the Norwegian Church, which agreed to make Magnus V the first anointed king in Scandinavia, the patronage of St Olaf over the new monarchy allowed Norwegian episcopate to underscore the leading role played by the archbishopric of Nidaros, where the relics of the holy king were stored in its cathedral. Yet the support of the bishops for the modernization of the Kingdom carried a high price — to use the authority of the Church to confirm that the king was the rightful heir to St Olaf, the bishops demanded a veritable upheaval of the relationship between the monarchy and the Church. Namely, the recognition and introduction of Gregorian principles, not only in terms of the canonical liberties of the clergy, but also by proclaiming the primacy, or even supremacy, of the bishops over the monarch. Thus, the patronage of St Olaf over the Norwegian monarchy became a dangerous constraint on royal power, limiting its sovereignty, at times even threatening the unity of the Kingdom. As soon as anti-Gregorian kings came to power, such as Sverre I and his successors, those who refused to confirm their vassalage to St Olaf, which — according to the coronation oath of Magnus V — was equivalent to recognizing the supremacy of the Church and of the archbishop of Nidaros, the bishops were more than ready to abandon the ideal of a united Norway by supporting pretenders to the throne who adhered to the old principle of divided succession, as long as they declared for the Gregorian faction. Hakon IV's political nous, as well as his good fortune on the battlefield, allowed him to unify the country once more. Simultaneously, the acute conflict between the Papacy and the Emperor provided Hakon with a favourable context for reaching a compromise with the Church, which by the time of the First Council of Lyon, was keen to abandon its demand that the king of Norway declared himself a knight of St Olaf.

Moving the coronation to Bergen and making it the Kingdom's capital was also conducive to increasing the independence of the monarchy from its restrictive vassalage to the *perpetuus rex Norvegiae*. In the new capital, Magnus VI laid the foundations, both material and ideological, for the cult of the Crown of Thorns, in the shape of the model of the Capetian kingship and meant to compete with that of St Olaf. Such a political and religious manoeuvre took place when the Papacy, now free of the Hohenstaufen threat, and not merely content with the king granting Gregorian freedoms to the Norwegian clergy, attempted to restore the Norwegian Crown's vassalage to St Olaf, and as a consequence, make it subordinate itself to the Church. In response, the liturgy for the new Norwegian feast included elements emphasizing the sacred mission of the

King who, as the depositary of the *angelicum ministerium*, and just like the bishops, was meant to lead his subjects towards salvation, by way of the teachings of the Gospels and using the symbols of the Passion, kept in the chapel royal. Thus, in lieu of the sanctification of the monarchy through its subordination to St Olaf — we now see an exaltation of kingship, acting as a mediator in the process of salvation. It is possible that this sacral emancipation of the monarchy alarmed the Norwegian bishops since although Magnus VI succeeded in reaching a compromise with the episcopate — Gregorian independence of the Church in exchange for ceasing attempts to impose vassalage to St Olaf on the King — after his death, a new conflict erupted with the archbishop of Nidaros, who demanded the new King Erik II swear Magnus Erlingsson's coronation oath. Yet Erik refused, as had Hakon IV and Magnus VI before him. This was perhaps an attempt to capitalize on the relative weakness of the monarchy, since Erik II was not yet of age, yet it failed to bring the Church any substantial gains: over the following decade all the Gregorian freedoms, with the exception of the canonical election, were revoked with the support of the lay aristocracy. While Hakon V, who assumed the throne in 1299, called on St Olaf, it was in reference to the political legacy of Sverre I and Hakon IV. His royal oath was ostentatiously directed to God and to his subjects, not to the bishops.

Finally, Hakon V used the introduction of the cult of the Crown of Thorns in the chapel royal, meant to compete with that of St Olaf, to transform the network of palace chapels into an ecclesiastical structure which was autonomous from the Norwegian episcopate and subordinate to the king only (our clergy, *clerici nostri*), with a quasi-bishop at its head (*magister capellarum regis*) appointed by the monarch himself. In Avignon, the king was able to block attempts by the Norwegian bishops to regain control over the royal canons and chaplains, and even got the pope to extend the episcopal rights originally granted to the provost of the chapels royal. We find no references in Hakon V's documents to either the *angelicum ministerium* of the king or to the Crown of Thorns, yet these relics and their religious meaning must have played an important role in the king's intentions. It is certainly no coincidence that two of the most important dignitaries of the royal Church, the *magister capellarum regis* and the Chancellor of Norway, were also the provosts of the royal sanctuaries to which the king had donated the relics of the Crown of Thorns.

These examples clearly show that the new concept for the legitimacy of royal power, introduced during the reign of Magnus VI, used a novel cult which differed from the ancient one of St Olaf (although the last had been modified by the Norwegian Church during the second half of the twelfth century in accordance with Gregorian ideas), achieved a lasting place within the overall strategy of ideologically defining the legitimization of the Norwegian monarchy. From the perspective of subsequent monarchs, the 'perpetual King' of a unified Norway — whose patronage

the Norwegian bishops and the Holy See had sought to use to restrict royal power and gain Gregorian freedoms for the Norwegian Church — became a highly inconvenient patron saint. Hence why the Norwegian kings decided to substitute his cult, both religious and political, with a new one. The cult of the Crown of Thorns — not only as a relic of the Passion of Christ but also of his eternal role as King — in which, according to the liturgical office, the Norwegian king was to play a leading role as the bearer of doctrinal faith to his subjects, referred to the archaic, Carolingian and Ottonian concept of the kingship on the one hand (whether the Norwegian monarchy was fully aware of this heritage is a question which cannot be fully answered). But on the other, it was also extremely modern, referencing its contemporaneous use by the Capetian monarchy. Without a doubt, in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, the French monarchy was a model of royal authority which derived its sacral legitimacy from a specific royal veneration for the Passion relics, by demonstrating the similarity between the kingship of Christ and that of the earthly monarch.

As Lena Liepe and Hege Roaldset remark, the relics of the Crown of Thorns, gifted by Philip III the Bold and Philip the Fair of France to Magnus VI and Hakon V, and its cult were ‘essential components in the Norwegian King’s staging himself as a divine ruler in the model of French monarchy.’<sup>50</sup> Obviously, the shape of the Norwegian holy kingship as it was designed by Magnus VI, then methodically implemented by Hakon V was modelled on the Capetian pattern. However, it was also a ‘manifestation of royal sovereignty [i.e., over the Church] as a divinely sanctioned institution — the notion of the monarch as *rex imago Dei* and *rex iustus* — the image of God and God’s righteous representative on earth.’<sup>51</sup> The Norwegian king as *rex imago Dei* was therefore to replace henceforth St Olaf’s vicar and vassal.

Finally, we should also note that the phenomenon of the political use of the cult of a holy King as the patron saint of a monarchy by a competing centre of power, or opposition to royal authority — as in the case of the Norwegian episcopate aiming to reform Norwegian Church and Kingdom, in order to gain Gregorian freedoms, but also to gain control of the Norwegian kingship — is not limited to St Olaf’s cult in Norway. In thirteenth-century Hungary, references to St Stephen and the laws he established can be found in the *Bulla aurea* (Golden Bull) issued by Andrew II in 1222, limiting royal power at the request of the Hungarian knights and magnates. Somewhat later, in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, we can also observe this phenomenon in France. Rebellious against the increasingly centralizing pressure of royal power, leagues of knights and

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<sup>50</sup> Roaldset, *Mariakirken i Oslo*, following Liepe, ‘The Crown of Thorns and the Royal Office’, p. 176.

<sup>51</sup> Liepe, ‘The Crown of Thorns and the Royal Office’, p. 176.

barons were formed and invoked the 'just rule' of St Louis to demand the restoration of the rights and liberties (whether real or imagined) that the holy ruler had allegedly granted them and upheld.<sup>52</sup> In other words, the secular elites in France and Hungary, by identifying themselves, as well as their social and political values, with the cult of the royal patron saint of the Kingdom, sought to legitimize their political strategy, while simultaneously delegitimizing those royal policies they deemed incompatible with the imagined ideological heritage of the holy kings. The situation was somewhat different in Norway, where it was the bishops who used the cult of a holy king paradoxically to diminish, instead of to increase, the royal authority and power over the Church, and even to submit the kingship to episcopal custody. The excesses of their political demands eventually led to the introduction of a new cult sacralizing royal authority, as well as to the creation of an autonomous, quasi-episcopal ecclesiastical structure by the monarchy, one which depended solely upon the king and was legitimized by him, while at the same time legitimizing — at least in part — the monarch's authority over the Church.

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<sup>52</sup> See *The Laws of the Medieval Kingdom of Hungary*, pp. 156 and 158; Beaune, *La naissance de la nation France*, pp. 140–53.

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## 7. Sanctity in Service

### *Saints in the Legitimation of the Presence of the Dominicans in Hungary*

Since the time of their settlement in the Kingdom of Hungary in the early 1220s, the Order of Preachers (Dominicans) and the Order of Minor Brothers (Franciscans) contributed greatly to the spread of a new type of spirituality as well as to the formation of the late medieval saintly ideal. The friars, who followed the apostolic way of life, lived in voluntary poverty and were mobile: the primary tool for their activity directed at conversion was preaching. The first Dominicans led by Paulus Hungarus, a canonist at the University of Bologna, arrived in Hungary in 1221.<sup>1</sup> The kingdom, situated on the periphery of Latin Christianity, was of special importance in the Dominicans' mission among the Cumans and the 'heretic' groups in the Balkans, especially until the mid-thirteenth century.<sup>2</sup> The Mongolian

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- 1 Tugwell, 'The Evolution of Dominican Structures of Government II'; on the history of the Hungarian Province, see Harsányi, *A domonkos rend Magyarországon*; Implom, *Adatok*, pp. 19–54; Schiel, *Mongolensturm und Fall Konstantinopels*, pp. 58–64. For its broader context, see Kłoczowski, 'Les ordres mendiants en Europe'; Klaniczay, 'Conclusion: North and East European Cults of Saints'.
- 2 Pfeiffer, *Die ungarische Dominikanerordensprovinz*, pp. 50–92; Makkai, *A milkói (kún) püspökség és népei*; Altaner, *Die Dominikanermissionen*, pp. 141–51 and 155–60; Berend, 'The Mendicant Orders', pp. 258–68; Berend, *At the Gate of Christendom*, pp. 213–16; Müller, 'Die dominikanische Mission inter infideles et schismaticos', pp. 341–43; Ternovác, 'Domonkosok Boszniában'. On the question of the unity of the Eastern and Western Churches and the fight against the heretics, see Barabás, *Das Papsttum und Ungarn*, pp. 233–63.

**Eszter Konrád** • is Old and Rare Books Librarian in the Library and Archives of the Eötvös Loránd University in Budapest. Her main research interests include late medieval religious life and devotional literature, especially vernacular hagiography. She has published several articles related to the cult of mendicant saints and the blessed in medieval Hungary.

*The Cult of Saints and Legitimization of Elite Power in East Central and Northern Europe up to 1300*, ed. by Grzegorz Pac, Steffen Hope, and Jón Viðar Sigurðsson, *Comparative Perspectives on Medieval History*, 2 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2024), pp. 183–208

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10.1484/M.CPMH-EB.5.137536

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invasion of Hungary in 1241–1242 was a heavy blow for both enterprises.<sup>3</sup> The centre of the Hungarian Province was established in Buda in the proximity of the royal palace in the convent of St Nicholas, which hosted the General Chapter of 1254. The Order expanded dynamically until the mid-1260s: between 1221 and 1241, more than twenty houses were founded throughout the country which by 1277 had become convents.<sup>4</sup>

The Dominicans' prosperity can be partly attributed to their confidential relationship with King Béla IV and his consort, Mary Laskaris: one finds Dominican friars as their confessors, and the royal couple raised their daughter, Margaret, as a Dominican nun.<sup>5</sup> They had a female monastery built nearby on the Island of the Hares near Buda in 1253, which not only housed their daughter and her fellow nuns but also several members of the family and the daughters of important aristocratic families.<sup>6</sup> However, after Margaret had pronounced her vows to the master of the order in 1261, partly in order to avoid a marriage particularly favoured by her father for political reasons, the royal couple preferred the Franciscans in their entourage.<sup>7</sup> The Dominicans were generally considered as an 'elite unit': they were educated priests, and the assistants of the local bishops whose support was indispensable for the expansion of the Order. In the course of the missions, they worked together closely with the local ecclesiastical elite, and they were even able to convince some high-ranking churchmen to join their Order.<sup>8</sup> The wide range of sources related to Hungary produced by Dominicans in the thirteenth century, ranging from canon law to pastoral auxiliary material, hagiography, and history writing, also confirms this.<sup>9</sup>

The spreading of the cult of the Order's founder, Dominic (c. 1234) and a martyred inquisitor Peter of Verona (c. 1253), was an efficient means to reach a wider audience and to enhance their authority and prestige. In addition to preaching, the friars promoted their saints' cults by distributing their relics in their churches throughout Europe, including Hungary, where two shrines of local importance in the south-eastern and south-western

3 Zágórhidi Czigány, 'A domonkos rend megtelepedése', pp. 107–08. On the Dominican victims, see Loenertz, 'Un catalogue d'écrivains et deux catalogues de martyrs dominicains'.

4 Only three new foundations between 1242 and 1277 are known. Presumably in the decades following the Mongolian invasion, the aim was rather the reorganization of the Province than the establishment of new houses or convents; see Zágórhidi Czigány, 'A domonkos rend megtelepedése', pp. 105–06. See also Zágórhidi Czigány, 'A domonkos rend konventjei', pp. 81–95.

5 For an overview of the historical contexts, see Klaniczay, 'Saint Margaret: Royal and Female Sanctity'.

6 Klaniczay, 'Familienklöster'; Klaniczay, *Holy Rulers*, pp. 205–06; Klaniczay, 'Sacred Sites in Medieval Buda', pp. 236–47.

7 Fügedi, 'La formation des villes', pp. 970–71.

8 Zágórhidi Czigány, 'A domonkos rend megtelepedése', pp. 111–12.

9 Szovák, 'A domonkos írásbeliség'.

regions emerged. This Dominican relic policy helped to strengthen their presence in the different provinces by creating local shrines to kindle devotion among the locals and to give opportunities for new miracles attributed to the intercession of these saints which could be incorporated into new hagiographic works. Whereas the Order's presence in Hungary was surely legitimate from the point of view of the mission, powerful relics could enhance their position in the region within the local ecclesiastical structure and attract the faithful to their churches. The two shrines in Hungary had lost importance by the last decades of the thirteenth century, which can be partly attributed to the Dominicans' withdrawal from missionary activities, and partly to the fact that Princess Margaret, the daughter of the king, died with the reputation of a saint in 1270, and soon steps were taken for her canonization.<sup>10</sup> Since Margaret had lived and died in Hungary, the spread of her cult was quite different from those of St Dominic and St Peter who were 'imported' as already-canonized saints. In this chapter I will focus on how the Dominicans in Hungary made use of the abovementioned two male saints in the legitimation of their presence and activity both within the whole Order and in relation to the local population. Drawing primarily on two major groups of sources from the thirteenth century originating from Hungary (the miracles of St Dominic and Peter of Verona and a Dominican sermon collection) related to the two different spheres — one rural and mostly lay, the other urban and clerical — I investigate these two directions to show how legitimacy is constructed in two specific contexts. First, I demonstrate how the miracle accounts testify to the friars' skilfulness in the implementation of new cults and the running of local shrines, and also the local population's response to it. Second, I look at the draft sermons of a Dominican preacher written for a clerical audience and present his arguments as to why these saints, representing the ideals of the Order's spirituality, were so great and exceptional, legitimating their leading position among the religious orders.

## The Miracles of St Dominic and St Peter of Verona in Hungary

Dominic died on 6 August in 1221 and was buried in a simple grave in the church of the Dominican convent of Bologna until, in 1232, his confrère John of Vicenza took up the cause of boosting his cult.<sup>11</sup> Pieces of the founder's relics were taken at the solemn translation of his body to a new

<sup>10</sup> Klaniczay, *Holy Rulers*, pp. 224–25.

<sup>11</sup> On the importance of Dominic's canonization in the history of papal infallibility, see Prudlo, *Certain Sainthood*, pp. 84–89. For an outline of his canonization, see Prudlo, 'Heretics, Hemorrhages, and Herrings', pp. 105–12.

funeral monument in the same church designed by Nicholas of Pisa on 24 May 1233.<sup>12</sup> He was canonized on 13 July 1234 with the bull *Fons sapientiae* by Pope Gregory IX (1227–1241). Despite the prohibition of Master Francis of Ascoli, further pieces of relics were taken at his second translation in 1267 that took place at the time of the General Chapter.<sup>13</sup> By the second third of the thirteenth century, in addition to his tomb in Bologna, other local shrines housing his relics emerged in Dominican churches, including in Italy, Hungary, France, and Provence.<sup>14</sup>

Peter of Verona (1205?–1252), an erudite preacher and inquisitor in Lombardy, was assassinated in 1252 by a group of Milanese Cathars as a result of his anti-heretic activity in northern Italy. His canonization was the quickest in the history of papacy at that time: on 9 March 1253 his name was inscribed in the book of saints by Pope Innocent IV with the bull *Magnis et crebis*.<sup>15</sup> This rapid canonization can be ascribed to the active contribution of the Order of Preachers and the pope.<sup>16</sup> The first phase of the dissemination of the veneration of Peter of Verona throughout Europe was similarly rewarding.<sup>17</sup> A great number of miracles occurred either in the proximity of his tomb in the Sant'Eusturgio in Milan and in the Dominican churches of northern Italy, France, Bohemia, and Ireland, where Peter's relics were preserved.<sup>18</sup> A piece of his relic was taken to Hungary sometime before 1259.<sup>19</sup>

The presence of the relic of a saint was equal to the presence of the saint him/herself, who mediated between humankind and God, and whose power was sought after both as a patron and miracle worker. The relics were often cut into smaller and smaller pieces, but their power did not diminish so the saint could be practically omnipresent.<sup>20</sup> As Donald

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12 Gerardus de Fracheto, *Vitae fratrum*, pp. 96–97.

13 D'Amato and others, *Le reliquie di S. Domenico*, pp. 52–53. According to the authors, the Master of the Order's prohibition does not exclude the possibility that he himself distributed small fragments among the religious authorities who were present.

14 D'Amato and others, *Le reliquie di S. Domenico*, pp. 49–50 and 83.

15 On Dominic's canonization documents, see Krafft, *Papsturkunde und Heiligsprechung*, pp. 363–84.

16 As Prudlo argued, for the Dominicans, Peter's canonization meant the glorification of their Order, whereas for Innocent IV, who financed the initial phase of the creation and the solidification of the saint's cult, Peter was the defender of orthodox faith; thus, the support of his cult signified the strengthening the institution of papacy; see Prudlo, *The Martyred Inquisitor*, pp. 85–87.

17 Prudlo, *The Martyred Inquisitor*, p. 148.

18 Prudlo, *The Martyred Inquisitor*, pp. 159 n. 103 and 161 n. 112.

19 On the characteristics of male sainthood of the mendicants, see Vauchez, *Sainthood*, pp. 336–48; Bartlett, *Why Can the Dead*, pp. 65–71.

20 On relics and miracles, see Sigal, *L'homme et le miracle*; Snoek, *Medieval Piety from Relic to the Eucharist*, pp. 338–41; Bartlett, *Why Can the Dead*, pp. 239–409; Angenendt, 'Holy Corpses and the Cult of Relics'.

Prudlo has shown, the Dominicans soon recognized the potential in the dispersion of Peter of Verona relics as they may be conducive to miracles attributed to the saint himself, which in turn could be an efficient means of introducing and solidifying his cult in regions far from where he had been active.<sup>21</sup> This observation can be extended to the case of Dominic as well: whereas during the founder's first translation in 1233 pieces of his relics were only given to a limited number of people, presumably through the mediation of John of Wildeshausen, provincial of Hungary at that time, these positive effects on the cult were only hoped for,<sup>22</sup> the fact that after the second translation in 1267 a larger-scale dispersion took place is probably connected with the great number of miracles collected in Somlyó (before the mid-1240s) and Rouen (between 1261 and 1270) in the proximity of his relics.<sup>23</sup> The second occasion fits well with the Dominican relic policy of the time, which can be regarded as deliberate from the canonization of Peter of Verona at the latest. The miracles from Hungary were of special importance since the country was a missionary territory where the Dominicans had been successful in gaining a foothold in a short space of time, and also because they demonstrated the local population's devotion to Dominican saints.

As has been widely acknowledged in the scholarship, the historical parallels between the two great mendicant orders were not accidental: as the early Franciscans borrowed from the constitutions of the Order of Preachers, the latter, taking the example of the Minor Brothers in the propagation of the cult of the St Francis of Assisi, introduced various prescriptions at an institutional level to foster the veneration of Dominic as the founder and patron of the Order of Preachers between the 1230s and the 1250s.<sup>24</sup> In 1255, Master Humbert of Romans ordered the collection of new miracles attributed to the intercession of Sts Dominic and Peter of Verona and for the priors of Bologna or Milan, respectively, to be notified. Also, anyone who knew of trustworthy accounts of miracles, visions, or edifying records that occurred either in the order or were related to it should write to the Master about it in order that it be recorded in written form for the benefit of posterity.<sup>25</sup> The latter plan resulted in Gerald of Frachet's *Vitae fratrum* to which I will return later. Several other prescriptions regarding the commemoration of the two saints (liturgy, visual representations, church dedications, etc.) were also introduced in

21 Cf. Prudlo, *The Martyred Inquisitor*, pp. 157–59.

22 Cf. D'Amato and others, *Le reliquie di S. Domenico*, p. 51.

23 Vincent, 'Le pèlerinage de saint Dominique'; Bériou and Hodel, *Saint Dominique*, pp. 1535–40.

24 Van Engen, 'Dominic and the Brothers', pp. 10–11; Canetti, *L'invenzione della memoria*, pp. 339–401; Tugwell, 'Introduction', p. 32 n. 28; Barone, 'Lagiografia domenicana', pp. 368–73; on the prescriptions, see Dubreil-Arcin, 'L'hagiographie dominicaine', pp. 297–300.

25 *Acta capitulorum generalium I*, p. 81.

the following decades. As Simon Tugwell pointed out, the collection of the miracles was motivated by the revision of the legend of St Dominic, and the updating of their saints' miracles occurred precisely at times when the Order was facing some kind of crisis.<sup>26</sup>

Contemporary Dominican hagiography and sermon literature inform us about the miracles of Dominic and Peter in Hungary which occurred in the proximity of their relics.<sup>27</sup> The founder's miracles were first reported in Constantine of Orvieto's new life of St Dominic in the second half of the 1240s, and those of Peter of Verona were reported by a Hungarian prior in an account on the Order's missionary activity in Hungary written in 1259. The two saints' relics were of fundamental importance in the creation of a local cult around the church of the convent where they were housed. The Dominicans were the single religious order in Hungary at that time to possess the relics of their founder and first martyr, which could have endowed them with a certain kind of superiority. Given the close link between the Order and the king in that period, presumably it was their joint decision where to place these relics. Those of Dominic, probably obtained at his first translation in 1233, were placed in Somlyó (Similu, today Vršac, Serbia) in medieval Krassó County, in the church of the Dominican convent, which was in all likelihood founded by King Béla IV.<sup>28</sup> It is known from two miracle accounts reported in 1315 that it was the saint's finger relic that was preserved here.<sup>29</sup> Supposedly it was during the leadership of John of Wildeshausen — who had personally been present at the first translation of St Dominic in 1233 — of the Province of Hungary (1228–1233), that the relics came to Hungary.<sup>30</sup> Somlyó was

<sup>26</sup> In the thirteenth century, these occurred in 1245, when the rivalry with the Franciscans reached its height, in the 1250s, when the secular hostility threatened to undermine the reason for the existence of the Order, and in 1289, when it was heading towards its first serious breakup with the Papacy; see Tugwell, 'Introduction', p. 57.

<sup>27</sup> On the sermons on the mendicant saints, see Ferzoco, 'Preaching, Canonization and New Cults'; Ferzoco, 'Sermon Literatures'. On the miracles related to Hungary, see Rössler, *Magyar domonkosrendi példák és legendák*; Györkös, 'Magyar vonatkozású domonkosrendi történetek'; Györkös, 'The Saint and His Finger'.

<sup>28</sup> In the Middle Ages Krassó county was part of the bishopric of Csanád. Somlyó was the estate of the archbishop of Kalocsa until 1227, then of the king. Supposedly, the convent's church was dedicated to St Dominic; see Romhányi, *Kolostorok és társaskáptalanok*, pp. 23–24. It is debated until when the convent existed, but it still functioned in the early fourteenth century, as two recent miracles were reported by its former prior Nicholas of Vasvár at the General Chapter of 1315; see Tugwell, 'Introduction', p. 72. On the identification of the location of Somlyó, see Györffy, *Az Árpád-kori Magyarország*, III, pp. 493–94; Györkös, 'The Saint and His Finger', pp. 546–47.

<sup>29</sup> The two miracles mentioning the finger relic of Dominic are reported in *Miracula sancti Dominici*, ed. by Tugwell, #13, pp. 121–22; #14, pp. 122–23.

<sup>30</sup> Implom, *Adatok*, p. 80. On John of Wildeshausen's participation at the translation and his role in the distribution of the relics, see D'Amato and others, *Le reliquie di S. Domenico*, pp. 50 and 87.

not an important town but, as Attila Györkös has observed, its closeness to Cumania made it ideal for missionary activity.<sup>31</sup> It was also John of Wildeshausen, at that time already Master of the Order (1241–1252), who decreed the collection of the new miracles of St Dominic in 1245 in all the provinces of the Order, and who later handed them to Constantine of Orvieto, including those from Somlyó, to add them to the new legend of the founder.<sup>32</sup>

Constantine finished his *Legenda Sancti Dominici* around 1247. He presented Dominic as a divinely inspired founder and an efficient miracle worker, and included twenty miracles from Somlyó.<sup>33</sup> The original list must have contained at least twenty-one miracles, since Rodrigo da Cerrato also reported a *Corpus Christi* exemplum in his *Vitas sanctorum* (c. 1272) that took place here: while a priest celebrated a mass in front of the altar of St Dominic, the elevated Host disappeared, and became visible again when the priest confessed his sins to the Dominican *subprior*.<sup>34</sup> Although it had been omitted by Constantine, presumably because it was not a miracle of Dominic, it is a valuable testimony of the sacred space around the altar in which the saint's relics were preserved where such a miracle (of a punishment) occurred.<sup>35</sup> The twenty miracles listed by Constantine were all reported in the official legend of Humbert of Romans,<sup>36</sup> and nine became part of Dominic's *vita* in Vincent of Beauvais's *Speculum historiale* (c. 1245–1255), the third part of his *Speculum majus* written c. 1235–1264.<sup>37</sup> Most importantly, five of them were added to his life by James of Varazze (Jacobus de Voragine) in the *Legenda aurea* (c. 1260–1266), thanks largely to which they became quite well known also outside the Order. They continued to be reported in Dominican hagiographic works

31 Györkös, 'The Saint and His Finger', p. 547.

32 Deák, *La légende*, pp. 69–70.

33 On Constantine of Orvieto's new legend, see Deák, *La légende*, pp. 68–73; Bériou and Hodel, *Saint Dominique*, pp. 859–66.

34 As Tugwell points out, even though it was not certain that it was Rodrigo himself who had access to these miracles at the General Chapter of 1246, there was someone else who made a copy of this list of miracles before it was taken by Master John of Wildeshausen. Possibly, the list was handed down by Humbert of Romans (who was already Master of the Order at that time) in the Chapter of Paris in 1256 to Gerald of Frachet. See Tugwell (ed.), *Miracula sancti Dominici*, pp. 29–30. On Rodrigo's work, see Dondaine, 'Les éditions du "Vitas Sanctorum"', pp. 225–53; Bériou and Hodel, *Saint Dominique*, pp. 1041–42.

35 Rodrigo de Cerrato, *Vitas sanctorum*, LVII 84, reported in Tugwell (ed.), *Miracula sancti Dominici*, p. 28.

36 Humbert of Romans, *Legenda sancti Dominici*, pp. 429–34. These miracles were read at the *mensa* on the feast of Dominic's translation; see p. 428; see also Implom, *Adatok*, p. 80.

37 Vincent of Beauvais, *Speculum majus*, pp. 1272–73 (Book xxx, chapter 116–18). Jacobus de Voragine, *Legenda aurea*, II, pp. 738–40. For a full list including all the miracles from thirteenth-century Hungary in Dominican hagiography, see Györkös, 'The Saint and His Finger', p. 551.

for centuries. Dominic's miracles constitute the oldest list of miracles in Hungary collected at the shrine of the relics of an international saint; it can be considered as a 'shrine-based' miracle collection.<sup>38</sup> As Györkös noted, these miracles show how the recently canonized saint's cult spread towards the frontiers of Western Christianity.<sup>39</sup> After the first wave of miracles occurred before 1246, only two more are known from the same shrine that presumably took place shortly before 1315 when they were included in the collection of miracles compiled by Berengar of Landorra, but nothing is known about the convent's and the relic's later history.<sup>40</sup>

The miracles of Dominic were gathered with the aim of strengthening and spreading his cult throughout Europe. Thus, they are different from those registered for a possible canonization: even when witnesses are mentioned, other details such as profession or relationship to the beneficiaries are not, and the approximate time of healings is only recorded on two occasions.<sup>41</sup> The relics were placed in or in the proximity of the altar dedicated to the founder.<sup>42</sup> On certain occasions, they must have been put on public display and were allowed to be approached, as some people regained health after touching or kissing the relics.<sup>43</sup> The miracles are reported in hierarchical order: the six raisings of the dead are followed by thirteen healing miracles, and the list ends with a devotional miracle of a pious elderly woman who wanted to have a votive mass celebrated in honour of St Dominic. Constantine, in his legend, after narrating the miracles

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38 As Leigh Ann Craig has pointed out, chroniclers recorded miracle narratives in their works in order to assert the social and political authority of a person or an institution rather than promoting pilgrimage to a shrine; Craig, 'Pilgrimage as a Feature of Miracles', p. 168.

39 Györkös, 'The Saint and His Finger', p. 538.

40 See n. 28 above. It is probably another relic of St Dominic that turns up in the parish register of the church of Kizsolna (today Jelna, Romania) in an 1468 entry together with other saintly relics, but further research is needed on this topic; see Florea, *The Late Medieval Cult of the Saints*, 152.

41 As Ildikó Csepregi pointed out in connection with the fifteenth-century miracles which occurred at the relic shrine of St Paul the Hermit in Budaszentlőrinc; Csepregi, 'Miracle Types and Narratives', p. 328. Nevertheless, the narrative structure of the Somlyó miracles is similar to those of the miracle testimonies of the canonization processes. Their sequence is usually the same (the name of the person who invoked the intercession of the saint, the place where the suppliant came from, the name of the dead or ill person, age, social status, problem/illness, invocation of the saint, vow, healing, making the miracle public) but in some cases they may vary or add or omit certain details. The length of the accounts is rather varied.

42 Constantine of Orvieto, *Legenda Sancti Dominici*, #72, p. 338: 'coram altari beati Dominici collocans'. On the relics in/near the altar and the access to it, see Snoek, *Medieval Piety from Relic to the Eucharist*, pp. 175–245.

43 Constantine of Orvieto, *Legenda Sancti Dominici*, #82, p. 344: 'ductus tandem ad reliquias sacrosanctas et tactus eisdem'; #84, p. 345: 'tactus sacrosanctis reliquiis'; #85, p. 345: 'ad reliquias beati Dominici visitandas accessit, quas cum osculatus esset et ab eisdem iterum iterumque tactus'.

that occurred at the tomb of Dominic in Bologna, turns to those that took place elsewhere: 'que in Ungaria facta cognovimus, stupenda prorsus maxime circa mortuos suscitatos parte quadam reliquiarum sacrosantis corporis ipsius illuc delata, devotionem in populo provocante' (we have learnt that in Hungary wonderful [miracles], mostly raising of the dead took place by a piece of relic of his holy body that had been placed there, stirring devotion among people).<sup>44</sup> In another miracle he begins with a reference to the spread of the fame of the founder's virtues over the living and the dead in the whole country.<sup>45</sup> While these formulations are from Constantine who, possibly, also polished the style of the miracle accounts, the details surely come from the prior (or the friar(s) responsible for their registration) of Somlyó. In fact, there are a number of features in these miracles attesting the friars' aptitude for introducing recent, 'non-local' saints in a rural environment and the laity's and some churchmen's positive responses to it.

The miracles testify to the friars' successful implementation of devotion to St Dominic in general, not only in cases of serious illness or death, among the locals. The first account narrates how a couple went with their little son to visit Dominic's relics in Somlyó out of devotion; when their baby died there during their stay, they asked for the intercession of the saint to resurrect the child.<sup>46</sup> Although the friars were those who started publicizing the saintly fame of Dominic, the locals then continued to spread the news among themselves; in the sixth miracle, a bystander advises the grieving father of a recently died son, who previously did not believe in the miracle working capacities of Dominic, to turn to the saint:

Crede, beatum Dominicum magni esse meriti apud Deum, virtutemque Dei in veritate operari per eum miracula, que feruntur, necnon et ipsum invoca toto corde. Forsitan qui plerosque mortuos suis meritis suscitavit, tuum etiam filium suscitabit.

(Believe, St Dominic has great merits with God, and God's power truly works miracles through him, as it is said, and you should invoke him as well with all your heart. Perhaps He, who resurrected many dead for his merits, will resurrect also your son.)<sup>47</sup>

It also turns out from the accounts that the friars succeeded in creating a local shrine of considerable significance as the different places of origin of

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44 Constantine of Orvieto, *Legenda Sancti Dominici*, #82, p. 338.

45 Constantine of Orvieto, *Legenda Sancti Dominici*, #76, pp. 340–41: 'Crebrescente per totam Ungariam virtutum fama, quas per merita beati Dominici super vivos et mortuos manus domini frequentabat'.

46 Constantine of Orvieto, *Legenda Sancti Dominici*, #72, p. 338.

47 Constantine of Orvieto, *Legenda Sancti Dominici*, #76, p. 341. The translations are mine.

the pilgrims suggests.<sup>48</sup> A miracle informs us that the shrine was visited by pilgrims led by a parish priest.<sup>49</sup> In another one a priest was present when a noblewoman made a vow to visit Dominic's relics if her servant came back to life, and after he was healed, he accompanied her to Somlyó.<sup>50</sup> The mendicant orders, in general, were not immediately welcomed by the local ecclesiastic organization.<sup>51</sup> However, the miracles show that the friars managed to build a network around them, comprising the laity and the clergy alike, so the fame of St Dominic reached different social groups, ranging from a count to ordinary people. The clergy (or someone connected with them), turn up on three occasions, indicating the acknowledgement of the brothers and the approval of the new saint's cult at the same time.<sup>52</sup>

The miracles corroborate how responsibly the friars handled the shrine and took care of the founder's relics.<sup>53</sup> Some suppliants were allowed to remain in the church to pray in proximity to the relics.<sup>54</sup> The friars showed great care in making the believers aware of the necessity of reporting the miracles to them and also of making the miracles public.<sup>55</sup> A man had failed to report his healing to the friars out of negligence; then he was prompted by a dream vision in which Dominic, dressed as a friar, appeared to him and asked for the price of the healing; waking up,

iter arripuit, ad locum venit et coram fratribus de ingratitude seipsum redarguens, quod factum fuerat, totum tam de sanitate prius exhibita, quam de revelatione postmodum subsecuta devote simul et diligenter exposuit, audiente quamplurimo, qui tunc aderat, populo et Deo gratias referente.

(the man set out on a trip and went to that place, and revealing his ingratitude to the friars, he brought to light diligently everything what had happened, the earlier restored health just as well as the subsequent revelation, while a great number of surrounding people listened to him giving thanks to God.)<sup>56</sup>

48 *Villa Leley, villa Pinnar, villa Orodiansi, villa Titulensis, villa Oudon, villa Reseud, villa Urecha, villa Ticha, villa Geneu.* Many of these forms are corrupt.

49 Constantine of Orvieto, *Legenda Sancti Dominici*, #78, p. 342.

50 Constantine of Orvieto, *Legenda Sancti Dominici*, #73, p. 339.

51 Cusato, 'The Radical Renewal of Pastoral Care', pp. 322 and 329.

52 The news of the healing of the servant of the wife of a count who promised to go barefoot to the shrine or that of the steward of the provost of Arad must have reached also other members of lay and religious elite; see Constantine of Orvieto, *Legenda Sancti Dominici*, #73, p. 339.

53 On the tasks involved in running a shrine, see Bartlett, *Why Can the Dead*, pp. 259–63.

54 Constantine of Orvieto, *Legenda Sancti Dominici*, #72, p. 338.

55 As can be seen best from Constantine of Orvieto, *Legenda Sancti Dominici*, # 80, p. 343.

Cf. also Volpato, 'Pubblicità del miracolo', pp. 453–55.

56 Constantine of Orvieto, *Legenda Sancti Dominici*, #80, p. 343.

Dominic's miracles were also recalled in a sermon, as András Vizkelety has shown, composed in all probability by the Provincial of Hungary — presumably friar Marcellus — for the saint's second translation in Bologna in 1247 (Fig. 7.1).<sup>57</sup> The sermon is built on the parallel between Joseph in the Old Testament and St Dominic, who were both exhumed by their sons and brothers and were placed in a new tomb. The preacher ends his sermon by noting that Joseph and Dominic were alike also in the 'working of miracles, since not only in Spain or in Lombardy but also in our Hungary, people in large numbers ran to see the miracles performed due to his intercession.'<sup>58</sup> If this sermon was in fact delivered with the above content, all those who were present at the translation ceremony in Bologna could hear about the miracles in Hungary and the population's devotion to St Dominic.

Peter of Verona's relics must have come to Hungary sometime before 1259, when the miracles attributed to his intercession in the Dominican church of Patak (today called Sárospatak) in north-eastern Hungary, on the road that led to the Principality of Galicia-Volhynia, were first reported. The convent and the church, built on a royal estate, were mentioned for the first time in 1238.<sup>59</sup> Peter's relics were placed here plausibly to protect against another Mongolian attack after that of 1241/1242 and to be of help for the friars' apostolic mission in a region where non-Latin Christian ethnic groups also lived.<sup>60</sup> It is possible that Peter's relics were

57 Marcellus was prior provincial of Hungary for twelve years in the 1250s and 1260s. He was the spiritual director and confessor of Princess Margaret and presumably also the author of her first *vita* written between 1272 and 1275; cf. Klaniczay, 'Saint Margaret: Royal and Female Sanctity', p. 22. The sermon is preserved in the Codex of Leuven (shelfmark: National Széchényi Library, MNy 79) made up of two volumes bound together at the end of the thirteenth century. The codex, which also contains the earliest extant piece of poetry in Hungarian, the Lament of Mary, is made up of *de tempore* and *de sanctis* sermons mostly by contemporary French and Italian Dominicans. From among the five sermons and four brief sermon drafts on Dominic, Vizkelety individuated two that in all likelihood were written by the same author in Hungary. For their transcription and analysis, see Vizkelety, *Az európai prédikációirodalom recepciója*, pp. 156–68. The sermon's thema *Ioseph qui natus est homo* turn up several times among the sermons composed for the feast of St Dominic; see Schneyer, *Repertorium*, v, pp. 324 and 653. On the thirteenth-century Dominican sermons, see Vizkelety, 'A Domonkosrend tudományközvetítő szerepe', pp. 473–79; Vizkelety, 'I sermonaria domenicani', pp. 30–38. Another copy of the same sermon is preserved in the Biblioteca Marciana in Venice, under shelfmark Cod. 171.

58 'Item rara miraculorum operatione, quia non solum in Hyspania uel Lombardia, uerum etiam in nostra Hungaria cateruatim ruunt homines cernere cupientes, que per eum fiunt mirabilia', in Vizkelety, *Az európai prédikációirodalom*, p. 167.

59 Patak belonged to medieval Zemplén County, bishopric of Eger; on the convent, see Romhányi, *Kolostorok és társaskáptalanok*, p. 57. Its dedication is uncertain: in some sources, it was referred to as St Vincent. However, in a permission of indulgence from 1418, it was referred to as Church of St Dominic; Lukcsics, *XV. századi pápák oklevelei*, I, p. 56, no. 49.

60 Cf. Moravcsik, 'The Role of the Byzantine Church', pp. 150–51.

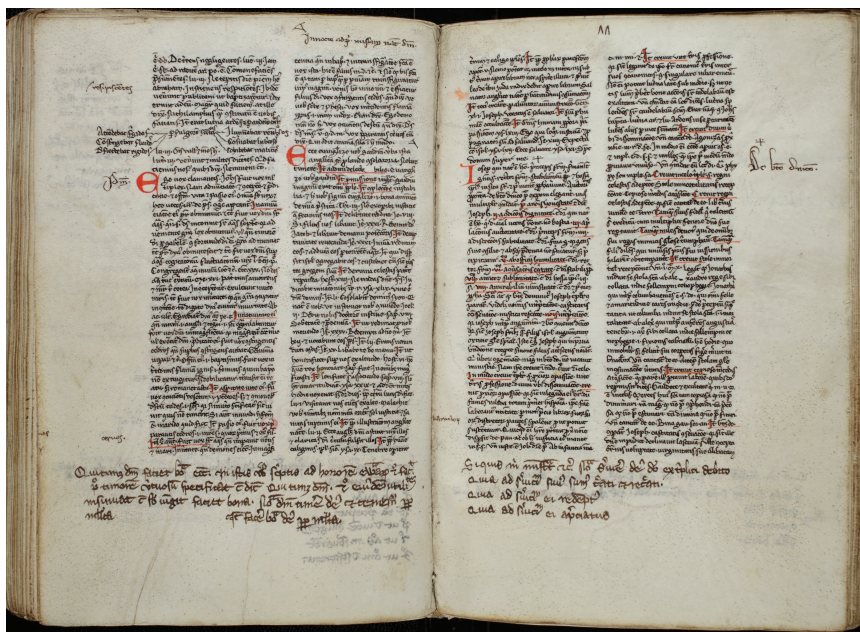


Figure 7.1. *De sancto Dominico. Ioseph qui natus est homo*, a sermon presumably by a Dominican author from Hungary, Budapest, National Széchényi Library, MNy 79, fol. 77r. Last third of the thirteenth century. Photo courtesy of the National Széchényi Library.

brought to Hungary for the General Chapter held at Buda in 1254 but there is no evidence for that.<sup>61</sup> The miracles were registered by Prior Svipertus (or Petrus) in an account about the first decades of the history of the friars' mission in Hungary that he sent to Master Humbert of Romans in Bologna. Svipertus related all the successes in their missionary activities primarily among the Cumans, for whose conversion the friars went as far as the River Dnipro, but, not concealing the hardships they had to face, he also related that approximately ninety friars were killed by the Mongolians (Tartars). The account can be found in some manuscripts of the *Vitae fratrum Praedicatorum* of Gerald of Frachet (1256–1260) who had access to all the materials that were sent to the Master of the Order from the different provinces.<sup>62</sup> The *Vitae fratrum*, which also reported the life and

61 Konrád, 'Veronai Szent Péter', pp. 155–57.

62 For the list of the manuscripts and the new edition of the *relatio*, see Tugwell, 'Notes on the Life of St Dominic', pp. 86–92. Although according to Tugwell, the original title of the work was *Liber Vitas fratrum Praedicatorum*, for the sake of clarity, I will refer to it with the title used when it was originally edited in 1896.

numerous miracles of Peter of Verona, was written to be used only within the Order, so his miracles in Hungary could be known only in some convents.<sup>63</sup> As Anne Reltgen-Tallon has argued, the dissemination of the veneration of Peter was topical because it was possible to associate him with the Hungarian friars who suffered martyrdom by the Mongolians in 1241/1242, and the conclusion of the account with his miracles served as a kind of memento of the importance of martyrdom in the Hungarian Province.<sup>64</sup>

Towards the end of the *relatio*, the Svipertus briefly narrates four recent healing miracles attributed to the intercession of Peter of Verona in Patak.<sup>65</sup> The first one reports the curing of a *mulier Ruthenica* on the vigil of the translation of St Dominic: after the celebration of the mass for Peter of Verona (Peter Martyr), a woman, who had previously been a follower of Eastern (Greek) Christianity, probably encouraged by the local Dominicans, looks for healing at the friars' church approaches the relics of Peter of Verona, and regains health.<sup>66</sup> In the background of this miracle, a fortunate missionary activity among the local population is outlined. It turns out from the miracle accounts that the — unspecified — relic was preserved in the altar dedicated to St Peter. The three other accounts report a raising from the dead, a delivery from a demon, and a healing of a crippled person. These records witness an early phase of the cult of Peter of Verona, which explains the presence of St Dominic, an 'older' saint who already had a more developed cult, in two of them. The prior emphasizes the authenticity of the first miracle by underlining the ecclesiastical and lay witnesses of the event, and also in the fourth one by mentioning that he himself personally knew the beneficiary of the miracle.

The two lists of miracles share a number of common features: almost all of them report miraculous healings attributed to the intercession of the saints whose pieces of relics are placed in (or in the proximity of) the altar

63 Gerardus de Fracheto, *Vitae fratrum*, pp. 203, 214, 236–48.

64 Reltgen-Tallon, 'Les martyrs dominicains de Hongrie', p. 214.

65 The miracles are reported in Gerardus de Fracheto, *Vitae fratrum*, pp. 308–09: 'Noviter etiam quod quasi infinita miracula per gratiam Dei et merita beati Dominici in pluribus conventibus nostris facta sunt in Hungaria, adeo ut eciam numerum excedant. Sed et noviter anno domini millesimo ducentesimo quinquagesimo nono, cum populus venisset ad ecclesiam fratrum nostrorum de Porroch in vigilia translationis beati Dominici et post celebrationem misse de beato Petro martyre, causa devotionis accederet populus ad reliquias martyris et quedam mulier Ruthenica in manu dextra a graui infirmitate quam paciebatur, recipit sanitatem, videntibus omnibus tam religiosis quam secularibus, qui interfuerunt. Item cuiusdam mulieris infans defunctus positus sub altari beati Petri martiris vivus est receptus. Quidam obsessus pluribus annis per merita beati Dominici et Petri martyris a demone est liberatus. Cui eciam ego frater Svipertus, tunc prior eiusdem conventus dedi manducare. Quidam contractus in pedibus accedens ad altare beati Petri martyris recepit sanitatem.'

66 On Ruthenia, see Wunsch, 'Ruthenie'.

dedicated to them in a rural environment, each includes a healing miracle related to conversion, and each places strong emphasis on authentication by witnesses. Yet they differ in the time of composition, purpose, and textual transmission. These accounts were success stories communicating the importance of Dominican local shrines in Hungary for the whole Order (in the case of Dominic, even beyond) and are unique testimonies of how a new religious order exploited the opportunities of the relics of their two recently canonized saints to introduce new cults, to attract the local population to their new churches, and become established in the local ecclesiastic structure. The miracles collected from the different provinces, from France to Hungary, from Ireland to Sicily, served also as a form of — to borrow the fortunate expression of Roberto Paciocco originally referring to the Franciscan *catalogi sanctorum* — geographical map of the Order in the second half of the thirteenth century.<sup>67</sup>

### Sts Dominic and Peter of Verona in a Dominican Sermon Collection

The rise of the mendicant orders went hand in hand with the new emphasis on preaching, and the friars were the greatest producers of all kinds of auxiliary materials. The modern sermon collections were one of these: they not only facilitated the friars' everyday activity, but in the case of their own saints, they provided a great opportunity to praise also their spiritual family's special qualities through the explication of the saint's lives and qualities. The friars expected large audience in their churches on the feasts of those saints who were of particular importance to them. The few extant Dominican sermon collections from the last decades of the thirteenth century, which were originally made for users in Hungary, report sermons for the feasts of Sts Dominic and Peter. One of them, the collection of sermons known as *Sermones compilati in studio generali Quinqueecclesiensi in regno Ungarie* (Sermons compiled at the University of Pécs in the Kingdom of Hungary), was composed probably sometime between 1255 and 1275 by a Dominican friar, but survived in a copy made in a German territory at the turn of the fourteenth–fifteenth century.<sup>68</sup>

67 On the Franciscan catalogues of saints emerging in the first half of the fourteenth century, see Paciocco, *Da Francesco ai 'catalogi sanctorum'*, pp. 91–94.

68 The codex is preserved in the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, under shelfmark Clm 22 363b. On the collection, see Madas, *'Studium summae veritatis'*, pp. 51–58. The dating of the composition is based on internal evidence: the latest saint in the collection is Peter of Verona canonized by Pope Innocent IV in 1253 and the latest quoted authority is the pope himself who died in 1254; Thomas Aquinas, who died in 1274 and was canonized in 1323 is not quoted or mentioned at all. However, there is no scholarly consensus about the date of composition: the fact that Aquinas is not quoted does not necessarily mean that the

Its *sanctorale* contains 199 sermons on saints, among them a number of Hungarian royal saints.<sup>69</sup> Contrary to what its name suggests, the original *corpus* was presumably compiled in Buda, the centre of the Dominican Province of Hungary, and could have been used in the education of the novices in the local *studium generale* founded after 1304.<sup>70</sup> As has been shown by Edit Madas, these high-quality scholastic model sermons — abundant in citations from classical authorities<sup>71</sup>—contain a great number of reflections on preaching, such as learning the *summa veritas*, the conditions of preaching and understanding, the suitability and the alertness of the preachers.<sup>72</sup> The examples to follow were the apostles, the doctors of the Church, and two great saints of the Order, Sts Dominic and Peter of Verona, whose importance in the collection was attested by the seven and five sermons dedicated to their feasts, respectively. Even though it is not known how these sermons were presented to the audience, they at least give a taste of the Dominican author's idea of why these saints (and the Dominicans) were excellent. The novices might have used these ideas later as preachers. The feasts provided occasions to inform the audience about the lives and virtues of these saints and to capitalize on the power of their high moral and spiritual qualities. Whereas, in Dominic's case, his activity as a preacher is usually combined with learning and teaching, Peter is presented as someone who aimed at the eradication of sin (both moral and theological) by showing the truth. These two saints embodied the whole Order, and were thus appropriate devices to strengthen people's belief that the Dominicans, excelling both from spiritual and doctrinal point of views, are those who can best direct men and women to the path of salvation, and thus are those who deserve to have a privileged position within a Christian community.

From these remarkable sermons I would like to highlight a few motifs here. The preacher brings up several times that in Dominic's glorification the foundation of the Order was decisive. He explains Dominic's ascent to heaven through four steps: the gift of continence, the light of intelligence, the feeling of love, and the institution of the Order:

Propter ista IIII<sup>or</sup> merito comparatur sali et luci, lucerne ardenti et civitati eminenti. Fuit ergo sal per donum continencie, quia sicut sal

---

collection was written earlier than his death. The only fixed date seems to be that it was ready by the beginning of the fourteenth century since one of the sermons of the collection turns up in an early fourteenth-century collection of sermons.

69 Five on St Stephen, two on St Ladislaus, and four on St Elizabeth.

70 It was decided at the General Chapters of 1302, 1303, and 1304 that all the Dominican provinces, except Denmark, Greece, and the Holy Land, should have their own *studium generale*; *Acta capitulorum generalium I*, pp. 314, 320; *Acta capitulorum generalium II*, p. 2.

71 Madas, 'Les auteurs classiques mentionnés.'

72 Madas, 'Studium summae veritatis', pp. 52–55.

arcet vermes a carnibus, sic ipse separavit a se carnalitates et erat quasi adeps separatus a carne tenendo eximie vite celibatum [...]. Fuit eciam lux per lumen intelligencie, in cuius signum in ore eius apparuit ardens facula, in fronte vero micans stella, que sui splendore mundum illuminavit. Ipse est enim Elias, qui surrexit quasi ignis et verba eius ardebant quasi facula Eccli. 46 Fuit eciam ardens amando Dominum intime [...]. Fuit eciam civitas eminens exiliendo ordinem suum eximie [...].

(For these four [grades] it is proper to compare him to salt, light, ardent oil lamp, and to a city built on a high place. So he was salt through the gift of continence, since as salt keeps away the worms from the meat, he separated himself from carnal things and was like fat separated from meat, living an excellent celibate life [...]. And also, he was light because of the luminosity of intelligence, in whose mouth a burning torch and on whose forehead a shining star appeared, the splendour of which illuminated the whole world. He was also Elias, who appeared as fire and whose words were burning as a torch, Eccli.46. And also, he was ardent because of the love of intimate loving of God that came from within [...]. He was a city built on a high place by bursting out excellently his order [...].)<sup>73</sup>

The salt metaphor is used again in connection to chastity but at this time applied generally to the Order of Preachers whose two outstanding virtues, cleanness (salt) and science (light), could be both found in Dominic, since serving the flower of chastity, he gained the intact celibacy of the excellent life.<sup>74</sup>

The prominence of the saints of the mendicant orders was largely because their vocation was the propagation of the Gospel. Two sermons on St Dominic are centred on the praise of learning and teaching, in which the founder is also the model to follow in studying.<sup>75</sup> Dominic, as father of all preachers, excelled in the service of preaching, because — and the chronology is important — first he acquired wisdom and [only] then poured out the teaching [of the Church].<sup>76</sup> In one of the sermons the preacher explains how all power was passed from God to people by Christ, from Him to the Apostles, then to the bishops and the preachers of lower

<sup>73</sup> *Sermones compilati*, sermo 73, p. 159.

<sup>74</sup> *Sermones compilati*, sermo 93, p. 199: 'Eminencia dignitatis predicatorum constitit in sciencia et mundicia. Racione mundicie dicuntur sal, racione sciencie dicuntur lux. Utrumque autem fuit in Sancto Dominico, scilicet donum continencie, quoniam florem pudicie servans illibatam attigit eximie vite celibatum.'

<sup>75</sup> *Sermones compilati*, sermo 73, p. 158: '[...] ad imitationem patris nostri debemus et nos discere [...].'

<sup>76</sup> *Sermones compilati*, sermo 92, p. 197: '[...] quia primo acquisivit sapienciam et postea profudit doctrinam [...].'

rank. Continuing this thread in another sermon, he writes that '[...] Beato Dominico, qui in se quidem fuit bonus et ecclesie Dei extitit fructuosus, quia reliquit post se heredes, etc., ut filii dicantur proprie fratres ordinis sui, nepotes vero omnes conversi per doctrinam filiorum suorum' (St Dominic was good and brought fruit for the Church of God, since he left heirs, therefore the friars of his order are properly called his sons, and all those who were converted by the teaching of his sons are called his grandsons).<sup>77</sup>

Peter of Verona, whom the author considers the most eminent among the preacher friars and special, is presented as a saint rather to be admired than imitated. That Peter was awarded the Triple Crown, reserved only for those who were martyrs, virgins, and doctors at the same time, turns up in three *sermones*. In the sermon built on the theme *Et ecce equus albus* (Apocrypha 6.2) 'the preachers of Christ', the Dominicans, are compared to noble horses that are praiseworthy for the beauty of colour, by which preachers should be distinguished in leading an exemplary life, for the strength of body, by which they should be strong in virtue while wandering, for the courage of heart, by which they should be ardent in the fight against sins and in martyrdom, and for the quickness of legs that they should be ready to be obedient to Christ.<sup>78</sup> In the collection, Peter's activity as a preacher is almost always conjoined with his anti-heretical activities.<sup>79</sup> Although the word 'inquisitor' never turns up, in one of the sermons the author clearly states that Peter became a martyr as a result of his mission to investigate the heretics.<sup>80</sup> What made him especially suitable for fighting the heretics was his ability, given by God, to discern between good and bad. Quoting the bull of canonization of Innocent IV, the preacher emphasizes that Peter 'chased away the darkness of error with the light of his own teachings transmitted to others because he was the teacher of the truth and he spent his days with preaching beneficial to the souls and refuting the heretics with valid doctrines.'<sup>81</sup> Peter's service against the 'rebellious heretics' is a proof that he was a talented preacher.<sup>82</sup>

77 *Sermones compilati*, sermo 74, p. 160.

78 *Sermones compilati*, sermo 61, p. 134. Cf. also Gregory's bull 'Fons sapientiae'.

79 Yet, as has been shown by Prudlo, for the early preachers Peter's mission was not defined in terms of the institution of inquisition but the core of his anti-heretical activity was to defeat heresy by his preaching; Prudlo, *The Martyred Inquisitor*, pp. 100–01.

80 *Sermones compilati*, sermo 61, p. 135: '[...] ut Mediolanum pergeret hereticos inquirere vincens, id est animo vincendi, ut vinceret, scilicet ipso facto. Nam dum iter salutaris propositi peragit, ab hereticis occiditur [...].'

81 *Sermones compilati*, sermo 60, p. 133: 'Tenebras erroris fugavit lumine doctrine sue aliis tradite, quia fuit doctor veritatis et dies impendebat commodis animarum insistendo predicacionibus et hereticum dogma validis rationibus confutando, ut dicit Innocentius.'

82 *Sermones compilati*, sermo 61, p. 135.

In the *Sermones compilati* collection Peter's martyrdom was interpreted as a triumphant victory.<sup>83</sup> After the early Christian martyrs, the first 'modern' saints who were canonized under the title 'martyr' were Thomas Becket (c. 1119–1170) in 1173 and Stanislaus of Kraków (1030–1079) in 1253.<sup>84</sup> Peter was, in turn, the first canonized martyr of the mendicant orders, and the Dominican authors did not miss the opportunity to underline this.<sup>85</sup> According to the author, the Church was renewed by the saint martyr, and his violent death would bring to perfection that which had been started by Stephen (the first Christian martyr), so that *Her youth would be similar to Her old age* (Deuteronomy 33. 25). The preacher attributes the recent growth of the Church to Peter, who not only in his life but also after his death converted the people: he compares Peter to the trunk of a tree, from which more branches grow out, '[...] sic uno martire moriente mille alii credebant [...]' (so with the death of one martyr, another thousand [people] started to believe).<sup>86</sup>

## Conclusions

We have seen how two groups of sources related to the cults of Dominican saints written for different purposes and for different audiences in the thirteenth century contributed to the legitimation of the Order's presence in Hungary. The addressees could gather information on the friars' praiseworthy activity in successfully spreading the fame of their saints, be it the implementation and running a shrine, popularizing the new miracles that occurred in Hungary, or promoting the excellence of the Order through the sermons written for the feasts of their saints. The friars also acquired religious prestige from the fortunate growth of a local cult around its two first saints in the first decades of their presence in Hungary. The numerous miracles that became known throughout Europe enhanced the Dominicans' authority within the Hungarian ecclesiastical structure, and also that of the Hungarian Dominicans within the whole Order.

I have shown the multiple ways of making the most of cults of saints, in which the relics were of the utmost help, especially since the other

83 *Sermones compilati*, sermo 63, p. 139.

84 Stanislaus of Kraków was canonized in the same year as Peter of Verona; before that, the Papacy was reluctant to canonize martyrs. However, as noted by James D. Ryan, Innocent IV addressed several bulls to mendicant orders, acknowledging brothers who had been killed in the name of Christ, and declaring his certitude that they were associated to the college of martyrs; Ryan, 'Missionary Saints of the High Middle Ages', pp. 4–5; for a comparison of these two saints in sermon literature, see Kuzmová, 'Preaching on Martyr-Bishops'.

85 On Peter as 'new martyr' in the *Legenda aurea*, see Le Goff, *In Search of Sacred Time*, pp. 118–20.

86 *Sermones compilati*, sermo 63, p. 139.

great mendicant order, the Franciscans, did not have any relics of their founder in Hungary, nor a canonized martyr saint. The relics made it easier to attract the local rural population to a new church, to a new order, and empowered the friars with authority. The miracles attributed to the intercession of St Dominic and St Peter facilitated the acknowledgement of the friars' presence in the local ecclesiastic system. People of different social statuses looked for healing from Dominican relics, ranging from ordinary people to the nobility, and the news of the miracles even played a role in turning people's attention to Dominican saints, and thus, also to the Order itself. The two devotional miracles of Dominic reveal that the presence of a piece of his relic endowed the friars' church with a sacred atmosphere.

From model sermons produced for users in Hungary in roughly the same period we can gain some pieces of information on what the friars could preach about on the feasts of their saints, on which occasions a substantial audience was expected. These feasts provided an opportunity to popularize their apostolic mission, to advertise the excellence of their Order through the saints, above all in spiritual and theological questions, their courage in evangelization and correction of moral sins even at the cost of their life. The preacher friars considered themselves to be the heirs of the Apostles and as sons of St Dominic regardless of the province in which they were active. Sts Dominic and Peter of Verona represented the preacher friars' spirituality, and their veneration was equal to the approval and the esteem of their vocation and activity in the region.

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PART II



# Native Saints



## Native Saints: Introduction\*

In the excerpt from *Passio Kanuti* quoted at the end of the introduction to the previous section, the hagiographer explains that some saints experience special veneration in particular localities. One explanation for this veneration can be the presence of relics, of which we saw several examples concerning non-native saints. However, the hagiographer explains that such veneration primarily happens ‘due to the common residence’ (‘propter familiaritatem cohabitantium’).<sup>1</sup> In other words, saints were especially venerated in and by the communities to which they themselves belonged, and in the places where they were active during their lifetime — which, in many cases, are also the places where their relics were kept. We refer here to such saints who were venerated by their own communities and in their own localities as native saints.

As with the non-native saints, those who were venerated in the places where they had lived and worked, and by people with whom they shared particular bonds of belonging, could provide both opportunities and challenges for those elite groups who sought to enhance their own legitimacy. The main challenge might consist of establishing a new cult, centred on an individual whose sanctity was not already confirmed through hagiographic material or feasts, as opposed to non-native saints. On the other hand, the ability to monopolize the cult of the native saint through control of the saint’s relics was itself an opportunity. The religious institution which guarded these relics became the saint’s main and unrivalled cult centre.

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\* The research leading to these results has received funding from the Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2014–2021 (2019/34/H/HS3/00500). This chapter is part of a joint research project of the University of Warsaw and the University of Oslo ‘Symbolic Resources and Political Structures on the Periphery: Legitimization of the ELITES in Poland and Norway, c. 1000–1300’.

<sup>1</sup> *Passio Sancti Kanuti Regis et Martyris*, 1, p. 62.

The legitimizing potential of native saints lay particularly in the ability to anchor the veneration of a saint in a local context. This was so because native saints were more deeply rooted in the history of the place and the history of the people. After all, the connection between a native saint and a local territory did not only stem from the saint's relics being present at the cult centre — as could also be the case with non-native saints — but also from the saint having taken part in the history of the territory before their death. The value of having a patron saint connected with the territory is particularly evident in the cases of local cults from Denmark and Sweden, as discussed by Steffen Hope, Karin Lagergren, and Sara Ellis Nilsson, all of whom provide examples from several cults. Ellis Nilsson, in particular, emphasizes how local themes run through the stories of the saints' lives, justifying either the antiquity of the religious institution and its connection to the very beginnings of Christianity in the polity (as in the case of Elin of Skövde), or the location of the centre of veneration and its rights to ecclesiastical supremacy over particular areas or particular prestige within a polity's Church organization (as in the case of Botvid of Södermanland).

That a saint's life on earth was connected to a particular religious institution, a particular elite group, or a particular territory also provided valuable opportunities for the legitimization of elites. In some cases, such connections could be stressed and expanded through various versions or redactions of the saint's legend, as presented in *vitae* or liturgical offices. For example, in the *vita* of St Wenceslas known as *Legenda Christiani*, a text discussed by David Kalhous and Kacper Bylinka, the story of the saint's life is preceded by the story of the past of the Bohemians, the origins of the dynasty, and the realm's conversion to Christianity. Such connections could often be embellished beyond historical fact. A good illustration of this is Anna Agnieszka Dryblak's discussion of how the hagiographies of St Hedwig highlighted her role as the founder of the Trzebnica monastery, which was the centre of her cult. The documents available to us from the time of the foundation, however, clearly indicate that her husband had the main role. Another, even more spectacular example from Poland is a tradition which was in place already in the first half of the twelfth century. According to this tradition, it was St Adalbert, the most important Polish saint, who was the founder of the Gniezno archdiocese, and its first metropolitan. The archdiocese, however, was established three years after his death.<sup>2</sup>

For dynastic elites, the native saints were often valuable for legitimization purposes because these saints could be connected to the dynasty, and thereby bestow an aura of sanctity onto the whole family, and thereby be

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2 Deptuła, *Galla Anonima mit genezy Polski*, p. 325; Pauk, 'Quicquid pertinebat ad imperium', pp. 270–71.

an important, powerful means of legitimization. Indeed, as David Kalhous shows in the case of St Wenceslas, this legitimizing capital can be used in different ways: to strengthen itself in its relations with local elites as well as with external forces, both secular and ecclesiastical. The use of holy kings by their successors is also explored by Haki Antonsson, who demonstrates how hagiography of Cnut Rex reveals a shift in the cult, from initially having expressed only the identity of ecclesiastical institutions to becoming closely related to royal identity and ideology. It should be noted, however, that not all cults of holy rulers underwent such a transformation and so, for example, the cult of St Henry II the Emperor, as Robert Folz notes, never took on a political role and he 'remained primarily a Bamberg saint'.<sup>3</sup>

On the other hand the family connections of the saint could in turn be exploited by religious institutions who claimed him or her as part of their own institutional history. For example, as discussed by Grzegorz Pac, that St Ludmila belonged to the Přemyslid dynasty made it possible for St George's Abbey in Prague — where the body of the holy duchess was kept — to use Ludmila as a reminder to the Přemyslids about their obligations to the abbey founded by them. To some extent, the case of St Hedwig, who is both a saint associated with Trzebnica and a dynastic saint, is similar, as Anna Agnieszka Dryblak shows. In both these cases, we see how a religious institution employed the dynastic saint to assert legitimacy towards the dynasty.

However, dynastic saints were also important to religious institutions due to the ways in which these saints symbolized territorial control, at least when the saints had been rulers of lands and peoples. What mattered here was not simply that a particular saint had lived in a specific territory or belonged to a particular people, but that the saint had governed both territory and people. This dynamic is particularly notable when the saint is a king or a duke. In Karin Lagergren's chapter we see how St Erik is presented as a protector of the clergy and the people rather than the royal family. Similarly, St Olaf of Norway became a saint for the Norwegian Church, which — as Jerzy Pysiak shows in his chapter in Part I on non-native saints — led the Norwegian kings to seek legitimacy with the cult of the Crown of Thorns. We see here an example of what Janet Nelson has noted, namely that a saintly ruler can also be easily used by the Church to suborn the ruler currently in power.<sup>4</sup>

Somewhat simplistically, it can be said that while the fundamental problem from the point of view of using a saint for legitimacy purposes in the case of non-native saints is to link them to the local context, in the case of native saints the opposite applies: to give them a universal feature

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<sup>3</sup> Folz, *Les saints rois*, p. 91.

<sup>4</sup> Nelson, 'Royal Saints', pp. 43–44.

and place in the broader context of Christianity or even salvation history. In his chapter, Kacper Bylinka examines such efforts to link the two native, dynastic saints, Wenceslas and Cnut Rex, to the wider historical context by linking them with other, more established saints. He shows that these efforts are important for the identification and legitimacy of the local elites, allowing them to demonstrate that they are full members of the Christian *ecumene*. Likewise, the claim by the Odense cathedral chapter that Cnut Rex was a protomartyr provided Denmark with a typological link to biblical history, as mentioned by both Bylinka and Hope.

Finally, it should be noted that just as in the case of the peripheral cults of non-native saints, which sometimes served in important ways to legitimize the main centres of their cults, the legitimacy of the elites from the very centres of Christianity could also be served by the cults of native saints from the periphery. This issue is crucial for Kirsty Day's chapter, which shows the importance to the Papacy of thirteenth-century women from East Central Europe's dynastic circles who enjoyed a reputation for sainthood, as well as of the stories of their lives. One may even wonder whether the use of the term 'native saints' is appropriate in the case of this relationship: although for Poland or Bohemia the saintly duchesses discussed by Day were undoubtedly native, from the point of view of the Papacy this did not matter much: they were simply saints, even if the context in which they lived was not insignificant.

This shows a certain conventionality of the categories we are using here: just as non-native saints, through the translation of relics and the formation of local centres of veneration, became in local communities saints in their own right, also native saints were never reserved only for one community. Even if their veneration was concentrated or even limited to one diocese or one realm, by achieving the nimbus of sainthood they achieved a status accepted more widely, becoming, in a way, the object of cult of the entire Church, and, entering an even higher level, joining the Heavenly Jerusalem.

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## 8. The Prague Nunnery and its Patroness, St Ludmila\*

### *Legitimization and Mutual Support*

The conversion of Duke Bořivoj in the 880s, which took place under the influence of Great Moravia, to which he was subordinate, was a turning point for the introduction of Christianity to Bohemia. The new faith was strengthened in the following decades by successive rulers from the Přemyslid dynasty, which had achieved hegemony over the Bohemian lands.<sup>1</sup> St Ludmila, the wife of Bořivoj, was baptized alongside him. According to hagiographical sources, after the duke's death, she lived the rest of her days as a pious widow, before she was eventually murdered in 921, on the orders of her godless daughter-in-law. Ludmila was the grandmother of St Wenceslas, another saint from the Přemyslid dynasty. His martyrdom at the hands of his brother, Boleslav I, took place about fifteen years after the death of his grandmother and his cult was already

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\* The research leading to these results has received funding from the Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2014–2021 (2019/34/H/HS3/00500). This chapter is part of a joint research project of the University of Warsaw and the University of Oslo 'Symbolic Resources and Political Structures on the Periphery: Legitimization of the ELITES in Poland and Norway, c. 1000–1300'.

<sup>1</sup> For a general overview, see Sommer, Třeštík, and Žemlička, 'Bohemia and Moravia'.

**Grzegorz Pac** • is Professor at the Faculty of History, University of Warsaw. His research interests include the cult of saints, papal canonization, queenship, and the role of women in the Early and High Middle Ages. Recently he published *Women in the Piast Dynasty. A Comparative Study of Piast Wives and Daughters (c. 965–c. 1144)* (Leiden – Boston: Brill, 2022) and 'The Papal Monopoly on the Canonization and Translation of Saints on the Peripheries of Latin Christendom: The Case of Bohemia until c. 1150', *Journal of Medieval History*, 48.4 (2022), 457–77.

*The Cult of Saints and Legitimization of Elite Power in East Central and Northern Europe up to 1300*, ed. by Grzegorz Pac, Steffen Hope, and Jón Viðar Sigurðsson, *Comparative Perspectives on Medieval History*, 2 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2024), pp. 217–240

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10.1484/M.CPMH-EB.5.137538

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developing rapidly at the end of the tenth century.<sup>2</sup> St Wenceslas' cult overshadowed the cult of St Ludmila, which seems to have been more modest, yet at the same time the latter cult fuels many more disputes between scholars. To summarize, it has been hotly debated whether she was venerated and had been accepted as a saint by the local Church already at the end of tenth century, or whether it was as late as the mid-twelfth. My own view on this controversy, expressed more fully elsewhere,<sup>3</sup> is that we have enough proof to be convinced that the cult was already recognized in the tenth century and continued to exist, even if without significant further growth, over the next decades and centuries.<sup>4</sup> St George's Church at Prague Castle, where the saint's body was interred and the nearby nunnery were undoubtedly the centre of her cult. However, there is no reason to believe, as some scholars have suggested, that it was limited to within its walls.<sup>5</sup>

However, I shall focus here on St George's Abbey, and I will describe how the new cult was used by this community and its abbesses as part of the process of legitimization. From the moment it was established, the fact that the Přemyslid duchess with *fama sanctitatis* was buried in the church was used by the convent to underline its extraordinary position and close ties to the dynasty. Underlining these symbolical ties became particularly crucial when this close connection between the abbey and the ruling family in fact started to become weaker. It would therefore seem that the use of Ludmila's cult in order to legitimize the nunnery had several different intended audiences. The first was probably the Přemyslid dynasty itself, whose forebears had founded the abbey. The fact that it housed the remains of their saintly ancestor was a very good way of reminding them of their continued obligations towards it. Another audience would have been the ecclesiastical circles in Bohemia, since the presence of such important relics would have given the nunnery a special position and distinguished it from other ecclesiastical institutions. We should not forget that there was

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2 For a general overview, see Kubín, *Sedm přemyslovských kultů*, pp. 125–50; Klaniczay, *Holy Rulers and Blessed Princesses*, pp. 100–08 as well as the contribution by Kalhous in this volume.

3 Pac, 'Wokół wczesnego kultu św. Ludmiły'; Pac, 'The Cult of St Ludmila'.

4 This is clear from the saint's portrayal in hagiographical pieces focusing on her grandson, as well as in *The Life of St Wenceslas and St Ludmila* known as *Legenda Christiani*, which has been convincingly dated to the late tenth century. St Ludmila's death is referred to as a *martyrium* in her own *vita*, *Fuit in provincia Boemorum*, dated fairly unanimously to the same time. Additionally, her feast appears in some early calendars, including one from the late eleventh century which is linked to Kraków, see Pac, 'Wokół wczesnego kultu św. Ludmiły'; Pac, 'The Cult of St Ludmila'; Pac, 'Kalendarz z Kodeksu Gertrudy', in particular pp. 34–47. Cf. Pac, 'Gertruda and her Saints', pp. 124–26. Archaeological traces of the preservation of her remains, discussed below, also point to her veneration.

5 This opinion was recently put forward, in particular by Petr Kubín, see his works mentioned below.

an even more important cult, that of St Wenceslas, which had its shrine in Prague's St Vitus Cathedral, immediately in front of St George's Church. The nunnery therefore needed its own cult to maintain its status within Prague Castle and define its own identity. Finally, the presence of the body of the great saint, with its associated miracles, might also provide the nunnery with greater esteem within wider Bohemian society.

But in order for the cult to be used to legitimize the nunnery, it first needed to become popular. This encouraged the nuns and abbesses of St George's to actively support and promote it. In a way, it was not only the nunnery which needed St Ludmila, but also the saint who needed the nunnery. This created a mutual relationship between the institution and its patroness, one which was not unusual when compared to those between other saints and medieval ecclesiastical institutions.

Indeed, the role of St Ludmila in the legitimization of St George's Abbey should be seen in the context of similar uses of the cult of saints by monasteries, chapters, or bishoprics elsewhere in Latin Christendom. In its peripheral areas, such as the Bohemian lands, this need for legitimization could have had a specific character, since the newly established Christian institutions in recently converted territories could hardly use their past to prove their authority or even to justify their existence. Instead, to achieve this, they would have needed to establish entirely new cults, or at other times, to establish connections with older cults, for example, through the translation of relics. In the case of the Prague nunnery, it was the former.

## The Church and Abbey of St George and the Přemyslids

A direct link between the first Christian duchess of Bohemia and St George's Church at Prague Castle was established by Ludmila's grandson, St Wenceslas. In 925 he transferred her body, previously buried in Tetín (about 30 km to the south-west of Prague) to the church. However, at that stage it was not yet a proper translation of the body of a saint, but merely the transfer of her body to the church established in the Přemyslid centre of power.<sup>6</sup> St George's Church had been founded by Ludmila's own son, Duke Vratislav I, who was also laid to rest there.<sup>7</sup> St George's, which became a collegiate church quite early, played a central role at Prague

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<sup>6</sup> Pac, 'Wokół wczesnego kultu św. Ludmiły', pp. 41–44; Pac, 'The Cult of St Ludmila'.

<sup>7</sup> Merhautová, *Bazilika sv. Jiří*, pp. 22–34.

Castle not merely before, but also after the foundation of the rotunda of St Vitus by Duke Wenceslas.<sup>8</sup>

Both churches received new functions after the establishment of a bishopric in Prague in 968–976, which had until then been part of the diocese of Regensburg. Mlada, the daughter of Wenceslas's brother, Duke Boleslav I, played a key part in the creation of the new diocese. She had travelled to Rome, where she became a Benedictine nun and received the monastic name of Mary. The *Chronica Boemorum*, written sometime between 1117–1125 by Cosmas, dean of the cathedral chapter of Prague, quotes a papal document (the authenticity of which is a matter of dispute)<sup>9</sup> stating that the pope gave his approval for a bishopric to be founded in the Bohemian capital. In the same document the pope commands: 'for the Church of Saint George the Martyr we decree that a congregation of devout nuns be constituted under the rule of Saint Benedict and the obedience of our daughter, Abbess Mary.'<sup>10</sup> The letter immediately spurred Duke Boleslav II and his sister Mlada-Mary into action: the Church of St Vitus was to become the seat of a bishopric, while the Church of St George would be a nunnery.<sup>11</sup>

The fact itself that the nunnery was established with papal approval, along with a diocese and under the leadership of the ruler's daughter, demonstrates the great prestige of the institution. It should also be stressed that this nunnery was a dynastic foundation, modelled on well-known examples from the contemporary Empire: established and led by members of the ruling family, it prayed for the prosperity and salvation of the Přemyslid dynasty.<sup>12</sup>

However, St George's Church was not only special because of the monastery, there were other factors at play. As already noted, the church itself had also been established by a member of the dynasty, Duke Vratislav I, the father of Wenceslas. From that time on, it was the place of burial for many of the Přemyslids: Ludmila and Mlada, Vratislav himself, Boleslav II (or perhaps Boleslav I) and Oldřich, who died in 1034.<sup>13</sup>

8 Třeštík, 'K založení pražského biskupství', pp. 184–85 n. 19; Třeštík, *Počátky Přemyslovců*, pp. 409–10.

9 Sobiesiak, *Boleslaw II Przemysłida*, pp. 175–78; Kalhous, *Anatomy of a Duchy*, p. 151 with n. 655 for further reading.

10 'Ad ecclesiam vero sancti Georgii martiris, sub regula sancti Benedicti et obedientia filie nostre, abbatisse Marie constituatur congregatio sanctimonialium', *Cosmae Pragensis chronica Boemorum*, I, 22, p. 44. Here and later the English translation follows Cosmas of Prague, *The Chronicle of the Czechs*.

11 *Cosmae Pragensis chronica Boemorum*, I, 22, pp. 42–44. Cf. Sobiesiak, *Boleslaw II Przemysłida*, pp. 22–24. For more on Mlada-Mary, see also Birnbaumová, 'Dobrawa a Mlada', pp. 38–46; Turek, 'Ctihodná Mlada – Marie'.

12 Sobiesiak, *Boleslaw II Przemysłida*, p. 24. Cf. Pac, *Women in the Piast Dynasty*, pp. 351–62.

13 Borkovský, *Svatijiřská bazylíka*, pp. 32–42; Frolík, 'Hroby Přemyslovských knížat', pp. 25–46; Frolík and Smetánka, *Archeologie na Pražském hradě*, pp. 130–42; Polanský and others (eds),

Other family members or ducal consorts were possibly also buried there.<sup>14</sup> Consequently it should undoubtedly be seen as the first necropolis of the Přemyslids.<sup>15</sup>

Prague Castle, where the church was located, remained an important centre of power in itself. However, it is possible that in case of St George's, its use as a dynastic burial site was in addition to the special role it played in the inauguration ceremonies of the Bohemian dukes. The stone throne, on which each new duke was solemnly seated, was located between St George's, the cathedral, and the ducal *palatium*.<sup>16</sup> Interestingly, according to Cosmas's description of the 1055 inauguration of Duke Spytihněv, the duke went straight to St George's after his enthronement, which leads Roderich Schmidt to conclude that the inaugural mass was in fact celebrated there.<sup>17</sup>

The symbolic role played by St George's Church, as well as the glorious inception of the dynastic nunnery, was matched by the real power of its abbesses. We cannot say much about their economic status, or that of the monastery itself, but the sources provide us with some information about their political position. Some of these stories suggest that the successors of Mlada-Mary had enough clout to oppose the most powerful figures, without hesitation. Let me mention but one anecdote, partly humorous, provided by Cosmas about the conflict between one of the abbesses of St George's and the heir to the throne, Spytihněv. When supervising the construction of a new wall around the castle, on the orders of his father Duke Břetislav I, it turned out that this work could not be completed without destroying the abbess' oven. When others hesitated to do so, Spytihněv tore it down, saying 'Hodie domna abbatissa calidas non gustabit placentas' (Today the lady abbess shall not enjoy her warm cakes). The furious abbess confronted the prince, ridiculing the duke, who 'sibi famosum fert de fornace triumphum' (an oven overcomes in triumph). Sometime later, during his enthronement in 1055, Spytihněv, who 'abbatissa dicta dux alta in mente reposita' (kept these words of the abbess deep in his mind), took revenge and banished her.<sup>18</sup> Although not all details of this humorous tale should be assumed to be true, it does

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'Přemyslovská dynastie', pp. 548–53. On the debate on whether Boleslav II or Boleslav I is buried in grave no. 98 at St George's, see in particular Borkovský, *Svatijiřská bazylíka*, pp. 25–32; Sláma, 'Několik poznámek'; Bravermanová, 'K hrobu č. 98', pp. 47–48.

14 See previous footnote: some scholars suppose, although without convincing arguments, that Oldřich's brother, Duke Jaromír (d. 1035) was also buried in St George's Church.

15 Cf. Sobiesiak, *Bolesław II Przemyślida*, p. 23.

16 On the throne and enthronement, Schmidt, 'Die Einsetzung'; Kulecki, 'Ceremonial intronizacyjny Przemyślidów', pp. 441–45. On the throne's location, Schmidt, 'Die Einsetzung', pp. 454–55; Borkovský, *Die Prager Burg*, p. 97.

17 Schmidt, 'Die Einsetzung', p. 451.

18 *Cosmae Pragensis chronica Boemorum*, II. 14, pp. 104–05.

seem to indicate that there was a conflict of some kind between the heir to the throne and the abbess, which ended in the banishment of the latter and which was still remembered at the time the chronicle was written, sometime between 1117–1125. But even if it was only a story, it still shows how Cosmas viewed the position of the abbesses of St George's Abbey. In his tale, no one except the young prince dared to oppose to the abbess and even if she finally lost this dispute with a member of the ruling family, this only happened when Spytihněv inherited full authority as duke. In summary, this tale demonstrates that, at least according to Cosmas, the abbess of St George's was powerful enough to initiate a conflict with one of the most powerful figures in the realm. It also shows us that disputes might arise between the ducal family and the abbess over the control of space within Prague Castle. According to Cosmas, she apparently saw herself as a co-host of the Castle Hill.

### The Nunnery and the Beginnings of St Ludmila's Cult

The strong status of St George's Church and the nunnery, from the founding of both to at least the 1030s, is worth emphasizing because it was a place that had a potential to create a new cult that would be a symbolic manifestation of its institutional power and identity. Indeed, according to most scholars, it was just after the foundation of the nunnery by the powerful princess Mlada and her relatives that the remains of St Ludmila were transferred to the cross-shaped cavity<sup>19</sup> located in the central nave of the church. Although it was placed below the level of the floor, it was not in the ground because the pit was only half a metre deep, lined with splinters of stone and carefully mortared.<sup>20</sup> Importantly, other examples from the Empire and elsewhere suggest that this kind of cavity was exclusively used

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19 MB, 'Relikviářový hrob sv. Ludmily', p. 149; Kubín, 'Zur Heiligsprechung', p. 644; Kubín, *Sedm přemyslovských kultů*, p. 121. Milena Bravermanová ('Hroby světců', p. 91; 'Relikviářové tkaniny', p. 354) says that it is impossible to tell whether this was the first burial place of Ludmila after the transfer of her remains from Tetín, or the second. Jakub Izdný ('Mohl autor') argues for the first hypothesis on the basis of the archaeological excavations. It seems somewhat unlikely that the body of the saint was placed in this cavity (131 cm long, 21–25 wide and 48–50 deep), just a few years after her death. Nor does the half-metre deep pit, lined with chips of limestone and finished with mortar, seem to fit a tomb dug in an as yet unconsecrated church, as described in the *Legenda Christiani*. For a description of the cross-shaped cavity, see Borkovský, 'Piscina ve tvaru kříže', pp. 680–91, 697–707; Borkovský, *Svatijiřská bazylíka*, in particular pp. 28–32, Fehring, 'Die Kreuzgrabenanlagen von Prag', pp. 1167–70; Bravermanová, 'Hroby světců', p. 91. Borkovský considered this feature to be a baptismal piscina, which has been disproven.

20 For a description, see previous n.

for relics.<sup>21</sup> In other words, when Ludmila's remains were relocated, she was already being treated as a saint. We are therefore dealing with the first material signs of her veneration.

Interestingly, the cavity was partially destroyed when a nearby grave, given the number 98 by the archaeologists excavating St George's Church, was dug. St Ludmila's relics therefore had to have been removed before that, likely to an overground *tumba* (tomb), known from a description of the church's destruction in 1142.<sup>22</sup> Grave no. 98 is usually identified as the burial place of Boleslav II (d. 999), or sometimes as that of Boleslav I (d. 972).<sup>23</sup> It would therefore seem that the *elevatio* of Ludmila, which was the official recognition of her cult, had taken place already in the tenth century, no more than three decades after the nunnery was founded.<sup>24</sup> Tapestries found in Ludmila's tomb, which have been dated to the early eleventh century, are probably remnants of either this translation or some later devotional practice. Jakub Izdný has recently pointed out, based on the research of Milena Bravermanová, that 'the remains were manipulated more often after the transfer from Tetín', which he rightly sees as evidence of her veneration as a saint.<sup>25</sup> The cult was therefore established and maintained in this newly founded ecclesiastical institution and the connection between the two seems clear: the cult helped to legitimize and improve the status of the newly-established nunnery.<sup>26</sup> It is highly likely that it was Mlada-Mary who was instrumental in getting the sainthood of her great-grandmother recognized.

The promotion of St Ludmila's cult was probably directly linked to the growing cult of St Wenceslas in the nearby church of St Vitus. Boleslav I, the saint's brother and assassin, had already had his body translated there from Stará Boleslav, where the martyr had been buried initially. With what was now a double patronage,<sup>27</sup> the church of St Vitus and St Wenceslas in Prague was the undoubted centre of the cult, and as already suggested by Josef Pekař and developed by Dušan Třeštík, the main purpose of the recognition of the new saint was to legitimize the foundation of the

21 Fehring, 'Die Kreuzgrabenanlagen von Prag', pp. 1167–70; Bravermanová, 'Hroby světců', p. 91; Hlobil, 'Gotický náhrobek', p. 392.

22 Bravermanová, 'Hroby světců', p. 92; MB, 'Relikviářový hrob sv. Ludmily', p. 149.

23 See above, n. 13.

24 Pac, 'Wokół wczesnego kultu św. Ludmily', p. 45.

25 Izdný, 'Mohl autor'; Bravermanová, 'Relikviářové tkaniny' in particular pp. 354–56. Cf. Bravermanová, 'The Oldest Textile Items', pp. 87–94.

26 Cf. Kubín, 'Du cloître au diocèse', 84.

27 In fact, the new patron outshone St Vitus so effectively that in the eleventh and twelfth centuries the cathedral was sometimes referred to as that of St Wenceslas. From at least 1090, the third patron of the church was St Adalbert. See Kalousek, *Obrana knížete Václava*, p. 89. Cf. also Kubín, 'Zur Heiligensprechung', pp. 638–39 n. 30.

new bishopric of Prague.<sup>28</sup> Indeed, it was generally expected that the creation of new archbishoprics or bishoprics would be justified by and find their ideological basis in their apostolic traditions or in the presence of especially important relics.<sup>29</sup> In Prague, that role seems to have been played by the remains of St Wenceslas, which were, according to Třeštík, translated there shortly before the establishment of a new diocese in 968–976. Třeštík states that the formal recognition of the cult of St Ludmila in Mlada's nunnery, which he considers analogous to that of St Wenceslas, may have taken place at a similar time.<sup>30</sup>

It was most likely at that time, shortly after the creation of the Prague nunnery in the late 960s or early 970s, that the Life of St Ludmila, known as *Fuit in provincia Boemorum*,<sup>31</sup> was written.<sup>32</sup> It describes the pious life of the saint, called here *famula dei*, and her death, which was described in a hagiographical style and referred to as a martyrdom.<sup>33</sup> Although the dating of another hagiographical text, the Life of St Wenceslas and St Ludmila, known as *Legenda Christiani*,<sup>34</sup> was the subject of great debate within Czech historiography, it was probably written in 990s.<sup>35</sup> This *vita* is an important proof of the early veneration of St Ludmila, since it devotes nearly as much time to her as to her grandson, describing her pious life, her martyrdom, and her posthumous miracles.<sup>36</sup> Additionally, it also includes a description of the transfer of Ludmila's body to Prague as well as of the feast of her *translatio*, which also allows the author to mention the miraculous healing which took place on that day. The *vita* was dedicated to

28 Pekař, 'Svatý Václav', pp. 82–83 n. 96; Třeštík, 'Translation und Kanonisation', in particular pp. 360–61.

29 Cf. some reflections on the legitimization of archbishoprics, especially on the periphery of Christendom in Michalowski, *The Gniezno Summit*.

30 Třeštík, 'Translation und Kanonisation', p. 361.

31 *Fuit in provincia Boemorum*, ed. by Chaloupecký. However, note that according to most scholars, the original form of the *Fuit* ends with chapter 7, with the words 'migravit ad Dominum' (as opposed to the edition which includes chapters 8 to 14). See in particular Vilikovský, review of *Prameny X.*, pp. 81–94; Urbánek, *Legenda t. zv. Kristiána*, pp. 164–79 and more recently Třeštík, *Počátky Přemyslovců*, p. 138.

32 Třeštík, *Počátky Přemyslovců*, pp. 153–54, 174–75; Kubín, 'Znovu o Kristiána', p. 64 with n. 14 (p. 70); Kubín, *Šedm přemyslovcových kultů*, pp. 84–87; Kubín, 'Du cloître au diocèse', 82–84.

33 Pac, 'The Cult of St Ludmila'; Pac, 'Wokół wczesnego kultu św. Ludmily', pp. 17–18; however, the latter is incorrectly based on the whole text from the Chaloupecký edition (see above, n. 31). Cf. a different interpretation of the source: Kubín, *Znovu o Kristiána*, p. 64 with n. 4 (p. 70); Kubín, *Šedm přemyslovcových kultů*, pp. 84–87; Homza, *Mulieres suadentes*, pp. 96, 108.

34 *Legenda Christiani*, ed. by Ludvíkovský.

35 The dating of this source has been the subject of debate for over 200 years. Today, most scholars agree on its tenth-century origins; for a summary of the entire debate, see Kalhous, *Legenda Christiani*.

36 *Legenda Christiani*, ed. by Ludvíkovský, chs 3–5, pp. 24–54.

Vojtěch-Adalbert, bishop of Prague and future martyr, while its author was in all probability Mlada's own brother, a monk named Christian.<sup>37</sup>

It is precisely the *Legenda Christiani* which provides us with a very good description of the ideological significance of both cults for the Přemyslids. Written by a member of the dynasty itself, it presents an extensive history of Bohemia and its ducal lineage, as well as highlighting the close link between St Ludmila and St Wenceslas, whose cult was much better established at the end of the tenth century.<sup>38</sup> In a similar manner, the veneration of those two dynastic saints may have been cultivated in the two Prague churches (those of St Vitus and St George) which were closely linked to the Přemyslids and by the two institutions which they had founded, the bishopric and the nunnery.

### **Hauskloster of the Přemyslids?**

However, after the 1030s, during the rest of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, the close relationship between the dynasty and the nunnery became weaker. Czech historians sometimes emphasize that from the very beginning, female members of the ducal family often served as abbesses of St George's Abbey.<sup>39</sup> Indeed, in later periods, we can find evidence of a preference for Přemyslid princesses to hold this office: for example, in 1200 Agnes, the abbess of Doksany and daughter of Vladislav II, became abbess of St George's. In 1302, Sophia, abbess of the Prague nunnery, abdicated in favour of Cunigunde of the Přemyslids dynasty.<sup>40</sup> However, during the eleventh and twelfth centuries, there were no known abbesses from the dynasty.<sup>41</sup> It is also interesting to examine the abbesses of St George's

37 Třeštík, 'Přemyslovec Kristián'. Cf. Kalhous, *Legenda Christiani*.

38 Cf. in particular Kuźmiuk-Ciekanowska, *Święty i historia*.

39 See Merhautová, *Bazilika sv. Jiří*, p. 38; Modráková, 'Úřad abatyše', p. 581. Cf. Wolverton, *Hastening Toward Prague*, p. 331 n. 125.

40 Žemlička, *Přemyslovci*, pp. 206–07; Karczewski, 'Kunegunda Przemysłówna', pp. 87–89; Benešová, 'Abatyše Kunhuta'.

41 We also do not know anything for certain about any Přemyslid daughters who were sent to the nunnery between Mlada and Agnes. The only evidence we have are the words of Cosmas, who when describing the funeral of Duke Břetislav II mentioned his sister Ludmila. The chronicler calls her a 'devout servant of God' ('Deo devota famula' — *Cosmae Pragensis chronica Boemorum*, III, 13, p. 175), which may suggest that she was a nun, yet this description is not precise enough to be able to determine whether Ludmila was a Benedictine nun at St George's in Prague. There is in fact a strong counterargument to this: given everything we know about the relationships between female monasteries and the families which founded them, it would be difficult to imagine that Ludmila, a Přemyslid princess, would not have received the post of abbess there. Břetislav's funeral took place in 1100 and is described by Cosmas shortly after a story involving an abbess of St George's named Windelmuth (see below, n. 54), recorded under the same year. Since someone else

between the reigns of Mlada and Agnes (late tenth century–1200), although the limited sources mean that we can only name a few. In the eleventh century, there is the above-mentioned protagonist of the tale about the oven, described by Cosmas as Bruno's daughter (*Bruninis filia*),<sup>42</sup> and one referred to by the chronicler as Windelmuth,<sup>43</sup> as well as the abbess Adelaide, who may have been the same as the abbess who fell out with Spytihněv.<sup>44</sup> For the twelfth century, we only know two abbesses: the nameless abbess mentioned in the appendix to the Chronicle of the so-called Canon of Vyšehrad for the year 1142, whom I shall discuss later, and Bertha. The former was probably the individual who was removed from office by the papal legate shortly after 1142, whereas Bertha was first mentioned in papal documents from 1145 and 1151<sup>45</sup> and she is known to have re-established St George's Church after it had burned down.<sup>46</sup> There is nothing to suggest that any of those women were Přemyslids. In fact, for those whose names are given, a German origin seems likelier, as in the case of Bruno's daughter.<sup>47</sup> As Lisa Wolverton summarizes, the 'view [...] that St George's was the Přemyslid dynastic house for women is incorrect for the eleventh and twelfth centuries.'<sup>48</sup>

If the church of St George was used as a necropolis, at least for some Přemyslids, it lost this function after the 1030s, as no ruler or other member of the dynasty was buried there later.<sup>49</sup> Until the end of the

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was apparently the abbess during that same time, it would be quite unlikely that Ludmila was a nun in St George's (if she was a nun at all).

- 42 *Cosmae Pragensis chronica Boemorum*, II, 14, p. 104.
- 43 *Cosmae Pragensis chronica Boemorum*, III, 11, p. 171. She is also mentioned as *Vencelmunt* or *Vencilmunt* in the so-called *Necrologium Bohemicum*, obituary notes added to the *Martyrologium Pragense* in 1151–1157. See: [Martyrologium Pragense], fol. 28v; Graus, 'Necrologium Bohemicum', pp. 799, 803. For the dating of this source, see: Graus, 'Necrologium Bohemicum', pp. 799–801. On its origin cf. also Dragoun, 'Necrologium bohemicum', pp. 13–23.
- 44 As *Adleyth abbatissa* in *Necrologium Bohemicum*, see [Martyrologium Pragense], fol. 9v; Graus, 'Necrologium Bohemicum', pp. 799, 803; *Codex diplomaticus Bohemiae*, II, no. 387, p. 436. According to this last source, a royal charter from 1221, Adelaide (*Adlaida*) was an abbess in the times of Severus/Šebř (1030–1067), bishop of Prague and Duke Břetislav I (d. 1055), while according to Cosmas, *Bruninis filia* held the office at the end of his reign.
- 45 *Codex diplomaticus Bohemiae*, I, no. 142, p. 144 [as *Berta*]; no. 167, p. 171 [as *B.*]. She also appears as *Pertha* in the *Necrologium Bohemicum*, see [Martyrologium Pragense], fol. 32r; Graus, 'Necrologium Bohemicum', pp. 799, 809.
- 46 Merhautová, *Bazilika sv. Jiří*, pp. 41–52.
- 47 Wolverton, *Hastening Toward Prague*, p. 331 n. 125; Žemlička, *Přemyslovci*, p. 206. Note that many high ecclesiastical offices in the eleventh and twelfth centuries in Bohemia were occupied by Germans, Žemlička, *Čechy v době knížecí*, pp. 210–11; Sommer, Třeštík, and Žemlička, 'Bohemia and Moravia', p. 246.
- 48 Wolverton, *Hastening Toward Prague*, p. 331 n. 125. Cf. Wolverton, *Hastening Toward Prague*, pp. 132–33.
- 49 Cf. above, pp. 220–21 with n. 14.

twelfth century, some were laid to rest in the cathedral, others in the Vyšehrad collegiate church, while some were buried in other places such as the monasteries in Kladruba or Strahov.<sup>50</sup> A separate issue is that of the Přemyslids being remembered in prayers at St George's Abbey. For a monastery associated with the dynasty, there are surprisingly few names of early Přemyslids in its surviving calendars. However, these were created quite late, in the early fourteenth century.<sup>51</sup> These loosened ties between the monastery and the descendants of its founders may have induced the nuns to stress ever more strongly their connection to their patroness and the progenitor of the ruling dynasty. Apart from the prestige it brought, the figure of St Ludmila also served to remind the Přemyslids of their duties towards the nunnery: the story of the conflict between the abbess and Spytihněv shows that this was indeed necessary.

### Abbesses of St George's Fighting for their Patroness

As mentioned at the beginning, although there are enough reasons to disagree with those who claim that the veneration of St Ludmila was limited to St George's Abbey, her popularity in the eleventh century, as well as in the first half of the twelfth, would seem to have been quite limited. It would be hard to compare it to the cult of St Wenceslas, since several of his *vitae* had already been written in the tenth century, followed by two more in the eleventh,<sup>52</sup> whereas in contrast there were no new texts devoted to St Ludmila. More importantly, by the first quarter of the twelfth century, there are many attestations of his cult, such as ecclesiastical foundations or solemn celebrations of his feast. But more importantly, it had also achieved political significance, given that St Wenceslas himself had begun to be seen as the patron saint of Bohemians.<sup>53</sup> Nothing similar happened in the case of St Ludmila. From the point of view of the legitimacy of St George's Abbey, this disproportionality between the cult of its patroness and that of St Wenceslas might have been problematic, especially since the centres of the two cults were just a few dozen metres from each other.

Therefore it was not only St George's Abbey in Prague, where the centre of the cult was based, which needed Ludmila's cult as a form of

<sup>50</sup> Frolík, 'Hroby Přemyslovských knížat', in particular pp. 26–27; Polanský and others, eds, 'Přemyslovská dynastie', pp. 553–61. Cf. Wolverton, *Hastening Toward Prague*, pp. 132–33.

<sup>51</sup> By which I mean the calendars from the time of Abbess Cunigunde, which only list Mlada, Bořivoj, and Boleslav II, in addition to St Ludmila and St Wenceslas, from among those Přemyslids who died before the thirteenth century. Source edition: *Svatojirské kalendáře*, pp. 61–81. For earlier manuscript calendars from St George's, see *Kalendáře rukopisů*, pp. 35–78.

<sup>52</sup> See Kalhous in this volume.

<sup>53</sup> See: Graus, *Lebendige Vergangenheit*, pp. 159–82 and below, n. 71.

legitimization, in particular to emphasize its bonds with the dynasty. In the period in question, it was also the other way around — St Ludmila required the active support of her cult as well. The available sources tell of two events which show this increased support from the nuns of the nunnery, which in both cases resulted in a confrontation with the bishops of Prague. The first is recorded by Cosmas in 1100, and the chronicler claimed that, with other members of the bishop's entourage, he witnessed it himself. During the consecration of a church that belonged to the nunnery, Abbess Windelmuth gave Bishop Hermann a fragment of cloth taken from St Ludmila's dress, which was to be placed in the pyx in the altar among other relics. According to the chronicler, the bishop said: 'Tace, domna, de eius sanctitate, dimitte anum quiescere in pace' (Let's have no talk, lady, as to her saintliness and let the old woman rest in peace!). The scandalized abbess replied that 'multa enim Deus per eius merita cotidie operator magnalia' (great things are done daily by God through her [Ludmila's] merits), so the bishop ordered an ordeal by fire of a fragment of Ludmila's clothes. Unsurprisingly, this test proved Ludmila's sanctity: the material remained unharmed by the flames, while the bishop and canons shed tears of joy.<sup>54</sup>

This story, as David Kalhous has pointed out and I have developed elsewhere, should not be treated literally.<sup>55</sup> It is not, as some Czech historians have suggested,<sup>56</sup> an illustration of the ambiguous, if not openly hostile, attitude of the bishops of Prague towards St Ludmila's cult. Its goal was rather to confirm her sainthood, which Cosmas apparently accepted without reservations,<sup>57</sup> by employing the figure of a doubting Thomas, a role often played by bishops in other hagiographical stories. Let us mention a few examples. For instance, in the early thirteenth-century *Sancti Willelmi abbatis vita et miracula* (St William had been the prior of the Abbey of St Geneviève in Paris before moving to Denmark), it is the Bishop of Orléans who doubts the authenticity of the relics of the saint's head, and who suffers divine punishment for his incredulity.<sup>58</sup> In another Danish source, the late twelfth-century life of St Theodgar, the king and bishop, wrongly, suspect fraud on the part of the local priest

54 *Cosmas Pragensis Chronica Boemorum*, III. 11, p. 171. On the ordeals of relics by fire, see Head, 'Saints, Heretics and Fire'; Head, 'The Genesis'.

55 Kalhous, 'Znovu o Kristiána: replika', p. 416; Kalhous, 'K historické metodě', pp. 180–81; Pac, 'Wokół wczesnego kultu św. Ludmily', pp. 23–30.

56 Profanová, *Kněžna Ludmila*, p. 118; Hledíková, 'Úcta sv. Ludmily', p. 41; Kubín, 'Zur Heiligsprechung', p. 636; Kubín, 'Znovu o Kristiána', p. 64; Kubín, 'Odpověď na repliku', p. 173.

57 Cf. Kubín, 'Du cloître au diocèse', 87.

58 *Sancti Willelmi abbatis vita et miracula*, cap. 9, pp. 316–18. Cf. Sumption, *Pilgrimage*, pp. 30–31.

who had proclaimed Theodgar's sainthood.<sup>59</sup> In the *Translatio et miracula s. Odulfi*, which was added to one of the manuscripts containing the thirteenth-century Chronicle of the Abbey of Evesham, it is Lanfranc, the post-Conquest archbishop of Canterbury, who advised the abbot to perform an ordeal by fire of the relics of the previous Anglo-Saxon abbots, whose sainthood he doubted: two of them pass the trial successfully.<sup>60</sup>

For hagiographers, bishops were a very handy artifice for portraying the figure of a doubting Thomas. On the one hand, this is the result of the bishops' responsibility for maintaining the orthodoxy of the cult of saints and verifying the authenticity of relics. On the other, their proclamation of someone's sainthood had a legal consequence: namely, the official recognition of a cult. Consequently, stories such as Cosmas's played a part in the legitimization of the cult. In fact, Thomas Head called the ordeal by fire performed by bishops, 'an alternative way of canonization.'<sup>61</sup> However, for the chronicler, the main purpose of the story is to express his own devotion to St Ludmila and proclaim her glory and its manifestation through miracles. Although not institutionally connected to St George's Abbey, Cosmas obviously supported the cult and wanted to further legitimize it by recounting her thaumatological power in that passage. From our point of view, it is important to emphasize that Cosmas's story illustrates the status, and also the determination of the abbess: she was both able to object to the bishop and promote the cult through the use of relics during the consecration of a new church.

The second story can be found in an appendix to the Chronicle of the so-called Canon of Vyšehrad, probably written in the early 1150s by a different author than the rest of the work, who is often believed to be linked with the nunnery in Prague (although only because the story focuses on it).<sup>62</sup> Its protagonists are 'moniales dilectae deo et hominibus de coenobio sancti Georgii martyris sanctaque Ludmilae martyris' (nuns from the convent of St George the Martyr and St Ludmila the Martyr, beloved by God and people). Incidentally, it is this source which refers to Ludmila as a patron saint of the abbey for the first time. During the siege of Prague by the Moravians in 1142, the nuns abandoned the monastery.

59 *De sancto Theodgario*, chs 5–6, pp. 15–16. On the dating of the text: Haki Antonsson, 'Saints and Relics', 74–76; Haki Antonsson, 'False Claims', pp. 190–92, but also Gelting, 'The Kingdom of Denmark', p. 105, where it is dated to the late eleventh century.

60 *Translation and Miracles of S. Odulph*, pp. 323–24. Cf. Sayers and Watkiss, 'Introduction', p. lxiv.

61 Head, 'The Genesis', esp. pp. 34–37.

62 *Canonici Wissegradensis continuatio Cosmae*, s. a. 1142, pp. 235–37. The different authorship and time of writing of the appendix to the chronicle of the so-called Canon of Vyšehrad, which itself ends upon the year 1142, has already been pointed out by Václav Novotný and has been accepted by all later scholars, see: Novotný, 'Studien zur Quellenkunde Böhmens', pp. 546–48 and most recently Reitingr, 'Psal tzv. Kanovník vyšehradský', p. 664 and n. 127.

But hearing rumours of a fire in the church, they decided to visit it to find the relics of St Ludmila and remove them from the destroyed basilica. After being miraculously prevented from doing the latter, they ask Otto, the bishop of Prague, to come and decide what to do. He declines to do anything without first asking for authorization from Rome, which is an early example of the acceptance of papal rights with regard to the translation of saints.<sup>63</sup> 'To fulfil their wish' ('ut desiderium ipsarum impleat'), as the author says, the nuns then turned to Henry Zdík, the bishop of Olomouc, who was apparently also present in Prague, and with whom they were on good terms, as other sources attest.<sup>64</sup> But Zdík refused to act without the permission of the local bishop. Not wishing to give up, and on the advice of Dean Henry, Archdeacon Peter, and other members of the Prague cathedral chapter, the nuns 'took out the casket, opened it and having looked it over, joyously lay it next to the altar' ('sarcophagum relevant, aperiunt, et praevisum iuxta altare laetanter recondunt'). The passage ends with the miraculous revelation of a theft by a stonemason, who had stolen a fragment of St Ludmila's body and was punished for his deed.

This story can be interpreted in many different ways. Some historians see it as an attempt by the nuns to have Ludmila's cult recognized through an official translation, which according to these historians had not taken place before.<sup>65</sup> However, as I have tried to demonstrate elsewhere,<sup>66</sup> what we are dealing with here is rather the transfer of relics of an already recognized saint, which was necessary for practical reasons but still required a formal procedure that included approval by the pope, at least according to some ecclesiastical circles. From our perspective, the most important aspect would probably again be the determination shown by the nuns. This is something that the author seeks to emphasize, along with the miraculous signs of Ludmila's sainthood. It illustrates that the nunnery was keen to ensure the proper treatment of the relics of its patroness, even in the face of a refusal from the bishop of Prague based on the fact that this

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63 Pac, 'The Papal Monopoly', pp. 463–67.

64 Henry Zdík appears in a document issued by Pope Eugene III in 1145 as the petitioner for papal protection and confirmation of the abbey's possessions, *Codex diplomaticus Bohemiae*, I, no. 142, p. 145. In another document, addressed in 1151 to the abbess and nuns of St George's Abbey, the same pope remembers the recently deceased bishop, referred to as the 'benignus patronus et benefactor' of the abbey and thanks the community for the 'ornamenta' for the liturgical service made by the nuns and given to the pope by Zdík, *Codex diplomaticus Bohemiae*, I, no. 167, pp. 171–72.

65 Urbánek, *Legenda t. zv. Kristiána*, I, 1, p. 175; Hledíková, 'Úcta sv. Ludmily', pp. 41–42; Kubín, 'Zur Heiligsprechung', p. 637; Kubín, 'Znovu o Kristiána', p. 65; Kubín, 'Odpověď na repliku', p. 173; Kubín, *Sedm přemyslovských kultů*, pp. 106–09.

66 Pac, 'The Papal Monopoly', pp. 463–67; Pac, 'Wokół wczesnego kultu św. Ludmily', pp. 30–40.

right was, according to bishop Otto, reserved to the pope. Interestingly, in the following year, a papal legate who visited Bohemia removed the unnamed abbess for some undefined disobedience.<sup>67</sup> Although this cannot be proven, it would be tempting to connect these two events and suggest that this punishment was in response to the previous violation of papal and episcopal rights with regard to the translation of saints.<sup>68</sup>

### Conclusions: The Early Cult of St Ludmila in Relation to Other Cults on the Periphery of Latin Christendom

The nunnery was determined to promote the cult of St Ludmila, and to defend it if necessary, because the Přemyslid saint was crucial in the legitimization of the abbey. Like many other ecclesiastical institutions, St George's was connected to its patron (or in this case patroness) through a web of mutual obligations. Monks, nuns, and canons needed a saint to symbolize their status, identity, and autonomy, especially when it started to be questioned. This was the case with the Prague nunnery, since its position was dependent on its close ties to the Přemyslids. The figure of Ludmila, as a dynastic saint, illustrates this bond very well, which was particularly important since these ties had in fact become weaker. But legitimization could only happen if the saint had a thriving cult: saints were therefore dependent on the ecclesiastical institutions which cared for their relics and organized their veneration.

We can identify this form of support, provided by the community of nuns at St George's, for St Ludmila's cult, even when the cult was still quite limited. This would seem to have been successful. And while it would be an exaggeration to speak of it as flourishing in the second half of the twelfth century or at the beginning of the thirteenth, it seems to have been quite stable and widely accepted, as is attested by the inclusion of the saint's feast in nearly all medieval calendars in Bohemia.<sup>69</sup> It is perhaps not entirely a coincidence that the stabilization of the cult took place at the time when the bond between the nunnery and the dynasty was re-established. The

67 See: Gerhoh of Reichersberg, 'Epistola IV', cols 492–94. Cf. Novotný, 'K pobytu kardinála Guida', pp. 211–12; Spätling, 'Kardinal Guido', pp. 318–19.

68 Petr Kubín, who interprets this passage as an attempt to have the cult of St Ludmila officially recognized (cf. above, n. 65) suggests that the legate's decision might be related to the abbey's conflict with the bishop in this regard, Kubín, 'Zur Heiligsprechung', pp. 647–48; Kubín, *Sedm přemyslovských kultů*, p. 111. My own interpretation of this event explains the legate's intervention equally well, if not better. However, let us again emphasize the fact that any connection between the removal of the abbess and the issue of St Ludmila's cult remains speculative and without corroboration in the sources — something Kubín also admits.

69 Dragoun, 'Česká středověká kalendária'; Pac, 'The Cult of St Ludmila'.

fact that the turn of the thirteenth century was only the second time in its history that the nunnery had a Přemyslid abbess may also serve to illustrate this connection.

As mentioned previously, from the very beginning of her cult, St Ludmila occupied second place among the Přemyslid saints. She was always overshadowed by her grandson, St Wenceslas, who became an important form of legitimization for both the dynasty and the political community as a whole. One explanation for this early asymmetry between these two dynastic cults could be explained by an observation made by Lars Boje Mortensen, who has pointed out that in the early stages of Christianization within the peripheral realms of Latin Christendom, the ideological landscape was always dominated by a single saint.<sup>70</sup> This conclusion, based on a comparison between Norway, Denmark, and Hungary, also works in the case of Bohemia but with one important reservation. Here St Wenceslas occupied a comparable position to the holy rulers of the three polities above (that of patron of the realm and protector of the political community, legitimizing the social and legal order). However, in Bohemia, from the mid-eleventh century onward, there was an additional patron of the realm — St Adalbert,<sup>71</sup> who also became the third patron of the Prague cathedral.<sup>72</sup> This was a consequence of the translation of the remains of the former bishop of Prague and martyr from Gniezno to his former cathedral in the late 1030.<sup>73</sup>

This phenomenon of the appearance of a second important saint, treated as an additional patron of the realm, can also be observed elsewhere on the periphery of Europe. Among the 'major saints', Mortensen also notes St Ladislav in Hungary and St Cnut the Duke in Denmark,<sup>74</sup> while in Poland the status of second patron (the first being St Adalbert) was bestowed upon St Stanislaus.<sup>75</sup> However, in all these cases, their canonizations took place much later (1170 for Cnut, 1192 for Ladislav, and as late as 1253 for Stanislaus), whereas the cult of St Adalbert was adopted in Bohemia much earlier and quickly became well established. It is therefore quite likely that the slowdown in the development of St Ludmila's cult was mainly due to chance, namely the translation at that specific point in

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70 Mortensen, 'Sanctified Beginnings', pp. 255–59.

71 Graus, 'St Adalbert und St Wenzel'; Gieysztor, 'Politische Heiligen'; Pauk, 'Święci patroni'.

72 See above, n. 27.

73 *Cosmae Pragensis Chronica Boemorum*, II. 3–5, pp. 84–91. Cf. Kuźmiuk-Ciekawska, 'Święty Wojciech wraca do Pragi', pp. 94–103; Wolfinger, 'Politisches Handeln', pp. 239–43.

74 Mortensen, 'Sanctified Beginnings', p. 255. Cf. Figurski and Pac, 'Saints and Relics', pp. 343–45.

75 On those cults, see e.g.: Klaniczay, *Holy Rulers and Blessed Princesses*, pp. 173–94; Veszprémy, 'Royal Saints', pp. 232–39; Petersen, 'St Canute Lavard'; DuBois and Ingwersen, 'St Knut Lavard'; Roznowska-Sadrei, *Pater Patriae*. The cult of St Stanislaus is also discussed in this volume by Karolina Morawska.

time of St Adalbert, whose veneration then came to overshadow that of the Přemyslid duchess.

Another possible explanation for why Ludmila never became a patron saint of the realm could be her gender. At least in the eastern and northern outskirts of Latin Christendom, this position as protector of the political community was mostly occupied by holy rulers and in all cases by men. It is instructive to read the description of the battle of Kressenbrunn in 1260 between the Bohemians and Hungarians by one of the anonymous continuators of Cosmas. According to the chronicler, the Bohemians were supported by a whole group of saints, called here 'patroni Bohemiae gloriosi' ('glorious patrons of Bohemia'): Wenceslas, Adalbert, Procopius of Sázava, and the Five Martyred Brothers. Apparently, it was not just a holy duke, but also a holy bishop or even holy monks could play the part of a *Schlachtenhelfer* (helper in battle).<sup>76</sup> Interestingly, even within such a large group of saints, Ludmila, the female saint who was widely venerated in thirteen-century Bohemia, is absent.<sup>77</sup> Even if her cult could provide legitimacy to the nunnery that housed her body, and possibly also to the dynasty descended from her, she never attained the status of a saint who legitimized the political order and symbolized God's protection over the entire community of Bohemians.

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<sup>76</sup> Cf. Graus, 'Der Heilige als Schlachtenhelfer', pp. 330–48.

<sup>77</sup> *Příběhy krále Přemysla Otakara II.*, pp. 318–19. Cf. Pauk, 'Święci patroni', p. 257; Pac, 'Wokół wczesnego kultu św. Ludmiły', pp. 50–52.

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## 9. Many Lives of One Man\*

### *Strategies for Building Legitimacy through the Story of St Wenceslas in Early and High Medieval Hagiography (940s–1260s)*

St Wenceslas (921–935), the duke of Bohemia who was murdered by his brother and successor Boleslav I (935–972), soon began to be venerated by local clergy and people. In a short time, even his brother started to support his cult. The transformation of his image in medieval hagiography and historiography is, thanks to the high number and density of existing texts, an excellent field for the research of the competing legitimizing claims. The following analysis will be based primarily on St Wenceslas's hagiography. As a result of the rich source material, it will focus on the legends written between 940s and 1260s. Therefore, it will be important to introduce the existing dossier of the texts. The large group of hagiographic texts was written, among other reasons, to support the claims of particular groups of people — the Přemyslid dynasty, the Bohemian or Bavarian clergy, monks, the imperial court, or the secular elites in general — to higher positions in the social hierarchy. Although those claims must not have been explicitly expressed in the texts, they, at least, introduce us to the contemporary

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\* This contribution was supported by the Czech Science Foundation GA18–09231S. I have also used the database Czech Medieval Sources online supported by LINDAT/CLARIAH-CZ (<<https://lindat.cz>>) financed by the Ministry of Education of the Czech Republic (LM2018101). I am grateful to Jakub Izdný and the editors for their insightful critical remarks. I am dedicating this article to Walter Pohl on the occasion of his seventieth birthday and to Herwig Wolfram on the occasion of his ninetieth birthday for their enthusiastic and insightful support.

**David Kalhous** • is Associate Professor at the Department of Auxiliary Historical Sciences and Archive Studies, Masaryk-University in Brno. He is interested in the problems of establishing princely power, and social and cultural history in the Early and High Middle Ages. Currently, he and his team are finalizing a monograph about the government practice and governance of Přemysl Ottokar II.

*The Cult of Saints and Legitimization of Elite Power in East Central and Northern Europe up to 1300*, ed. by Grzegorz Pac, Steffen Hope, and Jón Viðar Sigurðsson, Comparative Perspectives on Medieval History, 2 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2024), pp. 241–266

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discourse ('Gedankenwelt') and help us to understand the contemporary 'sociology'.<sup>1</sup> On the one hand, the comparison of the surviving texts will help us to identify the common elements and reveal contemporary discourses. On the other, it will enable us to recognize specific aspects of each of the texts; this will bring us closer to the particular authorial intentions of each of the hagiographers and their specific strategies for establishing the legitimacy of particular claims.<sup>2</sup> Finally, the results based on the analysis of the texts and their comparison will be questioned from the perspective of the intended and real audience — here, our main source of information will be the manuscript transmission of the texts. In the next step, we will assess the extent to which the strategies of legitimization succeeded; this will be achieved through a comparison of the texts and their manuscript transmission. We therefore intend to demonstrate how the legitimizing strategies that we may reveal might differ, depending on the selected level of analysis.

## Legends – A Genealogy and the Manuscripts

St Wenceslas and the assessment of his rule based on his hagiography has been since the early modern period a key element of any debate about early Bohemian history.<sup>3</sup> It is not that surprising, as they are nearly the only contemporary sources for the history of tenth-century Bohemia. The last complex assessment of the hagiography of St Wenceslas was undertaken by Dušan Třeštík (1933–2007);<sup>4</sup> his work, which forms the basis for this section of the chapter, is complemented by Zdeněk Uhlíř's extensive list of manuscripts that document the cult of St Wenceslas.<sup>5</sup>

The earliest Latin legend of St Wenceslas is *Crescente fide*, which is usually dated to the 970s. Its oldest manuscripts were copied in the 1020s and 1030s in the Bavarian monasteries of Benediktbeuren and Tegernsee. Nearly all the other manuscripts which contain this legend were also written in Bavaria and its Eastern March before 1200.<sup>6</sup> The anonymous author

1 Goetz, "Vorstellungsgeschichte".

2 Eco, *The Role of the Reader*; cf. n. 68 of this chapter.

3 Most recently Vaniček, *Svatý Václav*.

4 Třeštík, *Počátky Přemyslovců*; Třeštík, 'Kristián a václavské legendy 13. století'; his results develop the analysis of Jaroslav Ludvíkovský, cf. his, 'Crescente fide, Gumpold a Kristián', pp. 48–66; Ludvíkovský, 'Václavská legenda XIII. století', pp. 196–209; Ludvíkovský, 'Nově zjištěný rukopis', pp. 56–68; for more detailed bibliography cf. Kalhous, *Legenda Christiani*. Cf. also Wood, *The Missionary Life*.

5 Uhlíř, *Literární prameny*.

6 Kalhous, *Bohemi*; as the recent edition in *Fontes rerum Bohemicarum* 1, ed. by Emler is based on an atypical Vatican MS Reg. lat. 498, I am quoting MS CLM 4 605, fols 133r–40r, which is the basis of my forthcoming edition. According to Havel, *Die lateinische Schriftkultur*

of the legend is usually identified as one of the priests sent by Regensburg to Prague.<sup>7</sup> There is a consensus among philologists and historians that the version of the text we can now read in the oldest manuscripts is, however, a corrupted and shortened version of the archetype.

*Crescente fide* was a main source of information, including the plotline, for the *Legenda Gumpoldi*. Gumpold was of Bavarian origin and his relationship with the Ottonians helped him to be promoted to the bishopric of Mantua (attested 966–981). His legend is an elaborate work of contemporary rhetoric which is richly decorated with many figures of speech that often make it difficult to understand.<sup>8</sup> Its oldest manuscript Wolfenbüttel, Herzog August Bibliothek, Cod. Guelf. 11.2 Aug. 4<sup>o</sup>, fol. 19r–37r is illuminated. It seems that Queen Emma, the wife of Boleslav II of Bohemia, had commissioned it from the canons of Hildesheim as a gift for Emperor Henry II.<sup>9</sup>

Gumpold's legend inspired the anonymous monk, who used it as a main source for the *Second Old Church Slavic Legend*.<sup>10</sup> Although it was written in eleventh-century Bohemia, as philologists have been able to prove, its oldest known manuscripts were copied in Rus' in the late Middle Ages.<sup>11</sup> This legend of St Wenceslas is called the *Second Old Church Slavic Legend*, because there is also a First Old Church Slavic legend known in three versions first version of which was possibly written either c. 940 (philologists) or c. 970 (historians). Whereas most of the Slavic philologists consider its Vostokov redaction to be the oldest (e.g., V. Konzal),<sup>12</sup> other scholars, such as O. Králík, or D. Třeštík, argue that the so-called Croatian version came first.<sup>13</sup> Even this concise text is only recorded in fourteenth-, fifteenth- and sixteenth-century manuscripts of Croatian

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*in den böhmischen Ländern*, however, it is probable that CLM 4 605 was not written for Benediktbeuren (cf. Kalhous, *Bohemi*, pp. 104–05), but for Prague. I am grateful to D. Havel for providing me with the manuscript of his forthcoming book.

7 Třeštík, *Počátky*; but cf. Kalivoda, 'Nejstarší svatováclavská hagiografie'.

8 Gumpold, *Legenda*, pp. 146–66 (hereafter Gumpold); for English translation cf. *Passion of Saint Wenceslas by Gumpold of Mantua*, trans. Miladinov; for the relationship between *Crescente fide* and *Legenda Gumpoldi* see Ludvíkovský, 'Crescente fide, Gumpold a Kristián'; Třeštík, *Počátky Přemyslovců*.

9 *Legenda Wolfenbüttelského rukopisu*, ed. by Zachová; cf. Třeštík, 'Ještě ke královně Emmě'; Sommer and Velimský, 'Iluminace Wolfenbüttelského rukopisu', pp. 38–49.

10 A higher level of complexity in the relationship between the *Legenda Gumpoldi* and the Second Legend was introduced by Spurná, 'Překladová technika'. K. Spurná also defended PhD thesis with new edition of the Second Legend, which, however, is not published yet.

11 Cf. *Druhá staroslovanská legenda o sv. Václavovi*, ed. by Vašica, pp. 71–83 (= Druhá stsl. legenda).

12 Konzal, 'První slovanská legenda'.

13 Třeštík, *Počátky Přemyslovců*; Králík, 'K historii textu'.

and Rus' origin.<sup>14</sup> Paradoxically, some echoes of these Old Church Slavic legends can be found in the legend penned by Laurentius of Monte Cassino, later archbishop of Amalfi (1030–1049).<sup>15</sup> This has convinced many experts that there was an unknown Latin legend of Bohemian origin that might have served as a bridge between Laurentius and the *First Old Church Slavic Legend*.<sup>16</sup>

An early synthesis of *Crescente fide*, *Legenda Gumpoldi* and possibly also by the *First Old Church Slavic Legend* or texts related to it was the *Legenda Christiani* which was compiled in the 990s in Bohemia, most probably by a member of the Přemyslid dynasty Christianus, son of Boleslav I and therefore also a great-grandson of St Ludmila and a nephew of St Wenceslas.<sup>17</sup> Although it is traditionally called a 'legend', I prefer Josef Pekař's characterization that it was rather an 'ecclesiastical history of Bohemia'.<sup>18</sup> This is because it not only includes the St Wenceslas legend but also the story of his holy grandmother, St Ludmila, who was murdered fourteen years before St Wenceslas, as well as another story about the rise of the Přemyslid dynasty through the election of their ancestor Přemysl and the baptism of Duke Bořivoj by Methodius in the court of Svatopluk, the ruler of the Moravians (see Fig. 9.1).<sup>19</sup>

14 Cf. *Ruské redakce původní staroslovanské legendy o sv. Václavu*, ed. by Serebrjanskij, pp. 11–13; *Charvátolaholská redakce původní staroslovanské legendy o sv. Václavu*, ed. by Vajs, pp. 31–35 (= První stsl.). I am quoting both versions with the same edit.

15 Třeštík, 'Miscellanea', pp. 73–92 insisted that the legend was ordered by Břetislav I as a part of his initiative to promote the bishopric of Prague. His thesis, however, was not widely accepted; for edition cf. *Laurentius, Opera*, ed. by Newton.

16 Třeštík, *Počátky Přemyslovců*, pp. 225–49.

17 *Legenda Christiani*, ed. by Ludvíkovský (= LChr). For the discussion of the authenticity of the text see recently Kalhous, *Anatomy*; from a historiographical point of view Kalhous, *Legenda Christiani*. Kubín, 'Kult svatých Ludmil', still maintains his thesis about the later origin of the text (twelfth century) related to the 'proper establishment' of St Ludmila's cult in that century; however, he primarily repeats the older arguments of B. Bretholz, and secondly, he does not properly discuss my argument in his newer contributions. Lately, Pac, 'Wokół wczesnego kultu św. Ludmily' proved that the feast of St Ludmila in the eleventh-century manuscript is a later addition. However, he largely disputed Kubín's assumptions. Kubín's main argument is that the bishops of Prague before the twelfth century doubted the holiness of St Ludmila and therefore it is not probable that her cult would have been proclaimed by St Adalbert, to whom the author of *Legenda Christiani* addresses his text, cf. our polemics which ignited lately again with Kubín, 'Znovu o Kristiána'; Kalhous, 'Znovu o Kristiána'; Kubín, 'Odpověď na repliku'; Kalhous, 'K historické metodě'. For responses to Kubín's 'Kult svatých Ludmil' see Izdný, 'Mohl autor' and Zapletalová 'Znovu k stáří' or Retinger, 'Václavův družiník Podiven'.

18 Pekař, 'Nejstarší kronika česká', pp. 385–481.

19 Cf. Pac's article in this volume.

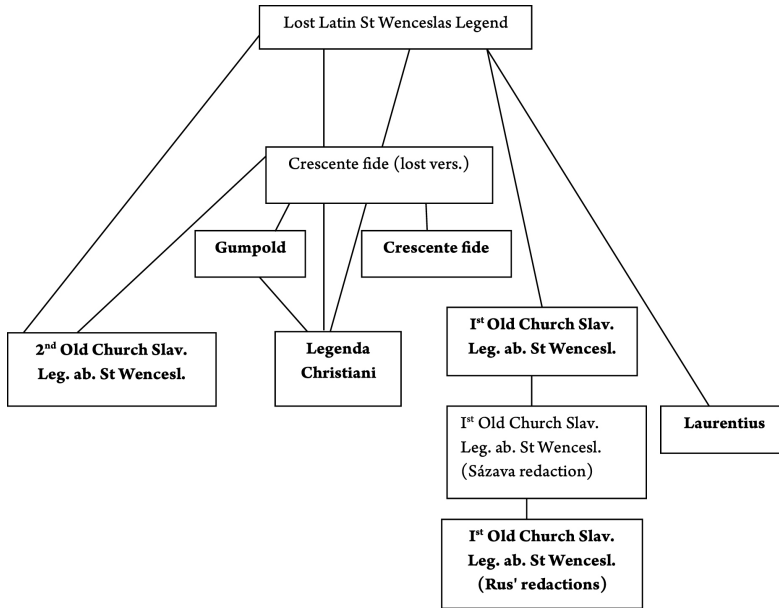


Figure 9.1. The Stema of St Wenceslas legends based on Dušan Třeštík.

Whereas Gumpold's legend was also the model for the only twelfth-century *Oportet nos fratres* which is of disputed origin,<sup>20</sup> the authors of *Ut annuncietur I* (1260s) and *Oriente iam sole I* (1270s),<sup>21</sup> written in Bohemia, found their main inspiration in the *Legenda Christiani*.

## Just One Story? Leader and 'Monk'

Now we will focus on the construction of St Wenceslas in each of the texts mentioned above.<sup>22</sup> This analysis of how St Wenceslas was characterized and the subsequent comparison will help us to separate specific information from the general aspects of the lives of holy princes. Moreover, it will provide us with some interesting insights into the legitimizing role that these texts have played from the perspective of the elites. The analysis of the image of St Wenceslas will be used to consider how the legitimacy of a particular social group was cemented.

<sup>20</sup> *Oportet nos fratres*, ed. by Pekař, pp. 390–412 (= *Oportet*).

<sup>21</sup> *Oriente iam sole I*, ed. by Pekař, pp. 413–30 (= *Oriente I*).

<sup>22</sup> A very useful overview of the motives in St Wenceslas hagiography is provided by Nastalska-Wišnicka, *Rex martyr*. Cf. also Kalhous, *Anatomy*.

St Wenceslas is characterized in *Crescente fide* as an ideal ruler of noble origin — the author names his princely ancestors.<sup>23</sup> He protects widows and orphans, supports the weak, foreigners or clergy, and provides his retinue with weapons and costly clothes.<sup>24</sup> Its author stresses St Wenceslas's alleged wisdom, literacy and (basic) religious teaching, which is one of the earliest examples among legends about holy kings and princes.<sup>25</sup> Although he supposedly hesitates to condemn anyone to death — here, we can hear the echo of the Carolingian legislation and canon law, which prohibited priests from participating in courts, where the guilty might be sentenced to death<sup>26</sup> — he does not hesitate to attack those who trespass against the law of God —, even violently. As the author of the *Crescente fide* insists:

Indeed, he was without a blemish, a true servant of God, according to the Apostle's precepts, reproving, exhorting, and rebuking many. He invited them to the Lord's banquet. And when he lore them out of the Devil's throat, he brought them to the bosom of the Mother Church and nurtured them constantly with divine nourishments. He conversed kindly with the moderate, but if he learned of certain immoderate people, loitering in taverns, drinking and abandoning the faith, and indulging in revelry without cause, he immediately had them put in irons and severely flogged with many blows. And he did not cease to offer prayers during both day and night.<sup>27</sup>

In his religious zeal, St Wenceslas was caught up in the conflict with the secular elites and with his mother Drahomíra, whom the Latin hagiogra-

23 *Crescente*, c. 1, fol. 133v; *Gumpold*, c. 2–3, pp. 148–49; *Legenda Christiani*, c. 2–3, pp. 16–34; *First*, 36; *Oportet*, c. 1, p. 389; *Oriente*, c. 1, p. 409.

24 *Crescente*, c. 2, fols 134r–34v; *Gumpold*, c. 5, pp. 149–50, c. 7, pp. 150–51; *Legenda Christiani*, c. 6, pp. 54–58; *První stsl.*, 37, 38; *Oportet*, c. 5–6, pp. 392–94; *Oriente*, c. 4, pp. 411–12.

25 *Crescente*, c. 1, fols 133v–34r; *Gumpold*, c. 4, p. 149; *Legenda Christiani*, c. 3, p. 28; *První stsl.*, 14–15, 37, 38–39; *Oportet*, c. 5, pp. 392–93; *Oriente*, c. 1, p. 409. There are many parallels for these motives in other lives of holy rulers.

26 *Crescente*, c. 2, fol. 134v; *Gumpold*, c. 6, p. 150; *Oportet*, c. 5, pp. 392–93; cf. Kalhous, *Anatomy*, p. 244; as a source of information, the authors could have used *codex mixtus* like Heiligenkreuz 217 available in Prague in 990s, cf. Havel, Kalhous, 'Heiligenkreuz 217'. For parallels in *Vitae Mathildis* cf. Pac, 'Problem świętości', pp. 111–13 (or Graus, 'La sanctification du souverain', pp. 559–72, here p. 563. Cf. also n. 33.

27 *Crescente*, c. 65, fols 136r–36v: 'Erat namque sine querela uerus Dei famulus et multos secundum apostoli precepta arguendo, obsecrando, increpando, ad cenam Patris familias inuitabat eosque ereptos a diabolica potestate in gremio sanctę matris ꝥclesię constitutos assidue diuinis dapibus nutriebat uel in tabernis bibentes et a doctrina recedentes, statim illos mensę pronos alligans, districte flagris uerberabat multis et non in die neque in nocte ab oratione uacabat.'; for translation, cf. *The Origins*, trans. Kantor, c. 5, p. 148. However, see *Gumpold*, c. 7, p. 151, or *Oportet*, c. 6–7, pp. 394–95, c. 15–16, pp. 400–02, where the model is changed and violence against the sinners is left out.

phers unanimously label as a pagan.<sup>28</sup> The author of *Oriente iam sole* I even praises him for expelling his mother, who was made responsible for murdering St Ludmila, her mother-in-law and St Wenceslas's grandmother.<sup>29</sup> (Otherwise, the motive for Drahomira's expulsion is developed differently in the *First Old Church Slavic Legend*. In this legend, Drahomira has a rather more positive image and St Wenceslas does penance for not honouring his mother.<sup>30</sup>)

Josef Staber pointed out that *Crescente fide* contains elements of the contemporary Benedictine reform as it had been developed in St Emmeram monastery in Regensburg: it stressed how St Wenceslas had prepared the wine and bread for communion.<sup>31</sup> Although these elements seem to be very specific, the authors of later legends repeated them regularly.<sup>32</sup> After all, we are also told St Wenceslas had been wearing the rough cassock of a penitent under his luxurious princely clothes.<sup>33</sup> The author also insists that St Wenceslas wanted to resign from his princely duties, make a pilgrimage to Rome and become a monk — there are several parallels to this in the Church history by Beda.<sup>34</sup> However, he was prevented from doing so — and from leaving the throne to his impatient brother Boleslav — by his commitment to finishing the building of the new St Vitus Church.<sup>35</sup> Both *Legenda Gumpoldi* and *Legenda Christiani* adapted motive from *Crescente fide* and enriched it with new details. For example, where the author of *Crescente fide* characterizes St Wenceslas as a successful war leader,<sup>36</sup> the monk Christian adds a story about the miraculous defeat of the duke of Kouřim, who was going to oppose Wenceslas,

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- 28 *Crescente*, c. 5, fols 135v–36r, or *Crescente*, c. 6, fols 136r–36v; Gumpold, c. 5, pp. 150–51; *Legenda Christiani*, c. 5, p. 42; *Oportet*, c. 6–7, pp. 394–95; c. 11, pp. 398–99; c. 15–16, pp. 400–02 (at the Diet, Wenceslas convinces the secular elites to give up idolatry); *Oriente*, c. 2, p. 410, c. 3, p. 411, c. 5, p. 412, c. 9, p. 416. Detailed analysis of the main conflict axis in the oldest St Wenceslas legends presented Michałowski, 'Władca i Kościół', pp. 841–53.
- 29 *Oriente*, c. 3, p. 411.
- 30 První stsl., 15–16, or 38 without noting her expulsion; cf. e.g. 'Honour your father and your mother' (Exodus 20.12).
- 31 *Crescente*, c. 2, fols 134v–35r; Staber, 'Die älteste Lebensbeschreibung', who also identified the textual influence of *Vita Haimrami* on *Crescente*.
- 32 Gumpold, c. 8, pp. 152–53; *Legenda Christiani*, c. 6, p. 58; *Oportet*, c. 8–9, pp. 395–97; *Oriente*, c. 5, pp. 412–13.
- 33 *Crescente*, c. 2, fol. 134v; Gumpold, c. 8, p. 153; *Legenda Christiani*, c. 6, p. 58; *Oportet*, c. 8, pp. 395–96 (barefoot visiting churches in neighbouring centres without his guards knowing it).
- 34 Cf. Kalhous, *Anatomy*, p. 247; for parallels with *Vitae* of queen Mathilda cf. Graus, *Volk, Herrscher und Heiliger*, pp. 428–29, or lately Pac, 'Problem świętości'; *Oportet*, c. 16, pp. 401–02.
- 35 *Crescente*, c. 6, fols 136v–37r; Gumpold, c. 15–16, pp. 157–58; *Legenda Christiani*, c. 6, p. 62; *Oportet*, c. 18–19, pp. 403–04; *Oriente*, c. 6, pp. 413–14 (Rome not mentioned anymore).
- 36 *Crescente*, c. 5, fol. 136r; *Legenda Christiani*, c. 10, pp. 90–102.

but instead of the intended duel, he threw himself on his knees when he spotted the cross above St Wenceslas's head.<sup>37</sup>

The narrative structure of the St Wenceslas legends thus shows remarkable continuity between the texts written from the last third of the tenth century until the thirteenth century,<sup>38</sup> where we can also sense some tensions between the prince and the monk.<sup>39</sup> However, from the earliest legends onward, the authors do not intend to make St Wenceslas a monk. On the contrary, his princely virtues were appreciated and great stress is put on the responsibility of the duke for his flock, which plays a more important role than his personal inclination to take the monastic habit — the author of *Crescente fide* stresses his wish to see the building of St Vitus Church finished first, whereas the author of *Oportet* was more explicit.<sup>40</sup>

Even at this level of analysis, the corpus of the texts offers an interesting insight into the discourse of the holy man-prince. This is not specific for saints but shares a lot with the discourse about the ideal ruler, as it seems that any holy prince was supposed to be an ideal prince, but not every perfect ruler became saint. Their personal characteristics, being of noble origin or proper behaviour, helped them to take responsibility for the salvation of their flock. Together with the historiographical texts including the Bible, they also legitimized the order of the world and the social hierarchy, including the existence of the secular elites who used the sword and a certain level of violence to protect the church and the Christian faith, but also to turn their subjects and followers away from sin. Therefore, the author of *Crescente fide* insists that St Wenceslas did not participate in trials where capital punishment was an option; however, the same author emphasizes his willingness to punish with his own hand those who trespassed against the regulations set by the Church.<sup>41</sup> Our analysis also leads to the assumption that even before the establishment of the high medieval knightly culture, the ecclesiastical authorities were seeking ways to integrate secular elites into their model of society and

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37 *Legenda Christiani*, c. 10, pp. 90–102. Later authors even put stress on foreign dukes paganism, cf. *Oriente*, c. 5, pp. 412–13: 'Fuit autem fortunacissimus in bello contra infideles gentes, christiane fidei eas subiciendo. Cuius autem hoc egerit virtute, patuit, cum contra ducem Kurimensem dimicaret'. Cf. Ludvíkovský, 'Soubor sv. Václava', pp. 89–100, who proved that this chapter was an integral part of the legend and not the later addition.

38 Cf. Kalhous, *Anatomy*, pp. 237–62, or Kalhous, *Bohemi*, pp. 185–90, but also Antonín, *Ideal prince*.

39 Klaniczay, *Holy Rulers*.

40 *Oportet*, c. 4, p. 392, or c. 12, p. 399. Cf. lately Kalhous and Luňáková, 'Rhetoric of War', but also Graus, *Volk, Herrscher und Heiliger*, p. 411.

41 For parallel with Louis the Pious, see Kalhous, *Anatomy*, p. 244.

give them specific goals and ideals with a Christian ethos.<sup>42</sup> It also seems that in the post-Carolingian St Wenceslas legends resound the ideas of the Carolingian *correctio*.

## Establishing Diversity: Legitimizing Particular Narratives

The last subsection will be focused on two sets of problems, the analysis of which promises to improve our understanding not only of the intended and real audience of the texts, but also help us to recognize the particular groups whose interests the legends might have legitimized at the point at which they were written. First, the specifics of every text will be scrutinized based on three selected short narratives. In the first step, we will analyse the story of the foundation of St Vitus's Church, and then, secondly, we will examine the role that the imperial court plays in the legends. Last, but not least, the image of the relationship between St Wenceslas and the noble elites deserves further scrutiny. The analysis of how each of the authors dealt with selected details promises to reveal what were the specific aspects of the narrative that should have helped to defend or legitimize particular goals and to establish textual communities.<sup>43</sup>

### *Building St Vitus Church*

According to *Crescente fide*, St Wenceslas sent his envoys to Regensburg to the bishop Tuto and asked him for his permission to build a church:<sup>44</sup>

And he inquired through emissaries of the bishop of Regensburg, named Tuto, saying, 'My father built a church for the

42 Cf. e.g. Kalhous and Luňáková, 'Rhetoric of War', pp. 221–23 with the focus on hagiography. More extensively Stone, *Morality and Masculinity*.

43 Stock, 'Textual Communities', p. 150: 'We can think of textual community as a group that arises somewhere in the interstices between the imposition of the written word and the articulation of a certain type of social organization. It is an interpretative community, but it is also a social entity.' Cf. also Melve, *Inventing the Public Sphere*, pp. 17–22.

44 *Crescente*, c. 6, fol. 137v: 'Eo namque tempore cogitavit templum edificare Domino et per nuncios sciscitavitbat Radatispone episcopum religiosum, nomine Tutum, dicens: "Pater meus edificavit templum Domino Deo, ego autem cum tua licentia similiter opto condere ecclesiam Domino Deo in honorem sancti Uiti martyris Christi". Episcopus autem Tutus expandit manus suas cum gratiarum accione ad Dominum, ouans et dicens: "Ite narrate filio meo Uuenezlao, dicentes: „Iam ominee tua constat ante Dominum Deum uenustissime constructa". Cumque narrassent secundum iussionem episcopi, ualde gauisus fuit et conuocatis omnibus, Deo opitulante ipse incipiens, miro ordine fundauit ecclesiam in ominee sancti Uiti'; cf. *The Origins*, trans. Kantor, c. 6, p. 179; Kalhous, *Anatomy*, pp. 251, 254.

Lord God and, likewise, I, too, want to found a church for the Lord God in honor of Saint Vitus with your permission'. Then Bishop Tuto, giving thanks, extended his arms to the Lord and, rejoicing, said, 'Go and tell my son Blessed Wenceslas, saying "Your church is already standing before the Lord, most beautifully built."'

And rightly so, as Bohemia was, in the time of St Wenceslas, part of his diocese, since the diocese of Prague had been established between 968 (when envoys were sent to Pope John XIII) and 976 (when the first bishop was consecrated) as a part of the Mainz metropolitan seat. It had initially been under the metropolitan authority of Salzburg, to which Regensburg bishopric was subordinated.<sup>45</sup> Therefore, the author of *Crescente fide* uses this story to demonstrate St Wenceslas's obedience to canon law as well. While the anonymous author of *Crescente fide* indirectly states this, Gumpold mentioned it explicitly.<sup>46</sup> Just one decade later, Christianus added to his models *Legenda Gumpoldi* and *Crescente fide* that Bohemia was part of the Regensburg diocese 'in that time'.<sup>47</sup> This was something that Gumpold did not mention at all, although at the time he was writing his legend, Bohemia was no longer under the Regensburg see. Whereas the later author of *Oportet* follows Gumpold,<sup>48</sup> the author of *Oriente iam sole I* adopted Christianus's version.<sup>49</sup> It thus seems that for the authors, such as Christianus, who were settled in Bohemia and connected to the Přemyslid court, it was important to stress the independence of the Prague diocese. However, if we look at the *Second Old Church Slavic Legend*, the situation becomes more complicated because, although its author was writing in Bohemia, he didn't adapt his text in accordance with Christianus.<sup>50</sup> For the anonymous author of the *First Old Church Slavic Legend*, this wasn't an issue at all, and the foundation of St Vitus Church was not directly addressed by either version.

### ***St Wenceslas, the Přemyslids, and Imperial Power***

The analysis of the role of the Regensburg bishopric provides us with a good starting point regarding the role of the imperial court and its relationship with the Přemyslid dukes. *Crescente fide* does not include

45 Cf. recently Kalhous, *Anatomy*, pp. 145–57.

46 Gumpold, c. 15, p. 157: 'Nec mora instat impiger facti, fervens autem propositi, missis Ratesponę sedi regię legatariis Tutonem episcopum, totius probitatis virum, cuius diocesi tota subcluditur Boemia, supplici rogatu, quo idem opus Deo sacrandum eius licentia et assensu fieret, implorat ...'

47 *Legenda Christiani*, c. 6, pp. 60–62.

48 *Oportet*, c. 18–19, pp. 403–04.

49 *Oriente*, c. 6, pp. 413–14.

50 Cf. Druhá stsl. legenda, c. 15–16, pp. 105–06.

any regional context, apart from Prague and its region and the fact that St Wenceslas's uncle was duke of the Bohemians. Otherwise, the legend lacks any geographical, or geo-political context.<sup>51</sup> The only exception is a miracle which affected a man from 'the Frankish province'.<sup>52</sup> On the other hand, Gumpold very carefully set the stage for his legend, written at the Emperor Otto II's command.<sup>53</sup> Even though Gumpold doesn't doubt that the Přemyslids are hereditary rulers elevated by the local polity, he also describes the 'primitive northern regions',<sup>54</sup> where they rule 'under the power of the late most illustrious king Henry I' (919–936),<sup>55</sup> or 'the shining power of the most serene king Otto I' (936–973) respectively.<sup>56</sup>

Christianus disagreed with this point of view; he called Henry, king of the Saxons, Wenceslas's 'friend'.<sup>57</sup> By stressing his link to Saxony, he weakened the universality of his royal title, and by calling him a 'friend' of St Wenceslas, he made him more or less his peer or at least someone worthy of a partnership.<sup>58</sup> Otherwise, Christianus emphasized the hereditary nature of the power of the Přemyslid dukes,<sup>59</sup> when he wrote:

And after him his first born son, Spytihnev, assumed power, a man who sparkled with diverse virtues, a good character, and a reputation for sanctity beyond measure. Emulating his father by being perfect in the faith of Christ, he founded churches of God and gathered priests and clerics around him. And he departed this world for the stars, having completed forty years of life. After his death, as is well known, his brother Vratislav assumed control of the principedom.

51 *Crescente*, c. 1, fol. 133v.

52 *Crescente*, c. 11, fol. 139v.

53 Gumpold, Prologus, p. 147; Druhá stsl. legenda, prolog, p. 87.

54 Gumpold, c. 1, p. 148; Druhá stsl. legenda, c. 1, 88. Cf. Banaszkiewicz, 'Gumpold, Vavřinec a Kristián'.

55 Gumpold, c. 2, p. 148: '...cui jam regnante felicitis memoriae praeclarissimo rege Heinrico, quidam gentis illius progenie clarior ac potentia in cives eminentior, Zpuytigneve nomine, principatus regimen sub regis dominatu impendens ...'

56 Gumpold, c. 4, p. 149: 'Patre interim, ut jam dictum est, universae carnis viam ingresso juvenis ipse senum exempla actibus declarans, sub regis serenissimi Ottonis fulgente potentia, favorabili populorum assensu in paterni ducatus successionem, se nimium refutante, delectus, et in principalis sedem dignitatis est elevatus.'

57 *Legenda Christiani*, c. 7, p. 64: 'Agebantur vero hec temporibus Henrici, regis Saxonum, qui primus inter ipsos, Christo sibi propicio, dyadema inposuit, cui felix isdem amicus iungebatur assidue.'

58 Althoff, "Amicitiae"; Pleszczyński, *The Birth of a Stereotype*, pp. 41–63.

59 *Legenda Christiani*, c. 3, p. 26: 'Suscepitque pro eo regnum eius primogenitus filius Spytigneve, cunctis virtutibus bonitatis famaue sanctitatis admodum fulgens. Imitator siquidem patris factus, fundator extitit ecclesiarum Dei, congregator sacerdotum clericorumque, perfectusque in fide Christi, peractis vite sue annis XL, luce ex hac migravit, astra petens. Cuius post transitum frater eius Vratislau regni suscepisse dinoscitur gubernaculum ...'

and he stressed — in accordance with the author of the *Crescente fide!* — that the succession depended on the election by ‘all people’ in ‘the capital city, Prague.’<sup>60</sup> The fact that Gumpold’s effort to create an imperial/Ottonian context for the Přemyslid principality contrasts with Christian’s attempt to stress the hereditary claims and rights of the Bohemians could be interpreted as a struggle between the imperial and the Bohemian vision of their relationship. However, if we take into consideration the *Second Old Church Slavic Legend*, written beyond any doubt in Bohemia, but fully accepting Gumpold’s point of view<sup>61</sup> or *Crescente fide*, penned by a member of the Bavarian clergy, who acknowledges the hereditary claims of the Přemyslids and the rights of the Bohemians to elect their duke, like Christianus did, this construction falls apart and we have to find a more complex solution.

Although the authors carefully orchestrated their narratives and even the wording of their texts, their authorial intentions thus must have been more locally and chronologically specific in order to defend fewer general claims. In the case of Gumpold, it is an attempt to legitimize the claims of the imperial court in 980s, whereas the author of *Crescente fide* seemed to be defending the rights of the bishopric of Regensburg in 960s or 970s. Both were disputed by Christianus, who most probably represented the interests of the Přemyslid dynasty and sought to strengthen the legitimacy of their claims for the Bohemian throne in 990s and endeavoured to gain more prestige for the dynasty. This was not actually the reality after the short political crisis c. 1000 AD (and here, we can also see why there was such a limited manuscript transmission of the *Legenda Christiani*). In contrast, for Cosmas of Prague († 1125), the Přemyslid and Bohemian participation in the empire became one of the sources of their legitimacy.<sup>62</sup> Cosmas only reflected contemporary circumstances, for him the Bohemian and Přemyslid participation in the empire was self-evident (or self-explanatory). Similarly, the anonymous translator of Gumpold in Old Church Slavic, the author of the eleventh-century *Second Old Church Slavic Legend*, considered the relationship between the Empire

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60 *Legenda Christiani*, c. 3, p. 28: ‘Cumque sagax ingenio cuncta, que a pedagogo sibi tradita forent, Spiritu sancto inspirante, alte memorie contraderet, genitore interim ex hac vita migrante annorum fere triginta trium, revocatur metropolitanam in urbem Pragam, sedemque in paternam ab omni plebe sublimatur’; *The Origins of Christianity*, trans. by Kantor, p. 173; cf. *Crescente*, c. 1, fol. 133v: ‘... omnes populi, qui eius fuerant, congregantes se elegerunt fratrem suum iuniorem nomine Uvirizlaum ducem et principem pro eo ...’; *Crescente*, fol. 134r: ‘Interea conuenerunt omnes populi illius regionis et elegerunt beatum Uuenzlaum ducem pro patre suo et sedere eum fecerunt in throno ipsius’; cf. also *Oriente*, c. 1, p. 409.

61 Druhá stsl. legenda, c. 2, p. 89; Druhá stsl. legenda, c. 4, pp. 90–91; *Oportet*, c. 1, p. 390, or *Oportet*, c. 3, p. 391.

62 Wihoda, *Die Sizilischen Goldenen Bullen*; Kalhous, *Bohemi*, pp. 80–92.

and Přemyslids. Even for him Bohemian and Přemyslid participation in the empire was self-evident.

Christianus, however, inspired the author of *Oriente iam sole I*, written in the Czech lands during the reign of Přemysl Ottokar II (1251/1253–1276/1278), king of Bohemia and duke of Austria, Styria, and Carinthia. The author enriched St Wenceslas's hagiography with a new element, as he recorded a story about Wenceslas's alleged participation at the imperial assembly. We are told that St Wenceslas was late due to the intervention of God himself. The emperor and princes were offended and supposedly came to an agreement that if Wenceslas came, they would ignore him. However, when St Wenceslas appeared, it was the emperor himself who jumped up from his throne and went to meet him halfway. In front of the surprised imperial princes, he suggested the holy man sit with him on his own throne. The emperor then explained to his princes that he had seen two angels accompanying Wenceslas. The emperor was supposed to have offered St Wenceslas great riches; however, his pious guest only asked for relics of St Vitus:<sup>63</sup>

Now it came to pass during his days that the emperor held court after convening an assembly of princes in one city. But because God desired that His miracle be manifested through him, saintly Prince Wenceslas was the last to arrive, not coming until the third day of the solemnity. Angry with him over his tardiness, the emperor and all the princes agreed among themselves in the meantime that the one who would rise

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63 *Oriente*, c. 6, pp. 413–14: 'In diebus autem eis accidit, ut imperator universitate principum in una civitate advocata curie sollempnitatem celebraret. Sanctus autem dux Wencezlaus deo sic disponente, ut in eo mirabilis appareret, celebritatis illius die tercio postremum omnium supervenit. Interim imperator et universi principes mora illius indignati, condixerunt, ut quicumque illi assurgeret aut locum daret capite plexeretur. Cum igitur sanctus dux colloqui palacium ingrederetur, imperator primus omnium assurrexit et obvius manibus illum excipiens, in throno suo secum eum sedere fecit, principes vero haut dubium assurgente cesare et ipsi assurrexerunt, quod factum fuearat obstupescentes. Nec enim imperatori congruebat conductum transgredi tam sollempnis universitatis; posterea vero vice ascitis imperator cunctis principibus et cum ammiracione sciscitantibus facti causam excusabat se, asserens firmiter se vidisse ingredienti sancto duci angelicum fuisse comitatum, et faciem eius decore nimio resplenduisse, ac in fronte illius crucem perlucidam apperuisse, et addidit: Nec presumpsit, cocussus obrupacione corporis et spiritus, tante glorie debitum non exhibere. Manifeste namque virtus manus domini dei erat cum eo. Quo audito principes universi sanctum dei in reverencia plus more solito habuerunt, et qui prius ad confusionem, locum ei denegare volentes, ordinabant, iam quasi primario suo assurgentes, locum sublimiorem offerebant, ut sedeat cum principibus et solium glorie teneat. Post celebracionem autem curie singulis principibus ad sua reversis imperator sanctum dei retinuit et seorsum alloquens hortabatur eum, ut postularet ab eo, quicquid sibi melius videretur expedire. Sed sanctus dei nec honore mundie aut divicias aut dilatacionem domini aut sceptrum regni, sed solum, ex apparicione sancti Viti, ut creditur, tamquam spiritui, non carni deditus, solum peciit reliquias sancti Viti et obtinuit'; cf. *The Origins*, trans. by Kantor, pp. 222–23.

before him and offer him a place would pay for it with his head. Thus, when the saintly prince entered the assembly hall, the emperor was the first among them to rise before him. And he offered him his hand as he stepped out to meet him and seated him next to himself on the throne. Of course, the princes also stood up when the emperor did, astonished at what had happened. For, verily, it was not fitting for an emperor to break an agreement among such a distinguished assembly. But when the emperor later summoned all the princes and they queried him in astonishment as to the reason for his behaviour, he apologized to them, asserting that he distinctly saw angels escorting the saintly prince as he entered, and how his face began to glow with an extraordinary resplendence, and a brightly shining cross appeared on his forehead. And he added: ‘Thunderstruck in body and in soul, I dared not deny due honor to such glory. For obviously the power of the hand of the Lord God was with him.’ When the princes heard this, all of them treated God’s saint with extraordinary respect, and those who had previously resolved to insult him, wishing to deny him a place, now rose before him as if before their superior, offering him a higher place so that he would sit with the sovereigns and receive a throne of glory.

Afterward, when the court meeting was over and the individual princes were making ready to return home, the emperor detained God’s saint. Conversing with him in private, he invited him to ask for anything that he considered most beneficial for himself. But God’s saint requested neither worldly honours, nor riches, nor the extension of his domain, nor the royal sceptre but, being exhorted, as is believed, by a vision of St Vitus and being devoted to the spirit and not the body, he requested only the relics of St Vitus, and he received them.

With that story, the author of *Oriente iam sole I* seems to be in accordance with contemporary Přemyslid ambitions (to legitimize the Přemyslid claim for the crown of the Empire) that we can also follow in the *Second Continuation of Cosmas’s Chronicle* written in the late thirteenth century,<sup>64</sup> and in the contemporary High Middle German epics penned by the authors supported by Přemysl at his court.<sup>65</sup>

### ***St Wenceslas and the Noble Elites***

Last, but not least, the relationship between the duke and the secular elites plays an important role. In all the legends, Duke Wenceslas represents

64 *Příběhy krále Přemysla Otakara II*, ed. by Emler, AD 1271, pp. 326–27. Cf. Šusta, ‘Přemysl Otakar II. a římská koruna v roce 1255’; Pekař, ‘Kandidatury krále Přemysla Otakara II.’

65 Vaniček ‘“Otakarovská” středověčná Evropa.’

Christianity and the Church, while the secular elites (and his brother and assassin Boleslav I) personify sins and the old, pagan customs and bad habits which are inappropriate for an ideal ruler. In *Crescente fide*, in Gumpold's legend, or in *Legenda Christiani* the self-confident prince deals — even violently — with his subjects,<sup>66</sup> whereas in *Oriente iam sole I*, Wenceslas keeps his faith in secret, and it is only when he takes the throne as an adult, that he can convince the secular elites that the acceptance of Christian values is the right choice. Still, those narratives are primarily descriptive — they surprisingly do not present a model of the proper relationship between the ruler and the secular elites, they criticize what is wrong. The author of the *First Old Church Slavic legend* represents the most decided point of view, when he compares the rebellious secular elites with Judas.<sup>67</sup> Therefore it is probable that he not only defended the hegemonic position of the Přemyslid dynasty, but in general, he also supported the leading position of a duke in society and presented the ideal relationship between the secular elites and their prince — i.e. loyalty and mutual support.

From the perspective of narratives about legitimacy, we can spot substantial differences between the texts. As we have demonstrated with the three examples, some details tell us about different elite groups. Whereas the Regensburg clergy in 970s did not stop reminding their audience about the claims of their bishopric, for the Prague clerics, this chapter was already closed. While the Ottonian courtier emphasized the power of his lord over the Přemyslids and their lands, Christianus, the Přemyslid monk, preferred to legitimize a vision of Bohemia as a family inheritance. It would be possible to give several other examples of legitimacy claims which are integrated into the narrative and it was their implementation into the generally shared narrative structure which made them convincing.

## Final Remarks (and Questions) – The Problem of Manuscript Evidence

When discussing legitimacy, we always need to ask: who were the authors of the legitimizing texts, who were their intended audiences and how did those audiences and their perceptions of the texts change over time? The conclusions based on the analysis of the texts helped to establish the intended audience for the St Wenceslas legends;<sup>68</sup> however, we must face the fact that none of the texts preserved is an autograph. Therefore, despite the importance of this problem, little is known about the real

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<sup>66</sup> Cf. n. 27.

<sup>67</sup> První stsl., p. 38; cf. *Oriente*.

<sup>68</sup> For the concept of the 'model reader', cf. Eco, *The Role of the Reader*.

audience of those texts in the following centuries, even though the analysis of their manuscript transmission promises to reveal who read those texts and estimate the extent to which their message might have changed under different conditions.

Naturally, the clergy and monks as the most literate social group are the most likely main readers of the hagiography of St Wenceslas. However, it would be short-sighted to exclude the secular elites just because they lack the reading or writing skills. The difference between the literate and illiterate people was more complex, as the lack of reading skills did not necessarily exclude a person from access to literacy, once there was anyone happy to mediate it.<sup>69</sup> We have only limited indications that the St Wenceslas legends were known among the lay audience — the foundation deed of canon Zbyhněv (1130s), who was member of Prague cathedral chapter but was evidently born into local noble family, quotes *Legenda Christiani*.<sup>70</sup> Although he was a member of the higher clergy, where the knowledge of literary texts is not surprising, he was also part of the local networks and had a family that still retained their estates near Levý Hradec.<sup>71</sup> These family links might have been a way to spread the texts' message. After all the secular and ecclesiastical elites were hardly two completely separate groups, we should merely speak about two different strategies for gaining and holding high social status. Similarly, instead of building a dichotomy of literate/illiterate, we should consider the (access to) literacy in a more nuanced way based on the (lack of) ability to actively compile a text on the one hand and on the other hand, on the accessibility of the texts through their own skills, but also thanks to the other people's mediation.

Previously, we have identified specific model readers of the St Wenceslas legends. Now we need to ask to what extent that intended audience and legitimizing strategies found confirmation in the manuscript transmission?<sup>72</sup> Does the material evidence prove our hypothesis, or did the authorial intention fail, and thus, at the end the legends defended completely different claims compared to what their authors intended? Let us use as an example the legend *Crescente fide*, which has the most numerous manuscripts among the early St Wenceslas legends until 1200:

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69 For early medieval Literacy, cf. especially Innes, 'Memory, Orality and Literacy'; McKitterick, 'Introduction', or her *History and Memory*; McKitterick, *The Carolingians and the Written Word*; see also n. 42.

70 *Codex diplomaticus et epistolaris regni Bohemiae* I, ed. by Friedrich, no. 130, p. 124: '...ubi christianitas incepta est ...' It is preserved in the confirmation by King Wenceslas (Václav) I of Bohemia (1230–1253), cf. *Codex diplomaticus Bohemiae* III/1, ed. by Friedrich, no. 56, pp. 57–59. Cf. *Legenda Christiani*, c. 2, p. 20.

71 For more details, see Kalhous, *Bohemi*, pp. 134–44.

72 For the importance of material evidence cf. Diesenberger, 'Repertoires and Strategies in Bavaria'.

1. CLM 4 605 (Prague?), fol. 133r–40r
2. CLM 18547 (Tegernsee), fol. 153r–60v
3. CLM 332, fol. 191r–95v related to Reg. Lat. 498 (common model?)
4. Reg. Lat. 498 (Bavaria?), fol. 15v–20v related to CLM 332 (common model?)
5. Admont 654, fol. 126r–32v related to Adm. 412
6. Admont 412, fol. 6r–11r related to Admont 654
7. CLM 2552 (Aldersbach), fol. 125rb–28rb related to Adm. 412 a 654
8. Heiligenkreuz 13, fol. 258ra–59ra (Magnum Legendarium Austriacum) most probably based on Admont 654/412
9. Zürich Rh 5
10. Stuttgart, Württembergische Landesbibliothek, Bibl. Fol. 56, fol. 113v–15v (Zwiefalten) (Bohemian redaction)

All these manuscripts are at least partially hagiographic collections. Most of them were copied in Bavarian monasteries, including in the Bavarian Eastern March. However, CLM 332 and Reg. Lat. 498 are exceptions, where the link to the specific ecclesiastical institution is missing, although the common scholarly opinion is that they originate from southern Germany.<sup>73</sup> Although it is possible to find some links between the institutions, where these manuscripts either originated or were preserved since they were copied,<sup>74</sup> it is not very likely that *Crescente fide* was copied into them primarily because of the defence of the alleged tenth-century claims of the Regensburg see. This particularly holds true for CLM 4 605, which was most probably written for the Prague bishopric.<sup>75</sup> Therefore, there can be two, not necessarily mutually exclusive, explanations. First, the shortest Latin legend *Crescente fide* seemed to be useful as a part of liturgy. Second, St Wenceslas's alleged behaviour corresponded well with the expectations of monastic communities and might explain the fact that most of the manuscripts originated from the monastic communities (although we should not forget that these communities were still the most important centres of literacy).<sup>76</sup> Although this hypothesis does not disprove the possible implications of *Crescente fide* from the period when it was written (the interests of the Regensburg see), this does not seem to be the reason why it was copied during the eleventh and twelfth centuries. It is also significant how the manuscript transmission was restricted to Bavarian monasteries without any Bohemian or Moravian copies — with one exception. The low level of literacy and the limited capacities of the Bohemian and Moravian ecclesiastical institutions remained a problem

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73 Kalhous, *Bohemi*, pp. 110–11.

74 Cf. Kalhous, *Bohemi*, pp. 103–21.

75 Cf. n. 7.

76 Cf. Staber, 'Die älteste Lebensbeschreibung'.

for the whole of the Přemyslid period (until 1306) and in the case of illuminated manuscripts until even the fourteenth century.<sup>77</sup>

We have also seen that the fact that *Legenda Christiani*, a form of late tenth-century Přemyslid manifesto, lacks early copies may indicate that the authorial intentions became less important soon after it was compiled. As the legend was also too long to be read as a whole during the liturgy, we only have two liturgical extracts about St Ludmila from the twelfth century — *Recordatus aviae suae* and *Subtrahente se*.<sup>78</sup>

## Conclusion

One of the goals of our analysis was to find out if it was possible to identify in the high medieval St Wenceslas legends any attempt to legitimize particular claims. Another, maybe more important, aim was to consider to what extent the specific legitimacy claims based on different forms of analysis change (comparison; analysis of the manuscript evidence). Through the comparative analysis, it has been possible to identify the common elements and strategies in the construction of St Wenceslas by a number of authors. Whereas it was possible to follow many characteristics and short stories which many of the hagiographers shared with each other and which reproduced contemporary discourse about the ‘right social order’, there exist some, often very short, comments in the legends, which helped to identify the particular claims — of the Regensburg see, the imperial court, or the Přemyslids. Second, the results of the textual analysis of the legends were compared with their manuscript transmission. In the final step, we asked to what extent the textual representations of the local claims, an important part of the authorial intention, were reproduced by later scribes. The analysis of the early manuscript transmission of the legend *Crescente fide* demonstrated that the defence of the claims of the Regensburg bishopric probably played a very limited role in the following decades. None of the preserved manuscripts were copied by the scribes in Regensburg cathedral or other ecclesiastical institutions linked to it. On the contrary, all the eleventh- and twelfth-century manuscripts were primarily copied for the needs of the Bavarian monasteries, as well as for the bishopric of Prague. Thus, the stress on St Wenceslas’s ‘monkish habit’ was probably of greater importance for the new audience, as it cemented through the example of the Bohemian saint the expected behaviour of

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77 Havel, *Die lateinische Schriftkultur*, attests that in the period up to 1200 only three scriptoria have thus far been identified with a high level of certainty: Břevnov (since the 1040s/1050s), Hradisko u Olomouce (since the 1140s?) and Strahov (since the 1140s?).

78 For *Recordatus* and *Subtrahente* as specific extracts from *Legenda Christiani* cf. Luďvíkovský, ‘O Kristiána, 1–2’, pp. 209–39, 158–73, 197–216.

a good monk. This means that there were always several layers in such hagiographic texts, the importance of which developed in contact with the respective audience. A combination of different analytical tools enables us to recognize the difference between authorial intention and legitimizing claims which were often closely connected within a distinct time period on the one hand, and different audiences who might have read entirely different messages in these texts on the other hand.

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## 10. The Cult of Saints in Elite Identity Construction in the Peripheries\*

### *The Cases of St Cnut of Denmark and St Wenceslas of Bohemia*

As Latin Christendom extended its territorial reach, the cult of saints was quick to capture the interest of the newly converted elites. Alongside the ‘universal’ saints (such as the Virgin and the apostles), saints’ cults linked with these new Christian communities soon emerged. Essentially, every political community which adopted Christianity could soon boast its own saint. A significant role in this process was played by local ecclesiastical institutions, such as bishoprics or monasteries, which at the same time constructed the memory and image of their patrons. The lives of saints written at the time, became the main influence which shaped the subsequent perceptions of local history.<sup>1</sup> Narratives centred on a local saint — whether a bishop or a member of a ruling dynasty — thus create a rich field for an inquiry into the construction of elite identities.

In the present chapter, I wish to explore the analogies between selected aspects of the narratives around two saints from the peripheries of Western Christendom: St Wenceslas, a Bohemian duke assassinated by his brother

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\* The research leading to these results has received funding from the Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2014–2021 (2019/34/H/HS3/00500). This chapter is part of a joint research project of the University of Warsaw and the University of Oslo ‘Symbolic Resources and Political Structures on the Periphery: Legitimization of the ELITES in Poland and Norway, c. 1000–1300’.

1 Mortensen, ‘Sanctified Beginnings and Mythopoetic Moments’, pp. 258–59.

**Kacper Bylinka** • is a PhD student at the Faculty of History, University of Warsaw, working on a dissertation entitled ‘Reception of the Cult of Saints as a Construction of Elite Identity on the Periphery of Latin Christianity (10th–13th Century)’. His research interests include hagiography, the narrativity of medieval sources and the process of Christianization on the periphery of Latin Christendom.

*The Cult of Saints and Legitimization of Elite Power in East Central and Northern Europe up to 1300*, ed. by Grzegorz Pac, Steffen Hope, and Jón Viðar Sigurðsson, Comparative Perspectives on Medieval History, 2 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2024), pp. 267–290

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10.1484/M.CPMH-EB.5.137540

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in 935, and St Cnut IV, king of Denmark, killed during a revolt in 1086. In the case of the former, I will focus on the narrative of the *Legenda Christiani*,<sup>2</sup> while the figure of Cnut will be studied through the prism of multiple texts written at Odense.<sup>3</sup> A comparison of the narrative strategies — a term I will discuss more precisely below — found in these texts, will serve primarily to further our understanding of how the written word was used in the Middle Ages for identity construction. The fundamental issue addressed in the present chapter is how the saints under consideration were quite literally inscribed into the ranks of the saints of the Western Church. This connection to the older saints, explicitly and self-consciously present in the hagiographic texts, became an important element that conferred legitimacy on the clerical elites of the Christian peripheries. However, the narratives surrounding Wenceslas and Cnut, both of whom quickly became the chief patrons of their respective political communities, bolstered attachment to specific values and were the products of the elite for the elite. Although the majority of medieval authors created their work in ecclesiastical environments, the saints who were constructed also influenced the secular elites, and created a bond between secular society and the clergy through this saint's cult. In constructing the narrative — that is, constructing an image reflecting elite identities — a pool of symbolic resources was created, allowing for the strengthening of one's own position on a number of levels. I wish, however, to focus on the chief narrative strategies employed by the authors of the texts under consideration to show that their saints constitute the sort of symbol that strengthens — indeed, roots — the community in *Christianitas* through references to other, older cults. In this case, this identity construction through the narrative was a legitimizing tool which demonstrated the elite's membership of the Christian world. The need to present these saints through such narratives created an image of these peripheral elites as an active part of this wider community, and not only thus brought them closer to salvation, but also constituted the essential, Christian, character of the kingdom.

## Mythopoesis, Identity, and Textual Community

Before I can begin an analysis of the narratives found in the sources, the nature of such a comparative study, as well as its broadly defined scope,

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2 *Legenda Christiani. Vita et passio sancti Wenceslai et sancte Ludmille ave eius* (hereafter *Legenda Christiani*).

3 Namely, there are four sources (*Gesta Swenomagni Regis et Filiorum Eius et Passio Gloriosissimi Canuti Regis et Martyris*, *Epitaphium Sancti Kanut*, *Passio Sancti Kanuti Regis et Martyris*, and *Tabula Othoniensis*), discussed below in this chapter.

calls for a number of clarifications.<sup>4</sup> The peripheries named in the title are those that the present volume focuses on, namely the territories of Scandinavia and East Central Europe, converted *c.* AD 1000. The point of reference is thus a group of countries that were recently added to Latin Christendom, including such polities as e.g. Bohemia, Poland, Denmark, or Norway. I understand elites to be comprised of groups that stand out from the rest of society because of their political influence, and their role in shaping the ideas that governed the community.<sup>5</sup> Identity is a form of belonging to and, in a general sense, of understanding particular values. And so consequently it should also be understood through the prism of community and of group identity, the traces of which can be found in the ideological content of the narrative about the saints, as they were generated by the elites. This identity created in a ‘textual’ way became at the same time a form of legitimacy for the particular community in which it was created. With the aim of demonstrating a membership in the wider community of the Christian world, the authors of the saints’ lives sought precisely to ‘inscribe’ it there through the figure of the saint, thereby legitimizing the validity of the cult centre on the map of Christian Europe.

The narrative itself, and especially the first stage of its formation, has been rightly described by Lars Boje Mortensen as ‘mythopoesis’ in an article comparing textual production from Denmark, Norway, and Hungary.<sup>6</sup> Mythopoetics consists of the increased production of narratives that centre the origins of states on the periphery around newly established saints shortly after their deaths, calling these events ‘moments’ in the construction of an image of the past. Such ‘moments’, with their material expression in the form of written texts, give an insight into identity construction by cultivating a memory of the past. My main objective is to undertake an analysis of these moments in the hagiography of the peripheries.

Another important inspiration for my research comes from the idea of the textual community, as proposed by Brian Stock.<sup>7</sup> It is the text, the written word, that constitutes the most important means of transmission of the values that went into identity construction in medieval communities. Stock sees a mechanism whereby communities constituted themselves

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4 This chapter was written at the beginning of work on my doctoral thesis, which I plan to complete in 2025, and in which I intend to describe my methodological approach in more detail. Prior to this, I plan to publish two related articles: the first on the relationship between the saints and the centre of their cult in Poland and Norway, and the second on the motif of protomartyrdom in the Peripheries.

5 For general remarks on elites, see Esmark, Hermanson, and Orning, ‘Introduction’, pp. 2–4; Jezierski, ‘Introduction’, pp. 9–15, cf. Introduction in this volume.

6 Mortensen, ‘Sanctified Beginnings and Mythopoetic Moments’, pp. 266–67. See also Ellis Nilsson in this volume.

7 Stock, *Implications of Literacy*, pp. 88–92.

around a text with even illiterate people participating in the values passed on by the writer, whose role is primarily to address a certain audience. In our case, we can assume that the audience is the elite — both secular and clergy — as they were the most interested in the cult of saints at the first stage of the Christianization. This approach, recognizing as it does a connection between the writer and the reader or listener (reception), fits quite well with the study of hagiography, which Stock himself was also interested in.

Such ‘textual communities’ in the peripheries employ specific symbolic resources that should be clear and easy for members of those communities to grasp, to the extent that the values set out in the text become their own values. While it may seem obvious, I wish to state clearly at this point that when we speak of a bishop as legitimizing his position via the figure of a saint, we are assuming this form of legitimacy was comprehensible to the members of his community. Let us take the bishop as an example. His role in a society stemmed from membership of various communities: from his canons to the laity of his diocese to his metropolitan see, as he participated in all of them at the same time.

The contribution of each member of the textual community to the creation of the texts also differed, as they were mostly written by literate clerics within an ecclesiastical milieu. In the present chapter, I examine several elite groups. Thus, when addressing the legitimizing forms employed by a bishop, I am also speaking of his flock, that is to say, of the local lay elite, including the ruler and his circle. In its role as the main conduit for the ideological foundations for using the cult of a saint to build one’s own position, hagiography addressed those circles who were themselves keen to participate in the promotion of the cult of a given saint, using the same legitimizing instruments.

It is worth noting that my interest lies primarily in works written locally, that is in the peripheries, as they provide more precise answers to the questions of local elite identities. While most of the texts about ‘peripheral’ saints were written locally, that was not always the case. For example, a large part of the life of St Wenceslas was initially written outside Bohemia.<sup>8</sup> The same goes for the first two lives of another saint important on the periphery (namely, Poland and Bohemia): Adalbert, bishop of Prague. The texts that constructed his image were written shortly after his death, but without the participation of peripheral institutions, despite their interest in this saint of Gniezno and Prague, and the texts thus adopted German and Italian perspectives. The first ‘peripheral text’ comes, if looking at it optimistically, from the latter half of the twelfth century, if not later.<sup>9</sup> On

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8 See Kalhous’ text in this volume.

9 By this I mean the so-called *Tempore illo*, for the dating of the second life, see Gromadzki, ‘Legenda De sancto Adalberto episcopo’, pp. 7–10.

the other hand, the very use of the texts written ‘in the centre’, stemming perhaps from the perception that there was no need to generate one locally, can also serve as eloquent testimony to the periphery’s identification with the centre. Nor should it be overlooked that in the initial stages of integration into the Christian world, the ecclesiastical elites of such newly converted peoples generally came from ‘the centre’. In the first instance, I focus on the texts written at the main peripheral hub of the saint’s cult, while not ruling out ‘central’ influences and contributions to the narrative concerning the saint.

While the construction of an image based on certain *topoi* is intrinsic to hagiography, the selection and arrangement of the *topoi* allow us, albeit to an extent defined by the limits of our knowledge, to draw conclusions about the ideological content of the text.<sup>10</sup> In any case, the construction of an image, which for obvious reasons has to refer to the Christian tradition in a broad sense, constitutes an important element of the construction of the narrative surrounding the saint. Medieval authors did, after all, display a degree of self-awareness with regard to the creation of an image, as the monk Aelnoth eloquently attests to in the epilogue to the *Gesta Swenomagni et Passio Sancti Kanuti* written c. 1100, shortly after St Cnut’s translation; ‘I, an ugly painter, have painted a beautiful man.’<sup>11</sup> It is this image, to follow his metaphor, or rather the method of its construction, which we might refer to as its narrative strategy, that interests me the most. In general, a narrative strategy is a more or less intentional use of selected values attributed in one way or another to the saint in his hagiography (which is a form of narration). Such strategies, employed by a writer belonging to a given community, bear all the hallmarks of identity construction.

It is also obvious that the lion’s share of hagiographic texts about a given saint is connected to a specific ecclesiastical milieu, typically the centre of the saint’s cult. As Steffen Hope demonstrated, a text written at such a centre could have a dual role: it described the place of the community within the universal Church as well as in its local environment. In that case, both roles were on display simultaneously, thus constructing an institutional identity.<sup>12</sup> Although it seems fitting to see the process of textualization of a community as a form of identity construction, and we can distinguish these levels of narration, I cannot fully agree with the concept of an institutional identity. In a word, since ecclesiastical institutions did not function as isolated islands, we are entitled to treat the narratives about saints as identity construction in a wider sense, which also concerned all

<sup>10</sup> See remarks on the approach to *topoi* in the emotional communities concept, Rosenwein, *Emotional Communities in the Early Middle Ages*, pp. 26–31.

<sup>11</sup> Ailnoth, *Gesta Swenomagni Regis* (hereafter *Gesta Swenomagni*), Epilogus, p. 135.

<sup>12</sup> Hope, ‘Strategies for Constructing an Institutional Identity’, pp. 2–11.

elite groups. I must also underline that in my research I focus on the textual reality of the sources, on the narrative structure which is to be treated as a cultural fact, transcending the institution itself. I also wish to propose an additional division into 'levels', or narrative aspects employed by writers, of identity, as found in the narrative: a 'local level', an 'ethnic level' and a universal or 'pan-Christian level' of narration. In this chapter I would like to focus on the final one, understood as the narrative focused on the saint's and thus the community's connection to *Christianitas* as a whole.<sup>13</sup> One should also bear in mind the interdependence of these narrative levels, resulting from the institutional provenance of the text.

After these initial remarks, let us move on to the analysis of the cults and thus the narratives of Saints Cnut and Wenceslas.

## St Wenceslas and St Cnut – The Sources

The first element that connects these personages is no doubt their membership of the category of royal saints. St Wenceslas, a duke of the Přemyslid dynasty, was murdered in Bohemia in 935 (929)<sup>14</sup> by his brother, Boleslav I. Following his body's translation to Prague, a cult soon developed there. In the case of St Cnut, the son of Sven Estridsen and king of Denmark, he was murdered by political opponents at the cathedral of Odense, which also soon developed into a centre of his cult.

Given this core similarity, the main difference and problem with a comparison between the narratives of these royal saints is chronological: the texts about St Cnut were separated by a century or so from those of the *Legenda Christiani*. While that does not rule out a comparison at the level of the narrative, a certain caution is advisable in view of the different contexts in which the texts were written. On the other hand, in some ways the situations seem similar, as the texts were written at a comparable time after the conversion of the two countries. Other significant differences concern the specific characteristics of the surviving texts, for example, their survival in vernacular languages.

With regard to the sources, our situation is as follows. The hagiography of St Wenceslas, treated at length in this volume by David Kalhous, consists of as many as eleven texts, mostly in Latin but with three in Old Church Slavonic. The most recent of the Latin texts, *Historia nova* by

<sup>13</sup> What follows is limited by the length of this chapter, but I intend to develop the other two levels of narrative in hagiography in my doctoral thesis. See also n. 4.

<sup>14</sup> The actual year of St Wenceslas' death remains a matter of debate due to contradictory source accounts chronologically close to the event; after Widukind's chronicle I give 935 here, noting the difference in the hagiographical sources (929), cf. Kalhous' text in the present volume.

Charles IV, was written in the mid-fourteenth century. The earliest version of the St Wenceslas tradition is dated by the so-called *First Slavonic Life* to the mid-tenth century. Apart from those vernacular texts, a considerable number of the oldest Latin lives were written in Western Europe (including Italy), which goes some way to show the interest in the saint beyond the borders of Bohemia.

In the present chapter, I focus on the *Legenda Christiani*. Of all the hagiographical texts about St Wenceslas, this work has attracted the most intense scholarly debate, going all the way back to the eighteenth century. While it is not possible to discuss the entire debate, which anyway goes beyond the scope of the present chapter, it is worth noting that the issue has even attracted its own meta-narrative.<sup>15</sup> The discussion concerns, among others, the authenticity of the source as a tenth-century text which has implications for the identity of the author.<sup>16</sup> The arguments in favour of its provenance from late tenth-century Bohemia are much more convincing than those that make the opposite case. The decisive argument in favour of the text's tenth-century date is, to my mind, the illumination of Gumpold's life of the saint from the so-called codex of Wolfenbüttel, that references a motif from the *Legenda Christiani* which is absent from Gumpold's account.<sup>17</sup> I also agree with those who identify the *Legenda's* author, Christianus, as Strachkwaz, a monk and the brother of Boleslav II, the son of Boleslav I and thus the nephew of St Wenceslas himself.

There are several reasons why I have focused on the *Legenda Christiani*. The first and decisive one is its local provenance. The author's perspective is undoubtedly that of both the secular Bohemian elite as well as the ecclesiastical Bohemian elite, which he represented simultaneously as a member of the dynasty and a dignitary of the Church. Second, the *Legenda Christiani* is a relatively early text that nevertheless builds on even earlier sources: the life by Gumpold and the *Crescente fide*. It is worth noting in this context Jacek Banaszekiewicz's argument that the narrative itself and its symbolic and ideological content should be focused on, rather than its filiation.<sup>18</sup> The work presents a coherent, clearly thought-out portrayal of the ruler, thus lending itself to a mythopoetic approach.

The situation is rather different in the case of St Cnut, where all our texts come from the episcopal environment of Odense, the place of the

15 Kalhous, *Legenda Christiani and Modern Historiography*.

16 The whole discussion is summarized in Kalhous, *Legenda Christiani and Modern Historiography*. For a fundamental text on dating and the author of *Legenda*, see Treštk, 'Deset tezí o Kristiánově legendě', cf. Kubín, 'Znovu o Kristiána'.

17 For that argument and new digital textual analysis, see Jasiński, *Legenda Krystiana – autentyk czy mistyfikacja?*, especially pp. 110–11.

18 Banaszekiewicz, 'Gumpold, Wawrzyniec i Krystian', p. 167.

royal martyr's death, and known by scholars as 'the Odense literature'.<sup>19</sup> Initially, the church hosted a community of regular clergy, but Erik the Good turned it in 1095 into a Benedictine establishment. The Odense literature consists of four texts: *Tabula Othoniensis*, *Passio Sancti Kanuti*, *Epitaphium Sancti Kanuti*, and *Gesta Swenomagni Regis et Filiorum eius et Passio gloriosissimi Canuti Regis et Martyris* by a monk from Canterbury, Aelnoth.<sup>20</sup> We thus have two extensive narratives of the ruler's martyrdom (*Passio* and the work of Aelnoth), a text on a metal plaque inserted into Cnut's reliquary (*Tabula Othoniensis*) and an epitaph from the same box, written on an unknown material.<sup>21</sup> We are certain about the authorship of the most recent text, the *Gesta Swenomagni*. However, the authors of the others, besides the *Epitaphium* which some scholars also attribute to Aelnoth, remain unknown to us, except to say that they were connected to the Odense community. In any case, their writing can be connected with two events: the *elevatio* of the saint's body in 1095 and the papal canonization of 1101. It is worth noting that the texts under discussion served as the basis for the liturgical texts dedicated to St Cnut, which were also written at Odense.

Before I move on to the narratives, we should consider to whom the texts were addressed and what this may or may not tell us about the issue of legitimacy and identity construction. The most recent text about Cnut, Aelnoth's *Gesta Swenomagni*, alone among the Odense texts, is like the *Legenda Christiani* as it is dedicated to a specific individual. The former addresses King Niels (1104–1134), the saint's brother. The latter is dedicated to Adalbert, the bishop of Prague who went on to be martyred himself and who is named as the initiator of the work: 'on your orders and with your permission', the author addresses the bishop, 'correction was made' to an existing description of the saint's passion.<sup>22</sup> In his dedication, the author includes a remarkable request to Bishop Adalbert: 'Would you kindly confirm what I have written so that it may at least be read in your diocese.'<sup>23</sup> The cult of St Wenceslas, as mentioned above, developed quickly after his martyrdom and served as an important driver for the creation of the see of Prague in 973.<sup>24</sup> While the details remain murky, it is clear from later sources that the initiative lay with the secular authorities, namely

19 For a comparative perspective on the cult of saints in Denmark, see Steffen Hope's chapter in the present volume.

20 For a recent work on the filiation relations of the Odense texts, see Petersen, 'Cnut Rex and Cnut Dux', pp. 118–19.

21 Cf. Hope, 'The Odense Literature', p. 102. For a recent work on a life written by Aelnoth, which unfortunately I have not yet had full access to, see Fritz, *The Multifunctionality of a Medieval Hagiography*.

22 *Legenda Christiani*, prologus, p. 8.

23 *Legenda Christiani*, prologus, p. 10.

24 For some remarks on this issue, see Grzegorz Pac's chapter in this volume.

Boleslav I or Boleslav II. Having a saint 'of one's own' was quickly used to demonstrate the legitimacy of the ecclesiastical authorities, sanctifying the Prague see and justifying its place on the map of *Christianitas*. Elite interest and care for their patron saint is illustrated well by the luxurious codex of Wolfenbüttel, cited above as an argument for the dating of the *Legenda Christiani*. Containing illuminations and Gumpold's life of the saint, the codex was commissioned by Queen Emma, the wife of Boleslav II in a clear demonstration of the saint's significance to the Přemyslid dynasty.<sup>25</sup> Cooperation between the ecclesiastical and secular authorities can, in any case, be seen at least in the early stages of the saint's cult, which we are concerned with here.

The example of Odense is a little different: initially a local cult of the murdered ruler, it gained wider support from ecclesiastical circles and then attracted the interest of the king, Erik the Good.<sup>26</sup> Suffice to say that Erik named his son, born a year after the *elevation* and the establishment of a monastic community at Odense, after his slain brother (the boy, Cnut Lavard, would go on to become a saintly martyr himself).<sup>27</sup>

In both cases then, the saints were employed in the service of the glory of both the ecclesiastical and secular authorities. If an exploration of this service lies beyond the scope of the present chapter, it is worth stressing that each cult figure enjoyed a practically unchallenged position as the principal saint of his respective country. Their figures became, moreover, an intelligible and ideologically complex element of prestige on the international arena, arousing interest not only in the peripheries but in the Christian world at large. It is worth noting, for the sake of comparison, that the cults of both saints were known on the eastern frontiers of Christian Europe, as seen for example in the Slavic liturgical texts.<sup>28</sup> In what way did the presentation of these saints allow the elites who identified with them to further the cause of their membership of *Christianitas*? We now move on to the narrative strategies of the texts themselves.

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<sup>25</sup> See n. 17.

<sup>26</sup> On the unnamed clergymen participating in the *elevation*, says the *Passio Sancti Kanuti Regis et Martyris* (hereafter *Passio Kanuti*), VIII, 70: *Hijis mox diuulgatis Iutenses cum episcopis et sacerdotibus ad modum religiosi ad nos fide bonaet deuotione uenerunt, consilium una nobiscum inierunt, et in eo decreuerunt, ut ossa regis et martiris cum digno honore eleuari debuerunt*, cf. Haki Antonsson, *St Magnús of Orkney*, pp. 131–32 on the Cnut cult's role in building the prestige of his dynasty.

<sup>27</sup> About St Cnut Lavard with further references, see Haki Antonsson, *St Magnús of Orkney*, pp. 133–39, cf. Petersen, 'Cnut Rex and Cnut Dux', pp. 118–25.

<sup>28</sup> About Saints Cnut and Wenceslas in the *Trinity Prayer*, see Pac, 'Kult świętych a problem granicy'.

## Altar, Saints, and Cnut's Sainthood

The central point of both narratives is doubtless the martyrdom of the saint. Within both examples, the authors devote a great deal of attention to the event, composing the events into a precise structure filled with select details. Below, I attempt to present the narrative strategies employed in the descriptions of the martyrdoms in order to inscribe the rulers of Bohemia and Denmark into the broader *Christianitas*, and thus to construct the identity of the communities addressed.

To this end, I wish to draw attention to the parallel between the cults of the saints under consideration, and a number of other saints whose names do not appear in the hagiographies of Cnut and Wenceslas by coincidence. Focusing on this aspect, the manner of the authors' description, and the need to use this element to legitimize the sainthood of the protagonist, will allow us to better grasp the 'level' of identity outlined above. As discussed, the main point of reference will be the narrative around the martyr's death as the most important part of his sanctification.

In the case of Cnut, besides the course of events themselves, there is an emphasis on the location of the events in order to connect him with other saints. It is to be expected that the basic information is provided on the 'real' events — that is, the ruler's murder at a specific place, the church of St Alban's at Odense,<sup>29</sup> or that the account is based on the reports of eyewitnesses of the events of July 1086. On the other hand, at the narrative level, the space is defined more precisely, inscribed into the performativity of Cnut's martyrdom. We are talking about the altar (*ara*), whose presence and ideological connotations I wish to discuss. The analysis of this motif, and of the narrative constructions around it contained in Cnut's hagiography, primarily aims to trace how the Odense textual community, through the veneration of the ruler of Denmark, sought to demonstrate its links with established cults, and how far this placed both Denmark and the local St Alban's church itself within the wider Christian world in the context of salvation history.

Thus, the writer of *Passio Kanuti* begins his narrative of the martyrdom with a fairly general description of the place: the action takes place at the Church of the Virgin and St Alban (*ecclesia sanctissime virginis Marie et beati martiris Albani*), where Cnut himself had brought the patron's relics.<sup>30</sup> He goes on, however, to identify the place of Cnut's Christ-imitating death with greater precision. Namely, when the king was pierced with a spearhead, he fell into the shape of a cross turned towards the altar of the

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29 On the location of the church and the topography of Odense, see Christensen, Bjerregaard, and Runge, 'Odense before and after the Canonization of Cnut'.

30 *Passio Kanuti*, vi, p. 69.

St Alban the martyr (*ad altare sancti Albani martiris*).<sup>31</sup> The author adds a note on the date (10 July), stating that Cnut, ‘by the intercession and act of our Lord Jesus Christ died spilling piously his blood at the altar (*secus aram*) of Christ.’<sup>32</sup> In its turn, the details of the text of the Odense plaque differs slightly: the events take place at the *basilica* dedicated to St Alban the martyr (alone), whose relics were indeed brought by Cnut, but instead of ‘here’, ‘from England to Denmark.’<sup>33</sup> Cnut, just as in the *Passio*, dies pierced by a spear, his arms spread in the shape of the cross before the altar (*ante aram*).<sup>34</sup> While it would seem logical that the altar should be that of St Alban, that this is not specified is significant in the light of the two altars mentioned in the *Passio*, where we find both the specific context of St Alban and the general one of Christ. This is important in that the *Tabula* defines the place of the action in yet another way, which is not found in the *Passio*: in *ciuitate Othensya*, at *basilica sancti Albani*, before an unnamed, hence presumably the main, altar. The other of the shorter texts, the *Epitaphium sancti Kanuti*, styles the altar not as that of St Alban, but simply as a ‘holy altar’ (*ante sacram aram*), in front of which the saint (*sacer*) spilled his blood. While the brief treatment emphasizes Cnut’s similarities to Christ (betrayed by a close associate, *a proprio*, struck in the side while asking for a drink), as explicitly stated on three occasions,<sup>35</sup> it is worth noting the presence of the *ara* in the narrative, especially when we move on to the most extensive, both in terms of its ideological content and its complexity, treatment in the *Gesta Swenomagni* by Aelnoth of Canterbury.

Aelnoth begins his narrative of Cnut’s martyrdom in the same way as the others, naming as the place of the action the *basilica Albani*, whose significance he emphasizes with the term *preciosus martyr*.<sup>36</sup> The following chapters, brimming with a variety of analogies (to biblical, mythological or historical figures), provide two descriptions of the martyr’s death. In both we can see an attempt to construct the Christian identity we mentioned: through inscribing Cnut into the history of salvation. First, in chapter xxvii, Aelnoth explicitly compares Cnut to St Stephen and St Sebastian, pointing to the same weapons being used against them: stones and arrows. He then mentions the companions (*socii*) of the ruler who suffered with him, ending the sentence by stating that ‘By the preciousness of their martyrdom [the basilica] was consecrated anew.’<sup>37</sup>

31 *Passio Kanuti*, vii, pp. 69–70.

32 *Passio Kanuti* vii, p. 70.

33 *Tabula Othoniensis*, p. 60.

34 *Tabula Othoniensis*, p. 61, on symbolic crucifixion and *Christomimesis* see Hope, ‘Symbolic Crucifixion and Royal Sainthood’, pp. 214–23.

35 *Epitaphium Sancti Canuti*, p. 76.

36 Ailnothus, *Gesta Swenomagni*, xxvi, p. 116.

37 Ailnothus, *Gesta Swenomagni*, xxvii, p. 118.

While indeed the term *socius* should — and in my interpretation still can — refer to those ‘real’, ‘earthly’ comrades-in-arms then in the church, by so explicitly<sup>38</sup> referring to the two martyrs in the text, it seems equally reasonable to conclude that Aelnoth has in mind here (also) St Stephen and St Sebastian, Cnut’s ‘heavenly’ companions. That is, this comparison is a part of a wider image Aelnoth had intentionally constructed.<sup>39</sup> In that sense, by means of allusion, he creates the idea that Cnut’s death acted as a second consecration of the *basilica* through the symbolic participation in the martyrdom of those saints by sharing similar suffering. This analogy, although expressed at an interpretive level, seems justifiable in the context of Aelnoth’s text as a whole, which is full of various comparisons and ideological meanings around the figure of the saint. We see this even further in the same chapter, where he goes on to develop more elaborate *Christomimesis* (e.g. including the thirsty Cnut being denied water, as mentioned in the *Epitaphium*).

It is also worth noting that in the following chapter, setting aside the extensively drawn analogy with the passion of Christ outlined above, the writer also ideologically encapsulates the passion of Cnut, this time expanding on the theme of relics. Namely, Aelnoth, in common with the other narratives from Odense, places the action in the specific space of the church. Thus the crowd, after breaking in, found there the ‘most pious of rulers’ at the eastern side of the building where the martyrs’ relics were found, and, ‘not just those of Alban, but also of Oswald’, as Aelnoth states. There follows the death scene before the altar, which is divided into two longer sentences and is the most dynamic of all: when the king, awaiting eternal rest, turns his heart and face to the altar (*ad aram*), he is pierced with a spear thrown in through the window by one of the attackers. But before he dies of his grave wound, he says farewell to his brother, Benedict, with a kiss of peace then arranges himself in the shape of the cross before the altar (*ante aram*), as the *Gesta Swenomagni* emphasizes the place for a second time.<sup>40</sup> In the context of the other Odense narratives, it is significant that Aelnoth, while repeating the words of the *epitaphium* placed in Cnut’s reliquary during the 1101 translation, omits the verse with the words *ante sacram aram*.<sup>41</sup> That opens up the issue of the authorship of

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38 What seems unclear here is the round brackets that Gertz placed in his edition before both comparisons to saints (ut ... ut), which is not grounded in the manuscripts he used, see Brugge, HB, MS 403, fol. 84v, where both saints are mentioned without any distinction from the rest of the text.

39 Cf. n. 11.

40 Ailnothus, *Gesta Swenomagni*, xxviii, p. 120.

41 Ailnothus, *Gesta Swenomagni*, xxxvi, p. 134.

the *Epitaphium*, which some scholars have sought to attribute to Aelnoth himself, as I wish merely to note.<sup>42</sup>

In any case, it is worth bearing in mind the different functions of the texts, as well as their form (*vitae*, an epitaph in verse or a brief note on a plaque) or their filiation (the *Gesta Swenomagni* as the most recent and most extensive treatment). On the other hand, the important detail of a more or less extensive discussion of the ‘altar’ constitutes an important narrative element in all of the Odense texts. This is important because it is also emphasized in the ‘practical’ aspect of the cult, namely in liturgical texts<sup>43</sup> written at roughly the same time as the narrative ones. While some were written at Odense and were used elsewhere, others come from other places, such as Lund, a bishopric that had enjoyed Cnut’s respect and generosity,<sup>44</sup> which gave us a text of reminiscence about the saint from the *Liber memorialibus*. Interestingly, while the martyr’s gesture (prostration in the shape of the cross) is mentioned, the altar before which he performed it is overlooked; instead, the action is located generally ‘within the enclosure of the church of Odense’ (*intra ecclesie otheniensis septa*).<sup>45</sup>

While several factors could influence the absence of this detail (e.g. a different role of the *liber memorialibus* or a different outlook), the outline set out above, even setting aside an analysis of the way in which the saint’s figure was used in each community, allows us to conclude that at the first stage of mythopoesis surrounding Cnut, the place of the altar was clearly thought out and intentionally introduced into the narrative. As part of the ruler’s portrayal, the altar acts as a connection between the present saint *in statu nascendi* and the earlier saints present there through their cults. On the ideological plane, Cnut is in this way connected to Christ and also with St Alban. We can also observe Aelnoth extending the *iunctim* even further to St Oswald, whose relics had been presented to the church by Cnut himself.

We thus see Cnut become the *protomartyr Danorum* at the feet of St Alban (the first martyr of England) who is present via his relics.<sup>46</sup> By noting the presence of the relics of Oswald, Aelnoth complements the portrayal of Cnut as a saint: the former functioned in the Christian

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42 It seems, however, that the original intent was to include a mention of the altar, as the text consisted of nine rather than eight verses, see Gertz, ‘Fortale’, pp. 38–42; cf. on the possibility of copies of the text circulating Hope, ‘Constructing Institutional Identity through the Cult of Royal Saints’, pp. 185–86.

43 *Carmina Ecclesiastica*, p. 152: *ante aram mirifice*.

44 So in *Passio Kanuti*, p. 65.

45 *De sancto Kanuto Rege et Martyre*, p. 148: on the source Gertz, ‘Fortale’, p. 54.

46 It may be worth noting that we could see two levels of identity I’ve previously mapped out created there: an ‘ethnic’ one (as Cnut is a Danish saint) and the ‘pan-Christian’ we are discussing here. I will further elaborate on this issue in my PhD dissertation.

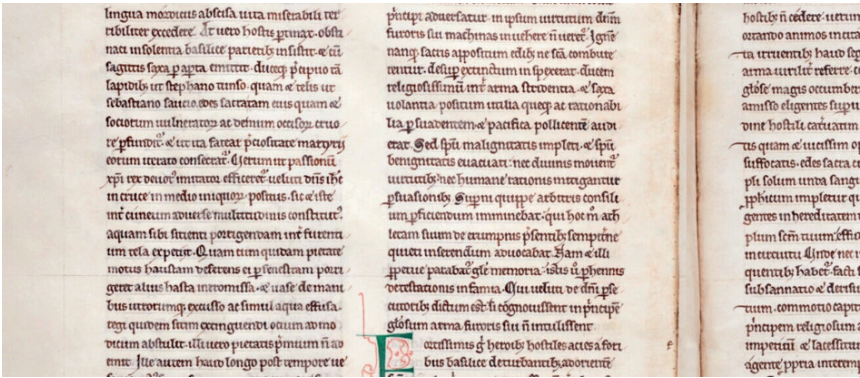


Figure 10.1. Fragment of *Gesta Swenomagni Regis et Filiorum Eius et Passio Gloriosissimi Canuti Regis et Martyris* where Ailnothus compares Canute to Saint Sebastian and Saint Stephen in Brugge, Hoofdbibliotheek Biekorf, MS 403, fol. 82v (detail). Reproduced with the permission of the Bibliotheek Brugge.

imagination as the model of a royal saint, while the latter was a ruler whose sainthood is being unveiled before our eyes.

It is worth noting that even if the term *protomartyr* is not used in our texts in relation to Alban, then the allusion, owing the nature of the community at Odense, seems to point in that direction. In a narrative about Cnut, he is the most important figure; little wonder then that the term is reserved for him. Aelnoth seems to feel obliged to explain its use for Cnut: God may turn a ruler into a patron (*de principe patronum*), a king into a *protomartyr*; and the first martyr is the first among Danes since no one among them had suffered martyrdom before.<sup>47</sup> It ought to be sufficient to recall the explicit analogy between Cnut and St Stephen, the original first martyr, which via Aelnoth found its way into the liturgy.<sup>48</sup>

To return to the role of the altar motif in the narrative about St Cnut, we may draw the following conclusions: 1) it constitutes an important element of his martyrdom, which was constructed and developed in the Odense textual community, and which lent a concrete dimension to the place of action; 2) the altar and the relics are far from coincidental in symbolic terms, instead they are resources which help to establish Cnut's sainthood.

47 *Gesta Swenomagni*, XI, p. 98.

48 See *Addenda I to Carmina Ecclesiastica, Vita sanctorum Danorum*, p. 154, it is also worth noting the occurrence of the 'protomartyr' term in relation to other royal saints from the peripheries, such as St Olaf or St Stephen of Hungary, see Mortensen, 'Sanctified Beginnings and Mythopoetic Moments', pp. 262–63.

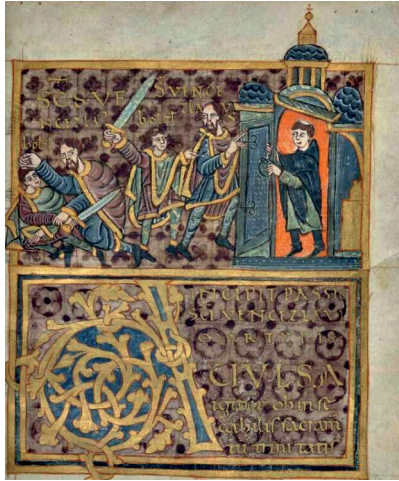


Figure 10.2. Saint Wenceslas' assassination scene. The prince flees from his brother, who is wielding a sword, to church, while priest closes the door, from Gumpold's *Vita* in the so-called *Codex of Emma*. Wolfenbüttel, Herzog August Bibliothek, Cod. Guelf. 11,2, fol. 21r (detail). Photo from Herzog August Bibliothek, CC BY-SA, via the Herzog August Bibliothek Wolfenbüttel Manuscript database.

Most of all, the emphasis on the altar serves to set Cnut against the background of the saints he himself had venerated (by procuring their relics, by prayer) and whose values and significance he took on when he became a saint (by fusing the role of the first martyr with that of a ruler). In short, Cnut as saint, thanks to the place and nature of his passion, brings to life the tradition of the martyrs of old, re-enacting the holy history: while as a new saint with his own attributes, he is intimately connected to existing saints, which inscribes him into the history of salvation. And that narration constructs the pan-Christian level of a textual community around St Cnut.

### ***Coheres martyrum* — St Wenceslas and the 'Right' Time of Martyrdom**

In the case of the *Legenda Christiani*, if the end is similar, the means are a little bit different, since they emphasize the other 'space' in the description of his martyrdom. To begin by looking first at the overall structure of the *Legenda Christiani*: its author, in common with Aelnoth, begins with a historical background, going back to the adoption of Christianity by

Bořivoj (chapters 1–2); introduces the successive Přemyslid rulers and focuses on the martyrdom of Wenceslas's grandmother, Ludmila (chapters 3–4); describes the merits of Wenceslas and his initiative in the translation of his grandmother's remains (chapters 5–6); presents the scene of his martyrdom (chapter 7), and the circumstances of his body's translation (chapter 8), and then moves on to catalogue the miracles performed thanks to his intercession (chapters 9 and 10).

At first glance, three elements of the narrative structure become obvious: the Christianization of Bohemia and the Slavic tradition of the Bohemian church; the sainthood of Ludmila; and the sainthood of Wenceslas. Without exploring the middle part at any length, it is worth noting that in the dedication written by the hagiographer, the martyrdoms of Wenceslas and his grandmother are treated as if they were one event.<sup>49</sup> On the other hand, the special significance of the duke for the Prague church is strongly emphasized. It is he who is the 'common' (*communis*) patron who, 'thanks to his merit rewarded Adalbert with the bishop's honour'.<sup>50</sup> We are not, of course, dealing with an actual award of the bishopric by the living duke; rather more significantly for the present analogy, it is his spiritual patronage over the see of Prague and its holder. In other words, St Wenceslas, thanks to his martyrdom, sanctions the creation and existence of the bishopric of Prague. St Wenceslas is referred to as *patron* on two more occasions: that of his translation, when 'God in His goodness gave the newly converted people of Bohemia a new patron',<sup>51</sup> and again at the beginning of chapter 10, in the context of the miracles performed in the saint's name.<sup>52</sup>

Wenceslas as the patron of a new Christian community is, however, portrayed against a wider historical background. Just like Aelnoth reaching back in time to describe the *gesta* of Cnut's father and brothers, the author paints a history of the Christianization of Bohemia, delving into the Slavic tradition. He starts with a brief introduction to the history of Great Moravia, whose Christian origins he pushes back all the way to the time of St Augustine, conveying on it the dignity of an ancient Christian community.<sup>53</sup> In an effort to trace the path to a Christian Bohemia, he goes on to mention the mission of Cyril and Methodius, who were also active in Great Moravia. It is there, on the occasion of the meeting between Methodius and Bořivoj, at a feast at the court of the Moravian ruler

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49 When discussing his motivation in writing the work, he describes the martyrdom of Saints Wenceslas and Ludmila in the singular, see *Legenda Christiani*, prologus, p. 8.

50 Christian asks Adalbert for prayer for the successful completion of his work to *communem patronum*, see *Legenda Christiani*, prologus, p. 10.

51 *Legenda Christiani*, 8, p. 78.

52 *Legenda Christiani*, 10, p. 90.

53 *Legenda Christiani*, 1, p. 12.

Svatopluk, that Bohemia adopts Christianity as their ruler receives baptism at the hands of Methodius himself. The author adds the story of the Strojímír rebellion in reaction to Bořivoy's conversion, which the Christian duke suppresses thanks to divine intervention. This tale of the Bohemian origins, which is also in part a dynastic legend, plays an important role in the overall structure, providing a simple portrayal of Bohemia's road to Christianity. This simplicity rests on the solid foundation of antiquity: the Christian community does not spring out of nowhere; on the contrary, it draws on a rich tradition. At the same time, the story carries an important ideological message, for example by geographically placing the Bohemians in the north and by presenting a concise story of the dynastic progenitor, Přemysl.<sup>54</sup> The rather convincing narrative of the Bohemians as coming from the far north, *sub Arcturo*, together with the ideological content of the story is approached by Banaszkiwicz as a kind of an intertextual polemic, especially with Gumpold's life of Wenceslas, in order to legitimize the place of Bohemia in the ranks of Christian states, membership of which was a historical necessity.<sup>55</sup> This necessity, ultimately confirmed by the figure of Wenceslas, is also discussed in the succeeding parts of the text in the light of his Přemyslid predecessors, whose dynasty is thus vicariously linked to the cult of saints.

Against this historical background, there emerges a linear narrative of the Christianization of Bohemia with an extensive portrayal of the figure of the duke as a generous founder, a role which is then fulfilled by all successive members of the dynasty discussed in the text. Thus, we have Bořivoy as an exile during the rebellion who promises God that he will build a basilica of the Virgin Mary in Prague as thanks for 'returning him with honour to his rightful place',<sup>56</sup> even as he had earlier built the church to St Clement, 'a pope and a martyr';<sup>57</sup> Svyatopluk, the eldest, who 'imitated his father as a builder of churches';<sup>58</sup> Vratislaus, the younger son, who built the basilica of St George;<sup>59</sup> finally St Wenceslas himself who initiated the construction of the church of St Vitus in Prague.<sup>60</sup> It is interesting, especially in the context of Drahomira, the mother of Wenceslas and an opponent of Ludmila, to note the mention of the Church of St Michael, where Ludmila's body would rest before her translation.<sup>61</sup> This founding

54 *Legenda Christiani*, 2, p. 18.

55 Banaszkiwicz, 'Gumpold, Wawrzyniec i Krystian', pp. 165–68.

56 *Legenda Christiani*, 2, p. 24.

57 *Legenda Christiani*, 2, p. 20.

58 *Legenda Christiani*, 3, p. 26.

59 *Legenda Christiani*, 3, p. 28.

60 *Legenda Christiani*, 6, pp. 60–64.

61 It is characteristic that the duchess, portrayed as a second Jezebel, in reality participates in ecclesiastical foundations, although her objective is obviously to overshadow the 'real' saint who was also active there, see *Legenda Christiani*, 4, pp. 40–42.

process clearly is a characteristic sphere of the dynasty's activity, and Wenceslaus explicitly remembers his predecessors' achievements when he asked the bishop of Regensburg for permission to build a basilica to a martyr: 'as my father once built a church to St George, so I with your permission would build a church in honour of St Vitus'.<sup>62</sup> The construction of the church would then assume a significant role in the duke's martyrdom, as, according to the *Legenda Christiani*, Wenceslas was close to abandoning the secular life and joining a monastery, but the thought of finishing the construction held him back. As the narrative tells us, following the martyr's death, Wenceslas 'inspired by God, built the basilica from the ground up and decorated it in a most wonderful way with ecclesiastical ornaments'. Even during the building works, he designated the basilica as his burial place and his body was moved three years after his death, thus further uniting him to its martyred patron.<sup>63</sup>

The crux of the narrative seems, however, to be the timing of Wenceslas's death. Thus, we find out that it all took place in the reign of King Henry I, who maintained peaceful relations with Duke Wenceslas who went to join his brother Boleslav at his residence at Stará Boleslav.<sup>64</sup> The fratricide-to-be used the feast of Sts Cosmas and Damian as the pretext for his invitation, in the expectation that Wenceslas would wish to celebrate it at the local church dedicated to them. The feast, the *Legenda Christiani* says, takes place 'two days before the feast of St Michael the Archangel'. Even as he knew about the preparations to his assassination, Wenceslas accepted the invitation to appear at the church and celebrate the memory of Cosmas and Damian. The plan to attack him at the church failed, however, as the conspirators, 'thrice rose and each time sat down again', in an effort to draw their concealed swords, but 'by an act of God', could not murder the duke. Key in this context is the author's brief commentary: 'God by His providence forbade them this act, wishing, perhaps, to sanctify the following day'.<sup>65</sup> Indeed, after a feast where Wenceslas cuts a figure closely resembling Christ at the Last Supper, the narrative moves on to the next day when Boleslav attacked his brother on the way to church. While unable to wound him mortally with his own hands, he manages to call on his men to murder the saint on 28 September at the gate to the church at Boleslav's residence.

As seen above, the timing of the martyrdom in the *Legenda Christiani* is portrayed as far from accidental, but as part of a divine plan fulfilled by the saint. His participation in a liturgy in honour of two ancient, Roman saints, his remembering the coming feast of Michael the Archangel at the

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62 *Legenda Christiani*, 6, p. 62.

63 *Legenda Christiani*, 8, pp. 78–84.

64 The text mentions a burgh of the same name as the saint, see *Legenda Christiani*, 7, p. 64.

65 *Legenda Christiani*, 7, p. 66.

feast,<sup>66</sup> all of this connected the duke to the saints of old. By his passion, 'he becomes a companion of angels, a fellow of angels, an heir to martyrs, he unites the believers in peace, possesses the innocent of virgins and the eternal crown of youth and the beauty of everlasting charm.'<sup>67</sup> In the eyes of the source this characteristic of Wenceslas comes primarily from his filling the 'lacuna' in the liturgical calendar. The martyr's death, in which Boleslav played a role, is thus to be seen as complementing the holy history in which this particular chapter took place in Bohemia.

## Conclusion

The present chapter draws an analogy between selected aspects of the narratives surrounding SS Wenceslas and Cnut. In the narratives, both are clearly portrayed as belonging to a wider Christian community, as can be seen from their veneration of relics and their respect for older saints. At the narrative level, Cnut is shown as fulfilling the divine plan by inscribing him into the succession of protomartyrs with his predecessors in the role mentioned by name: Stephen, Sebastian, Alban, or Oswald. With his passion, the Danish protomartyr re-enacted the suffering of these saints and adopted the same specific attributes as they did. As for the *Legenda Christiani*, St Wenceslas filled in a 'lacuna' in the liturgical calendar, gaining the laurels of martyrdom at a time specially dedicated to him, between the feasts of Sts Cosmas and Damian and of St Michael the Archangel. Christianus also portrayed the Christianization of Bohemia as a kind of a linear process crowned with the figure of St Wenceslas. It is also worth noting that both martyrs imitated Christ in their passion.

Thus, a number of local texts arose around the two saintly rulers from the newly converted states fairly soon after their martyrdom, in which the authors attempted to portray their images as an important element of membership in the community of Christian states. In the corpus of texts I have analysed, I have identified two main motifs in which the authors focus on this connectivity of the saints from the periphery with the former cults. In a way, both are concerned with space: literally, that is, the place of death in the case of Cnut, and the space of time in the case of Wenceslas. This kind of construction, building a narrative on the 'pan-Christian' level of the identity of the two textual communities, the Church of St Alban in Odense and the environment of the bishopric of Prague, was primarily intended to legitimize the position of both institutions, which — through the saint — 'had to' appear on the ecclesiastical map. The contiguity and

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66 On drinking in honour of saints with a Bohemian context, see Pauk, 'The Coin in the Political Culture', pp. 7–22.

67 *Legenda Christiani*, 7, p. 74.

continuity of God's work manifested by the participation of the new saints in salvation history through their similarities with the ancient cults was thus an argument for the elites to confirm their place and participation in this Christian universe.

I wish to emphasize that this is merely an introduction to a wider study, that the present chapter limits itself to selected hagiographical sources from Denmark and Bohemia and to an analysis of instruments, the narrative strategies rather than of the ways in which a saint was 'used' in a 'political' way. Yet, the preliminary glimpse of narrative strategies which were indeed used intentionally by those responsible for constructing the saint image, shows us how through identity they perceived and legitimized their community as a member of the wider *Christianitas*. In any case, the authors responsible for the portrayal of Wenceslas and Cnut demonstrated or at least attempted to demonstrate that 'we are part of the ancient world.'<sup>68</sup>

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68 Mortensen, 'Sanctified Beginnings and Mythopoetic Moments', p. 265.

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## 11. The Canonization Accounts of St Stephen of Hungary, St Thorlak of Skálholt, and St Cnut of Odense

### *A Comparative Reading*

The parts of Europe under consideration in this volume officially adopted Christianity within a similar timeframe, approximately between AD 900 and 1100. This era witnessed the consolidation of political authority, which resulted in the formation of principalities and kingdoms that became integral parts of Latin Christendom. As discussed in the Introduction, in recent years, there have been noteworthy collaborative publications that focus on investigating this transformative period, which consider both Northern Europe and East Central Europe. These collective volumes primarily include contributions that explore specific facets related to the author's respective region. Even though there are manifest similarities in the conversion and state-building aspect, there are fewer cases where the cult of saints of different regions are compared.

The significance of using a comparative approach in historical research should be clear. As Chris Wickham points out, comparison is inherent to any historical analysis.<sup>1</sup> When studying history, we naturally compare the past to the present, which recognizes the transformative nature of change over time. In our context, however, comparative history involves examining a specific phenomenon or event across two (or more) regions

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<sup>1</sup> Wickham, 'Problems in Doing Comparative History', p. 6.

**Haki Antonsson** • is Professor of Medieval Scandinavian Studies at University College London. His research focuses on the literature and history of Scandinavia in the period c. 1000–1400. His publications include *St Magnús of Orkney: A Scandinavian Martyr-Cult in Context* (2007), *Saints and Their Lives on the Periphery: Veneration of Saints in Scandinavia and Eastern Europe (c. 1000–1200)*, ed. with Ildar Garipzanov (2010), and *Damnation and Salvation in Old Norse Literature* (2018).

*The Cult of Saints and Legitimization of Elite Power in East Central and Northern Europe up to 1300*, ed. by Grzegorz Pac, Steffen Hope, and Jón Viðar Sigurðsson, *Comparative Perspectives on Medieval History*, 2 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2024), pp. 291–310

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10.1484/M.CPMH-EB.5.137541

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and societies, which poses methodological challenges. For instance, it is common to prioritize identifying similarities rather than differences between different areas of study. This tendency is understandable, as recognizing subtle distinctions may require expertise in both fields of inquiry.

The choice of what to compare is partly influenced by the specific range of sources available to us. In comparison to the wealth of material on royal authority, the sources about the sub-regal secular elite in Northern and East Central Europe during the studied period, especially its earlier phase, are comparatively scarce. The existing written accounts primarily focus on princely and royal dynasties, as well as ecclesiastical institutions such as monasteries and bishoprics. Iceland, given the absence of princely authority, deviates from this pattern. Instead, it possesses written sources in the form of sagas and church registers, which offer relatively unexplored resources concerning the participation of the elite in the veneration of saints.

To date, Gábor Klaniczay's concluding chapter in the volume *Saints and Their Lives on the Periphery* (2010) remains the sole attempt to compare the cult of saints in Northern Europe and East Central Europe. Focusing mainly on the native cults, Klaniczay illuminates the key similarities, centring on the prevalence of cults associated with princely and royal figures, which were predominantly upheld through royal patronage.<sup>2</sup> Klaniczay, however, also notes the potential advantage in identifying distinctions within overarching similarities between regions. An illustrative example is the cult of St Hallvard in Norway. According to a legend originating from the late twelfth century, Hallvard (d. 1043) hailed from a noble lineage with familial ties to the royal dynasty. The cult that arose in the Oslo region did not, however, revolve around a dynastic cult but rather focused on a local merchant who had been martyred while defending a pregnant woman from her attackers. Thus, at the heart of this cult was an elite member of society who existed outside the realm of dynastic and ecclesiastical hierarchy and had no direct association with the Christian conversion. A cult of this nature, characterized by such a unique profile, did not develop in East Central Europe during the period under study. This 'anomaly', I suggest, should pique our curiosity and prompt an investigation into the specific social and religious circumstances that facilitated the emergence of such a cult in Norway around 1100.

Examining hagiographic texts by identifying differences within a broader context of similarities can also provide valuable insights. In this volume, Kacper Bylinka's analysis of the hagiographers of Cnut of Odense and St Wenceslas of Bohemia exemplifies this approach. These writers establish connections between the lives and martyrdoms of their subjects

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<sup>2</sup> Klaniczay, 'Conclusion: North and East European Cults of Saints'.

and the larger framework of universal history and Christendom. This forms the field of broad similarities. The most important insight, however, lies in the distinct methods employed by the hagiographers to establish links between the local and the universal. The early hagiographers of St Cnut emphasize the sense of place by associating him with St Alban the protomartyr of Britain and St Oswald of Northumbria, while those of St Wenceslas highlight the martyr's position within the liturgical calendar, resonating with the commemoration of Sts Cosmas and Damian, as well as the Archangel Michael.

Acknowledging the value of using a comparative approach to uncover valuable insights, particularly when exploring significant anomalies or differences within seemingly similar contexts, and considering the focus of the volume on identity and legitimation, I will introduce three texts that portray the early canonizations and translations of native saints in Hungary, Iceland, and Denmark.<sup>3</sup> By adopting a comparative perspective, we can not only analyse and compare these instances but also identify the unique characteristics that distinguish each case.

## The Canonization of St Stephen of Hungary

In 1083, the Hungarian kingdom witnessed the translation of five saints in three different parts of the realm. These were St Gerard, the first bishop of the Magyar realm who was martyred in 1046, the ascetic monks Andrew Zoerard (d. c. 1010) and Benedict of Szkalka (d. c. 1013), as well as Emeric (d. 1037). However, the most significant translation was that of Emeric's father, King Stephen (reigned 1001/1002–1038), which took place in Székesfehérvár in a new basilica dedicated to his sanctity. This event, attended by King Ladislaus (1077–1095), marked the formal establishment of a cult that played a crucial role in solidifying the legitimacy of the ruling Arpad dynasty.<sup>4</sup>

We begin with the account of the translation of St Stephen in 1083, as recorded by Bishop Hartvic in his *Legenda santi Stephani regis ab Hartviko episcopo conscripta* (hereafter referred to as *Legenda S. Stephani*). In crafting the biography of Stephen, Hartvic drew extensively from two earlier hagiographic works, namely *Legenda maior sancti Stephani regis* (*Legenda maior*)

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<sup>3</sup> When I use the term 'translation', I am specifically referring to the ceremony of relocating the relics of a saint to a new shrine. On the other hand, when I mention 'canonization', I may also be referring to such a ceremony, but it can also encompass the broader concept of the official approval of the saint's cult by a specific ecclesiastical authority.

<sup>4</sup> See Klaniczay, *Holy Rulers and Blessed Princesses*, pp. 123–33.

and *Legenda minor sancti Stephani* (*Legenda minor*).<sup>5</sup> Hartvic dedicated his *Legenda* to King Coloman of Hungary, allowing a dating of the work to between 1095 and 1116. Considering that Hartvic incorporates *Legenda maior* and *Legenda minor*, it is evident that these texts predate his own. The prevailing viewpoint suggests that the *Legenda maior* is the oldest among the three, as it does not cover the events surrounding the official recognition of Stephen's sanctity in 1083. The author of the *Legenda minor* does describe these events, including the translation of St Stephen's relics, which dates the work later during King Ladislaus's reign or early in the reign of Coloman.<sup>6</sup>

The most detailed account of the events surrounding the canonization and translation, however, features in Hartvic's *Legenda S. Stephani*. It relates how, forty-five years after King Stephen's death, the Papacy commanded the translation of the relics of those who had propagated Christianity in Hungary. In anticipation of the event, King Ladislaus consulted with bishops, prominent lords, and learned men from all corners of his realm, and they observed a three-day fast. When they tried to lift the stone covering Stephen's grave, however, it proved too heavy even with their concerted effort. Later, a recluse informed King Ladislaus that 'a revelation from heaven' informed her that Stephen's remains could not be transferred unless Solomon, the king's cousin who had been incarcerated for attempting to regain his father's, King Andrew I's, throne (1046–1060), was granted a full pardon. They fasted for another three days, and this time, the stone was easily lifted from the tomb. Between this occurrence and the actual translation, miracles transpired both at the grave and across the realm, setting the stage for the ensuing passage (which essentially follows the *Legenda minor*):

Mane facto die post assumptionem sanctissime dei genetricis Marie quinto, convenientibus in ecclesiam cum rege principibus, cum clero pontificibus, primum missa pro defunctis est celebrata, deinde sublata tabula marmorea, que pavimento preminebat, postquam perventum est ad tumbam, tanta flagrantia svave redolentis odoris in apartione ipsius omnes, qui aderant circumdedit, quod in medium paradisi deliciarum domini se raptos opinarentur. Ipsa quoque tumba plena fuit aqua parum rubenti quasi oleo permixta, in qua velud in balsamo liquefacto quieverunt ossa pretiosa, quibus in mundissimo linteamine collectis in ipso liquore diutissime quesitus est anulus, qui beati viri dextere fuerat impositus.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>5</sup> For the three Legends see *Legenda maior*, *Legenda minor*, *Legenda S. Stephani regis ab Hartvico*.

<sup>6</sup> For a recent overview regarding the textual issues relating to the early hagiography on St Stephen, see Thoroczkay, 'Preface'.

<sup>7</sup> *Legenda S. Stephani regis ab Hartvico*, pp. 436–37.

(The morning of the fifth day after the Assumption of the most holy Mother of God, Mary, having come, when the chief lords, with the clergy and prelates, gathered in the church with the king, first the Mass for the dead was celebrated, then the marble slab that projected above the pavement was lifted, and they came to the sepulchre; and at its opening such a powerful, sweet-smelling fragrance enveloped everyone who was there, that they imagined themselves to be carried away into the midst of the delights of the Lord's paradise. And the sepulchre itself was full of water, a little crimson as if mixed with oil, in which rested, as in liquefied balm, the precious bones; having collected them in the finest linen cloth, they searched for a long time in that liquid for the ring that had been put on the right hand of the blessed man.)<sup>8</sup>

The portrayal of King Stephen's translation aligns with a common scene found in hagiographic literature in which the community, under the guidance of the bishop, reaffirms the saint's sanctity through a solemn liturgical ceremony.<sup>9</sup> The text highlights the harmonious relation between the crown and the community of the realm. Concomitantly the role of the unnamed bishop falls in the shadow.

While addressing the complex internal politics of the Arpad dynasty is beyond the scope of this exercise, it is clear that the *Legenda S. Stephani*, presumably commissioned by King Coloman, aimed to emphasize the sacred significance of the royal position. To achieve this objective, Hartvic skilfully integrated significant elements of regal conduct and policies from the preceding two Legends, while placing even greater emphasis on the sacred nature of Stephen's kingship and his role as an apostolic ruler.<sup>10</sup>

For this purpose Hartvic (following the *Legenda Maior*) highlights the anointing and coronation of King Stephen, the earliest recorded ceremony of this kind in Hungary:

Benedictionis ergo apostolice litteris cum corona et cruce simul allatis presulibus cum clero, comitibus cum populo laudes congruas adclamantibus, dilectus deo Stephanus rex unctione crismali perunctus, diademate regalis dignitatis feliciter coronatur.<sup>11</sup>

(Thus having acquired the letters of apostolic benediction together with the crown and the cross, the beloved of God, King Stephen, anointed by unction and chrism, was propitiously crowned with

8 Hartvic, 'Life of St Stephen of Hungary', pp. 394–95.

9 See, for instance, Heinzelmann, *Translationsberichte*.

10 See, for instance, Pražák, 'The Legends of King Stephen'. Hasseler, 'Royal Justice and Lawgiving in the Early Legends of St Stephen of Hungary'.

11 *Scriptores rerum hungaricarum*, p. 414.

the diadem of royal dignify while the prelates and the clergy, counts and the commoners, acclaimed unanimous praise.)<sup>12</sup>

Hartvic establishes an implicit connection between Stephen's coronation and his canonization, both of which received official approval from the Papacy. Prior to his coronation, a royal envoy arrived from Rome bearing a letter of apostolic blessing for Stephen's kingship, as well as a crown and a cross. Similarly he relates how the pope, unsolicited, issued an apostolic letter calling for the elevation of the relics of St Stephen and the four other saints who had contributed to the conversion of Hungary. In both instances, the papal blessing not only confers prestige and legitimacy but also asserts independence from the Empire, with whom Coloman had a strained relationship at the likely time of the *Legenda S. Stephani's* composition. In this context, it is worth noting the reference to the crimson oil-like substance that enveloped the relic for forty-five years, which serves as a poignant reminder of Stephen's anointing mentioned earlier in the text.

The portrayals of coronation and canonization within the context of Hungarian kingship position the monarch's role, both in life and in death, as integral to the proper order of the world. During the coronation scenes, the king receives the blessings of the highest ecclesiastical authority while highlighting the presence of various societal strata with the king at the pinnacle. Similarly, the account of translation emphasizes this aspect but on a wider geographical scale. Miracles occur throughout the kingdom and these involve both the humble and the powerful. Hartvic further infuses this process with the fundamental objective of achieving the right order of the world: the salvation of the soul. The theme of salvation, whether on an individual or collective level, is further reinforced by the pivotal role of the Virgin Mary. St Stephen fervently prays for her intercession on his deathbed, seeking protection for the kingdom:

'Regina celi, reparatrix inclita mundi, tuo patrocinio sanctam ecclesiam cum episcopis et clero, regnum cum primatibus et populo subpremis precibus committo, quibus ultimum vale dicens manibus tuis animam meam commendo.'<sup>13</sup>

('Queen of heaven, renowned restorer of the world, I commit the holy Church with its bishops and clergy, the kingdom with its chief lords and people to your protection in my last prayers, and saying my final farewell to them, into your hands I commend my spirit'.)<sup>14</sup>

<sup>12</sup> *Legenda S. Stephani regis ab Hartvico*, p. 384.

<sup>13</sup> *Legenda S. Stephani regis ab Hartvico*, p. 431.

<sup>14</sup> Hartvic, 'Life of St Stephen of Hungary', p. 392.

The themes of identity and legitimation are central to this volume, and they are both essential to the scene of translation as depicted by Bishop Hartvic. He highlights the Hungarian kingdom as a cohesive community and accentuates the significance of the Arpad dynasty within it. This emphasizes their pivotal role in upholding the rightful order of the world. The text conveys a sense of balance and harmony, where everything is in its rightful place. Literally so, as the *Legenda S. Stephani* concludes with a miraculous discovery of St Stephen's hand, which had been missing when his tomb was opened.

## The Canonization of St Thorlak of Skálholt

In Iceland around the turn of the twelfth century the depiction of the canonization and *translatio* ceremony of St Thorlak Thorhallson (1133–1193), the country's first native saint, not only expressed communal identity but also served as a reaffirmation of the rightful order of the world. At first glance, this might seem surprising considering that Iceland's societal structure at that time differed significantly from the rest of Europe. Due to the absence of royal power until 1262/1264, Iceland had a highly decentralized system of governance. Local chieftains exercised authority in their respective regions, while the Althing, an annual assembly for legislative and judicial matters, served as the sole central governing body. These chieftains were prominent landowners, often hailing from distinguished lineages, who represented other elite individuals within their local communities. By the second half of the twelfth century, and perhaps even earlier, power started to be concentrated within a small number of influential families, which signalled the demise of a previously balanced distribution of power. As a result, conflicts among these elite families intensified, which only ended when Icelanders pledged their allegiance to the Norwegian king in 1262/1264.

After the official establishment of Christianity in 999/1000, and especially with the introduction of the tithe-tax in 1096/1097, leaders and landowners took on the responsibility of building churches on their properties. Many assumed the roles of priests or deacons and supervised the management of these churches. The dynamic began to change from the late twelfth century onwards as the Church sought to assert its authority over these churches and advocated for a clearer separation between secular and ecclesiastical interests and affairs. In 1190, the archbishop of Nidaros issued a decree that prohibited clergymen from carrying weapons and leaders from attaining high holy orders. While the immediate impact of

this decree is a topic of debate, it serves as an indication of the growing divide between those involved in secular pursuits and those in holy orders.<sup>15</sup>

Haraldur Hreinsson's chapter in this volume provides further insight into the factors contributing to this development. He demonstrates how the self-identity of ecclesiastics was partially shaped by their active engagement with various religious texts, not least hagiography. The familiarity with such literature not only gave them a perception of their own position in the world but also played a crucial role in defining their role within the Church. Consequently, these developments contributed to the eventual emergence of an Icelandic Church that possessed its own distinct identity and purpose.

These changes are illustrated in the career of St Thorlak Thorhallsson. Having pursued his education in England and France, Thorlak returned to Iceland as a duly ordained priest and established an Augustinian priory in the southern region of the country. His reputation led to his selection as the bishop of Skálholt, a position he officially assumed in 1178 following his ordination by the archbishop of Nidaros. According to his hagiographic texts, Thorlak steadfastly worked to uphold the ecclesiastical standards and curtail the influence of laypersons over Church properties.

Immediately after his death in 1193 signs of St Thorlak's sanctity began to emerge. In 1198, at the urging of Bishop Brandr of Hólar and with the endorsement of Bishop Páll Jónsson of Skálholt, the Althing allowed votive offerings to St Thorlak's shrine. Thereafter numerous miracles occurred in various regions of the country which attested to validity of this decision. On 20 July 1199, the relics of Thorlak were translated to a newly constructed shrine within Skálholt Cathedral. During that same summer, the Althing incorporated the celebration of his feast day into the law.

These events are related in his earliest surviving Life, known as *Thorlaks Saga A*, which was composed in the early thirteenth century. It is likely that this account derives from a lost *\*Translatio S. Thorlaci*, composed right after the translation of 1199.<sup>16</sup> According to *Thorlaks saga A* the pursuit of official recognition of Thorlak's sainthood was not confined to the bishopric of Skálholt. Instead, the process attracted support and participation from members of the elite across Iceland. This included both secular chieftains and members of the ecclesiastical hierarchy from the northern bishopric of Hólar. *Thorlaks saga A* describes the translation in the following manner:

Þá er svá margar ok fáheyrðar jarteinir Þorláks byskups váru birtar ok upp lesnar samþykkðisk þat með öllum hofðingjum, lærðum ok leikum,

15 Sverrir Jakobsson, 'State-Formation in Medieval Iceland', pp. 160–63.

16 *Biskupa sögur II*, pp. 47–99. For the existence of a *\*Translatio S. Thorlaci*, see *Biskupa sögur II*, pp. xciv–xcv.

á landinu at taka líkama hans ór jörðu. Því kallaði Páll byskup saman lærða menn ok hofðingja í Skálaholt. Var þar fyrstr Brandr byskup frá Hólum, Guðmundr prestr Arason, er síðan var byskup, Sæmundr ok Orm, bræðr Páls byskups, Hallr ok Þorvaldr ok Magnús Gizurarsynir, Þorleifr ór Hítardal ok margir aðrir hofðingjar. Vatnavextir váru miklir í þann tíma um allt land, en svá vildi Guð at þat hepti einskis manns ferð til staðarins. Ok er þar váru allir saman komnir vökdðu allir um náttina, Guði til lofs ok inum heilaga Þorláki.

Um daginn eptir var heilagr dómr hans ór jörðu tekinn ok í kirkju borinn með ymnum ok lofsöngum ok fagrligri processione ok allri þeiri sœmð ok virðing er í þessu landi mátti veitask. Var kistan sett niðr í sönghúsi, ok sungu lærðir menn þá Te Deum, en sjúkir menn krupu at kistunni, ok urðu margir menn heilir af.<sup>17</sup>

(When so many unusual miracles of Þorlákr [Thorlak] were revealed and read aloud, it was agreed among all the leading men in the land, clerical and lay, to take his body out of the earth. Therefore Bishop Páll called together clerics and chieftains to Skálaholt. First there was Bishop Brandr from Hólar, Priest Guðmundr [Gudmundr] Arason, who later was bishop, Sæmundr and Orm, brothers of Bishop Páll, Hallr and Þorvaldr [Thorvald] and Magnús Gizurason, Þorleifr [Thorleifr] from Hítardalr and many other chieftains. There was great flooding of the rivers at that time throughout the whole land, but God wished that that impede no man from travelling to the see. And when they had all come together they all kept vigil during the night, to the praise of God and the holy Þorlákr [Thorlak]. During the following day his holy relics were taken out of the earth and carried into the church with hymns and songs of praise and beautiful processions and with all the honour and veneration which could be achieved in this land. The coffin was set down in the choir and clerics then sang the Te Deum, and sick men knelt at the coffin and many men were healed thereby.)<sup>18</sup>

Although the passage in question was almost certainly composed under the auspices of Bishop Páll Jónsson of Skálholt (1195–1211) who presided over the translation, it does not associate the official recognition of St Thorlak specifically with the bishopric of Skálholt. Rather we are presented with major national event that draws dignitaries from all over Iceland, with even the flooding of rivers ‘throughout the whole land’ failing to deter people from participating in the proceedings.

<sup>17</sup> *Biskupa sögur* II, p. 97.

<sup>18</sup> *The Saga of Bishop Thorlak*, p. 31.

The fervent atmosphere surrounding the canonization and translation of St Thorlak Thorhallsson, as depicted in *Thorlaks saga A*, may be attributed to the fact that he was Iceland's first saint. In fact, the text explicitly acknowledges the concerns of those involved, who feared that without the confirmation of his sanctity through miracles, Iceland would never have its own native saint. Furthermore, by emphasizing the national significance of these events instead of solely focusing on the role of the southern diocese, the text likely sought to anticipate and address any potential external criticism regarding a cult that had not received official recognition outside Iceland.

However, it is plausible that there are additional reasons for the detailed portrayal beyond defensive measures. To obtain further insight into the canonization scene, we should consider an earlier Icelandic text known as Ari Thorgilsson's *Íslendingabók* (*Book of Icelanders*).<sup>19</sup> Composed sometime between 1122 and 1133, this work narrates the history of Icelanders from the discovery of the country to the author's time. While covering a wide range of historical events, the focal point of the text revolves around the official adoption of Christianity at the Althing in 999/1000. On this occasion Iceland's elite reached an agreement to incorporate Christianity into the country's legal system, with the law mandating that everyone should be baptized into the Christian faith.

I have previously argued that Ari portrays the incorporation of Christianity into the legal system as a means of conferring legitimacy upon Iceland's political structure, which lacked a divinely ordained prince or king to bestow such legitimacy upon it.<sup>20</sup> The law and the associated constitutional arrangements, therefore, had to fulfil this purpose. Given these arrangements had their roots in Iceland's pagan past, the adoption of Christianity during the Althing gathering in 999/1000 marked a pivotal moment of sanctification, as depicted by Ari. Despite the potential for violence arising from religious divisions among the political elite, they ultimately united to oversee this momentous event.

We have observed that in Hartvic's *Legenda S Stephani*, the process of canonization and translation of St Stephen is intricately entwined with his coronation, thus effectively consecrating not only the Hungarian kingship but also the societal structure it embodies. I contend that a comparable connection can be perceived within the Icelandic context of St Thorlak, albeit in a more subtle fashion. Evidently, the anonymous author and the early audience held the translation of the saint and the preceding events in the utmost importance. It signified potentially the most crucial juncture for Iceland since its official embrace of Christianity. The narrative stands as the first historical account of a national event following a span

<sup>19</sup> *Íslendingabók – Landnámabók*, pp. 3–28.

<sup>20</sup> Haki Antonsson, 'The Present and the Past in the Sagas of Icelanders'.

of nearly seventy years since Ari composed his *Book of Icelanders*. Just as Ari's succinct history is centred around the theme of conversion and validates Iceland's unique constitutional arrangement, the canonization and translation of St Thorlak mirror the authority and identity of the country's elite at that particular juncture. The divine endorsement extends not only to the saintly bishop but also to the social framework represented by the presence of both ecclesiastical and secular participants.

## The Canonization of St King Cnut of Denmark

Finally, we turn to the canonization and translation of King Cnut of Denmark, who was killed in 1086 by his own rebellious subjects within the church of St Albans in Odense. In 1100/1101, his remains were transferred from the stone sarcophagus within the same church, where they had been placed after their initial translation in 1095 by the clergy of that institution. Aelnoth of Canterbury, an English ecclesiastic who according to his own words had lived in Denmark for about twenty years, recorded this event in his *Gesta Swenomagni regis et filiorum eius et passio gloriosissimi Canuti regis et martyris* (hereafter *Gesta Swenomagni*). The composition of this work, dedicated to King Niels of Denmark (1104–1134), occurred between the years 1109 and 1122, with the most likely timeframe for its creation falling between 1111 and 1114.<sup>21</sup>

From a comparative perspective, there are several similarities between Aelnoth's text and Hartvic's *Legenda S. Stephani*. Firstly, both texts were commissioned by or at the behest of the saint's royal relatives who were reigning at that time, namely Kings Niels and Coloman. Secondly, both hagiographers made use of earlier Lives of the saints in question, albeit to varying extents. A concise Life of Cnut, known as *Passio Kanuti Regis et Martyris*, was composed by the clergy community of St Alban during the period of his translation in 1095. Additionally, as previously mentioned, Bishop Hartvic had access to two Lives of St Stephen while writing his *Legenda S. Stephani*. Furthermore, Aelnoth of Canterbury and Hartvic offer a wider historical context for the lives of the kings, as they recount the history of the Danes and Magyars, respectively. Aelnoth's text begins with the arrival of Christianity in the North, leading into the reign of Sven Estridsen, whose religious virtues are said to prefigure those of his saintly son. Likewise, Hartvic, following the lead of earlier texts, initiates his accounts with the conversion of Stephen's father, Géza, who experiences a vision foreseeing that his future descendants will accomplish what he himself cannot achieve in his lifetime.

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21 *Passio Kanuti*, pp. 77–136. For the question of dating the text, see Hope, 'The Odense Literature', p. 104.

Lastly, the importance of papal involvement in validating the cults is highlighted in both *Gesta Swenomagni* and Hartvic's *Legenda S. Stephani*. As mentioned earlier, Hartvic explains that the pope had issued a written decree recognizing the veneration of relics belonging to the saints who played a significant role in the spread of Christianity in Hungary, including King Stephen. Aelnoth's text offers a detailed depiction of the pope's acknowledgement of Cnut's sanctity, with this account taking centre stage in the concluding section of the *Gesta Swenomagni*. However, in contrast to the Hungarian case, it was not the pope but rather the king who instigated the process of recognizing the saintly status. For this purpose, Aelnoth recounts that Erik dispatched legates who were sent to Rome with a formal appeal to the apostolic see. Thereafter, the pope convened a synod consisting of bishops and other ecclesiastics from the neighbouring region to examine the case and deliberate on the presented matter. After careful deliberations, the synod declared that Cnut was deserving of inclusion in the list of the blessed. Once the envoys returned to Denmark, the papal approval of the saint's cult was welcomed by all segments of Danish society:

Super que magnificentissimus heros habundantissime exhilaratus, magnates quique letificati, pontifices cum clero gratulati, plebs uniuersa ueluti noue pacis annunciatoribus aduenientibus summa exultatione congaudet ...<sup>22</sup>

(The magnificent hero was gladdened most profusely by this, and the magnates also rejoiced, the bishops and clergy gave thanks, the people rejoiced together, with the highest exultation, as if heralds of a new peace had arrived.)

It is worth emphasizing the mention of a 'new peace' ('noue pacem'). The cult of Cnut is presented as a unifying force that fosters social harmony, implicitly contrasting with the circumstances surrounding the king's martyrdom. The intention to highlight a sense of unity within society through the official recognition of the saint is evident in this context, as it was in the cases of King Stephen and Bishop Thorlak. However, Aelnoth's narrative differs significantly as it lacks specific details regarding the time and location. Instead, it provides a general depiction of nationwide celebrations that took place to commemorate the papal canonization of their saint. Aelnoth describes the *translatio* of 1100/1101 in the following manner:

Anno autem sexto imperii magnifici regis Herici, congregates uniuersis Dacie pontificibus cum multitudine cleri et terre populo innumerabili, preciosas beati martyris reliquias ex saxeo sarcophago assumptas atque

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<sup>22</sup> Aelnoth, *Gesta Swenomagni*, p. 132.

e cripta, ubi hactenus seruabantur, euectas, sollempnibus laudibus et ingenti leticia uniuersis comitantibus, ab eodem, quem prefati sumus, pontifice Hubaldo.xiii k. mai. in eadam, quam prediximus, arca oculis peccatricibus inspeximus impositas, ad instar niuis candidas et serico decenti inuolutas ...<sup>23</sup>

(And in the sixth year of the reign of the magnificent King Erik, as all the bishops of Denmark and a multitude of clerics an innumerable people of the land had come together, under solemn songs of praise and to the great joy of all those assembled, we saw with our sinful eyes the precious relics of the blessed martyr being taken from the stone sarcophagus and out of the crypt as well, where it had to point been kept. In the same year on 13 May he was laid into the shrine by Bishop Hubald, whom we have mentioned before, in the manner in which we have told before, having been wrapped into a cloth in the likeness of snow and handsome silk.)

A notable omission becomes apparent during the final phase of Cnut's canonization. This pertains to the absence of King Erik, whose participation would have been essential for consolidating the authority of the entire social structure. From a comparative perspective, this can be perceived as an uncommon feature or a revealing detail akin to the ones I previously discussed in this chapter. The absence of King Erik strongly suggests that the English writer was compelled to modify the account to align with historical circumstances. In the cited passage, Aelnoth explicitly reveals his own attendance at the Odense ceremony in 1100/1101, and so he leaves no doubt about his direct knowledge of the king's absence. The early audience of *Gesta Swenomagni* likely shared this understanding of the events surrounding the translation of St Cnut. Hence, highlighting the king's presence in the ceremony would have seemed incongruous. To address King Erik's absence, Aelnoth rebalances the narrative by focusing on the king's involvement in securing the papal acknowledgement of Cnut's holiness.

Aelnoth's account differs from our previous examples in that it lacks the balance between the various elements of the overall process. In Hartvic's *Legenda S. Stephani*, the papal canonization serves as a prelude and groundwork for the main event: the translation, which is attended by King Ladislaus and his kingdom's elite. In *Thorlaks saga A*, the recognition of Thorlak's sanctity at the Althing of 1198 sets off a chain of miracles that culminate in the subsequent translation and the inclusion of his feast day in the liturgical calendar. In contrast, Aelnoth's account presents the

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<sup>23</sup> Aelnoth, *Gesta Swenomagni*, pp. 133–34.

translation of 1100/1101, not necessarily as an afterthought, but certainly not as the climactic event of the canonization process.

The distinctions observed in Aelnoth's accounts, when compared to our examples from Iceland and Hungary, warrant further examination. This is not the appropriate setting to delve deeply into the emergence of Cnut's cult. My intention is simply to emphasize that, based on the available written sources, the extent of Erik's involvement and interest in the cult is unclear.<sup>24</sup> It is certain that the king was not affiliated with the initial translation of his brother's relics, which occurred in 1095 or at the end of the reign of his predecessor, Olaf, while Erik was still in exile. Apart from Aelnoth's narrative, the only known evidence of the king's potential patronage of the cult is his request to King William Rufus of England, sometime between 1095 and 1100, to send twelve monks from Evesham Abbey to establish a daughter house in Odense. This community eventually came to form the cathedral chapter and they would have served as the custodians of Cnut's relics.<sup>25</sup>

Another potential source for the king's engagement in the cult is Markus Skeggjason's *Eiríksdrápa*. Composed around 1104–1107, Markus, an Icelandic lawspeaker and skald, composed this skaldic praise poem for King Niels. The poem commemorates Erik's triumphs over the pagan Wends in the Baltic, his extensive construction of churches within his kingdom, and his achievement in securing papal consent for the establishment of an archbishopric in Denmark.<sup>26</sup> It also underscores the king's piety, as demonstrated through his two pilgrimages, with the second one leading to his death in 1103 while en route to the Holy Land. Interestingly, Markus Skeggjason's poem, despite his past role as the court poet for Cnut, does not explicitly mention the protagonist's support for his former patron's cult. This omission is significant, suggesting that if Cnut's cult was indeed a central part of the royal agenda, it was not deemed important enough to be included in a poem dedicated to King Niels near the beginning of his reign.

Based on the evidence, it seems that during Erik's reign, the Danish kingship did not prioritize the cult of St Cnut as a central aspect of its self-presentation and identity. This stands in stark contrast to our example from Hungary. The difference is, of course, also reflected in the origins of the hagiographic works Aelnoth and Hartvic had access to relating to their respective saints. Whereas the two lives of St Stephen were composed in close contact with the Hungarian crown, *Passio Kanuti* had its origins

24 This uncertainty was, to the best of my knowledge, first highlighted by Carsten Breengaard in his chapter on the reign of King Erik, *Muren om Israels hus*, pp. 162–83.

25 For the broader context see, Nyberg, *Monasticism in North-Western Europe*, pp. 55–58.

26 *Skaldic Poetry of the Scandinavian Middle Ages*, pp. 332–60.

in the ecclesiastical community that undertook Cnut's translation in 1095 with no discernible royal involvement.

In this context, the determination of whether Aelnoth wrote his *Gesta Swenomagni* as an ecclesiastic in Niels's court, as proposed by Michael Gelting, or as a member of the Odense clerical community, as commonly assumed, is not crucial.<sup>27</sup> The significance lies in the fact that Aelnoth dedicated the work to the king, intending it to serve as a reflection and reaffirmation of royal ideals. In the epilogue, he expresses his hope that Niels will take inspiration from the kingly virtues exhibited by his saintly predecessor.<sup>28</sup> Steffen Hope's contribution is relevant here, as he examines how Aelnoth situates the king's life and martyrdom within a broader dynastic history as well as encompassing a wider religious and geographical context. Additionally, Hope highlights the biblical parallels that underscore Cnut's kingship.<sup>29</sup> By adopting this perspective, Aelnoth aimed to integrate the cult of St Cnut and its image into the self-image and public projection of the Danish monarchy.

The initiative seems to have achieved its objective. In 1117, Pope Paschal II officially acknowledged the formation of a cathedral chapter in Odense.<sup>30</sup> This chapter consisted of the aforementioned community of monks and was led by Hubald, the same bishop who, as stated by Aelnoth, oversaw the translation of Cnut. The letter mentions Niels' patronage of St Cnut's church and its associated brethren, which is further affirmed by a separate letter granting privileges to both Cnut's Church and the associated brethren.<sup>31</sup>

Finally, Aelnoth's extended description of the papal canonization of Cnut's sanctity merits brief consideration. As previously mentioned, *Eiríksdrápa* states that King Erik achieved the feat of securing papal approval for the establishment of an archbishopric in the Danish kingdom during his pilgrimage to Italy, which likely occurred in 1098. In stanza 15 of the poem, it is recounted that the devout follower of Christ was granted all that was requested by the king. The choice of words used by Markus ('leyfði allt' or 'allowed everything') implies that Pope Urban II granted a wider array of concessions and privileges to the Danish king, which likely extended beyond the matter of the archbishopric. According to Markus' poem, Erik's final destination was the city of Bari, where Urban II coincidentally held a Church Council in the autumn of 1098. Additionally, it is known that at this Council, the pope and his synod received and approved at least one request for the canonization of a

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27 Gelting, 'Two Early Twelfth-Century Views', pp. 38–43.

28 Aelnoth, *Gesta Swenomagni*, p. 133.

29 Hope, 'The Odense Literature'.

30 *Diplomatarium Danicum*, no. 41, pp. 87–88.

31 *Diplomatarium Danicum*, no. 32, p. 76.

saint.<sup>32</sup> A papal recognition of Cnut's sanctity during this occasion would have been particularly fitting, especially considering that Bari, although functionally independent, was officially under the authority of the family into which Cnut's widow, Adela of Flanders, had remarried. I acknowledge that identifying Adela as a key advocate of Cnut's cult during this event is speculative in nature. However, besides the broader context, there is some support for this notion in Aelnoth's mention of the queen granting gifts to Cnut's shrine in 1100/1101 as an alternative to being unable to attend the translation.<sup>33</sup>

I argue that Aelnoth focuses on a multifaceted series of events, which extend beyond the mere cult of King Cnut, and constructs a narrative centred around a royal undertaking that, rather improbably, involves the convening of a papal synod to specifically declare on Cnut's holiness. The arrival of the papal legates and the subsequent communal moment then serve as the pinnacle of the formal affirmation of his sanctity.

## Conclusions

In the two previous examples, the acts of translation serve to reinforce the identity of two political entities being examined: the Hungarian Crown and the Icelandic Commonwealth. In the Hungarian context, the focus is on the elevation of the royal office, which aligns with the earlier portrayal of St Stephen's coronation. The process of canonization, particularly the translation of St Thorlak in the Icelandic case, evokes the crucial moment in the history of the Commonwealth — the conversion to Christianity at the Althing in 999/1000. This event occurs during a period of growing fragmentation within the polity, where unity is becoming increasingly strained. The 1100/1101 translation of St Cnut, as related by Aelnoth of Canterbury, presents a distinct situation. The description reveals a transitional process where a cult that primarily expressed the identity of a local ecclesiastical community becomes integrated into an emerging royal identity and ideology.

While it is undoubtedly possible to examine each case individually and reach similar conclusions, I propose that adopting a comparative approach enables us to identify distinctive and potentially illuminating elements that arise within the realm of broad similarities.

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32 This was St Nicholas 'the Pilgrim' and the petition came from the town of Trani, see Oldfield, 'St Nicholas the Pilgrim and the City of Trani', p. 171.

33 Aelnoth, *Gesta Swenomagni*, pp. 127–29. It is also noteworthy that, as per Aelnoth's account, Queen Adela was the first to acknowledge the sanctity of Cnut and the value of his relics.

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## 12. Legitimizing Episcopal Power in Twelfth-Century Denmark through the Cult of Saints\*

### Introduction

At the turn of the eleventh century, bishops emerged as important power-brokers in Danish society and began to strengthen their position and gain more independence vis-à-vis royal and aristocratic power.<sup>1</sup> The emergence of episcopal power was aided through several acts, projects, decisions and processes, which we might collectively call ‘legitimizing efforts’, by which the position of the bishop in the social fabric of eleventh- and twelfth-century Denmark was cemented and fortified.

One of the foremost tools for these legitimizing efforts was the cult of saints. At the turn of the eleventh century, Denmark had been a Christian kingdom for over a century, and the cult of saints had been a part of

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\* The research leading to these results has received funding from the Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2014–2021 (2019/34/H/HS3/00500). This chapter is part of a joint research project of the University of Warsaw and the University of Oslo ‘Symbolic Resources and Political Structures on the Periphery: Legitimization of the ELITES in Poland and Norway, c. 1000–1300’.

<sup>1</sup> Gelting, ‘The Kingdom of Denmark’, p. 87.

**Steffen Hope** • is currently a Postdoctoral Researcher at the Department of Archaeology, Conservation and History at the University of Oslo. His main research interests are the cult of saints, history-writing, identity-construction, and how these phenomena intersect. He also works on fragments of medieval manuscripts. His publications include ‘The North in the Latin History Writing of Twelfth-Century Norway’, in Dolly Jørgensen and Virginia Langum (eds), *Visions of North in Premodern Europe* (2018), and ‘Byzantine History in the Legend of Saint Olaf of Norway’, in Anna Lampadaridi, Vincent Déroche and Christian Høgel (eds), *L’histoire comme elle se présentait dans l’hagiographie* (2022).

*The Cult of Saints and Legitimization of Elite Power in East Central and Northern Europe up to 1300*, ed. by Grzegorz Pac, Steffen Hope, and Jón Viðar Sigurðsson, *Comparative Perspectives on Medieval History*, 2 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2024), pp. 311–330

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10.1484/M.CPMH-EB.5.137542

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Danish everyday life across all the social echelons for generations. Since the saints were firmly established in the worldview of the Danes, it was possible for the bishops to employ the veneration of specific saints as a way of demonstrating the legitimacy of their episcopal power, and to show that the bishops, due to their veneration of their heavenly intercessors, received aid by them in times of need. It is important to remember that episcopal legitimacy could only be strengthened by tools that were acknowledged by the wider social framework, i.e., some of the audiences to whom these legitimizing efforts were addressed. For this reason, while it is easy to envision the cult of saints in a rather instrumental or mechanistic way, it must be emphasized that the belief in the saints and their intercessory role was genuine, which is the only reason this belief could be channelled into legitimizing episcopal power.

It is also important to note that when talking about the legitimacy of episcopal power in eleventh- and twelfth-century Denmark, the issue is not whether the bishop held a legitimate place in Danish society. Rather, legitimacy here means the bishop's standing in Denmark's social hierarchy, vis-à-vis other social powers. Legitimacy, in other words, has to do with privileges, rights, and duties of the church relative to the aristocracy, the royal power, and urban elites. Moreover, legitimacy has to do with the hierarchical stratification of the bishops themselves, i.e., which of the bishops held a higher status relative to his peers. The status of any given bishop could change depending on the prestige of a bishop or a bishopric, and this prestige could be increased through the cult of saints.<sup>2</sup>

The present study explores three case studies for how bishops employed the veneration of saints in their efforts to bolster their legitimacy as powerbrokers in twelfth-century Denmark. The first case study is the cult of Cnut Rex in Odense, where we see that the saint was presented as the protomartyr of Denmark, which conferred a particular status on the bishopric of Odense within the grand historical narrative of medieval Denmark. The second case study is the cult of Liufdag of Ribe, where a controversial bishop employed the veneration of the bishopric's patron saint to salvage his own reputation and avert conflict within the episcopal milieu. The third case study is the veneration of Thomas of Canterbury in Lund, where the cult was introduced with the possible aim of providing the cathedral canons with a protector and model for emulation in potential future conflicts with royal power.

In twelfth-century Denmark, there are several examples that can showcase the connection between the cult of saints and episcopal legitimacy. The three case studies of the present article have been selected for two main reasons. First of all, they show very different ways in which saints

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<sup>2</sup> See Ellis Nilsson, 'Creating Holy People', pp. 103–08.

could serve to strengthen episcopal legitimacy. In the case of Cnut Rex, the bishop of Odense had to deal with a negative rumour about the saint-king, a rumour that emerged outside Odense, which persisted for decades, and which effectively became what we might call a negative cultural memory about Cnut. The response of the Odense bishop was to insist on Cnut's role as protomartyr, which conferred greater legitimacy on Odense as a cult centre and episcopal town. In the case of Liufdag, the veneration of the saint served in part as a bulwark both against economic pressures and conflicts between bishop and canons, which threatened the legitimacy of Bishop Radulph. Here the saint was employed to strengthen the position of one individual bishop, rather than the bishopric or the general standing of the bishop within the ecclesiastical framework of medieval Denmark. In the case of Thomas, we will find that a saint could be employed as a rallying point and figurehead for the cathedral community. The veneration of Thomas at Lund was established against a backdrop of conflict between the king and the bishop, and it is likely that Thomas was chosen as a figurehead in part because he was the ultimate example of a champion of the church who had stood against the encroachment of royal power and, in a way, had won. Through the difference in audiences and aims, the three case studies therefore serve to highlight the variety of ways in which saints could be employed when used to legitimize episcopal power.

The second reason for this selection of case studies is that despite their differences in execution and audiences, they are also united by the theme of martyrdom. All the saints in question were venerated as martyrs, and we will see that in at least two of these cases the issue of martyrdom was a main element in how the saints were employed for the purpose of strengthening episcopal legitimacy. For this reason, these three examples enable a coherent presentation while simultaneously demonstrating the complexity of the cult of saints in twelfth-century Denmark.

## **Background: The Emergence of Danish Episcopal Power**

The first Danish bishoprics were established during the tenth century in a Christianization process overseen by the archbishops of Hamburg-Bremen. By 988, the bishoprics of Slesvig, Ribe, Aarhus, and Odense were in place and belonged to the metropolitan see of Hamburg-Bremen. At this early stage, it is unlikely that the bishops of these dioceses were actually resident there.<sup>3</sup> With the rise of a strong Danish royal power in the first half of the eleventh century, the ecclesiastical infrastructure was

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<sup>3</sup> Gelting, 'The Kingdom of Denmark', p. 81.

expanded both in terms of the erection of churches and the strengthening of the ecclesiastical organization. It is most likely that it was in this period that the first resident bishops appeared in Denmark. The expansion of the Danish Church continued during the reign of Sven Estridsen (r. 1046–1074/1076), and around 1060 the diocesan structure was reformed to include four new bishoprics, namely Lund, Roskilde, Viborg, and Vestervig.

Since Denmark was a unified polity governed by a single king, these bishoprics comprised a unified Danish Church. This unity can, however, be easily exaggerated. Despite the unity of the kingdom, Denmark was still decentralized and the bishops should perhaps be understood primarily as local powerbrokers who navigated a political landscape that included secular actors — kings, nobles, the emerging urban communities — as well as religious actors, predominantly the other Danish bishops. As a consequence of this complex political landscape, the bishop had to position himself both on a local and a pan-local level — a level we might somewhat anachronistically call ‘national’ for the sake of convenience. Since the bishop operated on these two levels, the efforts to strengthen episcopal legitimacy needed to address several audiences. Due to the different frames of reference or different preoccupations between these audiences, bishops needed to employ a variety of legitimizing strategies. The writing of history, the minting of coins, architectural programmes, saints’ feasts, and church dedications are all examples of such strategies that began to be utilized in the latter half of the eleventh century, and which continued into the twelfth century and beyond.

The institutional framework of the Danish Church changed in 1104, when the bishopric of Lund was elevated to the status of metropolitan see and archdiocese of all of Scandinavia and the Atlantic Islands. The effects of this change on the quotidian affairs of the Danish bishops should, however, not be exaggerated, at least not for the first few decades.<sup>4</sup> The bishoprics appear to have been overwhelmingly local in their concerns. While the primacy of the archbishop of Lund was unquestionable, the remaining bishops were from time to time forced to emphasize their authority in the face of their episcopal peers, and to strengthen their standing vis-à-vis both other fellow bishops as well as secular actors. Since the relationships between bishops or bishoprics could be contentious, and since bishops often found themselves embroiled in quarrels with various secular actors, the efforts to strengthen episcopal legitimacy continued throughout the medieval period.

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4 As late as 1133, Pope Innocent II stated that the metropolitan jurisdiction of Lund was to revert to the archbishop of Hamburg-Bremen (*Diplomatarium Norvegicum* xvii, no. 852). While this reversion did not have a lasting effect, it points to the precarious position of the archbishop of Lund in the mid-1100s.

## First Case Study: Cnut Rex in Odense

As mentioned in the introduction, the clerics and, later, monks at the episcopal church of Odense had to grapple with a negative cultural memory about their patron saint. Cnut had been killed in the course of an insurrection that was a response to the king's taxation. Although Aelnoth of Canterbury, writing between 1110 and 1117,<sup>5</sup> emphasized that it was the tax collectors rather than the king who were the real transgressors,<sup>6</sup> the description of Cnut's reign in the later *Chronicon Roschildense* (c. 1138–1140)<sup>7</sup> and an even later refutation of this description by Saxo Grammaticus both demonstrate that the story might be told very differently outside Odense.<sup>8</sup> This view might have had an adverse impact on the reputation of the Odense bishop. Consequently, the circulation of this negative perception of Cnut meant that the clerics at Odense had an added impetus to carefully formulate the image of their patron saint through textual production.

By the time of Cnut's death in 1086, Odense was a burgeoning episcopal centre, primarily as a result of royal munificence. Like several other diocesan towns, Odense had a royal manor, and Cnut had gifted relics of the saints Alban and Oswald of Northumbria to the wooden cathedral church. Moreover, the building of the stone church that later became St Cnut's Church is likely to have begun in the course of Cnut's reign and was probably initiated by him. This was part of Cnut's wider investment in the Danish Church and its infrastructure, and the stone structure of the Trinity Church in Lund and the minting privileges afforded to the Roskilde bishops can be interpreted as aspects of that same ecclesiastical policy.

By the end of the eleventh century, then, Odense was a bishopric on the rise. However, compared with the richer and more powerful diocesan towns like Lund, Roskilde, and probably also Ribe, the Odense bishop's position within the Danish Church organization appears to have been relatively weak. This relative weakness combined with the negative cultural memory of the bishopric's patron saint might have been seen as a threat to the reputation of the saint, and by extension the reputation of the bishop. This could have had a negative impact on the legitimacy of the Odense bishop's standing within the Danish Church.

Following the proclamation of Cnut's sainthood at a synod of the Danish bishops in 1095, Odense became the centre of a new cult as well as the centre of significant textual production. In the period c. 1095–1117,

5 Gelting, 'Two Early Twelfth-Century Views', p. 38.

6 Aelnoth, *Gesta Swenomagni*, p. 102.

7 *Chronicon Roschildense*, pp. 23–24.

8 Saxo Grammaticus, *Gesta Danorum*, pp. 858–63.

the following hagiographical texts were composed: an anonymous *Passio*, a tablet inscribed with an account of the martyrdom and the names of Cnut's retinue,<sup>9</sup> an *Epitaphium*, and a second, more elaborate, *vita* written by Aelnoth. These four compositions are known collectively as the Odense literature. A liturgical office based on Aelnoth's *vita* was written shortly afterwards.

The production of hagiographical material is only to be expected following the establishment of a new cult. The relative frequency of new materials in this context should, however, be understood in light of the precarious position of the Odense bishopric within the Danish Church. In the case of a new saint, perhaps especially a new native saint, the prestige of that saint could be seen as inextricably linked to that of the diocese. Consequently, when promoting the cult of Cnut in order to counter a negative memory of his kingship, the Odense bishop and his men sought to cement the legitimacy not only of their saint but also of their own standing within the ecclesiastical landscape of Denmark. If we understand some of the motivation behind the formulations of Cnut in the Odense literature in light of scepticism and criticism from the outside, we might understand more fully some of the strategies used in the construction of Cnut's textual image. One such strategy was to present the patron saint of Odense as the protomartyr of Denmark.

The textual image of Cnut Rex as it appears in the Odense literature and the liturgy is complex, and its details underwent many changes in the period 1095–c. 1125. I have written about this development elsewhere,<sup>10</sup> so here it will be sufficient to focus on Cnut's protomartyrdom.

The image of Cnut Rex as the protomartyr of the Danes first appears in the *Tabula Othoniensis*, where he is referred to as 'protomartyr Danorum'.<sup>11</sup> As Nils Holger Petersen has argued, the *Tabula Othoniensis* is likely the second text in the Odense literature,<sup>12</sup> and this means that the idea to present Cnut as protomartyr developed over time. The most extensive treatment of the idea of Cnut as protomartyr can be found in Aelnoth's *Gesta Swenomagni*. Aelnoth suggests that it was God's intention to make the king into the protomartyr of the Danes, and to turn the ruler, *princeps*,

9 Petersen, 'Cnut Rex and Cnut Dux', p. 119.

10 Hope, 'The Odense Literature', pp. 110–17; Hope, 'Constructing Institutional Identity', pp. 192–207.

11 *Tabulae Othoniensis*, p. 62. Michael Gelting has ascribed the title of 'protomartyr' to Aelnoth, but the appearance of the term already in *Tabulae Othoniensis* shows that it antedates the composition of *Gesta Swenomagni* (see Gelting, 'Two Early Twelfth-Century Views', p. 48). It is possible that Aelnoth could have been involved in the making of *Tabulae Othoniensis*, but this will remain uncertain.

12 Petersen, 'Cnut Rex and Cnut Dux', pp. 119–20.

into a patron.<sup>13</sup> The image of Cnut as protomartyr is also retained in the liturgical office, which was based on Aelnoth's *vita*.<sup>14</sup>

From the perspective of the legitimization of episcopal power, the formulation of Cnut as protomartyr of the Danes is significant and should perhaps partly be understood in the light of Odense's position within the Danish Church. For the bishop of Odense to claim that his see held the relics of the first martyr on Danish soil conferred significant prestige in the eyes of the rest of the Danish Church. This prestige was mainly based on the simple premise that the first martyrdom of a geographical entity — in this case Denmark — ushered in a distinct phase in the holy history of that entity. Another important part of that prestige came from the typological connections to other saints who enjoyed the title of protomartyr. Protomartyrdom typologically connected the Danish king with Stephen, the first protomartyr of Christian history, and such a connection strengthened Cnut's efficiency as an intercessor between God and the living. It is also noteworthy that Alban, whose relics Cnut was said to have brought to Odense himself, was the protomartyr of Britain. Such a connection would not have been lost on the English clerics and monks at Odense, as Alban's status as protomartyr was stated in the liturgical office performed in Odense for his feast day.<sup>15</sup>

It is likely that both Alban and Stephen provided the hagiographers at Odense with material for their presentation of Cnut as protomartyr. This influence is seen most clearly in the case of Stephen, whose death by stoning is alluded to in the description of the stones hurled at Cnut.<sup>16</sup> The connection between Cnut and Alban as protomartyrs, however, is not emphasized in the Odense literature nor in the liturgy, the emphasis placed on the relics of Alban, as well as those of Oswald, and their presence at the martyrdom of Cnut, shows that the connection between the saints was significant to the hagiographers at Odense.

The formulation of Cnut as the protomartyr of the Danes is also interesting in the light of the wider Danish history, because there are two historical strands that contradict such a claim. One strand, which is the earliest that can be attested in written sources, is found in book 2, chapter 41 of Adam of Bremen's *Gesta Hammaburgensis ecclesiae pontificum*.<sup>17</sup> From information ostensibly gathered at the court of Sven Estridsen, Cnut's father, Adam claims that Denmark has more martyrs than can fit in one

<sup>13</sup> Aelnoth, *Gesta Swenomagni*, p. 98.

<sup>14</sup> Hope, 'Constructing Institutional Identity', p. 211.

<sup>15</sup> The Vesper hymn for St Alban's feast in *Breviarium Othoniense* (Copenhagen, Kgl. Bibliotek LN 29 quarto, fol. 371r) explicitly refers to him as protomartyr, while the first antiphon for Matins (fol. 369v) presents him as the first to light a torch for the English people ('Primus in anglorum cito lampas gente').

<sup>16</sup> Hope, 'The Odense Literature', p. 112.

<sup>17</sup> Adam of Bremen, *Gesta Hammaburgensis Ecclesiae Pontificum*, pp. 69–70.

book. This claim must be understood in light of his attempt to strengthen the prestige archdiocese of Hamburg-Bremen, but while the number of Danish martyrs by c. 1070 was likely exaggerated, there is at least one reason to suspect that the claim is not entirely without basis.<sup>18</sup> This is the story of Liufdag of Ribe. He was reportedly appointed bishop of Ribe in 948, and tradition held that he had been martyred by locals, an event which is uncertainly dated in Danish chronicles. It is unclear when the tradition of Liufdag's martyrdom first was established. Adam of Bremen mentions Liufdag in book 2, chapter 23, and notes that he was famous for his miracles, but does not record his death.<sup>19</sup> The later historical tradition of Ribe, which constitutes the second historical strand and to which I will return in the second case study, states that he was martyred, but it might be that this is a later detail, and that Liufdag did not have the status of martyr by the time the textual image of Cnut Rex was formulated at Odense. It is, in other words, uncertain whether the claims by Adam and the later Ribe tradition were in circulation in Denmark around 1100, and if so whether they were widely accepted. It is, however, possible that there were narratives that could contradict the image of Cnut as protomartyr. Either way, the formulation of Cnut as protomartyr of the Danes is significant for the legitimation of the bishopric of Odense's standing in Danish holy history.<sup>20</sup>

## Second Case Study: Liufdag in Ribe

The second case study is, on the one hand, similar to the first, in that the episcopal legitimacy which is at stake is partly to be understood in relation to the wider Danish ecclesiastical structure. However, in this case we should perhaps also interpret the efforts to strengthen episcopal legitimacy as not solely being directed towards the bishop's own hierarchical level, but perhaps even towards the community of clerics at the episcopal church.

This case study is centred on the efforts of Bishop Radulph of Ribe (c. 1158–1170/71), who sought to champion the cult of Liufdag. Our main source for Radulph's episcopacy is the *Cronica Ecclesiae Ripensis* (in Danish, *Ribe bispekrønike*), a brief anonymous chronicle that was written around 1230. Despite the gap between the date of the chronicle and

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18 See Haki Antonsson, 'The Early Cult', pp. 30–31.

19 Adam of Bremen, *Gesta Hammaburgensis Ecclesiae Pontificum*, p. 58.

20 One detail that might seem important is that Cnut was presented as protomartyr of the Danes, not Denmark, i.e. the first Dane to be martyred. This could theoretically allow for earlier martyrs who were not Danish, and Liufdag was Frisian. However, this is most likely a moot point, since we have no reason to think that such ethnic dividing lines were important in questions of protomartyrdom.

Radulph's reign, the chronicle remains our best source for the events of Radulph's episcopacy.

The figure of Liufdag, a Frisian missionary, appears to have been subject to some sort of local veneration in the eleventh century, since Adam of Bremen testifies to the wonders associated with him during his life. As Liufdag died in the tenth century, there was no significant ecclesiastical infrastructure that could promote his cult from its beginning, even though a church and at least one priest had been active in Ribe since the 880s.<sup>21</sup> Moreover, as the bishops of Ribe in the late tenth and early eleventh century were not resident in the diocese, an early cult of Liufdag would most likely have been local and rather unelaborate. According to the *Cronica Ecclesiae Ripensis*, after Liufdag had been slain by locals, the Christians of Ribe interred his body in the cemetery of the cathedral church of Our Lady, and above his grave they built some sort of structure, possibly a shrine or a chapel.<sup>22</sup> It is highly possible, perhaps even likely, that the Ribe chronicler is recording here the state of the Liufdag's grave as it was before the episcopacy of Radulph, rather than how it was at the end of the tenth century. Even so, the existence of a structure raised for the purpose of commemoration and veneration testifies to the cult of Liufdag prior to Radulph's time. This is only to be expected, as belief in Liufdag's sanctity would have been a prerequisite for the translation of his relics.

At some point in the 1160s, judging from the often-unclear dating in the *Cronica Ecclesiae Ripensis*, Radulph had the relics of Liufdag translated from his grave in the cemetery to the altar of the cathedral and placed in a reliquary there. The Ribe chronicler states that this was done without the permission of the archbishop and the pope. It is unclear whether the need for such permission was long established in Denmark by 1160, or whether this practice might have been introduced by Archbishop Eskil as an element of reform whereby the metropolitans centralized their authority, which in turn was in keeping with the efforts of Pope Alexander III to make the pope the supreme arbiter in matters pertaining to the cult of saints. It is also possible that such a requirement was only introduced later, and that the chronicler transposes this practice onto an earlier period.

The year of the translation is uncertain, except that it occurred before Radulph's death in 1170/71. Only five years later, however, the church was ravaged by a fire that destroyed Liufdag's relics. We do not know to what extent the contemporaries of Radulph saw this disaster as a divine pronouncement on the character of bishop, but the cult appears to have come to an end with this event — or at least to have been relegated to a solely local cult. Whatever the aftermath of the fire and the judgements that were made, for our purposes here the main point of interest is to

21 Kristensen and Poulsen, *Danmarks byer*, p. 24; Feveile, 'Ribe opstår'.

22 *Ribe bispekrønike*, p. 25.

understand why Radulph brought about the translation in the first place, and how this decision ties in with episcopal legitimacy. It is also important to note that while the promotion of the cult eventually failed, this failure came after Radulph's reign, and we should not let that end overshadow the point that during Radulph's episcopacy, the seeds for success were sown through the translation.

The overarching framework for understanding Radulph's translation of Liufdag is the Danish Church organization. As will be explained in more detail in the third case study, the 1160s were a chaotic period for Danish ecclesiastics. The war between different branches of the royal dynasty had ended in 1157, leaving Valdemar I as sole ruler over Denmark, and his approach to the ongoing papal schism led to conflicts with Archbishop Eskil of Lund. The result of this conflict was that the archbishop went into exile in the period 1161–1167. It is unclear how the archbishop's exile impacted on the unity of the Danish Church, in part because it is uncertain to what extent the Danish Church had been unified before 1161. For the individual bishops, the absence of their metropolitan might not have had great consequences for the general running of the diocese. Since the 1140s, the diocesan towns had been on the rise, in spite of the dynastic war, and several of the episcopal sees were undergoing a period of urban expansion. One such see was Ribe, where the bishop had acquired the right to mint coins in the 1140s and the erection of a new cathedral church in stone had begun around 1150.<sup>23</sup> Due to the lack of stone for building in the marshlands around Ribe, the building materials for the new structure were imported from the Rhineland.<sup>24</sup> The building of the new cathedral, in other words, testifies to Ribe's strong economic position by the mid-twelfth century, as well as to the financial demands of the ongoing construction work.

When Radulph was consecrated bishop, Ribe was, in other words, a see of both possibilities and challenges. The ongoing project to build the cathedral was indubitably a strain on the bishop's finances, and this strain might have shaped some aspects of Radulph's episcopacy. Another challenging aspect for the newly consecrated bishop was the controversies surrounding him personally, and which affected his position both within the Danish ecclesiastical organization and within the hierarchy of the episcopal church of Ribe. The challenges for the episcopal economy as well as the bishop's reputation are likely to have influenced Radulph's promotion of Liufdag's cult, both to bolster the church's income as well as to ensure the patron saint's protection of the beleaguered bishop.<sup>25</sup>

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23 Kristensen and Poulsen, *Danmarks byer*, pp. 157–58.

24 Kristensen and Poulsen, *Danmarks byer*, p. 158.

25 For a discussion on the relationship between cult promotion and economic struggles, see Skwierczyński, 'The Beginnings', p. 139.

Radulph was charged with murder and apostasy, which delayed his accession to the episcopal see. While he was eventually cleared of these charges, the Ribe chronicler states that Radulph was cleared after he had donated a certain farm, 'quadam mansione' to the monks at Løgum monastery.<sup>26</sup> Granted, the chronicler's claim is historically impossible, as the monastery of Løgum was not established until 1173, and Radulph died, as the chronicler states, around c.1170/71. It is possible that the recipients of Radulph's gift were the monks and nuns of the double monastery of Seem near Ribe, which was discontinued in 1170 and on whose foundations Løgum was established. Regardless of the accuracy of the chronicler's claim, however, this detail suggests that there was a long-standing tradition in Ribe which claimed that Radulph's accession to the bishopric was said to have been the result of bribery. This claim may well have been rooted in charges made during or shortly after Radulph's episcopacy. In addition, since Radulph had been the chancellor of the very same king who had been responsible for the exile of the archbishop, Radulph's character must have been further tainted in the eyes of his cathedral chapter and possibly also in those of other ecclesiastical figures throughout Denmark.

The *Cronica Ecclesiae Ripensis* provides some details that demonstrate Radulph's fraught relationship with the cathedral community at Ribe. The anonymous chronicler records an incident whereby Radulph's attempt to install his chaplain as a member of the cathedral canons — thus circumventing the canons' right to elect new members of their group — led to a fistfight in the chapter house.<sup>27</sup> Similarly, a letter of correction from Pope Alexander III, dated 1169 and cited in the chronicle, addresses the canons of Ribe and criticizes their abandonment of the Augustinian rule which Radulph had sought to implement.<sup>28</sup>

Given the inauspicious start of Radulph's episcopacy, the ongoing economic pressures of his office, and his conflict with his own canons, we might easily see his efforts to promote the cult of Liufdag as a way to legitimize his position as bishop of Ribe. This legitimacy was challenged both on a Denmark-wide level, as his suitability for office had been under investigation, and on a local level, as the canons apparently viewed him with significant scepticism and eventually also hostility. Given the challenges to his authority from his peers as well as those below him in the ecclesiastical hierarchy of Ribe diocese, the economic pressures of the cathedral works are likely to have been felt even more keenly, as a failure to raise funds for the erection of the new stone structure would be another dent in his already tarnished reputation.

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<sup>26</sup> *Ribe bispekrønike*, p. 28.

<sup>27</sup> *Ribe bispekrønike*, pp. 28–29.

<sup>28</sup> *Ribe bispekrønike*, pp. 29–30.

While the translation of Liufdag's relics should be understood in part as an expression of genuine veneration towards the saint — how else could such a move be worthwhile — the effort appears to have been precipitated by a deeply felt sense on Radulph's part of the need to legitimize his role as bishop of Ribe. The translation of the local saint became, then, one of the strategies through which he sought to strengthen his fragile legitimacy. By arranging a translation of Liufdag's relics, Radulph executed his duty to the saint and presumably hoped to gain the saint's support for his position as bishop.

It is likely that some hagiographical material was commissioned for the occasion of the *translatio*, such as a *vita* or a list of miracles. It is even possible that a liturgical office was composed for the feast.<sup>29</sup> No such material has survived, however, and we do not know how Liufdag was understood and formulated by his venerator in Ribe. In light of this lack of surviving sources, it is important to note that the *Cronica Ecclesiae Ripensis* attests that Liufdag was a martyr. While this chronicle from c. 1230 is our earliest surviving attestation to the image of Liufdag as martyr, this image is likely to be older. Since Liufdag is not mentioned among the countless martyrs that Adam of Bremen claimed could be found in Danish history, we are faced with the possibility that the formulation of Liufdag as martyr emerged during Radulph's employment of Liufdag as a legitimizing figure.<sup>30</sup> If the claim of Liufdag's martyrdom was first made in the 1160s, this would have been at odds with Odense's claim of Cnut Rex as Denmark's protomartyr. If Radulph did present Liufdag as a martyr, this can be understood in light of the prestige that a saint's status as martyr conferred onto its cult centre. This prestige would have been most welcome for an embattled bishop such as Radulph.

### Third Case Study: Thomas of Canterbury in Lund

The previous two case studies have been concerned with the legitimization of episcopal power within the Danish ecclesiastical matrix, where the demonstrations of legitimacy were addressed to other bishops and members of the Danish Church organization. The third case study, however, provides an example of how the cult of saints could be employed to strengthen episcopal legitimacy vis-à-vis secular power, or more precisely royal power. While the cult of saints should in most cases primarily be understood from a perspective of genuine belief rather than political expediency, it is important to acknowledge that the cult of Thomas of Canterbury was a highly political cult from the outset. The murder of the

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<sup>29</sup> Cf. Ellis Nilsson, 'Creating Holy People', p. 113.

<sup>30</sup> Cf. Gelting, 'The Kingdom of Denmark', p. 81.

archbishop in Canterbury cathedral on 29 December 1170 marked the climax of the ongoing conflict between royal and ecclesiastical power, and, following his canonization in February 1173, Thomas quickly became a symbol of the ecclesiastical cause.

The conflict between ecclesiastical and royal power arose from a disagreement between the Church and the king about jurisdictional boundaries and who should be the supreme power in society. The conflict sprung from the complicated relationship between pope and emperor, but also spread into other church provinces, including Denmark. For King Valdemar I, who had attained sole governance of the kingdom in 1157 after a protracted civil war, his choice to side with Emperor Frederick was presumably influenced in part by the bond that had existed between Valdemar's father Cnut Lavard, or Cnut Dux, who was murdered in 1131, and the German emperor, Lothair II. In addition, the possibility that Emperor Frederick could invade Denmark is likely to have been an important motivation for Valdemar's support. Whichever concern was the most pressing, the result was that King Valdemar came into conflict with Archbishop Eskil of Lund, who was a fervent supporter of Pope Alexander III. The conflict between Eskil and Valdemar led to the former's exile from 1161 to 1167. This period of exile coincided with the episcopacy of Radulph of Ribe, and, as stated, the turbulent relationship between king and church is likely to have compounded the Ribe cathedral chapter's scepticism and hostility towards their new bishop.

King Valdemar eventually switched his support to Alexander III, and the canonization of his father in 1169 could be seen as an incentive to keep that allegiance lest there be any doubt as to the authenticity of Cnut Lavard's sanctity. Despite this development, however, there is reason to think that for Archbishop Eskil the loyalty of the king was anything but certain. It is against this backdrop, therefore, of an uneasy status quo and a resolved but still-remembered conflict, that we must in part see the introduction of the cult of Thomas of Canterbury to Lund.

Given the paucity of the source material, we cannot say for certain when the cult of Thomas was brought to Denmark, and through which channels. However, based on the general speed with which the cult was disseminated throughout Latin Christendom and the surviving Danish source material, it appears that the cult might have entered various Danish bishoprics at different times and through several channels.<sup>31</sup> Moreover, the liturgical material demonstrates that the nature of the veneration of

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<sup>31</sup> There is still no comprehensive study of Thomas' cult in Denmark. The best overview remains Jørgensen, *Helgendyrkelse i Danmark*, pp. 20–21. For the speed of its dissemination in Scandinavia, see Toy, 'The Liturgical Commemoration', p. 25.

Thomas was left to the discretion of the individual bishops.<sup>32</sup> Given this heterogenous nature of the cult of Thomas in Denmark, the form which it took in Lund is particularly interesting, as it allows us to speculate about the purpose of this cult from the perspective of the legitimization of episcopal power, since Lund was the centre of the entire Danish Church.

Our best source for the cult of Thomas in Lund comes from the liturgical office for his feast day. The chants and readings do not survive in any known Danish manuscripts, but the texts can be found in the printed breviaries from late fifteenth- and early sixteenth-century Denmark. While these breviaries are late sources for twelfth-century Lund, there are good reasons to expect that the texts of the office are the same as those used when the cult of Thomas was first introduced to Lund.<sup>33</sup>

Unfortunately, the music is not recorded in the breviaries, so we lack one important source for understanding the possible chains of transmission of the liturgical material. However, the texts do provide one important clue. To explain this, it is important to note that a liturgical office — known to scholars as *Studens livor* — was composed at Canterbury at around the same time as the canonization of Thomas.<sup>34</sup> This office was intended to be performed by the monastic community at Christ Church, and therefore followed the monastic *usus*, or use. Consequently, the office consisted of twelve readings and twelve responsories. However, to facilitate the spread of the cult of Thomas, it appears that the monks at Canterbury also provided a shorter version that could be used for performances in non-monastic, or secular, churches, and which therefore followed the secular *usus*. The secular office consists of nine readings and nine responsories.

The office for Thomas in Lund is a secular version of the *Studens livor* since the metropolitan church was a non-monastic community. What is significant, however, is that both the chants and the readings are taken from the *Studens livor*, which suggests that the liturgical material was imported wholesale, probably from Canterbury. The reason that this is significant is that chants and readings could be disseminated separately, and readings could be taken from any one of the several *vitae* of Thomas that circulated in late twelfth-century Latin Christendom.<sup>35</sup> That the Lund office came into Denmark fully formed, at least by all appearances, testifies

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32 It is notable that while the late medieval breviaries from Lund and Roskilde contain the same readings and the same chants for the feast of Thomas, the breviary from Odense contains a different office. This suggests that the material used in Odense arrived through different channels than the material used in Lund and Roskilde. That Lund and Roskilde used the same material is unsurprising, given that these two episcopal sees collaborated closely throughout the medieval period.

33 Hankeln, 'Kingship and Sanctity'.

34 Slocum, *Liturgies in Honour of Thomas Becket*, p. 136.

35 As mentioned, the Odense office is notably different (*Breviarium Othoniense*, Copenhagen, Kgl. Bibliotek LN 29 quarto, fols 119r–21v).

to the alacrity with which the cult of Thomas was introduced to the metropolitan see.

While we cannot say for certain that it was Archbishop Eskil who facilitated the transmission of the office for Thomas to Lund, he is the best candidate. Eskil's successor Absalon had a different relationship with King Valdemar, and one that was particularly marked by their joint efforts in Danish military expansion into the Baltic rim. For Eskil, however, Thomas represented that struggle he himself had taken up and for which he had been exiled. It is likely that the cult of Thomas was brought to Lund at an early stage precisely to furnish the community of clerics at the metropolitan see with an example of the struggles of the Church, in order to instil into them the supremacy of the Church and the legitimacy of episcopal and ecclesiastical power in the face of royal encroachment.

There were no doubt several concerns that motivated Eskil to bring the cult of Thomas to Lund — if indeed it took place during Eskil's archiepiscopacy —, and we cannot say which was the most significant. However, given the unstable relationship between Church and king not only in Denmark but in several parts of Latin Christendom, the role of Thomas as a figurehead for ecclesiastical supremacy must have played a significant part in the introduction of the cult in Denmark. Moreover, the fact that the liturgy for Thomas' feast day was imported wholesale into the metropolitan church suggests that it was done speedily and with careful consideration. Such speed and deliberation might point not only to the religious concerns of the archbishop but also to the pressing need he felt to provide his metropolitan community with an example and inspiration in case there came a time when the Danish archbishop would again have to strengthen his legitimacy in the face of royal power.

Thomas of Canterbury's potential as an inspiration and model for the cathedral chapter in Lund was first and foremost based on his status as a martyr. He had performed the highest possible sacrifice, and the liturgical office from Canterbury, which was also performed in Lund, formulates Thomas' *christomimesis* in several variants. For instance, one chant, responsory 6, refers to Thomas as a protector who was mourned with great lamentations by the Church.<sup>36</sup> The importance of Thomas as a model and as a figurehead for the legitimacy of ecclesiastical liberty against royal encroachment would not have been lost on the cathedral chapter at Lund.

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<sup>36</sup> Slocum, *Liturgies*, p. 188.

## Conclusion

Several strategies were available to the bishops for their legitimizing efforts. The role of saints in the making, strengthening, or upkeep of legitimacy is perhaps particularly crucial and visible in the case of episcopal legitimacy. The reason for this visibility is primarily that the cathedral churches that served as the architectural manifestations of episcopal authority also served as centres of a saint's cult. In some cases, when the saint was both a patron of the episcopal church and a native saint, the cathedral was the primary centre of a cult, as we see in the cases of Liufdag in Ribe, Cnut in Odense, or Ketillus in Viborg. In other cases, when the saint was a foreign saint, yet was also the patron of the episcopal church, the cathedral was one of several secondary centres of this cult, as we find in the cases of Laurence in Lund and Lucius in Roskilde.<sup>37</sup> The cathedrals whose patrons were foreign saints were nonetheless centres of the cult, albeit on a local rather than a universal scale. This means that although these cathedrals only had parts of a saint's body rather than the entire body, or the majority of the body, the patronage of the saint was nonetheless ensured through feasts and church dedications.

The case of Thomas of Canterbury in Lund is somewhat different from those mentioned above. Thomas was never the patron saint of Lund cathedral, and although there was an altar dedicated to him,<sup>38</sup> and most likely a relic, we do not know about any significant popular pilgrimage in Thomas' honour at Lund. The beginning of his cult in Lund, however, was a response to more widespread contemporary currents in Latin Christendom, such as the conflict between Church and king and the dissemination of Thomas' cult more generally. Thomas' standing in the Latin Church at the time of his cult's arrival in Lund ensured that his importance lay, partly, in his value as an intercessor, a model, and a symbol for the cathedral community and that community's conviction of the legitimacy of their rights and privileges vis-à-vis royal power.

Perhaps more than most other powerbrokers of medieval Christendom, bishops were situated at a confluence of various potential sources of conflict. The bishop was a member of the ecclesiastical superstructure of the archiepiscopal network, and also a local lord who owned lands and participated in an economic system that included secular aristocrats, monasteries, and the urban elite. The bishop might often resort to whatever means were available to strengthen his legitimacy in the face of criticism or infringements. One such means was the cult of saints and the

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37 Haki Antonsson, *St Magnús of Orkney*, p. 98; Ciardi, 'Saints and Cathedral Culture', pp. 54–63.

38 Rydbeck, 'Thomas Becket's ampuller', p. 236. I am indebted to Dr Lena Liepe for notifying me of this reference. See also Jørgensen, *Helgendyrkelse*, p. 20.

episcopal retinue's role as custodians of the cults active in their bishoprics. Consequently, the cult of saints is particularly visible in the attempts to strengthen episcopal legitimacy.

The three case studies presented here provide only a small window into the complexities of ecclesiastical concerns in twelfth-century Denmark. As in the rest of Latin Christendom, the Danish Church was shaped by various tensions that could at times bring the legitimacy of bishops to crisis point. The responses to this crisis, or perhaps merely the anticipation of such a crisis, could vary. Responses depended on geographical and historical contexts, on the nature of the tensions and the pressures that amplified them, and on the personalities of those involved. The Danish twelfth-century bishop had at his disposal a set of possible strategies for strengthening the legitimacy of his authority and his standing vis-à-vis other groups, be they his episcopal peers, those below him in the church hierarchy, the royal power, the secular nobility, or laypeople in cities or in the districts.

One strategy for strengthening episcopal legitimacy was to promote the cult of a saint, as this would show the bishop's devotion and faith, and would also allow the bishop to rely on, or at least hope for, the assistance of the saintly intercessor in times of need, both for himself and for those around him. Here, we have seen three ways in which saints could be employed, and it should be emphasized that there were many other ways in which saints could be used as support for legitimacy. It is again necessary to emphasize that although this appeal or this employment of the saints might appear mechanistic, it was anything but. To fully understand why saints were employed to strengthen legitimacy, it is necessary to keep in mind that saints were real and important entities in the cosmology of all of twelfth-century Denmark (as well as other periods). It is precisely because of the undeniable reality of saints and their intercessory powers that saints were sought as supporters of episcopal legitimacy when that legitimacy was questioned or in crisis.

The three case studies included here are drawn from three specific crises in medieval Danish history. The presentation of Cnut Rex as the protomartyr of the Danes and the patron of all of Denmark can be seen as a response to a negative popular memory that could undermine the full potential of the cult of the martyred king. The translation of Liufdag's relics can be interpreted as a way for a controversial bishop to assess and shape the legitimacy of his episcopacy by showing his veneration for — and thus seeking help from — the saint whose cult centre served as the centre of the bishop's diocese. The importation of the cult of Thomas of Canterbury to the metropolitan see of Lund can be viewed as a way to ensure the construction of a cultural memory at the archiepiscopal church that would safeguard against an ecclesiastical community too eager to accept the encroachment of royal power.

In all these cases, the theme of martyrdom appears to have played a central part. Odense sought greater legitimacy by presenting its patron as the first martyr of the Danes. The later historiographical tradition in Ribe suggests that Liufdag was presented as a martyr, which might point to an attempt to rival Odense's claim. In Lund, meanwhile, the role of Thomas as martyr for the liberty of the church was likely intended to inspire the cathedral community to stand their ground against royal encroachments in potential future conflicts.

These strategies did not always yield lasting success, and we cannot necessarily trace the consequences of the strategies in the later material. Radulph's attempt to strengthen his legitimacy might have been successful in his lifetime, but the loss of Liufdag's relics tarnished his reputation in the bishopric's own historical tradition for later generations. Eskil of Lund's hypothetical concern about a troubled relationship between the king and future archbishops turned out not to become reality, as the archiepiscopacy of Absalon ushered in an era of close collaboration between king and church. In both cases, however, we must note that although the aftermath might overshadow the importance of these strategies at their inception, the strategies were employed out of a sense of necessity, responding to pressures or fears at that time.

As twelfth-century Denmark was a complex matrix of saints' cults, ecclesiastical concerns and developments in the various parts of the church province, there are more ways of mapping the range of strategies used for employing the cult of saints in the search for strengthened legitimacy. My hope is that the present text, has made it easier to recognize when questions of legitimacy can facilitate new (or further) development in the cult of saints.

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## 13. A Mutually Beneficial Relationship\*

### *Saints and the Legitimization of Elite Ecclesiastical Institutions in Sweden and Denmark before 1300*

*Salve, decus patrie,  
Martyr Deo grata,  
ad laudem Westgocie  
celitus donata,  
coram Rege glorie  
digne iam locata,  
esto regni Swecie  
mitis aduocata ...*<sup>1</sup>

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\* This chapter was written as part of the DIGARV-program project, *Mapping Lived Religion: Medieval Cults of Saints in Sweden and Finland* (2018–06216), with funding awarded by the Swedish National Research Council.

<sup>1</sup> 'Greetings, pride of the fatherland, martyr who loves God, given to us from heaven in praise of *Västergötland*, who now stands before the King of Glory. Be the humble advocate of the Swedish kingdom' (my translation). Piltz, 'Tidegård och mässa', pp. 195, 220.

**Sara Ellis Nilsson** is Researcher in Nordic Medieval History at Linnaeus University. Her research interests are interdisciplinary and include cultural heritage, social and cultural history, material culture, historical re-construction and re-enactment, medieval hagiography/liturg, and digital humanities. Together with her project colleagues, Terese Zachrisson, Anders Fröjmark, Lena Liepe, and Johan Åhlfeldt, she has recently published the article, 'Mapping Saints: Creating a Digital Spatial Research Infrastructure to Study Medieval Lived Religion', in *Digital Spatial Infrastructures and Worldviews in Pre-Modern Societies* (ed. by Alexandra Petrulevich and Simon Skovgaard Boeck, 2023).

*The Cult of Saints and Legitimization of Elite Power in East Central and Northern Europe up to 1300*, ed. by Grzegorz Pac, Steffen Hope, and Jón Viðar Sigurðsson, *Comparative Perspectives on Medieval History*, 2 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2024), pp. 331–356

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10.1484/M.CPMH-EB.5.137543

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## Mythopoetic Movements: Saints as Symbolic Resources

The functions and influences of the cults of Christian saints have been, and are, many and varied, while disparate groups promoted new saints for various purposes. Although, in general, the cults of saints were, and are, an important symbolic resource for many different groups, a mutually beneficial relationship can be identified that was important in legitimizing the newly emerging ecclesiastical elite in Scandinavia, while also encouraging the establishment of new saints' cults. As an important aspect of this relationship, saints and their cults need to be initiated and promoted by living individuals in order to exist and to be used for legitimization purposes. Indeed, if the veneration of a saint is not endorsed by ecclesiastical institutions, the cult risks being forgotten or becoming illegitimate or prohibited in the long term.

The premise of my chapter rests on the assertion that saints and ecclesiastical elite institutions — composed of the clergy and including bishoprics<sup>2</sup> — have a mutually beneficial relationship, and that the existence of each group relies to some extent on the other. Taken at face value, it seems perhaps an unproblematic statement of equal partnership, yet I would also maintain that this assertion needs to be put into perspective. It is true that *knowledge* of the saints and their officially sanctioned veneration would not exist in a society without being created by people and promoted by ecclesiastical institutions; however, although in some cases the institutions need the saints for legitimacy and a clear connection to the holy, these institutions are not entirely dependent on the saints themselves for their existence and authority. Nevertheless, it can also be said that saints need people and people need saints. The relationship people had with saints can also be described as one of what I term *indeterminant temporality*; saints are of the past, but also of the present in their use in legitimization, among other things. Although a hundred years might have passed since a saint's death, they are still very much a 'living' part of the community. In turn, they can be activated and used to legitimize undertakings by the elite at any point in history after they have become saints, including as a form of mythopoesis.

In his analysis of developments in early history writing in Norway, Denmark, and Hungary, Lars Boje Mortensen reveals that composing literature about the local royal saints, Olaf (Norway), Cnut (Denmark), and Stephen (Hungary), initiated what he convincingly terms the 'sanctified beginnings of historical writing'.<sup>3</sup> In this way, the biographies of these saints formed origin stories for the countries in question. Mortensen

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<sup>2</sup> But excluding parishes.

<sup>3</sup> Mortensen, 'Sanctified Beginnings', pp. 257–58.

interprets the initiation of this sort of writing — choosing to report the activities of a saint or to compose the history of the country in line with different textual and oral traditions — as the authors engaged in myth-making or mythopoesis, as well as being empowered to ‘sanctify writing’, especially by including aspects of salvation history and the stories of sanctified individuals. Mortensen identifies two succeeding phases: sanctifying the local past by means of Christian myths and shaping myths of the pagan past. Mortensen terms each of these phases — or ‘brief periods’ — in the writing of history as individual *mythopoetic moments*.<sup>4</sup>

In my study on the formation of early Scandinavian sanctity in the local cults of women saints, I coined the term *mythopoetic movements* in my exploration of Mortensen’s concept of ‘mythopoetic moments’.<sup>5</sup> While Mortensen emphasized that the moments of mythopoesis are brief or limited, sometimes conscious but not necessarily, I found that this did not always reflect the reality of how saints were described and activated in the long term, as an intentional undertaking by the dioceses, which used local saints in the legitimization of various phenomena including, for instance, historical truth and ecclesiastical elite institutions. A sense of conscious agency over a longer span of time needs to be added to the concept. Thus, the term ‘mythopoetic movements’ refers to a deliberate activation and subsequent sustainment of a cult with a particular legitimizing purpose in mind, throughout a given period. Applying the term to this period aids in the analysis of the way in which saints were used when the Christian histories or hagiographies of the Nordic countries were written throughout the medieval period, and how or why saints were continually (re-)created and (re-)promoted in a *longue durée* perspective.<sup>6</sup> In the following chapter, applying this modified concept — by replacing *moment* with *movement* in the sense of a conscious undertaking or effort by a particular group over time — allows for the exploration of whether the cults of saints needed the support of the ecclesiastical elite, and similarly whether the elites needed the saints in order to justify certain actions and promote an understanding of the Christianization of the region and the support of ecclesiastical institutions, creating a mutually beneficial relationship.

In order to explore and analyse aspects of legitimization and the mutual beneficialness between saints and the ecclesiastical elite, this chapter discusses the legitimizing function of the cults of saints in newly Christianized Sweden and Denmark by identifying three thematic examples of *mythopoetic movements* in the promotion and creation of early *multilocal*

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<sup>4</sup> Mortensen, ‘Sanctified Beginnings’, pp. 258, 266–68.

<sup>5</sup> Ellis Nilsson, ‘Forming and Fashioning Early Scandinavian Sanctity’.

<sup>6</sup> Ellis Nilsson, ‘Forming and Fashioning Early Scandinavian Sanctity’.

saints' cults.<sup>7</sup> Within a particular geographical region, multilocal saints who were known in more locations would have been more familiar and would have had a different role to play in mythopoetic narratives associated with legitimization than unilocal saints associated with a limited geographical area.

The mythopoetic movements explored in this chapter were situated in the ecclesiastical provinces of Lund and Uppsala. They reflect the ongoing effort that used the saints and their life stories to write and thus incorporate the region into Latin Christendom, in order to make the periphery a Christian centre and to legitimize people and places as valid parts of the Christian Church. The movement can be seen as a province-wide phenomenon; however, it could be expressed in different ways depending on the diocese. The audience for these narratives was mainly composed of the clerical elite, from both within and outside of the region. Each saint's cult discussed in this chapter provides an example of how the movement functioned within the dioceses and, consequently, could have affected movements elsewhere in the ecclesiastical provinces.

The Scandinavian ecclesiastical provinces were first established over the course of the twelfth century, after a period of missionary activity by various groups and claims of primacy over much of the region by the diocese of Hamburg-Bremen.<sup>8</sup> In about 1103, the diocese of Lund was the first to be granted the status of archbishopric and was initially awarded primacy over all of the bishoprics in the Nordic countries.<sup>9</sup> After Nidaros was made archbishopric with jurisdiction over the dioceses in most of modern Norway, Iceland, and the islands of the North Atlantic in 1153, Uppsala was eventually granted the status of archbishopric in 1164 with control over the bishoprics within most of modern-day Sweden and Finland. What makes the ecclesiastical provinces of Lund and Uppsala relevant for a comparative study is the fact that Lund maintained its primacy over Uppsala, and thus, the two provinces had a close relationship during the period studied.<sup>10</sup>

In particular, this chapter explores how multilocal saints in these two Scandinavian ecclesiastical provinces — Lund (medieval Denmark) and Uppsala (medieval Sweden and Finland) — were used to legitimize

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7 In this model developed by Alan Thacker, *unilocal* cults are found in only one location, such as a religious house, while *multilocal* cults are found in many places in a particular region but are not universally known. Thacker, 'Loca Sanctorum'; Thacker, 'The Making of a Local Saint'. See also Ellis Nilsson, 'Creating Holy People', pp. 32–33; Cubitt, 'Universal and Local Saints', pp. 423–24.

8 According to the version propagated by Adam of Bremen, this could have been an attempt to promote Bremen's metropolitan status, see e.g. Gelting, 'Elusive Bishops'.

9 It was temporarily dissolved in the 1130s, reflecting the administrative instability in the region. See, e.g., Gelting, 'The Kingdom of Denmark', p. 95.

10 Ellis Nilsson, 'Creating Holy People', pp. 2–3, 27–28.

ecclesiastical institutions, as evidenced in hagiographical writing and seen through the lens of mythopoetic movements. The narratives from the saints' lives found in the liturgical readings or their *vitae* contain evidence of these movements. The results of the analysis are organized according to three themes, which provide examples of types of mythopoetic movements directly connected to the use of saints in this form of legitimization. The first is comprised of stories told about the Christianization of the region, the second is related to justifying the geographical placement of new ecclesiastical institutions (including bishoprics), while the third encompasses the establishment and/or continuation of ecclesiastical institutions. Two saints, one from each ecclesiastical province, have been chosen to exemplify each of these forms of mythopoetic movements, although it is important to note that these are not the only local saints in these ecclesiastical provinces that were activated in mythopoetic movements. For the first theme, Theodgar of Vestervig and Elin (Helen) of Skövde provide the main examples for regions encompassed by the ecclesiastical provinces of Lund and Uppsala, respectively. The second theme is exemplified by the hagiographical writings about Theodgar of Vestervig and Sigfrid of Växjö. Finally, regarding the third theme, Liudfag of Ribe is discussed as a prime example from within the Lund province, while Botvid of Södermanland is the main example from the province of Uppsala. All of the saints chosen were somehow connected to the legitimization of ecclesiastical institutions.

## Saints and the Christianization of the Region

Writing the saints into the overarching Christian narrative and connecting these holy men and women to the Christianization of the North is the first form of mythopoetic movement presented. In this case, the lessons or legends of saints emphasize how these regions were incorporated into a wider conversion or Christianization narrative. Christianization is defined as a process by which, after an initial adoption of the Christian belief system during a period of conversion, the Christian religion gradually and continuously influenced existing institutions and mentalities as well as prompted the creation of new institutions to match existing ecclesiastical administrative structures, such as bishoprics. As I have argued previously, promoting the cults of local saints in areas undergoing Christianization reflects an 'alignment' with the newly established religion. This is partly achieved through the application of the model of sainthood, which was imported during the conversion, onto local saint-candidates.<sup>11</sup> Understanding the

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<sup>11</sup> Cf. Ellis Nilsson, 'Creating Holy People', e.g. p. 2.

Christianization of one's local region through the cults of local saints helps anchor these stories of transformation in a familiar context. In turn, endorsement by the ecclesiastical elite for these newly burgeoning cults demonstrates official support for the saints and the version of the Christianization narrative that they symbolize. These narratives offer insight into the legitimization of the Church and the new religion, by connecting particular saints to the conversion and Christianization of an entire region and its people, encapsulating the local populace in the process.

Composing legends of local saints involved in the Christianization of the region was a common practice in several bishoprics in both the ecclesiastical provinces of Lund and Uppsala. In fact, all of the saints whose legends fit into this category are connected to the conversion period, that is from the eleventh to the twelfth centuries. Although, arguably, the Christianization of at least parts of Sweden and Finland continued into the thirteenth century, the individuals that died and were promoted as saints in this century were not subject to the same claims to have converted or contributed to the Christianization of the region.

In the two main examples for this theme — Theodgar of Vestervig (North Jutland) and Elin of Skövde (Västergötland) — the saints' narratives both correspond and differ. Throughout the period, their connection to the Christianization of the local region was a recurrent element in their legends, while they were both considered responsible for the construction of much-needed churches in the region. However, Theodgar was a missionary and confessor, while Elin was a local woman, a member of the laity, and a widow and martyr.<sup>12</sup>

The missionary, Theodgar of Vestervig, was reportedly originally from Thüringen.<sup>13</sup> He travelled to England, Norway, and, finally, Denmark in the early eleventh century. He built a church in Vestervig in the north-east of Jutland and then served as a priest until his death. A little further north in the ecclesiastical province of Uppsala and about a century later in the mid-1100s, Elin of Skövde lived in Västergötland — a time seen in her hagiography as belonging to the Christianization period — and is most closely associated with the town of Skövde. Also according to her legend — based on her late thirteenth-century *officium* and earlier fragments — and liturgy, Elin is described as having dedicated her life to God's work instead of re-marrying as would have been expected.<sup>14</sup> Moreover, similar to other early Scandinavian female saints, she was the victim of interfamilial

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12 Another remarkable saint — as a layperson and not a member of the clergy — who could be considered within this theme is Botvid of Södermanland.

13 Wählin, 'Thøger af Vestervig'.

14 Pernler, *S:ta Elin*; Piltz, 'Tidegård och mässa'; Brunius, 'Elinmässan'; Ellis Nilsson, 'Creating Holy People', pp. 84–86.

violence as she was murdered by her son-in-law's family. This death was interpreted as a martyrdom.

A common and important legitimizing aspect in these saints' conversion narratives was the fact that both were described as church-builders. In the case of the laywoman Elin, in particular, contributing funds for the building of churches would have been seen to have legitimized the work of the official church in the region and indicated that this legitimization was endorsed by the laity. Connecting saints with church-building in these narratives could have also provided a form of official legitimization of the Christianization of the landscape, an activity arguably engaged in by the elite clergy and especially in Scandinavia by missionary bishops, which therefore might be mutually beneficial.

For the Lund ecclesiastical province, Theodgar provides a prime example of a saint whose legend contains a clear and enduring connection to Christianization. Theodgar's legend was composed in the late twelfth or early thirteenth century, over one hundred years after the mission it describes, while his translation and corresponding miracles are said to have occurred in about 1117. His work as a missionary and his journeys to England, Norway, and Denmark are described in the legend. This work included church-building as emphasized by the description of his initiating the construction of a church in Vestervig, near the coast in the north-west of Jutland.<sup>15</sup>

The earliest known fragment of Theodgar's *vita* is extant from Sölvesborg in the modern Swedish province of Blekinge, although this town was situated in Denmark for most of the Middle Ages. The fragment contains several miracle stories from the *vita*, including that of how Bishop Eskil refused to accept Theodgar as a saint until he was convinced by divine intervention.<sup>16</sup> This story of the difficulties experienced trying to deny his sanctity is in addition to the one in which Bishop Alberic failed in his attempt to burn Theodgar's bones to prove his unworthiness.

The supporters of Theodgar's official cult, and thereby those who acted as part of the mythopoetic movement that promoted him as a saint with an undeniable connection to the missionary period, were the bishops of Børglum — the diocesan see from at least the early twelfth century — and the Augustinians, who arrived in Vestervig in 1120 and dedicated the new church they built to Theodgar.<sup>17</sup> By 1300, Theodgar's cult extended from Jutland to Ribe, to the eastern areas of the Lund ecclesiastical province.

15 Ellis Nilsson, 'Creating Holy People', p. 71; Haki Antonsson, 'The Early Cult of Saints', p. 29.

16 *Sanctus Theodgarus confessor*, pp. 25–26; Møller Jensen, 'Sanctus Theodgarus'; Ellis Nilsson, 'Creating Holy People', p. 120; Copenhagen, Det Danske Kungliga Biblioket, NKS 3249 40<sup>o</sup>.

17 The Florence List — written before 1120 and found in Codex Ashburnham 1554 in Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana — includes Børglum. See Gad, *Helgener*, p. 251; Ellis

A clear connection to the process of conversion and Christianization is also found in the narratives written about the laity, as exemplified by the texts describing Elin of Skövde. Elin's importance to the Skara bishopric is clear in the way her cult was chosen and promoted. As a bishopric, Skara had been established relatively early; for example, it was included on the Florence List and even mentioned in the *Gesta Hammaburgensis ecclesiae pontificum* (GH).<sup>18</sup> It was considered the oldest diocese in what became the ecclesiastical province of Uppsala, and the GH and the *List of Bishops from the Skara Diocese* record the heads of the episcopal see from 1014–1317.<sup>19</sup> Despite this fact, the history of the bishopric and its role in the Christianization does not feature a bishop-saint, even though it has been speculated that Bishop Adalvard the Elder had previously been destined for this role as the founder of a church, probably the cathedral, in Skara.<sup>20</sup>

Although Elin is believed to have lived during the twelfth century, some of the first glimpses of her cult are her mass from a late thirteenth- or early fourteenth-century missal, as well as the later thirteenth-century *officium* presumed to have been written by Bishop Brynolf Algotsson who also claimed that she had been papally canonized (Fig. 13.1).<sup>21</sup> Brynolf's actions in support of Elin's cult continued the legitimization of her as a saint, while Elin provided the bishopric with a clear connection to the Christianization period. The fact that the claim of her being papally canonized was added to the legend corresponds with the tendency of the bishoprics within the Uppsala ecclesiastical province to follow the papal canonization prerogative and was beneficial for the continuity of Elin's cult.<sup>22</sup>

Elin engaged in many of the actions that provided the laity with *exempla* as to how Christians should live: for example, by being a church-builder; donating funds to the church; promoting the new faith; not re-marrying when she was widowed; going on a pilgrimage; and being

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Nilsson, 'Creating Holy People', p. 119; Haki Antonsson, 'The Early Cult of Saints', pp. 29–30, 36.

18 Nyberg, 'Adam av Bremen', pp. 168–69; Adam of Bremen, *Gesta*.

19 *Biskopslängd, Skara stift*, in Sigsjö, 'Skaramissalets Skara', p. 30.

20 Ellis Nilsson, 'Creating Holy People', pp. 168–69. Adalvard's connection to Hamburg-Bremen has been suggested as the reason he was not promoted as an official local saint for the diocese. See Schmid, 'Kalendarium och urkundsdatering', pp. 356–58. Skara's first bishop-saint was Brynolf Algotsson (d. c. 1317). Although the earliest miracles took place in the early fourteenth century, his canonization process was first started in earnest in the fifteenth century; his translation occurred in 1492. Thus, Brynolf's candidacy for the sainthood was part of a different movement. See Tyynelä-Haapamäki, 'Constructing Episcopal Sainthood'.

21 Stockholm, Riksarkivet, Fr 26890; Ellis Nilsson, 'Creating Holy People', p. 168.

22 Ellis Nilsson, 'Creating Holy People', p. 85; Ellis Nilsson, 'Forming and Fashioning Early Scandinavian Sanctity', p. 80.

generous towards others.<sup>23</sup> In fact, the liturgical lessons for Elin's *officium* highlight her good works and her martyrdom for the faith, alongside the comparisons with biblical figures that placed her among Christian role-models. All of these elements were important ways of providing a local figure who would act as an example for the populace, assisting the diocese in its mission.

The description of Elin in the lessons for her office indicates and provides evidence for her importance to the bishopric and the secular province within which she had lived — *Westgocie* or *Västergötland* — while emphasizing her sanctity. In addition to being described as 'Helena

*Uestgocie decus et patrona, posce nobis hodie gratiarum dona*' (*Västergötland's* adornment and patron saint),<sup>24</sup> Elin is called 'ad laudem *Westgocie celitus donate ... .. flos Westgocie, patrie lucerne ...*' ('wonder' and 'flower'),<sup>25</sup> and 'Stella noue gracie noue claritatis illuxit *Westgocie signis demonstratis*' (a 'star' rising over *Västergötland*).<sup>26</sup> These phrases tie Elin firmly into the early history of the diocese, emphasizing her importance to the region within this mythopoetic movement.

Although Elin's cult spread to other dioceses from the early fourteenth century, her feast was celebrated outside of Skara on a different day: 31 July. In Skara, Elin had a special, high-ranking feast day in the bishopric on

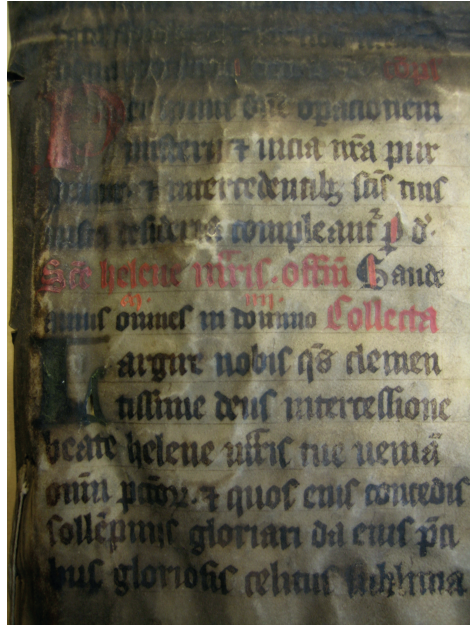


Figure 13.1. Detail of the beginning of Elin's mass in a thirteenth to late fourteenth-century missal fragment, originally in use in the Skara diocese (Fr 26890, 1r). Photo by the author.

23 Piltz, 'Tidegård och mässa', pp. 198–99, 221–22; Ellis Nilsson, 'Creating Holy People', p. 170; Ellis Nilsson, 'Forming and Fashioning Early Scandinavian Sanctity', pp. 80–81.

24 Edition in Piltz, 'Tidegård och mässa', p. 215; Ellis Nilsson, 'Forming and Fashioning Early Scandinavian Sanctity', p. 81.

25 Piltz, 'Tidegård och mässa', pp. 195–96; Ellis Nilsson, 'Forming and Fashioning Early Scandinavian Sanctity', p. 81.

26 Piltz, 'Tidegård och mässa', p. 214; Ellis Nilsson, 'Forming and Fashioning Early Scandinavian Sanctity', p. 81.

30 July instead.<sup>27</sup> This unique position further emphasizes the movement within Skara to promote Elin as one of the key figures to be remembered from the Christianization of that particular region, with a special feast day setting her apart in that diocese.

Of course, these examples do not constitute the only instances of this type of ‘movement’, which could also have existed in other dioceses involving other saints. Indeed, the conversion and Christianization were similarly evoked in other saints’ narratives in these two ecclesiastical provinces as part of mythopoetic movements: writing the Christian history of these regions and showing how they fit into a larger narrative of sanctification, legitimized by the presence and activities of local holy people. The liturgical lessons and legends of many saints claimed and emphasized that they were associated with the conversion and Christianization of the region, indicating that this movement might have been widespread. For instance, those whose legends describe them as instrumental in the Christianization of Denmark include Liufdag of Ribe, who will be discussed more in depth in the third theme below. In the ecclesiastical province of Uppsala, Sigfrid of Växjö (who will be discussed in detail below in the second theme, on the placement of ecclesiastical institutions) and Botvid of Södermanland (who will be discussed in the third theme, about legitimizing institutions) can be seen to be part of a similar movement.<sup>28</sup>

Thus, many of these saints’ legends make a point of describing the way in which a particular area was converted as well as the role the saint played in the conversion and Christianization. In some cases, this role included martyrdom, as with Liufdag, Elin, Botvid, Eskil, and Henry. All of these saints provide the faithful with *exempla*, as people who offered up their lives to bring these regions into the wider Christian community.

Another important aspect in this mythopoetic movement is that the official conversion stories associated with many saints from the province of Uppsala are connected with England. For instance, Botvid was converted in England and came back home to spread the Christian faith. Moreover, Eskil and Sigfrid were both missionaries, who were said to have ties with England.<sup>29</sup> Connections with England are also found in Theodgar’s legend as he is reported to have travelled there, but this emphasis on the saints

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27 Ellis Nilsson, ‘Forming and Fashioning Early Scandinavian Sanctity’, p. 83; Ellis Nilsson, ‘Creating Holy People’, pp. 169–70.

28 Eskil of Tuna and Henry of Finland are two other saints associated with conversion and Christianization narratives; however, space constraints prevent a more thorough investigation into their use in mythopoetic movements.

29 Ellis Nilsson, ‘Creating Holy People’, pp. 210–11. Sigfrid’s connection with the missionary period was still an important narrative in the late fifteenth century as seen in the final version of his legend printed in the ‘Skara Breviary’ from 1492 (Schmid, ‘Kalendarium och urkundsdatering’, pp. 352–53).

bringing the new religion from England is not as strong in the Danish material.

As a former pagan, Botvid provides a key example from the transition period as an important figure for the establishment and development of a Christian community in the area that would eventually become the diocese of Strängnäs. Botvid's legend provided an identity for the local community, and later the diocese, in discussions of the past and the transition to a Christian society. For example, the legend contains details of the process of Christianization performed by both Botvid (spreading the faith and converting his followers) and his brother Björn. The latter built a church dedicated to Botvid, an important act in solidifying the Christianization of the landscape. In addition, Botvid himself was said to have performed posthumous miracles in the area and in doing so aided the Christianization of the populace. This story was promoted and seen as important for the bishopric of Strängnäs.<sup>30</sup> In fact, as mentioned above with regard to Theodgar and Elin (and as can also be seen in the case of Sigfrid), one of the legitimizing aspects associated with the conversion narrative is an emphasis on church-building.

## Saints and the Geographical Placement of New Ecclesiastical Institutions

While the previous theme demonstrates how local saints are used to legitimize and affix the Christianization in time and space in a way which benefitted the narrative propagated by the ecclesiastical elites, the second theme shows how the saints are used to anchor the institutions of the church in a specific, relatable geography. This example of a mythopoetic movement uses local saints to justify the geographical placement of new ecclesiastical institutions, including bishoprics, their sees, and religious houses. Indeed, it can be seen that one saint can be activated in several mythopoetic movements, depending on the strategy of legitimization employed by an elite institution. The dioceses of both ecclesiastical provinces use saints in a similar way to legitimize the location of these institutions by referring to a saint's connection with a specific holy place, a shrine, or an origin story. Moreover, the establishment of new ecclesiastical institutions in a saint's name can be considered a form of 'cult manifestation', in which elite clerical support or approval for a saint's veneration is manifest in the act of naming.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Ellis Nilsson, 'Creating Holy People', pp. 157, 159.

<sup>31</sup> This concept and its definition, as applied in this chapter, were conceived by the members of the project, *Mapping Lived Religion: The Medieval Cults of Saints in Sweden and Finland*.

Although they are not the only examples of this type of mythopoetical movement, the use of local saints in the legitimization and placement of ecclesiastical institutions can be exemplified by the narratives of the following two saints from the ecclesiastical provinces of Uppsala and Lund: Sigfrid of Våxjö and Theodgar of Vestervig. While both saints were missionaries, Sigfrid of Våxjö was also a bishop according to his legend, probably first composed in the latter half of the twelfth century. Reportedly from England, Sigfrid travelled to *Suecia* to preach to a king Olof, and was said to have founded the bishopric of Våxjö. His legend, the complete version of which is found in the *Gesta Beati Sigfridi* from the turn of the thirteenth century, also contains mention of three nephews who were martyred near Våxjö; however, Sigfrid himself was not a martyr.<sup>32</sup>

In this form of mythopoetic movement, a number of legends or *vitae* explicitly promote a saint as belonging to one diocese in particular, benefiting the institution via this saintly connection. The prime example of this form of legitimization is found in the use of Sigfrid to justify and endorse the placement of a see in Våxjö.<sup>33</sup> In fact, Sigfrid's legend explicitly states that the saint received divine inspiration as to where the church (i.e. the future cathedral and bishop's seat) should be built, and that he was to be buried in this church.<sup>34</sup> The composition of the legend was presumably contemporaneous with the attempt to establish the Våxjö bishopric, which was in fact not included on the Florence List nor referred to when the ecclesiastical province of Uppsala was established in 1164.<sup>35</sup> However, Våxjö had definitely been established by the time of the Skänninge Synod in 1248; therefore, the construction of a convincing narrative which legitimized the bishopric's claims to a long and saintly history seems to be a definite motivation, which would be of benefit to the diocese.

By activating elements of Sigfrid's legend, including claiming to have been established by a known saint, the Våxjö bishopric insisted that its

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It describes when a saint's cult is manifest at a specific location, with specific content, and during a defined period. See Ellis Nilsson and others, 'Mapping Saints'.

- 32 The oldest version could have been composed in the 1160s, based on the manuscripts of the Chronicle of Våxjö Bishops and the *Gesta Beati Sigfridi*. The complete version of his legend is contained in the *Gesta Beati Sigfridi*, composed in about 1206. Lundén, *Sveriges missionärer*, p. 175; Blomkvist, Brink, and Lindkvist, 'The Kingdom of Sweden', p. 188; Larsson, *Den Helige Sigfrid*, pp. 13–14; Ellis Nilsson, 'Att skapa ett helgon'. A summary of the *Gesta Beati Sigfridi* is contained in the lessons of Sigfrid's Office in a mid-to-late thirteenth-century breviary (BL Add. 40146). Schmid, 'Trois Légendes de Saint Sigfrid'; Ellis Nilsson, 'Creating Holy People', p. 86.
- 33 Ellis Nilsson, 'Creating Holy People', p. 213.
- 34 *Gesta Beati Sigfridi*. Lundén, *Sveriges missionärer*, p. 175; Larsson, *Den helige Sigfrid*, pp. 13–14. Ellis Nilsson, 'Creating Holy People', p. 86; Ellis Nilsson, 'Holy Validation'. The *Chronicon vetus Episcoporum Wexionensium* (1370s) continued to propagate this list of bishops starting with Sigfrid (pp. 129–31).
- 35 Ellis Nilsson, 'Creating Holy People', p. 175.

existence was continuous from Sigfrid's mission in the eleventh century. In doing so, the bishopric asserted independence from the much larger, neighbouring diocese of Linköping, by claiming episcopal continuity from the conversion period. For instance, Varend (*Waerendia*) — the region included in Växjö's jurisdiction — is explicitly named as the destination of Sigfrid and his nephews in the version of the legend probably composed in Växjö.<sup>36</sup> As an important facet of the establishment and legitimization of new holy places in the landscape, Sigfrid's status as a church-builder is also emphasized in his legend.<sup>37</sup> According to the legend, Sigfrid was instructed by the divine to establish a church in the settlement, described as 'now called Växjö'.<sup>38</sup> The legend insists that Växjö was then the seat of the bishopric from that point onward, with a list of bishops added to the legend which verified Växjö's claim that the see was illegally transferred to various other locations — including Skara and Linköping — before its *re*-establishment in about 1170.<sup>39</sup> Moreover, Sigfrid was divinely inspired to instruct his followers that Växjö was to be his place of burial, thus creating an important holy place through his shrine there.<sup>40</sup>

This action — the mythopoetic movement revealed by including these details in the lessons and reiterating them in the later legend — has been interpreted as necessary in Växjö's strategy to assert itself against the diocese of Linköping, a much larger diocese which shared a boundary with Växjö, providing both divine precedence for the diocese's placement and an early foundation connected to the conversion period. Sigfrid's importance to the diocese and the placement of the see is reiterated throughout the medieval period. By initiating a mythopoetic movement around Sigfrid and the establishment of the cathedral, as well as the bishopric, Växjö benefitted from the saint and his church-building and missionary activities in the region through this legitimization of their stated identity as one of the earliest bishoprics in the province, while the saint himself was recognized and promoted as an important saint and whose cult flourished even outside of Varend.

Although not as unequivocally clear a mythopoetic movement as the one that was mutually beneficial for the cult of Sigfrid and the legitimization of the Växjö bishopric, Theodgar of Vestervig was directly connected

36 Lundén, *Sveriges missionärer*, p. 195, ll. 16–17.

37 Lundén, *Sveriges missionärer*, p. 179; Ellis Nilsson, 'Creating Holy People', p. 87.

38 '...et in locum, qui / nunc ab incolis dicitur Wexio, Domino ducente, peruenit'. Lundén, *Sveriges missionärer*, p. 195, ll. 26–28; Ellis Nilsson, 'Creating Holy People', pp. 175–77.

39 Fröjmark, 'Från Erik pilgrim', p. 404; Ellis Nilsson, 'Creating Holy People', p. 176.

40 Editions of Sigfrid's office, based on the *Codex Laurentii Odonis*, are found in Lundén, *Sveriges missionärer*, p. 209, ll. 21–23: 'Sepultus est in / eodem loco, in auo [sic] sibi Deo donante / pausam elegerat'. In Önnerfors' edition (*Die hauptfassungen des Sigfridoffiziums*...), *auo* is *quo*. 'Buried in that place that God has pointed out for him'. Ellis Nilsson, 'Creating Holy People', p. 176.

to the legitimization of the location of a religious institution and possibly also a bishopric. Theodgar's cult was tied to the Børglum diocese, and some argue that a see existed in Vestervig for a while before it was moved to Børglum.<sup>41</sup> Connected with the first conceivable start of Theodgar's cult in the 1060s, the promotion of his cult coincided with the work to establish a bishopric in north Jutland, the Vendsyssel Region.<sup>42</sup> In this case, having a local saint — as with Sigfrid — would validate the location of a see and provide a shrine to attract pilgrims. However, if there was a mythopoetic movement focused on Theodgar and his place of burial as a suitable location for the bishop's seat, it was not successful in the long run. Instead, the Augustinian Abbey in Vestervig legitimized its own placement by promoting its location as being that of Theodgar's shrine and caring for his continued cult.

Despite the fact that his shrine was not physically present in the see, Theodgar was seen to have endowed the bishops of Børglum with authority. For example, in a letter of indulgence from 1278, Bishop Jens II of Børglum states that he writes the letter 'beate Marie uirginis matris eius apostolorum Petri et pauli et sancti Theothgari auctoritate ...'<sup>43</sup> Theodgar was elevated, as demonstrated by this list, to a place of high esteem and used to legitimize the bishop's authority together with the Virgin Mary and the apostles Peter and Paul. In addition, although Theodgar's sanctity was only confirmed by the local bishops, his legend mentions that he was canonized by the pope.<sup>44</sup> This inclusion further legitimized Theodgar's sanctity and his cult, providing a clear basis for his continued veneration and status as a multilocal saint.<sup>45</sup>

## Saints and Legitimizing Ecclesiastical Institutions

Of course, all of the themes discussed in this chapter could be and were re-activated over time. In this next theme, continuity is a fundamental feature as saints can be seen to have been used continuously to legitimize institutions over time. The mythopoetic movement of legitimizing the establishment and the continued importance of ecclesiastical institutions

41 For a discussion of this hypothesis, see e.g. Clausen, 'Skt. Thøger'. Like Växjö, Vestervig is not found on the Florence List; however, it is not found in later sources either.

42 Ellis Nilsson, 'Promoting or Rejecting the Saints'; Clausen, 'Skt. Thøger'; Ellis Nilsson, 'Creating Holy People', pp. 121–22; Cf. Gelting, 'The Kingdom of Denmark', p. 101.

43 'by the authority of the Virgin Mary, the apostles Peter and Paul and St Theodgarus', *Diplomatarium Danicum*, 2.2, no. 339.

44 Ellis Nilsson, 'Creating Holy People', pp. 121–22.

45 Other examples of this type of mythopoetic movement include the cults of Liufdag of Ribe and, at least to some extent, Eskil of Tuna. See, e.g., Ellis Nilsson, 'Creating Holy People', pp. 89, 106, 148, 213.

was achieved by activating special local saints. It was important to link the events in local saints' legends to a general sacred history and emphasize their importance to the institutions concerned.<sup>46</sup> Sainly endorsement of these institutions enhanced, for example, episcopal authority. In fact, all of the saints mentioned in this chapter fit into this theme in some way as they were vital for legitimizing the sanctity of their particular ecclesiastical institutions in the long run. For instance, they provided convenient local *exempla* and holy places within the bishoprics' jurisdictions.

Although not all local saints in the ecclesiastical provinces of Lund and Uppsala were used in legitimizing bishoprics or their sees, all of the saints discussed in this chapter did provide holy places for and within the new bishoprics: where they lived, died, and in some cases even the appearance of holy wells.<sup>47</sup> Consequently, the existence of holy places associated with local saints sanctified the landscape, and in turn, legitimized the institutions that promoted their cults and their continued existence. This form of legitimization can be seen in the writing of early diocesan history in the thirteenth century.

A parallel to the findings of this study can be found in research into relics and new, local patron saints (excluding women and children) in Normandy and Germany from the ninth to the twelfth centuries. Edina Bozoky found that the discovery of relics and the creation of hagiographies is a necessity in a newly Christianized area.<sup>48</sup> In these regions, there was a need for new relics and new patron saints, which were a way of ensuring that new saintly traditions were firmly anchored in the region. These saints and their associated holy places were important to the newly Christianized region, which in turn can be seen as a form of legitimization of the Christianization and of the institutions themselves.

While not the only instances of this form of mythopoetical movement, the use of local saints to legitimize the establishment and continued importance of ecclesiastical institutions will be exemplified by two saints from the Uppsala and Lund ecclesiastical provinces, a layperson and a missionary, respectively: Botvid of Södermanland and Liufdag of Ribe. For the Uppsala province, the use of a saint in the legitimization of institutions is epitomized by Botvid of Södermanland, who lived in the eleventh century. He converted to Christianity while in England and subsequently returned home to evangelize to his community. The earliest details of his life can be found in liturgical fragments from the thirteenth centuries from the Västerås, Linköping, and Uppsala dioceses, while the earliest evidence for

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46 Ellis Nilsson, 'Creating Holy People', p. 215. For an example of the connection between ecclesiastical institutions and the continued practice of creating saints in Sweden in the later Middle Ages, see, Tyynelä-Haapamäki, 'Constructing Episcopal Sainthood'.

47 Ellis Nilsson, 'Creating Holy People', p. 212.

48 Bozoky, 'Martyrs', pp. 20–21. See also Ellis Nilsson, 'Creating Holy People', p. 212.

the celebration of his feast day is found in a late twelfth-century calendar.<sup>49</sup> Botvid was murdered by one of his slaves, whom he had freed and was in the process of returning to his homeland. For the Lund province, the use of this form of movement is exemplified by Liufdag of Ribe, who was originally from Frisia and worked as a missionary in Scandinavia, at least according to the GH. His cult was promoted by the Ribe bishopric according to the *Cronica Ecclesiae Ripensis*, which also claims that he became a bishop in Denmark, before he was martyred.<sup>50</sup>

The connection to the distant — yet current — past and the establishment of permanent holy places in the region are important elements in this form of mythopoesis. Botvid provides a prime example, with his cult being first established as a local one in the province of Södermanland in medieval Sweden. On the one hand, the local church benefitted from their local saint, while on the other hand, the diocese of Strängnäs was provided with holy places within its boundaries and a continual, local legitimization of ecclesiastical institutions.

This mutual benefit is exemplified by the details in Botvid's legend which show how the bishops were involved in supporting and controlling Botvid's cult at a relatively early date. This interest extended to both the consecration of the church built on Botvid's brother's property and the translation of Botvid's relics. Most likely based on a twelfth-century composition, the oldest extant version of the legend has been dated to the second half of the thirteenth century.<sup>51</sup> In that version, Bishop Gerder of Strängnäs and another named bishop<sup>52</sup> ensured that the church was dedicated to Botvid in particular. This action supported Botvid's continued cult, while ensuring that the Strängnäs diocese had its own local saint.<sup>53</sup>

As further evidence of their interest in the saint and the purpose of creating mythopoetic connections between Botvid and the diocese, the bishops of Strängnäs ensured their control over Botvid's cult in other ways. First, the legend describes the details of the translation of Botvid's relics in the 1170s, inspired by the sweet odour coming from Botvid's

49 Schmid, 'Eskil, Botvid', pp. 107–08; Ellis Nilsson, 'Creating Holy People', pp. 83–84.

50 *Ribe Bispekrønike*; Ellis Nilsson, 'Creating Holy People', p. 89.

51 It was part of the so-called *Liber ecclesie Torsan* (Stockholm, Riksarkivet, Fr 30838) on which see Ellis Nilsson, 'Creating Holy People', p. 158; Schmid, 'Eskil, Botvid', p. 108; Carlé and Fröjmark, 'Danemark, Suède, Finland', p. 517; Nilsson, 'Saints' Offices', pp. 184–87.

52 The legend identifies this bishop as 'Henry of Uppsala'; however, there was no bishopric listed for Uppsala in the Florence List and thus, at the time of the consecration (1129 according to the legend), it is probable that Henry was instead bishop of Sigtuna. See Schmid, 'Eskil, Botvid', p. 107. Blomkvist, Brink, and Lindqvist, 'The Kingdom of Sweden', p. 187; Ellis Nilsson, 'Creating Holy People', p. 158.

53 'Peracta igitur ecclesia lignea, duos Episcopos, bonae memoriae viros, Henricum scilicet Vpsalensem et Gerderum Strengienensem, advocaverant, et ecclesiam illam in honore Dei et S. Botvidi consecraverunt ... invenerunt in eodem sarcophago thesaurum absconditum pretiosorem omni aere fabrilis ossa scilicet b. Botvidi. *Vita Sancti Botvidi*, p. 382.

tomb (*dulcem odorem*), with both the bishop of Strängnäs, Wilhelm, and the new archbishop, Stephan, participating.<sup>54</sup> Including these details in the legend reveals the importance of preserving the memory of who was responsible for confirming Botvid's sanctity and in turn reinforced the history of who was in control of the cult. Moreover, it was made clear within whose jurisdiction the church was located, supporting the bishop's right to control the veneration of local saints therein.

Furthermore, the cult surrounding Botvid led to the name of the church, where his relics were housed, changing to Botkyrka, as well as its formal establishment as a parish church. This practice of naming the church and parish after the local saint appears to be unique in the ecclesiastical province of Uppsala. By 1283, Strängnäs had established control over the cult of Botvid, as seen in a letter from King Magnus (Ladulås) which confirmed the bishopric's jurisdiction over Botvid's church. Furthermore, Bishop Isar of Strängnäs ensured episcopal control of the distribution of Botvid's relics and granting of indulgences in his veneration.<sup>55</sup> These events were beneficial to Botvid's cult and a fundamental part of the incorporation of Botvid into the mythopoesis of the diocese.



Figure 13.2. Late twelfth-century stone grave monument situated by Husaby church, Sweden. It features reliefs of several saints, one of which is presumably Botvid as he is holding a cross and a fish (pictured). The picture is from the Swedish *Iconographic Index* (<<https://pub.raa.se/dokumentation/105d5d2b-fadc-4bab-bd18-2bf8coe140ac>>). Image in the public domain.

54 'primo Archipraesule Vpsalensis ecclesiae Stephano et a bonae memoriae viro Wilielmor Strengienensi Episcopo in cujus parochia ipsa ecclesia consistit'. *Vita Sancti Botvidi*, p. 382.

55 *Diplomatarium Suecanum*, no. 759; *Diplomatarium Suecanum*, no. 1061; Ellis Nilsson, 'Creating Holy People', pp. 158–59.

Similarly, although he did not enjoy as widespread a cult as that of Botvid, Liufdag's importance for the Ribe bishopric's continued mythopoesis and legitimization of the institution was clear in the inclusion of his story in the *Cronica Ecclesiae Ripensis* (*Chronicle of the Bishops/Church of Ribe*, in Danish *Ribe Bispekrønike*). This text was originally written in the early thirteenth century to establish the history of the diocese and its bishops, emphasizing the Jylland bishopric's early independence from the Archdiocese of Hamburg-Bremen and autonomy from Lund in the twelfth century.<sup>56</sup> All of these aspects can be connected to this mythopoetic movement and the mutual benefits associated with having a local saint.

In the chronicle, elements were included which pertain to Liufdag's legend such as his martyrdom, the location of his grave in the cathedral precinct, and the *translatio* of his relics in about 1162.<sup>57</sup> This claim to a saint's earthly remains was an important basis for the continued local cult, which was beneficial for the bishopric as an institution, while the bishopric's support for the saint was important for the saint's continued official veneration.

The chronicle also promotes Liufdag as the missionary and founder of the bishopric, as well as a holy person who was killed by the unbelievers to whom he preached.<sup>58</sup> This short description of the see's first bishop states that he was also responsible for miracles, although it does not give any details.<sup>59</sup> Further down the short list of bishops, the description of where bishop Elias was buried refers to Liufdag as a saint, as does the episode regarding his elevation and translation.<sup>60</sup> It is in the telling of these events that Liufdag is now described as a martyr.<sup>61</sup> Moreover, a number of bishops are named as instrumental in the continued support for Liufdag's cult; the twelfth-century bishops, Elias (d. 1162) and Radulph (1162–1171), ensured that the Ribe bishopric and its new cathedral had a legitimate, saintly reason for existence — Elias being responsible for the *elevatio* of Liufdag's relics into the cathedral and Radulph for their *translatio* to the altar.<sup>62</sup>

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56 The chronicle originally ended with Bishop Tue's death (c. 1230), resuming in the sixteenth century. *Ribe Bispekrønike*, pp. 25–26. See, also, Schwarz Lausten, *Danmarks kirkehistorie*, pp. 21–24; Ellis Nilsson, 'Creating Holy People', pp. 63, 112–13. *Ribe Bispekrønike*; Gelting, 'Elusive Bishops', p. 184.

57 Ellis Nilsson, 'Creating Holy People', p. 112.

58 '...quem praedicantem plebs incredula presequitur et amnem transuadentem iaculis peremerunt'. *Ribe Bispekrønike*, p. 26.

59 '...et longo tempore miraculis coruscavit debitis tunc honoribus exaltus'. *Ribe Bispekrønike*, p. 26.

60 'Mortuo Helia et sepulto iuxta sanctum Leofdanum'. *Ribe Bispekrønike*, pp. 28–29.

61 '...episcopus sancti Leofdani martyris ossa in scriniis posita ...'. *Ribe Bispekrønike*, p. 29.

62 *Ribe Bispekrønike*, pp. 26, 28–30.

Through these actions and the recording of them for posterity, Ribe was on its way to being firmly established as a legitimate holy place — the site of one of the first sees with its very own local saint. Including this story in the chronicle was important to how Ribe would be perceived in the region's history. The bishops needed their missionary, founding bishop as a legitimizing support, while Liufdag needed the bishops and the bishopric in order for the memory of him as a holy man and saint to survive. This last point is crucial and shows how a cult without continued support stagnates and is consigned to memory. In this case, due to Radulph's death and the cathedral fire in 1176, in addition to the fact that no *officium* seems to have been written for Liufdag, continued development of Liufdag's cult was hampered. However, the story did not disappear and the memory of Liufdag remained in the official history of the diocese.

In fact, the ensuing criticism of certain actions of Radulph during the period of relative autonomy from Lund could also explain how what was seen as a mutually beneficial relationship for Ribe could be seen as something not worth pursuing by subsequent bishops.<sup>63</sup> In fact, the fire was described in the *Cronica Ecclesiae Ripensis* as the punishment for Radulph translating Liufdag's relics and authorizing his cult, as it 'incinerated' the bones of the 'martyr': 'Tempore illo episcopus sancti Leofdani martyris ossa in scriniis posita collocat in altari absque auctoritate papae et archiepiscopi. Sed incendium parum post subsequutum ecclesiam destruxit et martyris ossa incineravit.'<sup>64</sup> Therefore, in this case, it can be seen that the start of a mythopoetic movement using Liufdag in the legitimization of the sanctity of Ribe bishopric's past was successful in the short term, while the circumstances surrounding the initial mythopoetic movement led to its stagnation. In the long term, other local saints such as Theodgar and Ketillus were promoted by the bishops instead, as exemplified by letters of indulgence issued for visiting the cathedral in Ribe on these saints' feast days.<sup>65</sup>

63 See, especially, Ciardi, 'Saints and Cathedral Culture', pp. 61–62.

64 'At that time the bishop placed the bones of the martyr St Liufdag in the chests [and] put on the altar without the authority of the pope and archbishop. But a fire destroyed the church soon afterwards and incinerated the bones of the martyr' (my translation). *Ribe Bispekrønike*, p. 29.

65 *Diplomatarium Danicum*, Reg. Dan. Nr. 434 (indulgence for visiting the cathedral on the feasts of Ketillus and Theodgarus) and *Diplomatarium Danicum*, 2.4, no. 273 (dated using Theodgarus' feast day); Ellis Nilsson, 'Creating Holy People', p. 114. Indeed, Ketillus, a provost of the cathedral chapter of Viborg in the early twelfth century, was the first local saint to be actively promoted in that diocese. His cult started in the late 1100s and spread throughout the province and provides a potential fit for this form of mythopoetic movement. Even Margaret of Højelse or Roskilde, a layperson who lived in twelfth-century Denmark and was venerated as a martyr, would be worth considering in the context of this theme.

There are numerous other instances of the use of local saints to legitimize the establishment and continued importance of ecclesiastical institutions in these two ecclesiastical provinces. Claims of longevity and ties to the earliest history of the church in the region could utilize the saints as legitimizing factors in these forms of mythopoetic movements. For instance, as mentioned, the legend of Sigfrid maintained that Våxjö had been the see of a bishopric since his establishment of the church in the region — an important claim against the influential Linköping bishopric which surrounded Våxjö, the smallest bishopric in the Uppsala ecclesiastical province.<sup>66</sup> In addition, Theodgar was important to the abbey in Vestervig as well as the Børglum bishopric. On the one hand, the abbey in Vestervig continued to promote Theodgar's cult, encouraging pilgrimage to his shrine and revealing a belief in Theodgar as a true saint, as well as a maintaining of the mythopoetic movement concerning the continued telling and re-telling of Theodgar's story and the perpetuation of the saintly origins of their abbey.<sup>67</sup> On the other hand, as discussed above, the bishopric of Børglum continued to view Theodgar as an important way of legitimizing episcopal power as shown in the letter of indulgence composed by Bishop Jens II in 1278, which stated that the bishop's authority came from a number of saints, including Theodgar.<sup>68</sup>

The bishoprics of Strängnäs and Skara also continued to use saints as a form of legitimization through their renewed inclusion in narratives and promotion of these cults. For instance, the Strängnäs bishopric claimed to be the location of Eskil's martyrdom, an important holy place associated with this saint. In its turn, the bishopric of Skara continued to have a strong relationship with Elin, promoting her cult and elevating her to the most prominent position possible, that of patron saint of the bishopric, while a new *officium* was written for her before the end of the thirteenth century in which she was evoked as a reason that the region was sanctified.<sup>69</sup>

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66 Ellis Nilsson, 'Creating Holy People', p. 213. See above.

67 Cf. Ellis Nilsson, 'Creating Holy People', pp. 119–22.

68 *Diplomatarium Danicum*, 2.2, no. 339; Ellis Nilsson, 'Creating Holy People', p. 121.

69 Ellis Nilsson, 'Forming and Fashioning Early Scandinavian Sanctity', pp. 81–82; Ellis Nilsson, 'Creating Holy People', pp. 169–70. The Turku diocese would also provide a good example of a mythopoetic movement, as they legitimized the bishopric by insisting that their first bishop Henry's relics and martyrdom justified the establishment of a diocese in Finland, its inclusion in the ecclesiastical province of Uppsala, and its incorporation into the Swedish realm. Ellis Nilsson, 'Creating Holy People', pp. 197–98, 215; Lehtonen, 'Finlands erövring', pp. 18–20.

## Conclusion: A Question of Mutually Beneficial Relationships

In this chapter, I have discussed how it is possible to see how saints were created and promoted within *mythopoetic movements*, that is, by consciously activating and sustaining their cults for a particular purpose throughout the period. The case studies have considered how local saints from the Danish and Swedish ecclesiastical provinces were used as instruments of legitimization in the stories told about the Christianization of the region, the placement of new ecclesiastical institutions, and finally, the legitimization of the continued existence of these institutions.

The idea of mythopoetic movements also reveals what can be considered the fundamental nature of the cult of saints and the indeterminant temporality that this evokes. Saints and people may enjoy mutually beneficial relationships even though a saint might have lived at a different moment in time. Thus, the saints can be activated to be used in legitimization at any time after they have become saints. In the case studies above, the narratives concerning these local saints are shaped and moulded to fit certain legitimization needs in terms of the Christianization origin story, where ecclesiastical institutions should be placed, and to cement the authority of the newly established bishoprics by means of saintly endorsement.

The argument for a mythopoetic movement is stronger in some cases than in others. For instance, with regards to the first theme, many saints — and especially the main examples, Theodgar of Vestervig and Elin of Skövde — were used to legitimize an official version of local aspects of the Christianization. Moreover, local saints were used to legitimize the placement of certain ecclesiastical institutions, most clearly in the case of Sigfrid and the Växjö diocese, but also regarding Theodgar and the abbey in Vestervig. These saints and institutions can be said to have had a mutually beneficial relationship: a saint was promoted, and the cult endured, while the institution's geographical placement gained saintly validation. However, not all local saints were used in this way. Finally, the continued existence and importance of institutions was often validated by their connection to local saints. This final theme has been explored by considering the saints Liufdag and his connection to the bishopric of Ribe, and Botvid with his connection to the local parish and diocese of Strängnäs. These two saints led very different lives — one a cleric and the other a layman — and their use in the legitimization of institutions was undertaken in distinct ways. The mythopoetic movement in this case is related directly to the descriptions of the saints' connection to the institutions in question and, for instance, how they sanctify them. In these provinces, it can also be seen that certain saints had the potential to be activated for legitimization

purposes, but that the legitimizing relationship did not last in the long term.

In conclusion, this chapter has focused on cults of local saints which emerged in two ecclesiastical provinces and were instrumental in the legitimization of ecclesiastical elite institutions. The two provinces form a geographical region that has historically been interconnected, although the prevalence of cults of local saints seems to have differed, therefore providing useful comparative material. As mentioned, there are additional local saints from the region that would fit into other mythopoetic movements and legitimization themes not connected to the elite, and which deserve their own study in juxtaposition to these saints. In addition, in the future, it would be worthwhile to expand the study and consider how saints from other geographical regions fit into the thematic model presented.

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## 14. The Liturgical Performance of Saints' Offices in Medieval Sweden

### *Multimodal and Performative Event in a Legitimizing Context*

#### Introduction

In the beginning there was Pope Gregory the Great. He composed all the Gregorian chants through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. These chants were handed down by generations of singers until they were eventually written down in the ninth century by Charlemagne's scribes and were transmitted to all the cantors in his empire.

This is the narrative of the legend of Pope Gregory the Great (r. 590–604), and the transmission of his chants. It explains why the Catholic chant repertoire is commonly called Gregorian and who created it.<sup>1</sup> This narrative was an important propaganda tool when Charlemagne expanded his realm and used ecclesiastical chant as perhaps the most successful strategy to transform the Catholic part of Europe, Latin Christendom, with its many different liturgical dialects and variants into one unified landscape of chant. The use of both the legend of Pope Gregory the Great and the liturgical framework that was necessary for performing the Gregorian chant, served to create a homogenous Christian identity.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See for example McKinnon, 'Gregory the Great'.

<sup>2</sup> The legend was revived in the nineteenth century when the Benedictine monks in the Abbey of St Peter of Solesmes initiated the reconstruction of the Gregorian chant according to the oldest notated sources, see Bergeron, *Decadent Enchantments*.

**Karin Lagergren** • is Associate Professor in Musicology at Linnaeus University at Växjö, Sweden, and Research Associate at the Alamire Foundation, Belgium. She has carried out extensive research on the chant tradition and liturgy of the Birgittine Order, as well as numerous studies on the chant tradition in medieval Sweden.

*The Cult of Saints and Legitimization of Elite Power in East Central and Northern Europe up to 1300*, ed. by Grzegorz Pac, Steffen Hope, and Jón Viðar Sigurðsson, Comparative Perspectives on Medieval History, 2 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2024), pp. 357–384

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Gregorian chant was thus a vehicle for enforcing the legitimacy of the new faith. The chant itself as a legitimizing tool was successful not only because music has a unique ability to create an affinity among people, but also because it was something that ordinary people came in contact with on a regular basis when going to Mass, no matter where in Latin Christendom they lived.<sup>3</sup> That means that Gregorian chant was known to every single person in this part of the world. This canonical repertoire of chants is that which is found in the earliest notated manuscripts from the ninth century.<sup>4</sup> The introduction of the Gregorian chant is a most impressive achievement and an ideal example of music's power and ability to create legitimacy for a new ideology and the ruling elite. So how does this correspond to the cult of saints, and here in particular to the *sung* cult of saints? From a wider perspective, Gregorian chant is proof of how political and ecclesiastical power collaborated to create legitimacy for both secular and ecclesiastical power. The saints, their chants, and their offices play a crucial role in the understanding of how the elites displayed these claims. However, the view of a division between political and ecclesiastical, or secular and sacred, is both an anachronistic and a modern view on the division of the sacred and secular and does not mirror medieval conditions. We should not understand saints' offices as a union between two opposing forces. Instead, they are highly political documents in the widest sense and a sign of specific wishes at specific times. As such they stand in opposition to the modern popular view of plainchant as the bearer of timelessness and transcendental beauty. Saints' offices should rather be seen as a repertoire that is closely bound to specific places, specific events, and persons. Musicologist Susan Boynton has pointed out that medieval liturgy was discursive in the sense that 'the sacred was inseparable from the political, and the boundaries between insider and outsider were porous.'<sup>5</sup>

How is a saint's office defined? In short, a saint's office is a set of chanted and recited texts mainly based on the saint's *vita*.<sup>6</sup> The *vitae* are often formulaic and built on typical *topoi*, with references to other saints in order to create legitimacy and show how a particular saint stands in a line of already approved holy individuals. Therefore, saints' offices are, in their own right, testimonies of how individuals, groups, and historical conditions have their place in the study of this repertoire. Musicologist Roman Hankeln explains it thus:

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3 Research on cognition and music is extensive. One title I recommend is Benzon, *Beethoven's Anvil*.

4 Many scholars have written about the emergence of Western notation. In particular I recommend musicologist Susan Rankin's thorough and sharp analysis on the subject: Rankin, *Writing Sounds in Carolingian Europe*.

5 Boynton. *Shaping a Monastic Identity*, p. 5.

6 The service of Vespers is an exception to this, where more often the 'texts are invocations of a more general character'. Østrem, 'The Office of St Olav', p. 70.

Liturgical ceremonies were involved in communicating political matters. Liturgy transported the ideology and theology of rulership as seen by the episcopate but also as they were taken up by medieval rulers when they involved themselves in liturgy, thereby instrumentalizing it in a political sense and on their own terms.<sup>7</sup>

Hankeln continues to point out how metaphysical and political matters were intertwined through liturgy:

This involvement of rulers in a liturgical context paradigmatically formulated their claim to the metaphysical qualities of political power, and at the same time the commitment of the powerful to the religious-moral mandate of the church.<sup>8</sup>

Hankeln's statements form the essential premise of this chapter. This premise describes a joint force between what we today call the secular and sacred, but which often were seen as one and the same power in the Middle Ages. As Boynton remarked, liturgy was not just a product but also a practice and performance with a wide range of functions: 'praise, prayer, teaching, exegesis, expression of spiritual self-identification and affiliation, and much more besides.'<sup>9</sup> To this can be added the function of the legitimization of the ruling elites, elites who were often involved in liturgical matters in order to legitimize themselves. In other words, saints play an important role in legitimizing the elites, but the question of the practical observance of the commemoration of a saint is often an overlooked topic in the study of saints and their offices. The liturgies around these saints' feast days are crucial for understanding in what form the saints were presented to medieval people. In this chapter, I will examine some practical aspects of the performance of the saint's offices and point to various aspects of their legitimizing function with a particular emphasis on conditions in medieval Sweden (whose geographical extent corresponds roughly to that of modern Sweden plus Finland, but without Skåne).

In medieval Scandinavia, just as on the European continent, institutionalized Christianity was to a large extent an elite project where local saints functioned as powerful figures in the legitimization of both the elites and the Church. However, we have few documents that trace the direct link between the saints' offices and the elites, which is why a careful interpretation of the source material is essential. An important factor to consider is that Scandinavia was Christianized late from a European perspective, meaning in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. The Christianization gave rise to a need for local saints who could bridge the

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<sup>7</sup> Hankeln, 'A Blasphemous Paradox?', p. 4.

<sup>8</sup> Hankeln, 'A Blasphemous Paradox?', p. 4.

<sup>9</sup> Boynton, *Shaping a Monastic Identity*, p. 3.

gap between the liturgy, which came from Rome, and the more local perspective. By linking a local figure who was perhaps already incorporated into local folklore or even had living descendants, the Church's claims to be a universal institution, which incorporated local figures, were made more apparent. The choice of a saint for a particular purpose is therefore always a political act in the widest sense. Local figures played an important role in the Christianization process and this is why there are so many local saints from these centuries. The local elites were also crucial in promoting the new saints which could help to legitimize the local elites in a specific area; this would give a diocese additional splendour. When the dioceses were organized in the twelfth century, local saints were instrumental as symbols for the region but they also helped to distance dioceses from each other and to give them distinct features. Examples of these early saints are Elin (Helen) of Skövde (Skara diocese), Eskil of Södermanland and Botvid of Södermanland (both Strängnäs diocese), Sigfrid of Vaxjö (Vaxjö diocese), to name a few saints for whom we have offices preserved. These local saints were often martyrs who through their martyrdom became Christian examples to follow from a local perspective, and thereby also acted as an opposing force to the heathen society that should be left behind. A common narrative goes that they were assassinated by pagans out of some sort of jealousy, often caused by Christian virtues such as humility and generosity. The source material is scarce but in some cases we know that the local bishops played an active part in promoting the saints' cults. Since the bishops were close to the ruling elite, this execution of power included both the sacred and the secular perspectives. One such example concerning St Sigfrid of Vaxjö will be related below. The saints' *vitae* are in this respect very informative sources in that they, in a practical way, exemplify the close links between the ecclesiastical and ruling elites and their claim for legitimacy, and one of the *vitae*'s functions is to point to this relationship. Some of the cults of these local saints became more widespread and thus their liturgies were included in the calendars of other dioceses, while others remained limited to their own diocese. The legitimization of saints is in this way also a legitimization of the Christian elite that upheld a particular saint's cult and the promotion of their cult points to wider political initiatives.

### **Legitimization through Rank and Solemnity as Political Acts**

The saints were venerated in different ways depending on their rank. If they were venerated in more than one diocese, their ranking could differ. If a saint was seen to have one of the highest liturgical ranks, they were commemorated with elaborated liturgies, processions, lengthy

chants, display of relics, etc. That day, the ferial use (the liturgy used for days without feasts). was partly or wholly replaced by services in honour of the saint. The Mass was also a special high mass for that particular saint with its proper chants. I will not deal further with the mass liturgy on a saint's day in this short discussion. The rank and solemnity of a saint was the most important tool for determining the legitimacy of a saint. Moreover, promoting and advocating for a given rank and solemnity was an important strategy for different dioceses in order to gain legitimacy by appointing saints in a hierarchical order. Each diocese in medieval Sweden had its own local saint who imbued it with authority, as for example the above-mentioned Elin of Skövde (Skara diocese), Botvid (Strängnäs diocese), and Sigfrid (Växjö diocese). They were often venerated in other dioceses as well, but they were then given a lower rank. Few saints' cults became equally significant in all of a country's dioceses, and in those cases a cult formed part of larger political ambitions to strengthen their power and legitimization by using particular saints. Such examples include St Erik of Sweden, the martyr king who became a national saint, and St Birgitta whose cult became widespread in medieval Sweden and to some extent also more widely in Scandinavia.

The bishops and the ruling elite might actively collaborate in these processes. One example is the feast *Patronorum regnum Suecie* (patron saints of Sweden) with the office *Iocundare mater ecclesia*. The Council in Arboga in 1474 declared that this feast was to be observed on the second last Sunday after the octave of the Marian feast *Visitatio Mariae* as a feast of the highest rank, meaning it would take place in the days between 10 and 16 July. The saints to be included in this feast are not entirely clear but according to the mentions in the chant texts the following were considered: Ansgar of Bremen, the Virgin Mary, John the Baptist, Laurence, Erik, Henry of Finland, Eskil, Botvid, David of Munktorp, Sigfrid, Elin, and Birgitta. Later, also Birgitta's beatified daughter Katherina and Brynolf of Skara were added. The origin of the cult can be traced to Uppsala and Archbishop Jöns Bengtsson Oxenstierna (1417–1467, archbishop 1448–1467) who together with the ruling Swedish elite in 1465, promulgated a daily mass in honour of the Holy Trinity, the Virgin Mary, and all the patron saints of Sweden. The cult was politically motivated due to the situation during the Kalmar Union (1397–1523), where it was important to claim the supremacy of the bishopric of Uppsala over the bishopric of Lund. It is worth noting that the ninth-century bishop Ansgar of Hamburg-Bremen is the most prominent figure in this office since, in this narrative he holds the place as Apostle of the North.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Unpublished manuscript, Personal archive of Ann-Marie Nilsson, Uppsala University Library.

Another example of the establishment of a saint's cult as part of diocese's attempt to both legitimize itself and distance itself from another is St Sigfrid of Växjö. He was an English missionary bishop, who is believed to have arrived in the region of Varend, where Växjö is situated, close to the year 1000. Turning a local saint into one of the founders of the diocese was a way of establishing that diocese's position vis-à-vis the other dioceses, and of claiming legitimacy amongst the diocese's inhabitants. Historian Lars-Olof Larsson claims that the legend of St Sigfrid was created in 1205 or 1206 under Bishop Johannes Erengislonis, and that the legend was an important tool for demonstrating the legitimacy of the diocese of Växjö against that of the diocese of Linköping, which had contested the existence of the diocese of Växjö. The veneration of St Sigfrid started with the foundation of the diocese in c. 1170, but the cult may have had earlier origins, although we lack evidence about it.<sup>11</sup> It is highly conceivable that both the legend and the office were created in 1205/1206 so that the veneration of St Sigfrid could be demonstrated both through the legend and performative actions such as the liturgy.

It was not only bishops who could support the cults of particular individuals. The not-so-successful attempt to launch Brynolf Algotsson, the notable bishop in Skara during the extraordinarily long period 1278–1317, as a saint is an interesting two-step process. The launch was initiated by St Birgitta when she visited Skara cathedral on the feast of the Purification in 1349. In a revelation, the Virgin Mary remarks that Brynolf's tomb is placed in far too simple a place in the cathedral. Later, in 1417, a canonization process was initiated. The canonization documents formed the basis for the office of Brynolf, which was compiled during the reign of Bishop Brynolf Gerlaksson, bishop of Skara 1478–1505. The office is only known in the *Breviarium Scarense*, printed in 1498, and no music is preserved. Previous research has not been able to establish whether Brynolf Gerlaksson was the actual author or the instigator behind the cult, but this is of little importance in this discussion. Brynolf's cult seems to have been limited, and he was never canonized, but he was added to the above-mentioned feast for the patron saints of Sweden. My point is here that a canonized saint (Birgitta) and a bishop both worked for the cult of a holy bishop. In other words two highly influential individuals both sought to legitimize a cult more than a hundred years apart.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Larsson, *Det medeltida Varend*, pp. 31–44.

<sup>12</sup> Lagerberg, *Författartradition Brynolf*, pp. 42–43, Härdelin, Alf, 'Tidegärd för en helig biskop', pp. 83–84.

## Liturgical and Devotional Legitimacy in the Newly Christianized Scandinavia

Saints were useful in the legitimization strategies in newly Christianized Scandinavia in order to introduce the new faith and to secure stability and positions for the ruling elite. As scholars, we tend to look at saints from a scholarly and theoretical perspective, and perhaps also from the perspective of the ruling elite. But saints were immensely popular for a variety of reasons through all levels of medieval society, not only for their legitimizing qualities and not only as a narrative imposed by the authorities. By pointing to saints, faith was made concrete through the examples of real humans. In the case of local saints, this was particularly obvious since they were people who had lived their lives in the same places as the locals. The geographical and physical landscapes played an immensely important role in the devotion to saints who by this made them easy to relate to. Pilgrim sites are the most obvious of these physical locations, but holy wells connected to saints also had the power to sanctify the landscape. Saints were close to medieval people in their daily lives as their helpers and representatives in the celestial court, and maybe as the most important basis in the living religion. This popularity also gives them an important function from a legitimizing perspective. A saints' office was therefore a concrete act of performativity of their lives, one might even dare to call it a re-enactment. Even if lay people understood little if anything of the liturgical Latin texts, we can be sure that they were familiar with the saint's lives through for example folklore, devotional objects, frescoes in churches, sermons, songs in the vernacular, etc.

Medieval lay people had a multifaceted pre-understanding of the saints when they went to church on a saint's feast day. Attending a service meant entering a multimodal and multisensory event that involved sight, smell, spatial movements, and listening but without participating in the active sense by singing. The performance of the liturgy was a task for the staff for the whom the liturgy was their main role (in short, the clergy, monks, and nuns) for many hours of the day. Lay people participated in other ways, mainly through the body language where certain actions followed the liturgy such as kneeling, the sign of the cross, etc. while following the liturgy and saying private prayers.<sup>13</sup> Apart from Mass, lay people could visit church at any time of the day to say prayers, light a candle, offer a gift. The liturgy was performed in the choir, sometimes behind a rood screen so that the liturgy was mainly heard and not seen. Acoustically, the choir formed a room within the room, and gave the acoustic impression of a song coming

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<sup>13</sup> Pernler, 'En mässa för folket?', here in particular pp. 108–09.

from a great distance.<sup>14</sup> This, which might be seen as passive participation, is different from what we tend to think in terms of participating in liturgy today.<sup>15</sup> Above, I cited Boynton who points to the porous boundaries between insider and outsider. Liturgical participation can take many forms, not just through congregational singing. The audience for an office was thus twofold: both groups, the lay audience and the clergy, experienced the veneration of a saint in different ways due to their different tasks and capacities.

The liturgical observance of a saint's office took place through the traditional form of the liturgy of the hours, also called the Divine Office or canonical hours performed at regular intervals during the day.<sup>16</sup> A complete cycle of a saint's office took many hours to perform, and the celebration of Mass was the liturgical climax as well as the service that most lay people attended. The liturgical day consisted of eight services distributed throughout the day, from early in the morning or even in the night until evening. It was divided into the little hours during the day (Prime, Terce, Sext, None) and the longer and more important hours in the morning (Matins, Lauds), the afternoon (Vespers), and the evening (Compline). Lay people most certainly did not follow a full Divine Office, and given the medieval view of the division of labour they were not expected to do so. The form remained the same every day, but the content always varied and it was in this form a saint's office was celebrated. The basic foundation for the liturgical day regardless of the day was the recitation of the Old Testament Psalms and the canticles from the New Testament.<sup>17</sup> A saint's celebration began on the eve before the feast day with first Vespers, and was completed on the feast day with second Vespers.

The physical place for the veneration of a saint in the form of an office took primarily place in the most important churches with the closest connection to the elite: cathedrals. Cathedrals were also urban parish churches, which meant that their services were accessible to anyone. But saints' days were also associated with events that took place outside

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- 14 This has been shown in a study on the cathedral in Santiago de Compostela, see Suárez, Alonso, and Sendra, 'Intangible Cultural Heritage'. The special spatial and acoustic circumstances the Birgittine church in Vadstena with two performing groups (the sisters and the brothers) is discussed in Autio and others, 'Historically Based Room Acoustic', no pagination.
- 15 An excellent text discussing how lay people may have experienced a medieval Mass is given in Pernler, 'Åskådligt, konkret och mycket angeläget'.
- 16 The literature on the Divine Office is extensive. Two standard titles covering more or less the entire medieval liturgy are Hughes, *Medieval Manuscripts for Mass and Office*, and Hiley, *Western Plainchant*.
- 17 Benedictus, Magnificat, and Nunc dimittis to mention the most important canticles. The distribution of the 150 Psalms in office liturgy is a complicated matter, and the exact distribution for a saint's day is to be found in the breviary. For an overview of psalms in office liturgy, see Hughes, *Medieval Manuscripts for Mass and Office*, pp. 50–57.

church. These days were often connected with public festivities such as markets and days off. More interesting from a liturgical and legitimizing perspective is the extensive medieval culture of processions. These took place both inside and outside church on solemn occasions and had an important ritual function. Outdoor processions had a special spiritual power in that they had the ability to expand the sacred space, and by its sacramental presence it changed the locations which it passed.<sup>18</sup> This expansion of the sacred space also augmented the physical locations where legitimizing activities could take place.

## Liturgical Organization

The ranking of saints was undertaken according to principles which assessed their importance in that particular context. These rankings were consciously made and were a testimony of how the dioceses wanted to situate themselves in the Christian world. By pointing to saints as exemplars, they could put forth different aspects and virtues that they wanted to be associated with. The rankings included different kinds of veneration: a saint could be venerated with only a memorial — that is, a prayer, up to a full office covering all the canonical hours. Only in rare cases was a liturgy for a saint also provided for the little hours.<sup>19</sup> The little hours were in that case observed according to ferial use. The calendars state the rank of a saint to ensure the right observance in that particular diocese.<sup>20</sup>

A saint was particularly celebrated on their feast day once a year, which often, but not always, was their (presumed) death day. There were also two other possibilities for celebrating a saint: the day of the translation and the day of the canonization, but far from all saints were commemorated to this extent. Octaves could also be observed, which means the eighth day of a feast or the whole week following a feast which continued the principal feast, the uses differ.<sup>21</sup> One such case is St Birgitta of Sweden (c. 1303–1373), the superstar saint in late medieval Scandinavia. Though she lived in the fourteenth century, and thus is too late for the scope of this volume, the rich source material and her position in late medieval Scandinavia makes it difficult not to mention her. St Birgitta could be commemorated on the day of her translation (28 May), her death day (23 July), and the day of her canonization (7 October), depending on the

18 Fallberg Sundmark, 'Sjukbesök och dödsberedelse', p. 108.

19 One such example is the eleventh century Office for the Holy Trinity from Saint Martial de Limoges. An edition of this Office is found in Grier, *Office for the Holy Trinity from Saint Martial de Limoges*.

20 For Nordic saints in calendars and their rank, see Brunius, *Atque Olavi*.

21 Harper, *The Forms and Orders*, p. 307.

diocese. Unusually, a fourth feast day on 14 October was added in the 1420s or 1430s as the octave of the canonization day.<sup>22</sup> This addition of an extra feast day testifies to St Birgitta's outstanding position. Other saints whose cults not were as widespread as that of St Birgitta, but who were also venerated on their death day or translation day, include for example Eskil, in the diocese of Strängnäs. His feast day 11 June (12 June in some dioceses) was complemented by his translation on 6 October. Strängnäs also introduced a feast for his octave on 18 June.<sup>23</sup>

This means in reality that the elaborated chants that made up a saint's office were only performed once a year, or in some rare cases one, two or three times more. It is a challenging thought to think about all the saints in the Middle Ages who had their own offices and how many saints' offices were performed annually and thus needed to be on the repertoire for the cathedral singers. How much practice was needed by the choir to update them for the annual celebration? We know little about this.

Higher-ranking saints were normally commemorated with *one* office, but in some cases saints had two. St Sigfrid and St Botvid are examples of this. The first version of their offices from the thirteenth century were partly replaced with new chants in the fourteenth century.<sup>24</sup> The reason for creating new offices or reworking older versions is not always clear, but may be linked to new political situations, new key figures in the ruling elite, as well as changing musical tastes. Such reworking points to the dynamic, temporal conditions and indeed the ephemeral nature of the cult of saints. What we can be sure of is that new offices were a sign that the cult of the saints continued to be relevant, but that they needed to be updated to new standards of which we know little. St Birgitta of Sweden was also given two offices, but here the reason is more directly linked to efforts to promote her canonization which took place in 1391, only eighteen years after her death. The first of these offices is *Birgitta matris inclite* which originated around 1376, and is attributed to Birger Gregersson (archbishop in Uppsala 1366–1383). In this case we know from contemporary documents that Gregersson was personally involved in the process.<sup>25</sup> However, few of the melodies can have been composed by him since it is almost entirely based on the office for St Francis, *Fransiscus vir catholicus*, as Ann-Marie Nilsson has

22 On Birgitta's feast day in calendars, see Brunius, *Atque Olavi*, pp. 73–76.

23 Brunius, *Atque Olavi*, p. 47.

24 The first version of the office of St Sigfrid is *S:t Sigfrid besjungen*, ed. by Nilsson. The new office *Sigfridus Anglie ortus* (probably early fourteenth century) is briefly described here but a more in-depth examination has not been conducted yet: see *Celebremus karissimi*, in *S:t Sigfrid besjungen*, p. 13. The offices of St Botvid — the old office *Cur fredentes gentes* (early thirteenth century) and the new office *Triumphantis milicie* (late fourteenth century) have not been edited in their entirety and are only briefly examined, the latest publication is Nilsson, 'Medeltidens kyrkosång', p. 114.

25 Gejrot, 'Att sätta ljuset i ljusstaken', pp. 95–96.

shown.<sup>26</sup> The melodies in *Birgitta matris inclite* for the Magnificat antiphons for the first and second Vespers, and the Benedictus antiphon for Lauds, are not found in St Francis' office. Thus Birger Gregersson, or a team working under him, may have been a possible originator of these unique chants with melodies not known from other sources. The second office is *Rosa rorans bonitatem*, which was compiled after Birgitta's death in 1373 but before 1391. The dating can be ascertained from the fact that the office is attributed to the bishop of Linköping Nicholas Hermanni, who died in 1391. His role in the compilation process is not as well documented as that of Gregersson for *Birgitta matris inclite*, but in contrast to *Birgitta matris inclite*, all of the office melodies in *Rosa rorans bonitatem* seem to be unique, with only a few exceptions.<sup>27</sup> I will return to the question of authorship and why this is important below. I will also discuss the melodic choices for saints' offices below, but here I want to point out one situation where the emergence of a saint's office was directly linked to questions of legitimization. Vadstena Birgittine Abbey where Birgitta's relics were held (and are today) became the most important pilgrim site in late medieval Scandinavia, a status it took over from St Olaf in Trondheim. Vadstena was furthermore an important place for political gatherings. This charged Vadstena with both spiritual and worldly power that further emphasized the presence of a saint. Again, this example falls outside the chronological boundaries for this volume but it is mentioned here since this is one of very few examples of how legitimization can be systematically traced in the actual musical material.

## Legitimization through Categorization

It was not only rank and solemnity that were important. Another significant factor in the correct observation of a saint was to assign them to the right category. Usually, the following categories, with minor variations (subcategories for example), were used:

Apostles  
 Evangelists  
 Martyrs (and widows)

<sup>26</sup> *Två hystorie för den heliga Birgitta*, ed. by Nilsson, pp. 13–15.

<sup>27</sup> The question about composing bishops vs. driving forces behind a more collaborative work is discussed in Kelly, 'Medieval Composers of Liturgical Chant', pp. 95–125, and in *Två hystorie för den heliga Birgitta*, p. 29.

Confessors including doctors of the church and abbots  
Virgins

This categorization also serves another important purpose concerning the practical observance. The Middle Ages were full of saints, some very local and others known in the whole of Christendom. However, as mentioned above, not all these saints had their own office. But there was no need to worry, there were ways of observing saints with an office even if they did not have their own. In such cases formulas with standard offices were used, which are found in the repertoire of the Common of Saints. The Common of Saints was divided into the categories mentioned above, comprised of standard offices with standard texts and melodies for each of these categories. This is one reason why it was important to know the category of a saint, for example a martyr. In that case the cantor looked up the martyr's section in the Common of Saints in the liturgical books, which provided the singers with the appropriate office. Since saints' offices, with few exceptions, are preserved in sources that are much later than when the saint lived, there is reason to believe that this procedure was used at the beginning of a saint's commemoration before a proper office had been worked out. Two examples illustrate this: the earliest offices for St Sigfrid — who is supposed to have lived in the tenth century — and St Botvid — who is supposed to have lived in the eleventh century — are known in the *Toresunds breviariet* (the breviary from Toresund) from the thirteenth century.<sup>28</sup> The cults probably started shortly after their deaths and with individual items from an existing office, or mixed items from different offices that eventually were structured into a more systematic office once the cult spread. At a certain point, that specific saint was legitimized with a unique office.

The texts in the offices were, as mentioned, mainly based on the *vita* and they were highly standardized. The narratives in these categories also had legitimizing purposes. We can be sure that nothing is mentioned there by accident: which people were mentioned and why, which properties, which places, which actions and why they were performed, etc. This is a way by which the elites could control the cult, a cult that often was propelled by bishops, as the examples of Gregersson and Birgersson above show. This means that the chant texts also follow certain recognizable patterns. They can roughly be divided into the following three categories:

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<sup>28</sup> Text editions found in Önnorfors, *Die Hauptfassungen des Sigfridsoffiziums*, and Önnorfors, 'Das Botvidsoffizium des Toresundsbrevers', pp. 144–65.

### **Chants about Miracles Performed by the Saint**

In this category the saints' power to intervene in ordinary people's lives is explicitly displayed and gives us glimpses into people's everyday lives, which will be exemplified by two antiphon texts about two miracles that St Erik performed:

Martyr presbytero lingue solvendo ligamen dat cum sincero vocis modulamine famen. Alleluia.<sup>29</sup>

(The martyr unlooses the tongue of the priest, so that he can sing with a clear voice. Alleluia.)

Third Lauds antiphon, *Assunt Erics regis sollemnia*, trans. by Ann-Marie Nilsson

Infanti genito sine vita regis erici vita datur merito pariterque salus genitrici, alleluia.<sup>30</sup>

(Life is restored to a stillborn child through the virtue of king Erik, and its mother too recovers her health. Alleluia.)

Second Lauds antiphon, *Assunt Erics regis sollemnia*, trans. by Ann-Marie Nilsson

From the viewpoint of medieval mentality, chants about miracles are the most moving, and are also chants that in a direct way tell us about what was important to medieval people. In the first case, a priest has lost his voice which was crucial for performing liturgy, and with the help of St Erik he is able to sing again. In the second case a common scenario in *vitae* is told: dead people, here a stillborn child, who are brought back to life. These examples are at the same time, as they bring us direct into the reality of everyday concerns, also obvious examples of the legitimization inscribed in saints' offices. Since the chant texts were taken from the *vitae*, they were also important in the canonization process. No such process could take place without collecting miracles in order to support the case. Moreover, the saint's power to perform supernatural acts of healing, etc. speaks for itself as a highly legitimizing principle for not only the saint but also for those who supported the cult of a particular saint.

### **Praise for the Saint**

In this category we find praise for the saint that can be paired with praise often linked to specific place names or regions:

<sup>29</sup> Edition with melody: *S:t Eriks hystoria*, ed. by Nilsson, p. 61.

<sup>30</sup> Edition with melody: *S:t Eriks hystoria*, ed. by Nilsson, p. 60.

Felix parens Vesgocia gaudens plaude multiplica  
 pro tue prolis gloria devote laudum cantica.  
 Helena martir hodie carnis abiecto pondere  
 Celestis aulam curie scandit de mundi carcere.<sup>31</sup>

(O [region of] Västergötland, fortunate homeland, applaud joyfully, multiply your pious canticles in honour of your daughter. Helena the martyr who has thrown off the weight of the flesh today ascends to the celestial government's palace and leaves the earthly prison.)

Strophe 1 and from first Vespers hymn from *Salve decus patrie, translation from CD booklet to Ensemble Peregrina: Mare Balticum, vol. II: Medieval Finland and Sweden, Tacet S 248, 2019*

In the text of this Vespers hymn we find an example of the common narrative that the saint, here the martyr and widow St Elin of Skövde, has left their body and ascended into heaven and therefore is worthy of praise. The dichotomy between body and soul is stressed: the body is left on earth but the soul rests close to God. Time, place, and chronology are often pointed out in these kinds of chants. Time and place also serve as a tool for legitimization since they inform the listener about the actual conditions at the time of the saint, or rather conditions that were important to stress, whether or not they were true from a historical point-of-view: who donated land to whom, who commissioned a church, who supported the saint, etc. By doing this, the elite could ensure that they were recorded in the *vitae* and thereby place the saint in a landscape of legitimization. Geographical names are important for this reason. These legends did not take place in a remote country 'somewhere else'. Rather, the place names placed the saint right into the geography of local people, like the example above in the Vespers hymn for St Elin, where she is placed in the region of Västergötland where her presence in the local geography also legitimized the places connected to her. Through this, Västergötland can be made a sacred area. The creation of local geography as sacred areas places the legitimization of a saint right into the reality of ordinary people.

### ***Emblematic Events in a Saint's Life***

This third category contains chants about events in the saint's life that help to explain the importance of it, here exemplified by a text where St Sigfrid erects a tent which will lead to an important decision:

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<sup>31</sup> Edition with melody: *Sånger till fyra kyrkofester*, ed. by Nilsson, p. 31.

Ibi nempe fixit tentorium  
 pause sibi indulisit commodum  
 qui monente per soporem angelo  
 sacri terminum oratorii notavit cum eo.<sup>32</sup>

(For there he erected a tent  
 and indulged in a moment of rest.  
 While he was sleeping, led by an angel,  
 he planned out with him the boundaries of a church.)

Fifth Matins antiphon, *Celebremus karissimi*, trans. by Robert Andrews

In this chant, St Sigfrid arrives in what would become Växjö, and erects a tent where he rests. While he is asleep, an angel instructs him on the structure of the first church there. Texts in this category relate crucial events which serve to place the saint as the person behind important events, or to explain the existence of, for example, a church. These events were initiated by divine inspiration or intervention. This category is separated from the miracle category since it does not describe miracles. Rather, meetings with important figures, important journeys, or transcendental experiences such as this are told in order to create a narrative in which the sanctity of the saint is stressed. Both this and the first category (miracles), often give very precise information about places and individuals who lend a temporal and spatial character to the office chants.

Both the chant texts and to some extent also the place in the liturgy of the chants follow a standard pattern where the different aspects are addressed within the office. To start with the name of an office, it is named after the first lines of the first chant in first Vespers as, for example, the office *Celebremus karissimi* for St Sigfrid:

Celebremus karissimi  
 devote recolendo annua beati sigfridi sollemnia  
 cuius sacra hodie anima felix celi scandit fastigia  
 cui angelica congauget turba occurrens ei  
 suscepit cum gloria.<sup>33</sup>

(Dearest brothers, let us celebrate  
 in devoutly remembering the annual celebration of the Blessed  
 Sigfrid,  
 whose happy soul arose this day to the holy heights of heaven

<sup>32</sup> Edition with melody: *S:t Sigfrid besjungen*, ed. by Nilsson, p. 52.

<sup>33</sup> Edition with melody: *S:t Sigfrid besjungen*, ed. by Nilsson, p. 35.

he whom the angelic host meet with joy and receive in honor.)

First Vespers antiphon, *Celebremus karissimi*, trans. by Robert Andrews

The text is typical for the first antiphon of first Vespers, which is the service that forms the start of the celebration on solemn feasts on the eve before the actual feast day, in that it introduces us to the feast and the saint, and invites us to celebrate the saint. Often, the first antiphon of Vespers is also characterized by praise. After first Vespers, the celebration of a saint had thus started and was followed by one more service before bedtime: Compline, which is a short service that seldom had its own liturgy in a saint's office. Moving on to the day after, or rather early morning or even night, another symbolically important sung item is the invitatory that opens the Office of Matins. This piece opens the office on the actual saint's day and has more directly the character of a celebration of the saint.<sup>34</sup> Here is an example of the invitatory antiphon for St Elin of Skövde:

Assunt Helene solempnia virgo mater jubilet ecclesia.<sup>35</sup>

(The feast of Helen approaches; let the virgin mother Church rejoice.)

Invitatory antiphon, *Salve decus patrie*, trans. by Robert Andrews

The text is short, which is a normal feature for invitatory antiphons, but it is repeated several times following the standard performance in alternation with Psalm 94 (*Venite adoremus*). This text for St Elin of Skövde exhibits a common feature for this type of chant: the celebration is a collective effort in the first-person plural performed by the whole church, all of the clergy, the congregation, etc. The celebration is never an individual experience. This chant furthermore shows one fundamental strategy in the creation of saints' offices: the dependence on tradition. The invitatory antiphon for St Elin bears a close resemblance with the invitatory antiphon for the much more famous St Thomas of Canterbury, making it one example of how local saints can be legitimized through other more widely known saints.<sup>36</sup> Texts and melodies (which will be discussed later) are always part of a bigger whole, a world of intertextuality where texts and melodies form

34 On the form and performance of an invitatory see Hughes, *Medieval Manuscripts for Mass and Office*, p. 34 and Harper, *The Forms and Orders*, p. 79.

35 Edition with melody: *Sånger till fyra kyrkofester*, ed. by Nilsson, p. 33.

36 'The model for this chant is clearly the invitatory from the matins of St Thomas of Canterbury (martyr, 29 December), Assunt Thomæ martyris solennia: Virgo mater jubilet Ecclesia.' Edwards, *Matins, Lauds and Vespers for St David's Day*, p. 85.



Figure 14.1. *Celebremus karissimi* (top of page), first vespers antiphon from the office *Celebremus karissimi* for St Sigfrid of Växjö. Stockholm, Riksarkivet (National archives) fr. 20418, Smålands handlingar, 1574:4:5 Knekthemman. Fifteenth century. Reproduced with the permission of Riksarkivet.

allusions to existing role models that can be used for several reasons. One such fundamental reason concerns the questions of legitimacy: to place the saint in a row of persons already canonized (in the widest sense).

## The Role of the Office of Matins

The night or early morning office of Matins forms a liturgical highlight, and on saints' days this is particularly festive since it includes readings from the *vita* followed by long, elaborate chants. The readings from the *vita*

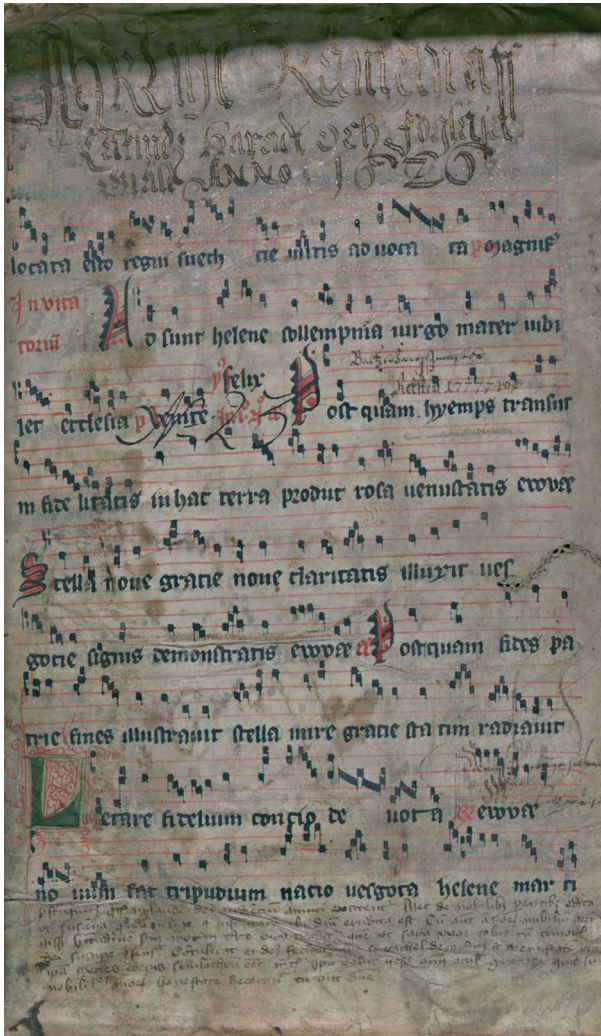


Figure 14.2. *Assunt Helene* (second line from top of page), invitory antiphon from the office *Salve decus patrie* for St Elin of Skövde. Stockholm, Riksarkivet (National archives) fr. 219, Västergötlands handlingar, 1626:23:2. Fifteenth century. Reproduced with the permission of Riksarkivet.

were divided into portions of three, six, nine, or in rare cases even twelve lessons, and each was followed by a Matins responsory that mirrored what had been narrated in the readings. Nowhere in a saint's office is the link between the sung and recited texts stronger than at Matins. The number of readings, and subsequently the number of responsories, is an

important item in determining the solemnity of a saint's feast. The more responsories, the higher the solemnity. The Matins responsories were the most complicated and longest pieces, lasting approximately from three to ten minutes. For most of the year, they were performed in the dark, or with lit candles if this was allowed. It is an intriguing thought to think of how they achieved this on saint's days with liturgies that were only performed once a year, when they could make little use of their rote learning used in the ferial liturgy.

In the afternoon or early evening, Second Vespers rounded off the saint's office, meaning that Vespers is a service of which there are two in a solemn saint's office. The text could also have a concluding character as, for example, in the antiphon from Second Vespers the antiphon from the office *Birgitte matris inclite* for St Birgitta:

Vale suavis musica  
 Demulcens aures principum  
 Tu Gedeonis bucina  
 Castra deterrens hostium  
 Tu dulcis timpanistria  
 Corda movens fidelium  
 Convertete mater inclita  
 Luctum nostrum in gaudium.

(Farewell sweet music who charmed the ears of the rulers  
 like Gideon's trumpet you  
 deterred the enemy host,  
 dear drummer-girl  
 rousing the hearts of the faithful.  
 Mother illustrious, transform  
 Our mourning into joy!)

*Second Vespers*, trans. by Ann-Marie Nilsson<sup>37</sup>

In this section, I have summarized some of the most important themes in chants for saints, and how they relate both to questions of legitimization of the saint and cult itself, but also how issues of the legitimization of the elites and power can be inscribed into the offices. We will now turn to what the musical content can tell its practitioners and listeners.

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<sup>37</sup> *Två hystorie för den heliga Birgitta*, ed. by Nilsson, translation text p. 233, music p. 88.

## Legitimization through Music

It is now time to consider the melodies for the saints' offices which always were in the form of the monophonic Gregorian chant. There are very few examples in the repertoire of saints' offices of polyphony, meaning that the Gregorian melodies have been embellished with one, two, or, very rarely, three voices.<sup>38</sup> Allusion, borrowings, and intertextuality are central concepts in understanding the musical power of a saint's office. The importance of intertextuality in chant is explained in the following way by musicologist Margot Fassler:

In music, examples of intertextuality include phrases taken or adapted from other works, even the use of a particular mode or key that is closely associated with other works that may be familiar to the performer or listener. Within a composition, one section can reference another by repetition, variation, fragmentation. When we deal with the combination of music and text — especially when texts come from liturgy or Scripture — this web of interrelationships becomes much more complex.<sup>39</sup>

Seen from the perspective of intertextuality, the goal was not to provide new melodies for a saint. On the contrary, it was important in the same way as *vitae* were constructed: by using already existing elements they could create associations which might establish familiarity or point to role models who could strengthen the legitimacy of the saint. This was done by using melodies that people, mainly those who had a liturgical education, already knew and could associate with other saints. A simple way of explaining this is that we today most probably do not want to sing Christmas melodies with words about summer — this leads the associations in the wrong direction and we tend to think about Christmas trees and mulled wine instead of the beauties of summer. This is musical intertextuality, in short. Saints' offices worked within a complicated web of intertextual relationships, both concerning the text and melodies, where copyright was never a problem. This can also be described as speaking about saints through melodies. There were three ways of addressing a saint in music:

- 1 *Contrafacts*: New texts used with existing melodies, often borrowed from another saint's office. This was a way of paying homage and not a lack of creativity, in line with the principle of intertextuality outlined above. This procedure was particularly used in hymns whose metric structure make the technique of contrafact easy to apply, using texts

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<sup>38</sup> If this was the case, this more often concerned Mass chants than Office chants.

<sup>39</sup> Fassler, *Music in the Medieval West*, p. 4.

with the same metre. One example of this is the hymn *Rex Olavus* from the office of St Olaf where the melody was borrowed from the hymn *Urbs beata Jerusalem*, a hymn used for the Feast of the dedication of a church.

- 2 *Adaptations*: Borrowed melodies that were altered to fit the new text. The alterations can be of many forms, but a recognizable part of the borrowed melody can be distinguished. Furthermore, the border between this category and the previous is fuzzy and not always easy to make. The alterations could involve, for example, adjusting the number of syllables in the new text, or rearranging melismas (two or more notes to one syllable) to be placed at the stressed syllables of the new text. Examples of this include several chants in the office of St Olaf which are modelled on the offices of St Augustine (in particular Matins and Lauds) and Martin of Tours (chants for Vespers).<sup>40</sup> By linking St Olaf to these two celebrities, legitimacy was inscribed into the musical transmission of his office.
- 3 *Unica*: New compositions meaning material without known concordances in other sources, sometimes due to the lack of research. One example of this is the *old office* for St Botvid, *Cur fredentes gentes*, but in this case more research is needed in order to establish possible contrafacts and adaptations of existing melodies. In this category, two contradictory views meet. Scholarship has been more occupied with researching unique repertoires, while medieval creators of offices could not claim legitimacy through music with new compositions.

In reality, a complete office repertoire seldom belongs to one of these categories, but is made up of mixed offices to different degrees. Both unique contributions and contrafacts are common in one and the same office, where in particular hymns almost always are subject to intertextual relations and seldom unica. One example of a mixed office is *Birgitte matris inclite* for St Birgitta, based on the office for St Francis discussed above. All in all, these categories are problematical in different ways since the boundaries between the different procedures are sometimes difficult to distinguish. The boundary between an adaptation and a contrafact can be porous, and an unica can appear to be an unica just because not enough research has been conducted, yet future research might result in the category changing to, for example, adaptation.

The refined ways of addressing a saint and at the same time make associations with other saints or ecclesiastical celebrities, is an art that best could be understood by the clergy who had an immense knowledge of melodies and chants. This finely woven net of allusions was something of which the lay audience most likely had little possibility of understanding,

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<sup>40</sup> See further Østrem, *The Office of Saint Olav*, in particular pp. 181–91.

except the most basic parts. But the laity knew liturgy, and they had learnt about the saints' lives in many other ways. Moreover, they had learned about the saints' miracle-making abilities, and these forms of knowledge made lay observance meaningful.

## Authorship and Legitimization

The question of origin and author is both a delicate and an anachronistic question. Authorship lends authority to a work and thus legitimacy, but authorship is a complicated word for medieval conditions. Still, it is important to address here at the end of this text, since these two concepts are closely intertwined and related to legitimization. Who puts their name under an office is enormously important, since this helps to legitimize the saint's cult for the elite whose approval is required. The discourse on offices has been very much a question of emphasizing particular individuals as originators. This was in fact already the case in medieval sources, and has often been repeated in modern scholarship in a view that owes much to the nineteenth-century view of the artist. If medieval writers used authorship as a tool for legitimizing saints' offices, modern scholars have looked at it from the Romantic viewpoint of the work-concept where new works are created in isolation out of more or less metaphysical inspiration. In those cases we have names of authors, these are important, influential people who were often bishops. A suspiciously large number of liturgical repertoires — not only saint's offices — are attributed to people who are not otherwise known as composers and who had very little or no time to compose, as musicologist Thomas Forrest Kelly remarked. Bishops are often mentioned, as we have seen examples of earlier in this text, but in reality they very seldom had time to compose offices. It is more credible to regard them as the people who commissioned and/or authorized an office, and by this the link between authority and legitimization becomes even clearer. There is a long list of saints' offices attributed to bishops or other ecclesiastical dignitaries.<sup>41</sup> The process of completing an office and chant repertoires in general is something that we know next to nothing about, but there is reason to believe that it involved teamwork and was perhaps initiated by a senior figure such as a bishop. I think that a cathedral chapter had the capacity and infrastructure to do this. Moreover, since the cathedral church was the normal place for saints' offices to be performed, the work of compiling an office was most likely conducted as a collaboration at a chapter, close to the cathedral liturgy. The work could have been initiated by a senior cleric, such as the bishop, who oversaw the work and

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<sup>41</sup> An impressive list of examples is found in Kelly, 'Medieval Composers', table 1.

approved it. Drafts were probably tested in the actual community where it was intended that the office would be sung, before eventually achieving a codified version that could be transmitted and copied. The borrowing of melodies was done in a careful way, building on role models that could be used to reinforce the saint's importance as standing in a line of Christian luminaries. Often, this process is hidden and we only see a name and the finished product, and as such this strategy goes well with the view of a repertoire with one named author.

Finally some words on the terminology used in medieval sources. 'Compose', 'dictate', and 'compile' are examples of terms that are all used in the Middle Ages to talk about creating music or music+text. Kelly's analysis reveals that the most common word for this procedure simply is *fecit* (made), which leaves us with little information about how the work was conducted.<sup>42</sup> It is important to highlight this in this chapter, because authorship and legitimization are closely linked to each other. Another factor is the close connection between word and tone. Since Gregorian chant is a genre that has text as its basic premise, the relationship between the melody and the chant text is close, and medieval sources therefore did not always make the distinction between whether only text or text *and* melody are considered. This is why medieval texts can speak about a certain person having created a chant repertoire, when it in fact concerns contrafacts where the music cannot be ascribed to the author. That is why it is not problematic for offices to be contrafacts and/or for adaptations to have a named author.

## Conclusion

In this chapter I have sought to show how legitimization in various ways was expressed in saints' offices, and how legitimization was demonstrated in this repertoire. I have pointed to the importance of intertextual aspects as part of the legitimization process. Those who made (*fecit*) these repertoires worked from an immensely large stock of chants they had learnt by rote, in a world that was permeated with the practical performance for several hours every day. This material was used and adapted over and over again, forming examples that people could learn from in order to become better Christians. Furthermore, I have discussed some of the practical circumstances concerning the cult of saints which often are overlooked in the study of saints' offices such as the organization of a saint's office, ranks, and typical content and where it could be expected to be placed within an office. The creation of saints' offices is a practical manifestation

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<sup>42</sup> Kelly, 'Medieval Composers', p. 112.

of the legitimization of elite power, and should not be studied separately if we want to understand how medieval people experienced this veneration. I have also given some examples of how saints' *vitae* were transmitted into a liturgical context. Even if lay people had most likely heard many (parts of) saints' offices, we must not forget that a saint's office always was determined by forces beyond the realm of ordinary people: the elites. Saints' offices are not folklore, but carefully worked out repertoires in order to create a certain narrative in a multimodal web of text, music, and performance.

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## 15. St Hedwig of Silesia\*

*The First Dynastic Saint of the Piasts and the Legitimization of Power at a Time of Change in the Thirteenth Century*

The holiness of rulers is an important but also rather complex phenomenon. Needless to say, one of the most important elements of the legitimization of power throughout the Middle Ages was a mandate from God. The sacralization of a ruler's power took many forms; however, the personal holiness of members of the dynasty wasn't the most popular. There were various reasons for this. First and foremost, achieving the ideal of holiness was not an easy task, especially considering the ruler's responsibilities in the temporal world. Moreover the ideals of sainthood — chastity, humility, and the renunciation of worldly affairs and riches — often interfered with a ruler's duties. Therefore the saint patron who came from the family line could provide important ideological support for his or her descendants, rather than during their own lifetime. On the other hand, after their death saintly family members quickly became important intercessors between God and the ruling family, providing therefore an important contribution to the legitimization of power. The absence of a charismatic saint who represented the dynasty during the time of the

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\* The research leading to these results has received funding from the Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2014–2021 (2019/34/H/HS3/00500). This chapter is a part of a joint research project of the University of Warsaw and the University of Oslo 'Symbolic Resources and Political Structures on the Periphery: Legitimization of the ELITES in Poland and Norway, c. 1000–1300'.

**Anna Agnieszka Dryblak** • is currently a Postdoctoral Researcher at the Faculty of History, University of Warsaw. Her research interests include medieval monasticism, the role of medieval female monastic foundations in social and political structures, queenship, political and religious culture of the Early and High Middle Ages, and the cult of saints.

*The Cult of Saints and Legitimization of Elite Power in East Central and Northern Europe up to 1300*, ed. by Grzegorz Pac, Steffen Hope, and Jón Viðar Sigurðsson, Comparative Perspectives on Medieval History, 2 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2024), pp. 385–412

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10.1484/M.CPMH-EB.5.137545

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early Piast rulers was troubling for many medievalists,<sup>1</sup> especially since the neighbouring countries boasted iconic saints such as Wenceslas of Bohemia<sup>2</sup> and Stephen of Hungary. Aleksander Gieysztor explained this lack of dynastic sanctity by the resistance of elites on the one hand and on the other by the expansion of the cult of St Adalbert which had achieved such great influence that promoting a competing holy figure became impossible.<sup>3</sup> Indeed, there are no instances of this in the first centuries of the Polish monarchs. But perhaps this should not be that surprising, since, as Grzegorz Pac has recently shown, the ideal of the monarch-confessor as saint was hardly common in that period. On the contrary, the monarchs of that period achieved sainthood in spite of their roles as rulers.<sup>4</sup> After all, the position and duties of a ruler led them to commit many acts which were hardly aligned with the ideals of a Christian life.

The situation was similar for female saints from the ruling families. In this case, it is also difficult to find examples of those who both performed their official duties and simultaneously strove to achieve their saintly aspirations. Those with the *odor sanctitatis* abandoned their regal trappings, gave themselves over to asceticism and sought to practise chastity, which did not entirely fit with the duties of a medieval ruler's wife.<sup>5</sup> Although we find some female saints of this sort in East Central European countries — e.g. Ludmila of Bohemia († 921), who was married to Bořivoj I (870–889), the founder of the Přemyslid dynasty,<sup>6</sup> or Cunigunde of Luxembourg, the wife of Emperor Henry II (1002–1033) — neither can be seen as classical examples of a medieval duchess, queen, or empress, since Ludmila was a martyr, while Cunigunde remained a virgin. Those who did manage to combine the duties of a queen and sanctity are relatively rare, such as Margaret of Scotland (1070–1093), who did not abstain from participating in life of the court, supporting her husband and at the same time meeting the needs of the poor and those of the Church.<sup>7</sup>

Although the Piast dynasty does not lack saintly, pious, or educated women, there is nothing to indicate that any of them possessed *fama sanctitatis*. Yet some historians believed that Doubravka (965–977), the wife of Mieszko I (c. 960–992) was one such example, since she was

1 Górski, 'La naissance des États et le "roi-saint"'; on this subject, see Pac, 'Problem świętości władców', pp. 90–91; also subsequent pages concerning archaeological research.

2 For more on the cult of St Wenceslas, see the chapters by Kalhous and Bylinka in this volume.

3 Gieysztor, 'Święci polityczni'.

4 Pac, 'Problem świętości władców'. On the difficulty for lay people of achieving sainthood, see: Vauchez, 'Lay People's Sanctity', pp. 23–24.

5 Pac, 'Ograniczenia żeńskiej świętości królewskiej'.

6 For more on the cult of St Ludmila see Pac's chapter in this volume.

7 Pac, 'Ograniczenia żeńskiej świętości królewskiej', pp. 449–50.

described by medieval chroniclers as a model of a *mulier suadens*.<sup>8</sup> It is not possible, however, to find any evidence in the sources of the existence of a cult around her or even of her holiness.<sup>9</sup> As noted above, the first centuries of Piast rule in Poland were dominated by the cult of St Adalbert, and we can find no members of the ruling family among the other saints who were used to provide support for the Polish rulers. Although the bond of friendship and cooperation between the Bohemian bishop-martyr and the Polish duke was unquestionable and Adalbert's patronage was vital for strengthening the religious and ideological basis of the young monarchy, shortly after his death the conflict between the Polish and Bohemian monarchies arose and in 1038 the Bohemian duke Břetislav I (1035–1055) invaded Gniezno, taking St Adalbert's relics to Prague. This example shows how fragile the relationship between the monarchy and the saint, who were not related by blood, might be. Having a saintly family member able to provide intercession was an invaluable way of legitimizing power — the patron created an eternal bond between the dynasty and God, becoming a part of the heavenly court and standing up for the family successors. Thus the monarchy could enjoy prosperity thanks to God's support and the rulers might hope for divine mercy thanks to the help of their saintly relative. Moreover, the saintly member of the dynasty could also sanctify it, transmitting divine grace — the sanctity could spread in the family, making it what André Vauchez named *beata stirps*.<sup>10</sup>

For all of these reasons the cult of St Hedwig as the first saint to be part of the Polish dynasty and at the same time a representative of *beata stirps* (St Elizabeth's aunt) is vital element of power legitimization for thirteenth-century Piast power. Its role appears to have been even more important when we take into account the new and complex situation of the Polish dynasty in this period — the progressive partition of the monarchy and rivalry between different branches of the family, which affected the need for new ways to legitimize power.

## Daughter of Berthold and Wife of Henry the Bearded

The first dynastic patron saint to emerge from within the Piast family was Hedwig of Silesia, the daughter of Count Berthold IV of Andechs

8 Banaszkievicz, 'Dąbrówka "christianissima"', esp. pp. 280–84; on Thietmar's chronicle record, Pac, *Women in the Piast Dynasty*, pp. 25–63.

9 Pac, *Women in the Piast Dynasty*, pp. 53–54, Pac, 'Ograniczenia żeńskiej świętości królewskiej', p. 448, Michałowski, 'Restauratio Poloniae', p. 23; cf. the alleged cult of Doubravka in: Wiszewski, *Domus Boleslai*, pp. 575–76.

10 Vauchez, 'Beata stirps'; Klaniczay, *Holy Rulers*, pp. 195–243, Michalski, *Kobiety i świętość*, pp. 172–74, Michałowski, 'Genealogie Kingi', pp. 806–07.

(1172–1204) and Agnes von Rochlitz (1172–1195) of the Wettins, who was born sometime between 1174 and 1180.<sup>11</sup> Although the origins of their titles date back to the tenth century, the Andechs reached the height of their political influence in the Reich in the second half of the twelfth century. They gradually enlarged their domains, but above all established close relationships with the Staufer and other noble and royal houses, such as the Wettins, the Capetians, the Árpáds, and the Piasts.<sup>12</sup> In the first half of the thirteenth century they would also highlight their kinship with two important female saints — St Hedwig and St Elizabeth.

Contemporary sources don't provide us with much information about Hedwig herself. She married Henry the Bearded (1201–1238) in the late 1180s or early 1190s.<sup>13</sup> The couple had seven children. After the death of her consort in 1238, Hedwig retired to the Cistercian convent in Trzebnica, founded by her late husband and where her daughter Gertrude was the abbess. She spent the last years of her life there and died in 1243.

The duke whom Hedwig married at the end of the twelfth century in Silesia came from a family which was well established there, but was also facing challenges in relation to the political changes at the time in the Piast realm. Since Bolesław the Wrymouth (1102–1138) divided his succession between his sons, the ever-more prolific dynasty had to find different ways to legitimize its power in ever smaller and more numerous dukedoms. One of them was Silesia, where Henry the Bearded ruled, which in the twelfth century was already divided into smaller dukedoms. However, even at the beginning of Henry's rule, he sought to extend his power over other Silesian territories and in his later years he endeavoured to rule over Lesser and Greater Poland. Moreover, the principle of agnatic seniority, through which power passed to the eldest living member of the dynasty, began to become less relevant in the second half of the twelfth century and soon after disappeared altogether.<sup>14</sup> All members of the dynasty were *domini naturales*: their right to rule was unquestionable from a legal perspective, but their rivalries also became more marked, leading to a continuous jostling for pre-eminence among the dukes. Within this specific context, the tools used by the elite families of the Empire, one of which included the Andechs, to legitimize their power, as well as the experience gained in doing so, could have provided the inspiration behind the strengthening of

11 Jasiński, *Rodowód Piastów śląskich*, pp. 89–90, Gottschalk, 'Das Geburtsjahr der h. Hedwig.'

12 On the significance and position of the family, see Gottschalk, *St Hedwig Herzogin von Schlesien*, pp. 24–73, Michalski, *Kobiety i świętość*, pp. 61–64, Schütz, 'Das Geschlecht der Andechs-Meranier', pp. 37–49, Weller, *Die Heiratspolitik*, pp. 691–93, 735–36, Zientara, *Henryk Brodaty*, pp. 112–14.

13 Jasiński, *Rodowód Piastów śląskich*, pp. 89–90.

14 In the second half of the thirteenth century, there was no established hierarchy between the dukes, although there was evidently an awareness of familial unity: Pauk, 'Regnum in se divisum', pp. 82–92.

ducal power in various realms.<sup>15</sup> Those strategies were used by the Piasts who ruled the duchies of the divided Poland.

During this time, Henry the Bearded was one of the most prominent Piasts. He also became the duke of Kraków and Greater Poland in the 1230s. The abundant diplomatic documents left by Henry and his son, Henry II the Pious, allow us to see how the structures of the duchy were shaped and how its foundations were laid. Using these sources, we can analyse many aspects: the building of political ties with other members, the introduction of novel social and economic solutions, and finally the planning and implementation of an extensive programme of ecclesiastical foundations.<sup>16</sup>

However, it is difficult to assess the role of Hedwig in this enterprise. Sources from the first half of the thirteenth century, mostly diplomatic ones, fail to provide much information about the activities and the role of the duchess. Even the foundation of Trzebnica Abbey, the first community of Cistercian nuns in Poland — often attributed to Hedwig because of her hagiography — is attributed by contemporary sources solely to her husband, Henry the Bearded.<sup>17</sup> Although we shall not be examining Hedwig's actions during her lifetime, this point is worth remembering when analysing her cult and its importance for the legitimization of the power of the Silesian Piasts.

## Henry's Dynastic Nunnery

One of the first acts of Hedwig's husband Henry the Bearded as duke was the establishment of a nunnery in Trzebnica in 1202. This foundation was important for various reasons: as an inaugural foundation of the duke, a place of prayers for his prosperity, and also as a dynastic convent where the female members of the dynasty might serve God in the future and thus support the secular power of their kin. The rich diplomatic material listing the donations and privileges granted to the convent during Henry

<sup>15</sup> Pauk, *'Regnum in se divisum'*, pp. 78–80.

<sup>16</sup> See Pauk, *'Das Stiftungsprogramm der schlesischen Piasten'*.

<sup>17</sup> Even her first known donation to the monastery was made only after the death of Henry, Dryblak, *'Bamberg i Trzebnica'*, pp. 56–57, Dryblak, *Piastowskie fundacje klasztorów żeńskich*, pp. 82–85, Rossignol, *'The Authority and Charter Usage'*, pp. 71–72. See also Kutzner, *"Na drodze ku chwale"*; Zientara, *Henryk Brodaty*, p. 139. Some uncertainty regarding who was actually the founder and the main benefactor of the Trzebnica community can also be noted in sources originated in papal circles — this is best exemplified by the sermons of Odo of Châteauroux. In one of them he links the foundation of the monastery with the person of the duchess, in the other he corrects himself by mentioning Henry the Bearded as the founder of the monastery, Krafft, *'Drei Predigten des Kardinals Odo'*, pp. 486 n. 53, 489 n. 69.

the Bearded's reign fails to mention the duchess. Afterwards, she certainly granted the convent some lands nearby Trzebnica, although these properties were legally assigned to its abbess, Gertrude, Hedwig's daughter.<sup>18</sup> However, we can assume that Hedwig — along with her brother — played some role in the introduction of the idea of dynastic, familial monasteries in Poland.<sup>19</sup> Having been raised at Kitzingen Abbey, and having a sister who was an abbess there, she was certainly aware of the significance of female monastic foundations in the religious and political landscape of a realm.<sup>20</sup> In Poland, this model had not yet been implemented by the Piasts. But the beginning of the thirteenth century — which coincided with the start of Henry the Bearded's reign — was a very special and difficult moment for the young duke. In 1201, after the death of his father, Bolesław I the Tall (1163–1201), Henry had to face his paternal uncle, Mieszko IV Tanglefoot (1163–1211), in the dispute over Opole, part of his *patrimonium*.<sup>21</sup> Moreover, this period also saw an increase in the divisions within the Piast lands. This situation called for novel ideas and solutions, which would strengthen the position of a young ruler and the basis of his power. In this context the foundation of a family nunnery should be seen as an inaugural act and therefore a very important element in providing the legitimization of power at the beginning of Henry the Bearded's reign.

Trzebnica Abbey's act of foundation informs us of the presence of members of the Andechs family in Poland when the nunnery was erected — Hedwig's brother, Egbert, and her paternal uncle, Poppon.<sup>22</sup> It suggests that Henry created this initial foundation — a Cistercian nunnery in Trzebnica — with the help of his wife's family, although it does not specifically mention Hedwig herself. The first abbess of the nunnery was Petrisa, Hedwig's former teacher at Kitzingen. After Petrisa's death, Henry and Hedwig's daughter Gertrude assumed the office, which remained in the hands of the Piasts until the sixteenth century.<sup>23</sup>

The special role of this Cistercian community of nuns is confirmed in *Liber foundationis claustrae sanctae Mariae Virginis in Heinrichow*. Its author

18 *Schlesisches Urkundenbuch*, II, no. 234, pp. 141–42; Dryblak, *Piastowskie fundacje klasztorów żeńskich*, pp. 117–18.

19 Kanior, 'Pierwsze fundacje cysterek', p. 40, Silnicki, *Dzieje i ustrój Kościoła*, p. 114.

20 Dryblak, *Piastowskie fundacje klasztorów żeńskich*, pp. 86–88, Pauk, "Program fundacyjny" Piastów śląskich', p. 91.

21 Dryblak, *Piastowskie fundacje klasztorów żeńskich*, pp. 73–76. On the dispute, see Zientara, *Henryk Brodaty*, pp. 117–19, Mika, *Mieszko książę raciborski*, pp. 174–79, Rajman, 'Utworzenie księstw raciborskiego i opolskiego', pp. 82–86.

22 *Schlesisches Urkundenbuch*, I, no. 83, p. 57. See also Dryblak, 'Bamberg i Trzebnica', pp. 57–60, Dryblak, *Piastowskie fundacje klasztorów żeńskich*, pp. 86–88, Felskau, *Agnes von Böhmen*, p. 103.

23 Dryblak, *Piastowskie fundacje klasztorów żeńskich*, pp. 119–20, 126–27, Wiszewski, 'Związki fundatorów', p. 311, Grüger, 'Der Konvent von Trebnitz', p. 85, Walter, *Z dziejów polskości*, pp. 10–11.

described Henry the Bearded as having underlined the importance attributed by the Silesian dukes to the inaugural foundation: 'As the memorial of Lubiąż is attributed to my father, and that of Trzebnica to me, I wish the monastery at Henryków to be the foundation and memorial of my son Henry'.<sup>24</sup>

## Creators of the Cult?

In summary, our knowledge of Hedwig's actions, from her arrival in Poland to her death in 1243, is quite limited. What we do know is mostly a hagiographical creation. Yet, the cult surrounding the duchess appeared and flourished almost immediately after her death.<sup>25</sup> In the initial period of its development, it was mostly limited to the elite circles connected with the dynasty (its broader influence can only be observed from the fifteenth century onward).<sup>26</sup> The family monastery collected proof of her sainthood, mostly miracles, and her tomb was cared for by specially chosen nuns — *custodes sepulchri*.<sup>27</sup> There seems to be no doubt that her family — both the ruling dynasty and the abbess of Trzebnica — were attempting to spread the idea of Hedwig's sainthood. It is also confirmed by the bull of canonization, in which the pope mentioned the efforts of the dukes, the nunnery and its abbess to obtain recognition of her veneration, which were made during the pontificate of Urban IV (1261–1264).<sup>28</sup> Those endeavours must have been quite vigorous, since the Silesian duchess was canonized on 26 March 1267, only twenty-four years after her death. It is probable that the canonization of another important saint for the Piast dynasty — St Stanislaus († 1079) — which had taken place in 1253, was a reference point for the Silesian branch of the family and the experience gained by the Polish ecclesiastical hierarchy in that case also helped in their efforts to receive official recognition for Hedwig's veneration.<sup>29</sup>

Hedwig's sainthood very quickly became an important element of dynastic tradition. Its vital importance can be seen in the relationship between the duchess and her daughter-in-law, Anna of Silesia, wife of Henry II the Pious (1238–1241), as presented in the hagiographies of both

24 English translation by Górecki, *The Text and the World*, p. 41; see *Liber fundationis claustrii Sancte Marie Virginis in Heinrichow*, p. 114.

25 It is possible that Hedwig already had reputation for saintliness before her death, Michalski, *Kobiety i świętość*, pp. 66–68, Suchoń, 'Święta Jadwiga', pp. 92–99.

26 Karłowska-Kamzowa, *Fundacje artystyczne*, pp. 127–28, Manikowska, 'Legenda św. Jadwigi', p. 159.

27 Michalski, *Kobiety i świętość*, p. 67.

28 *Schlesisches Urkundenbuch*, IV, no. 15, pp. 22–23.

29 Suchoń, 'Święta Jadwiga', pp. 93–94. On St Stanislaus' cult, see also Morawska's chapter in this volume.

St Hedwig and St Anne (1238–1241).<sup>30</sup> Although the cult of Anne was only regional, it is noteworthy that the sermons of Odo of Châteauroux, the promoter of the cult of Hedwig, emphasize the multiplication of Hedwig's sanctity in Anne.<sup>31</sup> When reading the *vita* of Henry the Bearded's wife, we also get the sense that her son's piety and glorious death (Henry the Pious died in the battle of Legnica, defending Silesia against the Mongol invasion in 1241) was in some way her merit. The hagiographical tradition of the duchess presents how she sanctified the whole dynasty. Hedwig thus became a source for establishing and strengthening the sacral dimension of the legitimization of power for the Silesian branch of the Piast dynasty, making it unique in comparison to the others.

But nonetheless, when Gertrude, the abbess of Trzebnica, asked the Cistercian Chapter to celebrate the anniversary of Hedwig's death, she intended to commemorate not only the anniversary of the death of her mother, but also those of her father and brother.<sup>32</sup> It is interesting to observe that the abbess took care to memorialize the closest members of her family without making any distinction with regard to Hedwig.

### ***Vitae* – Inspired Creations**

The first *vita* of St Hedwig, which has unfortunately not been preserved, must have been written during the preparations for the official recognition of Hedwig's veneration.<sup>33</sup> It is mentioned by the anonymous author of the *Vita maior*, who recalled a compilation authored by Engelbert, a Cistercian monk from Lubiąż.<sup>34</sup> The recognition of the cult inspired the creation of new hagiographies — the *Vita maior*, *Vita minor* and the *Tractatus sive speculum genealoye sancte Hedwigis* — texts which were of special significance for the development of her cult and the role it played for the Piast dynasty. The fact that the *Vita maior* is the most comprehensive hagiographical work created within the territories ruled by the Piasts

30 *Vita Annae ducissae Silesiae*, p. 657. In the *vita* of St Hedwig, the two duchesses are often shown together.

31 'Nutum suam ad omnem sanctitatem induxit, adeo ut spiritus eius videretur duplicatus in ea, sicut spirytus Helye in Heliseo', Krafft, 'Drei Predigten des Kardinals Odo', p. 492.

32 *Schlesisches Urkundenbuch*, III, no. 53.

33 There is a sixteenth-century tradition which mentions a *vita* written by a Dominican named Szymon, some historians therefore consider him as the author of the first hagiography of the saint, whereas some assume that there were two earlier texts — one by Engelbert and one by a different Szymon; it is also possible that the later tradition provides incorrect information, see Mrozowicz, 'Św. Jadwiga', p. 603, Michalski, *Kobiety i świętość*, p. 42, Suchoń, 'Święta Jadwiga', p. 98, Pater, 'Wartości historyczne', p. 182.

34 *Vita sanctae Hedwigis*, p. 511; on the author see Jażdżewski, 'Engelberci czy Engelbert?', pp. 189–94, Michalski, *Kobiety i świętość*, pp. 42–44, Mrozowicz, 'Św. Jadwiga', pp. 602–03, Pater, 'Wartości historyczne', p. 184.

shows its significance and uniqueness.<sup>35</sup> The *Vita minor* is in the form of a summary. The Genealogy gives more specific information about Hedwig's forebears and her descendants up to Władysław, the son of Henry V the Fat, duke of Wrocław, Jawor and Legnica (1296–1312), illustrating the qualities and piety of the Piasts.<sup>36</sup>

It is likely that all three texts were written by the same anonymous author. He was probably a Franciscan friar, since he defines himself as 'pauper et modicus, collegio pauperum aggregatus'.<sup>37</sup> Some similarities to the hagiographies of St Francis have been pointed out, which would seem to confirm the author's origins.<sup>38</sup> Ewald Walter proposed Heinrich von Brehna as the author of the *vitae* and genealogy.<sup>39</sup> It is likely that the author of the *vitae* and genealogy, whose name remains unknown to us, was a Franciscan from the St Jacob monastery in Wrocław, another Piast foundation which was closely connected with the ruling family.<sup>40</sup> Although we have no direct information suggesting that the creation of these texts was inspired by members of the ruling dynasty — especially in the case of the Genealogy, which emphasizes the exceptional character of the family — such a link would seem evident.<sup>41</sup>

As the author of the *vitae* pointed out, his work relied on canonical acts, other documents and the compilation by Engelbert.<sup>42</sup> The texts were completed in 1300.<sup>43</sup> In the medieval codices, the three works are usually accompanied by the papal canonization bull and homily.<sup>44</sup>

35 Michalski, *Kobiety i świętość*, p. 39.

36 Klaniczay, *Holy Rulers*, p. 220. As the Hungarian historian stated: 'All the branches are holy if the root is holy (Rom. 11:16) was one of the leitmotifs of the legend of St Hedwig'.

37 *Vita sanctae Hedwigis*, p. 641; Semkowicz, 'Wstęp', p. 502. A different hypothesis was proposed by Gottschalk, *St Hedwig*, pp. 14–15.

38 Clasen, 'Bonaventura als Erneuerer', pp. 52–62.

39 Walter, 'Professor Sophronius Clasen', p. 173.

40 Jasiński, 'Franciszkanin Henryk z Breny', pp. 340–50; Jasiński, 'Genealogia św. Jadwigi', pp. 197–202, Mrozowicz, 'Św. Jadwiga', p. 603, Michalski, *Kobiety i świętość*, pp. 40–42.

Jasiński pointed out the particularly close relationship between the family of Henry the Fat and the Franciscan and Clarian monasteries in Wrocław.

41 Jasiński, 'Genealogia św. Jadwigi', pp. 202–03. Cf. Walter, 'Professor Sophronius Clasen', p. 173, Michalski, *Kobiety i świętość*, p. 46.

42 *Vita sanctae Hedwigis*, pp. 510–11.

43 *Vita sanctae Hedwigis*, p. 641; Semkowicz, 'Wstęp', p. 503, Michalski, *Kobiety i świętość*, pp. 39–40, Pater, *Wartości historyczne*, p. 184; in spite of some different conceptions it is relatively certain that the Genealogy was written during the same period as both *vitae*, Jasiński, 'Beatrycza' pp. 105–07.

44 Michalski, *Kobiety i świętość*, pp. 38–39, Semkowicz, 'Wstęp', pp. 504–07, Mrozowicz, 'Św. Jadwiga', pp. 605–06.

## Depictions of the Family and the Saint in the Hagiography

Let us therefore take a closer look at the hagiographical creation of St Hedwig's image. The author of the *vitae* focused on the aspects of female sainthood, specific for earlier, classical, but also for more contemporary, mendicant ideals. Hedwig fulfilled her duties as a wife, while at the same time practising chastity whenever possible. She was generous towards the poor and the sick and attended to the needs of the family's ecclesiastical foundations.

Hedwig's relationship with Henry the Bearded is described as being both conventional and exceptional. She attended to her state and marital duties, but was also strict in observing sexual abstinence during penance, feasts, and pregnancy.<sup>45</sup> She wore fine clothing only when it was necessary and, following Jesus's example, she rejected material excess, abandoned the family's castle, and moved to Trzebnica Abbey.<sup>46</sup> After the birth of their last child, the couple decided to take vows of chastity and spent the last thirty years of their lives apart.<sup>47</sup> Hedwig limited her contact with Henry to avoid any accusations of impropriety, only meeting with him in front of witnesses and solely discussing important matters such as acts of piety, clerical appointments or works of charity. Even when Henry was ill, Hedwig did not stay with him, unless accompanied by her daughter-in-law and other women.<sup>48</sup>

At the same time, the *Vita* leaves no doubt about two matters. The first is that Henry the Bearded was himself extremely pious and understood his wife's needs. Secondly, that thanks to her — and obviously *gratia Dei* — he started to live like a monk ('*quasi monachus factus erat*'). The hagiographer spared no effort in praising the duke, noting his humble spirit, the religiosity of his heart, and his openness towards the 'ordinary people' — the poor and uneducated. He describes Henry as being happier to receive a modest gift from the poor than a lavish one from the rich. The author concludes: 'the influence of the duchess made that in the company of the saint and the pious woman also the consort became a saint man. Although according to the law she was submitted to Henry, she became his mistress in the virtuous and pious life.'<sup>49</sup> However, as a ruler he could not avoid certain acts. For example, enforcing the laws also

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45 *Vita sanctae Hedwigis*, p. 515.

46 *Vita sanctae Hedwigis*, pp. 518–19. Living near the convent, she nevertheless did not take vows — as her hagiographer writes, her daughter Gertrude tried to persuade her, but the duchess wanted to preserve her ability to give alms and help the poor. *Vita Sanctae Hedwigis*, pp. 519–20.

47 *Vita sanctae Hedwigis*, p. 516.

48 *Vita sanctae Hedwigis*, p. 516.

49 *Vita sanctae Hedwigis*, p. 519.

required him to sentence people to death. Some of the miracles listed mention interventions by the duchess. She was always trying to convince her husband that even if a man was guilty of a crime, such a severe penalty was unnecessarily cruel.<sup>50</sup> One of them even describes the duke ordering the execution of an enemy without further delay, because he wished to avoid Hedwig's protests.<sup>51</sup> We can thus see how the duchess exceeded her husband's piety. These incidents also illustrate one reason why St Hedwig distanced herself from the life of the court — the secular necessities of being the consort of a ruler obviously posed a grave danger to her own salvation.

The second matter about which the hagiographer showed absolutely no doubt was that Hedwig, even when separated from her husband, 'loved him, as he was a virtuous man and friendly to his people.' Wishing to avoid a fratricidal war between Christians, she went to Duke Konrad, who had incarcerated her husband, imploring him to release Henry — and her mission was of course successful.<sup>52</sup> Although Henry's death affected her deeply, she remained calm, consoling the nuns who mourned the founder and patron of the convent at Trzebnica.<sup>53</sup>

The author of the *Vita* convinced his readers that both spouses had lived a saintly life (although the duchess exceeded her husband's piety) and that their relationship — which could appear somewhat cold and distant — also contained a deeper and eternal bond.

Hedwig's religiosity affected her entire family. This can be seen in both her daughter Gertrude's choice to take vows and the fact that her son came to be known as Henry the Pious.<sup>54</sup> Henry's untimely death was a shock to all, yet his mother was certain that he had attained eternal salvation and consoled her daughter, who was barely able to accept the death of her brother.<sup>55</sup> The saintliness of the duchess undoubtedly served as a multiplier for the grace of God within her family, making it a sort of *beata stirps*.

Only two of Hedwig's seven children reached adulthood — Gertrude and Henry the Pious.<sup>56</sup> As the hagiographer made clear, Henry was deeply devoted to God and performed many acts of charity. He was also a brave Christian knight, who died defending the *populus Dei* from the Mongol invasion. His wife Anne, the daughter-in-law of Hedwig and the sister of

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50 *Vita sanctae Hedwigis*, p. 555.

51 *Vita sanctae Hedwigis*, pp. 555–56.

52 *Vita sanctae Hedwigis*, pp. 524–25.

53 *Vita sanctae Hedwigis*, p. 525.

54 *Vita sanctae Hedwigis*, p. 515.

55 *Vita sanctae Hedwigis*, pp. 525–26.

56 *Geneologia sanctae Hedwigis*, p. 646.

St Agnes of Prague, is portrayed as a companion and pupil of the duchess and as having been raised under her supervision.<sup>57</sup>

Gertrude, on the other hand, followed in the steps of her pious parents, choosing chastity and a life devoted to God in a Cistercian nunnery. The youngest daughter of Henry and Hedwig was betrothed to Otto VIII of Wittelsbach. But after the latter's assassination of Philip of Swabia (1198–1208), and his own death, these plans had to be changed.<sup>58</sup> It was therefore decided that Gertrude would become a nun and the abbess of the family's foundation at Trzebnica. The nunnery received a generous donation from her father, Henry the Bearded, on the occasion of her vows in 1212.<sup>59</sup> After the death of Petrissa, Trzebnica's first abbess, Gertrude took over the role, most probably in 1232. She went on to become a very prominent figure in Silesia — eighty documents issued by her have been preserved up to this day.<sup>60</sup> Her influence also extended beyond its borders, trying to implant the concept of dynastic Cistercian nunneries in Greater Poland (Owińska).<sup>61</sup> She was also undoubtedly active in the attempts to have her mother canonized and was one of the most important promoters of Hedwig's cult.<sup>62</sup>

The hagiography provides us with a very interesting record of Gertrude's role as a dynastic representative within the nunnery. In St Hedwig's *Vitae*, she discusses the location of Hedwig's future burial place with her mother. Full of humility, Hedwig desired to be buried in the cemetery. Faced with her daughter's objections, Hedwig proposed the chapel of St John, where the Piast children were buried. But Gertrude maintained her objections, first proposing her father's tomb and then that of her brother. In the end, she decided to bury her mother near the altar of St Peter, so that the nuns would always be able to see her tomb.<sup>63</sup> The author depicts Gertrude as representing the interests of the dynasty, taking care of *memoria*, while also probably considering how the cult of the saintly duchess should develop after her death. Other sources confirm that Gertrude made concrete efforts to create a place of dynastic remembrance at Trzebnica. As previously mentioned, we know from a document written by the abbot of Lubiąż that the Cistercian General Chapter consented to

57 Michalski, *Kobiety i świętość*, p. 78.

58 Kaczmarek, '... ut et matris et matertere memoriam confoveret', p. 332, Zientara, *Henryk Brodaty*, pp. 169–72.

59 *Schlesisches Urkundenbuch*, I, no. 132, pp. 95–96.

60 Kozłowska-Budkowa, 'Gertruda', p. 407, Młynarska-Kaletynowa, 'Rozwój majętności', pp. 230–44, Kaczmarek, '... ut et matris et matertere memoriam confoveret', pp. 340–42.

61 *Kodeks Dyplomatyczny Wielkopolski*, I, 307 and 308; Dryblak, *Piastowskie fundacje*, pp. 165–166.

62 Sutowicz, 'Starania polskiego episkopatu', pp. 9–26, Kaczmarek, '... ut et matris et matertere memoriam confoveret', pp. 336–38.

63 *Vita sanctae Hedwigis*, pp. 577–78.

her request to hold a solemn commemoration of the anniversary of her mother's death, but also to Gertrude's election as an abbess.<sup>64</sup> This consent was granted just after the same General Chapter imposed penance on the abbess due to the fact that she was receiving noblewomen and their families in the nunnery, which contravened its Rule.<sup>65</sup> Hedwig's daughter is therefore presented as the guardian of her mother's tomb and cult, but also of the family's *memoria*. Her actions were focused on these two closely related issues.

In conclusion, the hagiographer depicts a family sanctified by the presence and example of St Hedwig. The entire family gains from this and in the end, thanks to her guidance, the members of the Piast dynasty establish a very close relationship with God and achieve salvation. This special characteristic of St Hedwig's family is emphasized in the *Genealogia sanctae Hedwigis*, part of the *vitae*. This image created thereby in hagiographical tradition was a message targeted to the members of the family on the one hand, assuring them of their special position and divine favour, but also demanding that they face the challenges relating to this privilege. It was also a message aimed at the other political competitors — both other members of the Piast family and Bohemian rulers. Thus, the descendants of Hedwig and Henry's right to rule became unquestionable, because its source was sanctity of the duchess and through her — in a way also her family.

## Family Celebration

The last chapter and the culmination of the *Vita* describes the translation of Hedwig's relics, which followed her papal canonization and which was accompanied by miracles and signs of her sainthood. The *elevatio* of her body was performed in the presence of Duke Konrad of Głogów (1251–1274), his sons and his sister Agnes, who succeeded Gertrude as the abbess of the Trzebnica convent.<sup>66</sup> Other prominent figures were also present during the festivities which accompanied her translation: 'Ottokar king of the Bohemians, Władysław, bishop of Salzburg [the son of Henry the Pious — A. A. D], his brothers, Silesian dukes, the grandchildren of St Hedwig and dukes of Opole, with their knights, according to the dignity of their state and their secular dignity, glittering, bringing splendour and

64 *Schlesisches Urkundenbuch*, III, no. 53.

65 *Statuta Capitulum Generalium Ordinis Cisterciensis*, II, pp. 368 and 389. As penance, the abbess was forbidden to use her stall in the choir for forty days.

66 *Vita sanctae Hedwigis*, pp. 630–31.

decorating the fields around the Trzebnica monastery with the multitude of colours of their tents.<sup>67</sup>

The author underlines the presence of many noble guests during the ceremony, led by Přemysl Ottokar II (1253–1278). However, in his description of the *elevatio*, the special place of the Piast dynasty was underlined by the fact that it was Konrad with his children and sister, who took part in the opening of her tomb. Being the saint's closest family, they were also entitled to be close to her relics. There is no doubt that they also benefited from her special protection.

Interestingly enough, immediately after her canonization, the convent of Trzebnica was not very eager to share the relics of the saint. The *Vita* does not mention parts of Hedwig's remains being offered to the noble guests and shortly after the translation, Kunigunda, the wife of Ottokar II (1261–1285), was looking for support and intervention in order to urge the abbess of Trzebnica to send part of the relics to her.<sup>68</sup>

The other aspect of St Hedwig is apparent in the papal bull of canonization. While glorifying Hedwig's virtues and pioussness, the pope did not avoid the matter of her origins and family connections. He underlined that she was descended from an illustrious line which had given the world many crowned rulers and that, thanks to the grace of Christ and her devotion to God, she had improved the nobility of her family. The pope mentioned this in both the bull of canonization and his homily.<sup>69</sup> Her husband, Duke Henry, was a famous (*clare memorie*), and, in the deepest sense, a Christian ruler (*dux christianissimus*).<sup>70</sup> Most importantly, as the bull stated, she had given birth to Duke Henry II the Pious, who had died a martyr.<sup>71</sup> This same theme is presented in a broader manner in Clement IV's homily. While emphasizing the noble origins of Hedwig and her marriage being the *sui generis* union of her own virtues and those of the Piasts, the pope noted the birth of Henry II, whom he called another Maccabee, protecting the people of Christ against the Mongols with his sword. Through his death in attempting to do so, Henry achieved glory and the mantle of martyrdom. And similarly the duchess added to her own nobility the even more noble glamour of sanctity.<sup>72</sup> We can see

67 *Vita sanctae Hedwigis*, pp. 631–32.

68 Kaczmarek and Witkowski, 'Dzieje relikwii', pp. 34–35, Starnawska, *Świętych życie po życiu*, pp. 63–64.

69 *Schlesisches Urkundenbuch*, IV, no. 5, p. 19, *Sermo Clementis pape quarto de canonizatione beate Hedwigis*.

70 *Schlesisches Urkundenbuch*, IV, no. 15, p. 19.

71 *Schlesisches Urkundenbuch*, IV, no. 15, p. 21: '[...] per viam martirii suo meruit redemptori coniungi [...]':

72 'Hec est vere mulier generosa, que radiis nobilitatis ingenite plus splendoris adiciens ex se ipsa quam ei, unde originem traxit, provenerit ex radice', *Sermo Clementis pape quarto de canonizatione beate Hedwigis*, p. 178.

this as the literal application of the concept of *beata stirps* — Hedwig's sainthood affects the dynasty as a whole and facilitates the emergence of a subsequent saint. The same themes appear in the sermons of Odo of Châteauroux, who was responsible for evaluating the processes of canonization, presenting the conclusions of witnesses to consistories in Hedwig's canonization process and later acting as intermediary for the granting of papal indulgences.<sup>73</sup> These issues were examined in detail by Otfried Krafft. The idea of *beata stirps* clearly shines out from Odo's sermons, notably in the second sermon, in which he devoted considerable attention to Hedwig's origins, and in the third, in which he focused on her descendants.<sup>74</sup> Thanks to Hedwig's holiness, all her closest relatives are also sanctified — above all, her husband Henry the Bearded, her son Henry the Pious who died a martyr's death, her daughter-in-law Anne, who, thanks to her mother-in-law, even surpassed her in holiness, and her grandson Władysław, archbishop of Salzburg, for whom the holiness of his grandmother was so important that he neglected the local Salzburg saints in promoting her.<sup>75</sup> As Krafft rightly pointed out, it was Hedwig's family connections that were crucial for establishing her cult.<sup>76</sup> It can therefore be said that Hedwig's relationship with her relatives was in many ways extremely important, both in temporal and eternal terms — for thanks to the duchess's efforts, members of the dynasty were sanctified, whilst thanks to the efforts of the family, her sanctity was officially recognized and gained a prominent place. It was a relationship with family quite different from the one we witness in the case of Elizabeth of Thuringia, who, by rejecting the world, simultaneously encounters conflict with her family.

### ***Patrona Polonorum***

While describing Hedwig's pioussness, good deeds and miracles, the pope noted that her love was directed towards all. However, the Poles benefited from a special and maternal protection on her part, since her relics were on Polish soil and her intercession ensured the support and grace of God.<sup>77</sup> As Clement IV (1265–1268) stated, the Polish people as a whole

73 Charansonnet, 'L'Université, l'Eglise, l'Etat'; Krafft, 'Drei Predigten des Kardinals Odo', p. 478.

74 Krafft, 'Drei Predigten des Kardinals Odo', pp. 505–07.

75 Krafft, 'Drei Predigten des Kardinals Odo', pp. 491–94.

76 Krafft, 'Drei Predigten des Kardinals Odo', pp. 506–08.

77 *Schlesisches Urkundenbuch*, IV, no. 15, p. 22: 'Sed ubi provincia Polonie tantis decoratur muneribus eius preciosi corporis ditata thesauro, quid apud deum favoris et gratie sibi poscenti poterit denegari, ex quo apud ipsum talis advocate meruit presidio confoveri? Quod enim Polonos ipsos suo susceperit patrocinio promovendos, hoc sit eis in signum, quod ipsis reliquit in pignus corpus ipsum sui videlicet spiritus indumentum [...]':

implored their dukes to take steps to facilitate her canonization.<sup>78</sup> First of all, St Hedwig is therefore shown to be representing the dynasty she sanctified with her own virtue. Secondly, as the patron saint of all Poles, who enjoyed (and continue to do so) the presence of her relics, as well as the graces and miracles it brought, coupled with the saint's intercession in heaven.

It is interesting to note that in the canonization bull Hedwig is described as the patron of Poles (*Polonorum esse patronam*), and her relics are a special gift, adding splendour to all Poland (*provincia Polonie*). Considering the political situation in the Piast realm at the end of the thirteenth century, these statements require further analysis.

As mentioned before, the situation among the members of the Piast dynasty in thirteenth-century Poland was very specific — it would be difficult to speak of any sort of unity of the state or even of any attempts at unification on the part of the dukes. But at the same time, in the dynasty's awareness of kinship, we can see a sense of connection and common family heritage.<sup>79</sup> The different perceptions of St Hedwig's cult and its meaning should be understood in that context. The supra-regional resonance within Poland of her canonization is attested by documents from Archbishop Janusz of Gniezno (Greater Poland; 1258–1271) and Bishop Peter of Płock (Masovia), which were issued during the synod in Pajęczno in 1269. In them, they granted forty days of indulgence for all pilgrims to Trzebnica Abbey on the day of the translation of Hedwig's relics and on her birthday.<sup>80</sup>

At the same time, the available sources fail to mention any great interest in her canonization on the part of other Polish dukes. As noted previously, during the translation ceremony, only the Silesian Piast dukes were present. On the other hand, the hagiographer underlined the presence of Přemysl Ottokar II, king of Bohemia, who is known to have wanted to extend his rule to the Silesian duchies. We do not have any knowledge about dukes from other parts of Piast Poland taking part in the canonization festivities. Nor do we have any evidence that they were at all interested at the time in introducing the cult of St Hedwig into their duchies.

However, in the following years we do observe the introduction of the cult of St Hedwig in Greater Poland. It is reflected in the appearance of the name Hedwig within the local dynastic branch and later also in other lineages.<sup>81</sup> Ecclesiastical foundations, some already in the thirteenth

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78 *Schlesisches Urkundenbuch*, IV, no. 15, p. 22.

79 Pauk, 'Regnum in se divisum', pp. 161–62.

80 *Schlesisches Urkundenbuch*, IV, nos 103 and 104, pp. 80–81; cf. Wiszewski, 'Cysterki trzebnickie w społeczeństwie śląskim', p. 707.

81 Karłowska-Kamzowa, *Fundacje artystyczne*, p. 143.

century, with more appearing in the fourteenth, provide us with evidence of the spread of her cult.<sup>82</sup> One of the most notable examples is the altar consecrated to the Holy Trinity and St Hedwig in Poznań Cathedral, built by Przemysław II (1257–1296) in 1286.<sup>83</sup>

The situation was quite different in Lesser Poland. The author of the *vita* of Salomea (1215–1221), the sister of Duke of Lesser Poland Bolesław the Chaste (1232–1279) and Poor Clare, informs us that on the day of the translation of St Hedwig's relics, her brother was staying in Nowy Korczyn with his wife Kinga (1246–1279), where they were listening a narration of the pious life of Salomea.<sup>84</sup> One could even get the impression that the cult of Salomea was placed in opposition to the cult of St Hedwig and that this could be seen as an attempt to create a competing political and dynastic cult.<sup>85</sup> The cult of Salomea could never compete with that of Hedwig. Although her *vita* was written after her death at the Clarian monastery in Skąła and included a list of her miracles, her cult never expanded beyond Lesser Poland and failed to receive official recognition.<sup>86</sup>

It is also worth noting the importance attained by the cult of St Stanislaus in Lesser Poland. His canonization in 1253 was partly due to the efforts of Franciscans close to the court of Bolesław the Chaste. Although the saint bishop of Kraków was a martyr killed on the orders of the king, he became one of the most important 'political' saints in the thirteenth century and the hagiography even made him even a patron saint of the Piast monarchy.<sup>87</sup> One of the first promoters of his cult within the dynasty was Bolesław the Chaste, who founded a new Franciscan church devoted to St Stanislaus in Nowy Korczyn, just after his canonization.<sup>88</sup> In the hagiographical tradition of his wife, St Kinga, the ducal couple were involved in the efforts to promote his canonization and the duchess is said to be the one who personally elevated the relics of the martyr.<sup>89</sup>

82 Karłowska-Kamzowa, 'Święta Jadwiga', pp. 359, 363–66.

83 Karłowska-Kamzowa, 'Święta Jadwiga', p. 359, Nowacki, *Kościół katedralny*, p. 91.

84 *Vita sanctae Salomeae reginae Haliciensis auctore Stanislao franciscano*, p. 791: 'Item anno Domini MCCLXIX (sic) VIII Kalendas Septembris, in translacione sancte Hedvigis, frater Boguphalus lector in domo fratrum minorum in Corchin, presente domino Boleslao duce Cracovie et Sandomirie et presente domina Kinga ducissa, coniuge ipsius et contigit eum inter cetera loqui de sanctitate sororis Salomee, quomodo per ipsam Dominus multa operatur miracula'; Suchoń, 'Święta Jadwiga', p. 105.

85 Klaniczay, *Holy Rulers*, pp. 221–23.

86 Michalski, *Kobiety i świętość*, pp. 76–77, Klaniczay, *Holy Rulers*, pp. 222–23.

87 For a different interpretation of the hagiographical tradition interpretation see: Drelicharz, *Idea zjednoczenia królestwa*, pp. 150–99, Żmudzki, 'Liber de passione martiris', pp. 855–76.

88 Dryblak, 'Oryginalne czy wtórne?', pp. 697–98, Pencakowski, 'Sanktuaria minoryckie', p. 142.

89 *Vita et miracula sancte Kyngae ducissae Cracoviensis*, 35, pp. 710–11, Starnawska, *Świętych życie po życiu*, pp. 208–09.

As we can see, one way the rivalry between the various branches of the ruling dynasty manifested itself was through the promotion of the cult of a specific saint, who was supposed to support that specific branch and intercede in its favour. On the other hand, Hedwig — who represented a related Piast branch and was the only female saint member of the ruling family recognized by the Holy See with a *fama sanctitatis* which extended beyond borders — naturally became the dynasty's patron saint, whose protection and intercession was priceless. And although the cults of Salomea and Kinga of Lesser Poland and Anna of Silesia developed almost at the same time as Hedwig's, they never achieved a similarly important and supra-regional reach. Due to the family connections of the Piasts, Hedwig also became the patron saint of the Kingdom of Poland when it was re-established in the fourteenth century. After all, she had been the namesake of two Polish queens. The first was the daughter of Bolesław the Pious, duke of Greater Poland and the wife of Władysław I the Elbow-High. The second, the daughter of Henry V of Iron, duke of Żagań and wife of Kazimierz III the Great. During the reign of the latter, churches devoted to the saint were founded in Kraków and elsewhere in Lesser Poland.<sup>90</sup> Therefore, and in spite of the increasingly evident separation of Silesia from the rest of the Piast realm, the cult of St Hedwig became an important asset for the whole dynasty, regardless of the relationships between their specific branches. We can observe a similar phenomenon in Trzebnica itself — in spite of the exclusion of the Silesian branch of the dynasty from the Kingdom of Poland, until the sixteenth century the post of abbess was always held by members of the Piast dynasty and even the identity of the abbey became an object of discord between the Polish and German sisters at the convent.<sup>91</sup>

## Silesia as the Centre of the Cult

But let us return to the thirteenth century and to the first years of the cult of St Hedwig in Silesia. The importance to the dynasty of the saint's protection, and of the devotion she inspired, also found its expression in the material culture. After Hedwig's canonization, around 1267, Władysław, the archbishop of Salzburg (1265–1270) and also her grandson, decided to build in Trzebnica a new chapel dedicated to her to replace that of St Peter, where the most important members of the Piast dynasty, including

90 Karłowska-Kamzowa, 'Święta Jadwiga', pp. 359–62.

91 Grüger, 'Der Konvent von Trebnitz', p. 85, Walter, *Z dziejów polskości*, pp. 8–9, 10–11.

Hedwig, were buried. This work was continued by Konrad of Głogów and extended in the following centuries.<sup>92</sup>

The beginning of the construction is listed in an act issued by the archbishop, who in the document describes himself as ‘dei gratia Salzburgensis ecclesie archyepiscopus, apostolice sedis legatus nec non et dux Slesie.’<sup>93</sup> The aim of the document was to grant privileges for the construction works undertaken in Trzebnica ‘for the sins of our predecessors and our own salvation.’<sup>94</sup> Władysław fulfilled two roles — he was a representative of both the dynasty (a fact he underlined in the document) and of the Holy See — as a papal legate, it is probable he was there to confirm the authenticity of the relics.<sup>95</sup> The former would seem to have been more important, as evidenced by his financial and organizational involvement, as well as the motives behind the expansion of the church. The construction of the chapel was supervised by Agnes, the third abbess of the convent and Władysław’s sister.

The chapel consecrated to St Hedwig, one of the finest examples of Gothic architecture in Poland, was a mature and stylistically homogeneous Gothic building, the first of its kind in Silesia.<sup>96</sup> Her tomb, which included a canopy, was built in a novel architectural style for the region — the tomb of St Elizabeth was later built in a similar way.<sup>97</sup> Art historians agree that this new foundation was a response to novel architectural trends in Western Europe, namely the French and German Gothic.<sup>98</sup> Looking at the new chapel from this perspective, we can better measure the exceptional importance of these relics for the dynasty and the legitimization of their power. Jakub Adamski has recently pointed to the influence of other innovative styles, showing the influence of German and Bohemian ones.<sup>99</sup> Considering the stylistic elements, the personal links to the archbishop of Salzburg, as well as the interest shown by King Ottokar II of Bohemia in

92 Adamski, *Gotycka architektura sakralna*, pp. 76–77, Grzybkowski, *Gotycka architektura murowana*, p. 50, Jarzewicz, *Architektura kaplicy św. Jadwigi*, pp. 88–92, Karłowska-Kamzowa, *Sztuka Piastów śląskich*, pp. 35–36; Kaczmarek and Witkowski, *Mauzoleum św. Jadwigi*, pp. 12–13, Kaczmarek and Witkowski, ‘Kaplica św. Jadwigi’, pp. 345–53.

93 *Schlesisches Urkundenbuch*, IV, no. 46, p. 42.

94 *Schlesisches Urkundenbuch*, III, no. 46, p. 42.

95 Starnawska, *Świętych życie po życiu*, p. 178.

96 Karłowska-Kamzowa, *Sztuka Piastów śląskich*, p. 35, Suchoń, *Święta Jadwiga*, p. 103, Adamski, *Gotycka architektura sakralna*, p. 77, Utzig, ‘Twórca dekoracji rzeźbiarskiej’, p. 90; Pasiciel, *Gotycka przebudowa*, pp. 15–16, claims that work on the chapel lasted much longer; a convincing issue with this hypothesis was presented by Adamski, *Gotycka architektura sakralna*, p. 77 n. 144.

97 Karłowska-Kamzowa, *Sztuka Piastów śląskich*, p. 102.

98 Adamski, *Gotycka architektura sakralna*, pp. 80–82, Pasiciel, *Gotycka przebudowa*, pp. 171–74.

99 Adamski, *Gotycka architektura sakralna*, pp. 80–90, Grzybkowski, *Gotycka architektura murowana*, pp. 49–51, Jarzewicz, *Architektura kaplicy św. Jadwigi*, p. 91.

Hedwig's canonization, two important foundations emerge as potential inspirations for the Silesian chapel — the Franciscan and Clarian monastery and the chapel of St Ludmila in St George's Basilica in Prague.<sup>100</sup> Although they were built in an earlier style, these foundations share some important features — their ideological significance and the presence of a convent of nuns associated with the dynasty and the cult of the saint. These observations show that the founders of the Silesian chapel took inspiration from these important dynastic foundations, places where God's support was granted to the rulers and were thus of special importance for power legitimization.

Therefore the Polish dukes, acting in concert with Gertrude, and after her death, her niece Agnes, Hedwig's granddaughter and the next abbess of Trzebnica, followed the example of Henry the Bearded by creating one of the most important centres of Silesian sacrality. This convent, along with Hedwig's chapel and tomb, was a new and necessary sacral stronghold, which secured the legitimacy of the power of subsequent generations of Piasts. The involvement of the archbishop of Salzburg (and also, as he himself made clear, a Silesian duke) and his sister Agnes provide the culmination of the endeavours of the previous generation.

## Conclusion

Why was the cult of St Hedwig so important and why was she portrayed as a Polish saint? One could say that the dynastic cult is always vital and important. This is of course true. But in the second half of the thirteenth century, the Silesian Piasts found themselves in a very specific situation. The region was becoming increasingly divided between the various members of the dynasty. The Silesian duchies were attracting the attention of the Bohemian monarchs. It is also worth mentioning that Ottokar II of the Přemyslid dynasty took a stark interest in St Hedwig's cult. Considering his efforts to involve the Silesian dukes in his own faction and exert his influence over the region this interest takes on a particular importance. Admittedly, the Bohemian king understood the importance of saintly duchess's patronage in the legitimization of power in Silesia and was planning to take advantage of her intercession to gain stronger position in the Piast lands. The Polish dukes needed to underscore their position and their special right to rule, the fact that they were the *domini naturales*

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100 Adamski, underlining the significance of this model, indicates that 'the oratory of St Hedwig owes its shape to Czech buildings only in its typological aspect, not its style'. See also Jarzewicz, *Architektura kaplicy św. Jadwigi*, p. 91, Grzybowski, *Gotycka architektura murowana*, pp. 50–51, Kaczmarek and Witkowski, 'Kaplica św. Jadwigi', pp. 348–49, Utzig, 'Twórca dekoracji rzeźbiarskiej'.

in the region, even if they were also establishing alliances with stronger allies from beyond their borders. Dynastic foundations, convents which preserved the memory of their mighty founders, praying for them, were one of the most important tools for the legitimization of their power — one of them was Trzebnica nunnery, the inaugural foundation of Henry the Bearded's reign. Yet nothing could compare with the help and support of a dynastic saint, who appeared as an invincible protector for the family at a time of need. Hedwig, as a Silesian duchess, a member of the Piast dynasty, and in her role as saint, gave the Polish *duces Slesie* an additional, new and undeniable right to rule these lands forever. The entire dynasty was involved in this effort. One might even hazard that for Władysław being *dux Slesie* was of greater importance than being archbishop of Salzburg. Not without reason the cult of St Hedwig was more important to him than the cult of the local Salzburg saints. He was *dux Slesie*, just as Gertrude was *ducissa Slesie*, which we can see emphasized in the diplomatic sources. Thus, Trzebnica nunnery became doubly important for the legitimization of power — as a place of memory and prayer for the founder Henry the Bearded and as the centre of St Hedwig's cult.

The significance of St Hedwig's cult and of her burial place also found its expression in the following centuries, in particular in an architectural project by Louis I of Brzeg (1338–1398), who in the second half of the fourteenth century, in the grounds of Brzeg castle, built a church devoted to St Hedwig, which reproduced the form of the chapel at Trzebnica.<sup>101</sup> The same duke also commissioned an illustrated codex which contained the *vitae* of St Hedwig, the papal canonization bull, and homily. These initiatives by Louis were — as he himself stated — inspired by the actions of his ducal forebears, to whom he was bound by blood.<sup>102</sup> The cult of the duchess and her patronage therefore became one of the most important components for the legitimization of the power of the Silesian Piasts.

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<sup>101</sup> Karłowska-Kamzowa, *Fundacje artystyczne*, pp. 56–58.

<sup>102</sup> Karłowska-Kamzowa, *Fundacje artystyczne*, p. 58.

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## 16. The Legitimization of Papal Power through the Cults of Royal Women in Thirteenth-Century East Central Europe

Thirteenth-century East Central Europe glittered with the sanctity of women who had exchanged the dull and hollow promise of worldly power and wealth for the redemptive bounty of shared suffering with Christ. Invigorated by Elizabeth of Hungary (1207–1231) and the mythos woven around her following her canonization in 1235, these women developed creative and startling ways of spurning the temporal even as they were often forced to negotiate with it. Swapping linen for sackcloth, these women prayed for hours in freezing cloisters, walked through the streets barefoot until their wounded feet stained the snow red, kissed the leprous sores of the sick, and nobly endured infirmity, famine, and drought. Their ghosts could revive dying infants, heal illness, and rescue people and their dwellings from flame and flood. Locals physically fought over these saints' relics, ripping parts from their bodies to keep as holy vessels.<sup>1</sup>

Until relatively recently, the pope has played an understated role in this familiar story of East Central European female sanctity. Given that the papal office surely had much to gain from the cultural purchase of vignettes that told of royal women rejecting the trappings of temporal power, it is surprising that the role that women's sanctity might play in the

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<sup>1</sup> Homza, *Mulieres Suadentes — Persuasive Women*; Klaniczay, *Holy Rulers*; Michalski, *Kobiety i świętość*.

**Kirsty Day** • is Lecturer in Medieval History at the University of Edinburgh. She has a long-standing interest in gender and Christianity in central-late medieval East Central Europe, although her most recent publication concerns the use of emotions in the letters and sermons of Pope Innocent III: 'Sorrow, Masculinity and Papal Authority in the Writing of Pope Innocent III (1198–1216) and His Curia', *Journal of Medieval History*, 49 (2023), 201–26.

*The Cult of Saints and Legitimization of Elite Power in East Central and Northern Europe up to 1300*, ed. by Grzegorz Pac, Steffen Hope, and Jón Viðar Sigurðsson, *Comparative Perspectives on Medieval History*, 2 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2024), pp. 413–436

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legitimization of papal power — and the justification for the ecclesiastical hierarchy which underpinned it — has not been examined in depth. If Elizabeth and Hedwig of Silesia (1174–1243) were the only thirteenth-century East Central European royal women who were canonized in the Middle Ages, a far greater range of women received devotional attention as saints from the pope and other elite churchmen. Of these, I address directly in this chapter Anna of Silesia (1204–1265), Salomea of Kraków (1211–1268), Agnes of Bohemia (1211–1282), and Kinga of Poland (1224–1292). Situating the Papacy's interaction with these women's cults within the overlapping contexts of sanctity, inquisition, and confession, and within the deepening fear felt by the thirteenth-century popes towards the emperor brings out the possibilities that the Papacy may have seen — both within East Central Europe and beyond — for the legitimization of its power, and the processes through which the legitimization of papal power became bound to these women's acts of piety.

In existing scholarship, the popes of the thirteenth century have tended to play a role largely as gatekeepers of the forms of the religious lives that such women truly wished to pursue.<sup>2</sup> Until relatively recently, the dominant scholarly position was that while women religious might have needed the pope to approve certain aspects of their religious lives, the pope did not need women religious. In the past few years, however, the lives and miracles of Central European royal *religiosae* have been used as exemplars for how the authority and power of the popes developed via the increased control exercised by the Papacy over processes of saintly ratification.<sup>3</sup> As Gábor Klaniczay has most famously demonstrated, the cults of kings and princes which flourished in the twelfth century were superseded by cults of queens and princesses in the thirteenth century. This was due to a range of factors, including the development of Marian devotion, the women's religious movement, the popularity of mendicant spirituality among the East Central European elites, and the shrinking line between misogyny and the idealization of women by churchmen.<sup>4</sup> To this, and to the latter point in particular, we need to add Dyan Elliott's argument that the fierce asceticism of high-status women such as Elizabeth of Hungary and their submission to their confessors, the likes of which we see in Elizabeth's relationship with her confessor Conrad of Marburg (1180–1233), became attractive to, and were moulded and promoted by, churchmen as iconic anti-heretical statements.<sup>5</sup>

Not least because the provocative images of extreme worldly renunciation associated with these women's lives were formed in dialogue with

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2 See, for instance, Mueller, *The Privilege of Poverty*.

3 Klaniczay, 'The Power of the Saints'.

4 Klaniczay, *Holy Rulers*, pp. 195–294; Klaniczay, 'The Power of the Saints', pp. 124–25.

5 Elliott, *Proving Woman*, esp. pp. 85–116.

the Papacy's attempt to develop a monopoly over canonization in the thirteenth century, the Papacy's interest in, and influence over, these cults appear in explicit and implicit forms in the traces that they have left in saints' *vitae* and papal letters. In this chapter, I collect together these traces and respond to the question of whether the popes' interest in East Central European cults of royal holy women — an interest which was often very active, as we see in Pope Gregory IX's (1227–1241) correspondence with and about the princess-turned-nun Agnes of Bohemia (1211–1282) — reflected a papal effort to legitimize its power and the ecclesiastical hierarchy that underpinned it through the cultic enthusiasm that grew up around these women. I contend that the popes and other high-ranking churchmen saw in the spirituality of East Central European women the potential to legitimize papal and ecclesiastical power in East Central Europe specifically and Latin Christendom more broadly. In the tension between these women's exchanges of the temporal for the infinite and their concurrent promotion as 'dynastic saints', the agents of the Church glimpsed possibilities to style these women as anti-heretical and anti-imperial icons and to channel their devotion into a papally constructed orthodoxy.

In so doing, I do not read the source material as a papal scheme to inculcate the legitimacy of papal governance of the Latin Church among the East Central European masses, but rather as the outcome of a number of interlinked processes: the Papacy's promotion and defence of papal primacy; the use by churchmen of women's asceticism to trace the contours of orthodoxy; the development of an inquisitorial culture in close connection with the papal advancement of its claim to a monopoly over canonization, which added an additional sacramental layer to the confessor-penitent relationship as depicted in saints' *vitae* and gave greater evidential weight to these texts; and the clashes between pope and emperor over papal authority, which was treated by the Papacy as a severe threat to the unity of Christendom, and so the salvation of Christians, along the same lines as heresy.<sup>6</sup> While I admit that centring the pope risks, and often necessitates, interpreting the available evidence in a manner that is rather 'top-down', my hope is that it provides a way into considering the specific resonance that East Central European royal women's holiness may have had for the papal vision of the Church during the thirteenth century.

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<sup>6</sup> These processes have been discussed in great depth by many scholars. On the Papacy and papal primacy in the Central Middle Ages, see Pennington, *Pope and Bishops*; Morris, *The Papal Monarchy*; Robinson, *The Papacy*; and Whalen, 'The Papacy'. On women's asceticism and its relationship with orthodoxy, see Elliott, *Proving Woman*. On the papal monopoly over canonization, see Vauchez, *Sainthood in the Later Middle Ages*, pp. 22–32; Krafft, *Papstkunde und Heiligsprechung*; Klaniczay, 'The Power of the Saints'; Klaniczay, 'The Inquisition of Miracles'; and Pac 'The Papal Monopoly'. On the Papacy–empire conflict, see Whalen, *The Two Powers*; and McNeil, 'An Overview of Political Authority in Medieval Europe'.

That the regions of East Central Europe were areas in which the ecclesiastical elites seemed to be particularly interested when plucking women to be shaped into orthodox exemplars is an overlooked point of significance in existing scholarship. The process through which the submission of holy women to their confessor was carved into an orthodox exemplar, for instance, has particular East Central European dimensions. Traditionally, the regions of East Central Europe — in historiography as much as in the popular imagination — have been viewed as heavily dependent upon the Latin Church, and the Roman pontiff in particular, for protection, access to trans-European economies, and ‘nationhood’. This, as the story goes, in turn made them particularly receptive to the top-down imposition of papal authority in the high-late Middle Ages. Monika Saczyńska-Vercamer and Agata Zielinska have, in different ways, recently challenged this engrained and somewhat monolithic narrative. Saczyńska-Vercamer argues — admittedly with reference to the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, although the wider implications of her work force us to challenge the assumptions that we might hold about the earlier period covered in the present chapter — that the Papacy was reliant on the co-operation of East Central European ruling structures for its exercise of power on a local level.<sup>7</sup> In her exploration of the institutionalization of the Polish Church from 1198–1357, Zielinska emphasizes the co-existence and mutual development of religious and lay institutions in the Polish duchies, and has demonstrated the importance of co-creative relationships between the Church’s institutions on the character of papal governance on at a local level.<sup>8</sup> On sanctity in particular, Grzegorz Pac has shown that there was a strong desire among the Bohemian ecclesiastical elites to seek papal approval for the canonization and translation of saints from as early as the first half of the twelfth century.<sup>9</sup> If Bohemian churchmen were reliant on the Papacy for the legitimacy of their institutions, Pac’s study indicates also that the confident claim made by the thirteenth-century papacy to a monopoly over canonisation had its power base in the desire of the local ecclesiastical elites for the papal ratification of their saints. In a broader European context, Benedict Wiedemann has stressed that the governmental relationship between the pope and secular princes was one of consensus, and that the Papacy was only able to exercise power insofar as this power was recognized by secular governmental bodies. In turn, princes were able to use papal authority and power for their own ends.<sup>10</sup>

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7 Saczyńska-Vercamer, ‘Authority without Power?’.

8 Zielinska, ‘Territorialization, the Papacy, and the Institutions of the Polish Church’, esp. pp. 54–94.

9 Pac, ‘The Papal Monopoly’.

10 Wiedemann, *Papal Overlordship and European Princes*, pp. 1–14.

This more complex and varied portrait of the cultures of mutual dependence between shepherd and flock is one important context in which to read the legitimization of papal and ecclesiastical power through cults of East Central European holy women. This is not least because the cultural power of these women's symbolic and real rejection of the icons of temporal power could be drawn upon by the pope when his brittle relationships with some princes finally snapped. I suggest that the rejection of temporal power may have had anti-imperial resonances for the pope — especially in the case of Agnes of Bohemia, who rejected a marriage proposal from the Emperor Frederick II (1194–1250) — which could provide a way of legitimizing obedience to the Latin Church and, ultimately, to the pope.

There is, however, one more important contextual layer to the relationship between the pope and these holy women. In addition to the rejection of riches and temporal power, and the humiliation of one's own body, the *vitae* of our subjects also place great stress on the role of the confessor.<sup>11</sup> Religious women's unwavering obedience to their confessor as symbolic proof of orthodoxy in the high and late Middle Ages has been explored at length by Elliott.<sup>12</sup> As a post-Fourth Lateran Council (1215) inquisitorial culture permeated processes of verification beyond inquisitions into heretical depravity, including inquests into sanctity, the presence of confessors in *vitae* — as authors, witnesses, and characters — served to substantiate the text's veracity. The presence of the confessor as an authority figure, designed to replace the figure of the husband and representative at once of the Church and Christ, and the submission of a woman to her confessor — an act which was sometimes extreme and absolute and sometimes not so, but which was always present — modelled lay obedience to the Church and clerical authority and acted as an anti-heretical statement.<sup>13</sup> The following analysis begins from the positions that the way in which the pope sought to legitimize his own power and that of the ecclesiastical hierarchy via the lives of female East Central European saints was reliant upon, and mutually constitutive of, the legitimization of the power of East Central Europe's lay and ecclesiastical institutions, and that both the idea and reality of 'women' and their power were both vehicles for the legitimization of papal power.

In the first section of this chapter, I consider how papal and ecclesiastical power may have been legitimized through the confessor-penitent dynamic in the *vitae* of East Central European female saints during the thirteenth century. While the overlap between cultures of confession and inquisition in the thirteenth century have already been analysed extensively,

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11 Klaniczay, *Holy Rulers*, pp. 280–94.

12 Elliott, *Proving Woman*.

13 On the evolution of inquisition from confession, see Ames, 'Does Inquisition Belong to Religious History?', pp. 19–22.

including with reference to the *vitae* under consideration in this section, examining these cultures with a particular eye to how papal power may have been legitimized through them creates a context for the Papacy's more 'active', direct promotion of individual female saints in which the stakes involved are properly realized. In the second section, I trace how Gregory IX wove Agnes of Bohemia's conversion to monastic life into a hagiographic narrative of the rejection of the empire in a letter sent by the pope to Beatrice, Queen of Castile (1205–1235) in 1235, possibly in order to encourage Beatrice to reflect upon her ties to the empire. In and of itself, the recommendation of a Bohemian royal woman who had rejected the hand of the emperor as a holy exemplar to a queen of Castile, likely because of Agnes's proximity to the heartlands of the empire, suggests that East Central European holy women were, first, hardly 'peripheral'. It indicates also that the pope (re-) interpreted Agnes's conversion as a moment which neatly connected the specific alarm aroused by Frederick II to the Papacy's broader project of constructing orthodoxy. Rendering an individual's life as hagiography within their own lifetime for propagandistic purposes, however, meant that the living hagiographic subject's lack of complicity threatened to pose a problem for the legitimization of papal power. The third section of this chapter takes the correspondence between Agnes and Gregory across the course of the 1230s to consider how the tension embodied in Agnes as a 'living saint' between obedience to the Church, the power that she was able to draw upon as a member of a ruling dynasty, and her own will to shape her religious life complicated the pope's use of saints to legitimize his power. Read in the light of Gregory's promotion and hagiographic praise of Agnes's conversion, the pope's response to Agnes's protests about various aspects of her religious life suggests that the pope was beholden to Agnes's wishes if he wished to keep promoting her as exemplar for the purpose of legitimizing papal power. This is not to suggest that the use of female East Central European saints as a tool for the legitimization of power was a failed experiment; rather, that the friction between Agnes and Gregory suggests that the pope at least thought that the legitimization of the office's power lay in the recognition of this power by holy women like Agnes.

### **Confessors in the *vitae* of East Central European Women**

Considering the specific role of confessors in the *vitae* of East Central European women enables us to understand why the Papacy may have viewed the cults of these women as useful media through which to

legitimize papal power.<sup>14</sup> As the status of the confessor was elevated and his role made more distinct following the regularization of confession in the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215, the authority of the confessor as a trusted witness to sainthood likewise grew. When inquisitors into heretical depravity were appointed by Gregory IX in 1231, they were chosen from orders typically tasked with administering pastoral care such as confession; the mendicant orders, for instance, were often appointed as *inquisitores hereticae pravitatis*.<sup>15</sup> These orders had also sworn obedience to the pope. By 1235, as we learn from Elizabeth of Hungary's canonization dossier, the inquisitorial method was also applied in an increasingly systematic way to processes for the verification of sanctity.<sup>16</sup> Confessors as agents and symbols of orthodoxy who had close spiritual relationships with their penitents were viewed as trustworthy informants.<sup>17</sup> To confessors' positions as authors and champions of sanctity, renewed narratives of saint creation also made them early-stage, or even overall, scrutinizers of a candidate's orthodoxy.

The figure of the confessor in the life of a saint was, then, a component of the saint's orthodoxy, a status which held particular significance for the female penitents whose sainthood the ecclesiastical elite chose to endorse and promote. As confessors of holy women from the royal and noble ranks of society were increasingly drawn from the mendicant orders, which had vowed obedience to the pope, as the thirteenth century progressed, and as the Papacy continued to build a special case for its monopoly over the canonization process and to make canonical its ability to intervene in the spiritual lives of ordinary people, the confessor also became an agent of papal power. As Elliott has articulated, women were considered especially lay because they could not be ordained as clerics. The sharper line drawn by reform projects such as Lateran IV between clerics and lay people meant that women became twice-removed from the clergy. Women's status as 'especially lay' meant that the submission of holy women to their confessors became symbolic of orthodoxy to medieval churchmen.<sup>18</sup> The necessity for some women to form intimate spiritual relationships with their male confessors in order for their devotional lives to be addressed predated Lateran IV, as Kathryn Maude has demonstrated.<sup>19</sup> What began to change from the beginning of the thirteenth century is

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14 On confessors in the *vitae* of Central European women, see Klaniczay, *Holy Rulers*, pp. 280–94.

15 On the development of inquisitorial procedure by Dominican friars, see Ames, *Righteous Persecution*.

16 Klaniczay, 'The Inquisition of Miracles'.

17 For an important critique of who was deemed to be 'trustworthy' in the later Middle Ages, see Forrest, *Trustworthy Men*.

18 Elliott, *Proving Woman*, p. 48.

19 Maude, *Addressing Women*, pp. 89–128.

that this relationship became more unequal, hierarchical, ubiquitous, and valuable as an anti-heretical symbol as it was folded into the Papacy's project of orthodoxy and its claim to exercise supreme authority over spiritual matters in Christendom.

The way in which sacramental and inquisitorial cultures bled into one another in the form of the confessor are visible in East Central European women's lives in ways that are — and that were intended to be — startling and uncomfortable. The physical proof of sanctity was borne on the rough treatment of Elizabeth's body, which must have contributed to her death at the young age of twenty-four. While, even by Elliott's admission, the relationship between Elizabeth of Hungary and her confessor Conrad of Marburg is an extreme example of the absolute submission of a female penitent to her confessor, it emerged during a period in which papal procedures for inquisition also began to shape canonization processes, and so — not least because Conrad was an infamous inquisitor — became archetypal of this shift in thought on proof. Conrad and his relationship with Elizabeth looms large in Elizabeth's canonization dossier, presented to Gregory IX after he had authorized her canonization process. Conrad became Elizabeth's confessor during her marriage to Louis IV, the landgrave of Thuringia, and she placed herself under his command; Elliott and Klaniczay both comment on how Conrad as confessor became a replacement for Elizabeth's husband as a governing authority after her husband died on crusade.<sup>20</sup>

He wrote her *Summa Vitae*, in which he begged God's forgiveness for a severe punishment that he meted out to her upon discovering that she hid a woman with leprosy in her quarters in order to care for her.<sup>21</sup> In their testimony, Elizabeth's four handmaids comment frequently on the severity of Conrad's punishments. One of the handmaids, Irmgard, described how Conrad ordered a friar, Brother Gerhard, to beat Elizabeth and Irmgard hard 'with a type of whip that was big and long' while he sang the *Miserere mei Deus*, because Elizabeth had entered a cloister without Conrad's permission.<sup>22</sup> The wounds that she sustained from the beating were visible for three weeks after the event; Elizabeth's for even longer.<sup>23</sup>

Although none of these men was as harsh as Conrad, or was at least not presented as such, the confessor figured in most of the lives of women religious in the hagiographical *vitae* of women in East Central Europe, with the exception, interestingly, of Agnes of Bohemia. As Klaniczay has detailed, there was a great deal of variation in the relationship between

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20 Klaniczay, *Holy Rulers*, p. 284; Elliott, *Proving Woman*, pp. 94–95.

21 *Hessisches Urkundenbuch I*, p. 33.

22 *Quellenstudien*, pp. 185–86.

23 *Quellenstudien*, p. 185.

women and confessors in these women's *vitae*.<sup>24</sup> In the *vita* of Hedwig of Silesia, who took on a penitential life following the death of her husband Henry I of Silesia, Hedwig frequently refused her confessor's request for moderation and does not seem to have felt as bound to listen to him as Elizabeth did. According to the *vita*, which was written in around 1300, one of Hedwig's confessors, Abbot Gunther of Lubiąż, chastised her for walking around in bare feet after he had told her specifically to wear shoes. Hedwig, in response and holding the shoes under her arm, joked — playing on the double meaning of *portare*: 'to carry' and 'to wear' — that she had, in fact, been 'wearing' the shoes.<sup>25</sup> Kinga of Poland, a Hungarian princess who either joined the Order of St Clare or became a Franciscan lay sister, following the death of her husband in 1279, was known for having had a very close and intimate relationship with her confessor.<sup>26</sup> According to her *vita* — probably written in the late thirteenth or early fourteenth century — it was he who made the case that she ought to enter the convent as a consecrated virgin because she had not had sex with her husband (the High Duke of Poland Bolesław 'the Chaste', d. 1279).<sup>27</sup> Kinga's confessor is not portrayed as having been as harsh as Elizabeth's, but the intimate relationship that she formed with her confessor during her marriage and after the death of her husband served to produce orthodoxy through a startlingly intimate form of obedience. Unlike Hedwig, Kinga obeyed her confessor after he punished her for wearing no shoes by making her sit on the ground and display them.<sup>28</sup> Salomea of Kraków's *vita* does not give great mention to Salomea's confessor as a spiritual guide; however, he is a witness to a number of her miracles. In her *vita*, Anna of Silesia — interestingly, according to the *vita*'s author, under the guidance of her mother-in-law Hedwig — is portrayed as having been completely obedient to her confessor, receiving punishment from a handmaid under the confessor's direction during her husband's lifetime after she and her husband had slept together.<sup>29</sup> Anna's confessor then, however, disappears

24 Klaniczay, *Holy Rulers*, p. 287–88.

25 Jung, 'The Boots of St Hedwig'; *Vita sanctae Hedwigis*, p. 531.

26 In two charters of Kinga's, issued in 1288 and 1289, she describes herself as 'relictā serenissimi principis Boleslay, bone memorie quondam ducis Cracouuiensis et Sandomiriensis, domina de Sandech, sub ordine Sancti Francisci diuini manicata obsequijs' (the widow of the most serene prince Bolesław, formerly duke of Kraków and Sandomierz of good memory, lady of Stary Sącz, participating in divine duties under the order of St Francis). *Kodeks dyplomatyczny Małopolski*, II, pp. 171–72; p. 173. This indicates that she was likely a lay sister; however, it is not beyond the realm of possibility that she belonged to the Order of St Clare and had simply expressed this affiliation in an unusual way.

27 *Vita et miracula sancte Kyngae ducissae Cracoviensis*, pp. 713–14; Klaniczay, *Holy Rulers*, p. 292. On spiritual direction in the *vita* of Kinga more generally, see Kowalska, 'Błogosławiona Kinga i jej duchowi opiekunowie'.

28 *Vita et miracula sancte Kyngae ducissae Cracoviensis*, p. 698.

29 *Vita Annae ducissae Silesiae*, p. 658.

from the very short narrative after her husband dies, rather than substituting for the role of her husband as Conrad did for Elizabeth, perhaps owing to the short and sketchy character of the *vita*.

There was, then, a fair amount of variation in the way in which confessors were presented in the hagiographic *vitae* of holy women in East Central Europe. What remains consistent is the presence of the confessor as a tool of surveillance and mediation, and as a marker of legitimacy. The *vita* of Agnes of Bohemia, of course, is an important exception to this rule.<sup>30</sup> This is perhaps because as a ‘fully professed’ virgin nun from the outset of her religious life, she was portrayed in her *vita* as having been entirely obedient to the rule and, ultimately, the pope — and, because she was a bride of Christ, her hagiographer did not need to deploy a confessor as a proxy for her husband or Christ. The lack of an individual confessor for Agnes might reflect, more simply, the fact that the nuns would likely have had the same confessor in common. Given that Agnes corresponded regularly with Gregory IX, it may not have been necessary for the author of her *vita* to articulate her orthodoxy via her relationship with her confessor. Agnes’s asceticism and unquestioning subservience to the rule did not entirely reflect her lived reality and, as I discuss later, the notion that she might reshape the contours of the vow that she had taken so that she no longer fit the ‘bride of Christ’ role caused Gregory some concern. This indicates that Agnes’s vow modelled proof of orthodoxy and obedience to the pope, rather than subservience to a confessor.

It is unclear as to whether the *vitae* of some of these women would have reached the eyes of the pope, and, in the case of Kinga and Salomea, we do not know if the compilation of their *vitae* and miracles was intended for submission to the papal curia. Hedwig and Agnes were submitted for canonization — the former was canonized in 1267, whereas the latter was not canonized until 1989 — and so their dossiers would have been read by the curia, but it is not clear as to whether the other women’s would have. More important than this, or whether their sanctity was formally investigated by a papal representative or not, is that their authors knew that the confessor, or a deep commitment to a religious vow, had to be present in the lives of these women as part-proof of their orthodoxy. Obedience to the confessor or to one’s vow formed part of a schema of orthodoxy which recognized the pope as the supreme pontiff. This became coupled in these women’s *vitae* with their subjects’ acts of renunciation, and so spurning royal goods and power also meant the reorientation of one’s attention and obedience to the Church. In short, the lives of East Central

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<sup>30</sup> For Agnes’s *vita*, see *Legenda Blahoslavené Anežky*.

European female saints were media through which the legitimization of an ecclesiastical power that was ultimately presided over by the Papacy might be promoted.

## Gregory IX's Letter to Beatrice of Castile

A female saint's rejection of temporal goods and power in favour of obedience to the Church as an abstract for orthodoxy appears not only in the miraculous realm of saintly *vitae*. Pope Gregory IX's recommendation of East Central European holy women — and one holy man — to Beatrice, Queen of Castile (1205–1235) in a letter of 1235 traces reveals the opportunity that the pope saw in cults of royal holy women who rejected the temporal. The way in which Gregory sought to shape the hagiography of Agnes of Bohemia and to label her a living saint in the letter demonstrates how compelling the pope felt her renunciation narrative as a medium for the legitimization of papal power to be.

Gregory wrote to Beatrice on 7 June 1235. The daughter of the former King of the Germans Philip of Swabia (1177–1208) and Irene Angelina (1181–1208), Beatrice became the Queen of Castile on her marriage to Ferdinand III of Castile. Gregory had written to Beatrice in order to recommend Elizabeth of Hungary, possibly as a role model, in the highest terms. Gregory praised the recently canonized saint for swapping the trappings of regal splendour for the 'habit of poverty and rough clothing', and for her obedience to the poor and needy.<sup>31</sup> It is not easy to tell from the letter whether it was written in response to Beatrice's request for spiritual instruction or whether Gregory sent the letter unprompted, and Beatrice died shortly after the letter was sent, so — to add to the already fragmentary source material for Beatrice's life — we lack context for the letter's reception and its recipient's response to its content.<sup>32</sup> The letter is largely a mystical paean to the sanctity of the newly canonized Elizabeth, whom Gregory recommends to Beatrice as an exemplar toward the end of the letter where he addresses the queen directly. Elizabeth's example was 'a most precious pearl' and a mirror to be gazed upon frequently, so that 'nothing in the corner of your conscience lies hidden that would offend the eyes of the divine majesty'.<sup>33</sup>

Gregory celebrates Elizabeth's 'intoxication' of two prominent members of the German and East Central European nobility who had recently converted to religious life. One of these was Conrad of Thuringia

<sup>31</sup> *Annales Minorum*, II, p. 394.

<sup>32</sup> On the fragmentary nature of the evidence for Beatrice's life, see Baura García, 'Beatriz de Suabia', p. 63.

<sup>33</sup> *Annales Minorum*, II, p. 396.

(d. 1240), Elizabeth's brother-in-law, who would become Grandmaster of the Teutonic Knights in Marburg. 'Rejecting fine linen', Conrad had 'fled, naked, from wicked hands to the crucified Jesus and the sanctuary of the Cross ...so that by a bundle of myrrh he may be worthy of the inheritance of the Crucified'.<sup>34</sup> The other was Agnes of Bohemia, the Bohemian princess who had rejected the hand of Frederick II in order to join the Order of San Damiano in Prague in around 1234. Agnes was

the handmaid of Christ, virgin, the daughter of the king of Bohemia, your sister [he is addressing Elizabeth], in whose youth and in hardship we are finding signs of a heavenly way of life, so much that, fleeing the eminences offered by the imperial highness like poisonous reptiles, and, naked, taking up the standard of the triumphal cross, now she proceeds to meet her spouse, with lighted lamps and accompanied by a choir of holy virgins.<sup>35</sup>

Gregory's blazon of Agnes's virtues is a little more specific than that of Conrad's — Gregory's less-than-subtle-delight in Agnes's rejection of Frederick II's marriage proposal is palpable — but in both descriptions Gregory rejoices in Agnes's and Conrad's conversion away from the symbols of royalty and towards Christ.

Gregory's linkage of Elizabeth with Conrad and Agnes can be read productively within the context of the particular theatre of the Papacy–empire conflict that is represented in the letter, and doing so can tell us how the pope harnessed the particular rejection of the world that was represented in the lives of East Central European holy women — and, in this case, one man — to augment the legitimacy of papal authority. The little that we know of Beatrice of Castile enables us to flesh out the letter's context and points to why the pope may have taken an interest in the queen. Beatrice was born Elizabeth of Swabia — the shared name may have prompted the connection between the newly minted saint and the queen in the pope's mind — and was married to Ferdinand III in 1219 likely in order to enhance the dominant position of Castile within the Spanish kingdom by forging a bond between Castile and the empire. It has also been suggested

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34 'Inter quos sororium tuum fratrem Conradum, quondam Lantgravium, aetate tenerum, mundo carum, mortalibus gratiosum inebriasti praecipue poculo vasis huius, ita ut calcatis dignitatum fascibus, rejecta syndone, nudus profugeret de manibus impiorum crucifigentium Jesum Christum ad asyllum crucis, cuius signaculum impressit pectori, mysterium cordi, ut per myrrhae fasciculum posset Crucifixi consortium promereri.' *Annales Minorum*, II, p. 395.

35 'Inebriasti quoque poculo vasis huius Agnetem ancillam Christi, virginem, natam Regni Bohemiae, sororem tuam, in cuius aetate tenera, et rebus asperis experimur caelestis conversationis insignia, ita ut Imperialis culminis oblata fastigia fugiens, sicut reptilia venenata, et nuda vexillum triumphale crucis arripiens, iam procedat obviam sponso suo, accendis lampadibus, choro sacrarum Virginum comitata.' *Annales Minorum*, II, p. 395.

that Beatrice was chosen by Ferdinand's mother Berenguela of Castile (1180–1246) for the hand of her son because of Beatrice's renown as a particularly moral character (it might be noteworthy, here, that Berenguela was the sister of Blanche of Castile, whose son was Louis IX of France).<sup>36</sup> As Eduardo Baura García has argued, Beatrice was deeply admired by her contemporaries and viewed as a key architect of the bonds developed between the Castilian kingdom and the empire in the second quarter of the thirteenth century.<sup>37</sup> Beatrice and Ferdinand introduced the Teutonic Order to Spain, and donated several towns to the order.<sup>38</sup>

The concept of a religious order who shared close ties with a temporal power, and the broader context of Beatrice's close relationship with the empire, may have made the pope uneasy.<sup>39</sup> In 1235, the relationship between Gregory and Frederick II was not quite as volatile as it had been at the beginning of Gregory's pontificate when Frederick violated his crusading vow and then, as an excommunicate, travelled to Jerusalem against Gregory's orders. The pope and the emperor had since made peace with each other. However, by 1235 Frederick's behaviour had, once again, begun to worry Gregory.<sup>40</sup> After promising that he would not do so, Frederick threatened to suppress by force the rebellions against the imperial incursions into the Lombard cities.<sup>41</sup> Rumours of his abuse of the clergy had also begun to spread.<sup>42</sup> Gregory may have seen in Beatrice — especially if she had, in fact, expressed any desire for spiritual instruction — an opportunity to sow caution in the minds of those who saw great opportunity in forming closer ties with a vexatious emperor. If a concerning number of German or East Central European individuals had chosen to ally with 'wicked hands' or 'poisonous reptiles', a few virtuous characters — Agnes and Conrad, for example — had chosen a different path.<sup>43</sup>

Gregory does not explicitly suggest in the letter that a vote against the emperor was a vote for the Papacy, but he does make clear that conversion to religious life was tantamount to shunning the accoutrements of imperial power. These are, in turn, symbolic of evil. While running to the sanctuary of the Cross does not translate to alignment with the pope in Gregory's letter, the recent and historic rivalry between pope and emperor — of which Beatrice would surely have been aware — and the Papacy's claim that it was the sole body ordained to preside over spiritual

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36 Baura García, 'Beatriz de Suabia', pp. 67–75; Salvador Martínez, *Berenguela the Great*, pp. 426–59.

37 Baura García, 'Beatriz de Suabia'.

38 Baura García, 'Beatriz de Suabia', pp. 82–91.

39 Baura García, 'Beatriz de Suabia', pp. 88–89.

40 Whalen, *The Two Powers*, pp. 71–95.

41 Whalen, *The Two Powers*, pp. 71–72.

42 Whalen, *The Two Powers*, pp. 71–72.

43 *Annales Minorum*, II, p. 395.

matters positioned the pope as the office who was, really, concerned about the salvation of souls. The development of the papal monopoly over the canonization process combined with the implementation of inquisitorial procedure for the ratification of sanctity allowed the pope to stake a discrete claim to Elizabeth's holiness, thereby inserting the pope into the supposedly organic narrative of the spell cast by Elizabeth over these two holy figures.

The pope may have found royal women's renunciation particularly attractive as a model for sanctity simply because they did not have strong links to temporal governmental power, especially that which might be used to commemorate the empire. This may have played a role in the pope's and other high-ranking ecclesiasts' support for the cults of holy women in East Central Europe, but if it was the main or the only reason behind these cults' endorsement then this would suggest a large and implausible naïveté on the part of the pope. Royal and noble women in East Central Europe did hold power in varied forms; Sebastian Rossignol, on the issue of charters by noble widows in Silesia, suggests that Silesian widows were still able to issue charters, for instance.<sup>44</sup> Agnes of Bohemia, as we will see, retained close ties with her family, such that she was able to mobilize to secure a papal privilege and modifications to the form of religious life followed by the community of nuns to which she belonged in Prague. The startling power and popularity of the image of these women's embrace of poverty and humility must have prompted the pope to channel this devotion into papally ratified orthodoxy, and to attempt to use it as a means of legitimizing the power which underpinned this orthodoxy. In the letter and elsewhere, Gregory makes women — and men who gave up the will to rule — important through their embrace of the lack of power, circumscribing them to a particular role even if their vocations were very different; inspiration by Elizabeth, the pious laywoman, of Agnes, the virgin nun, becomes a narrative of turning away from any power that might be wielded in support of empire. In this way, acts of extreme worldly renunciation that, in this region, were performed mostly by women became a vessel through which the pope sought to legitimize papal power.

### **The 'Living Saint' and the Pope: Agnes of Bohemia's Correspondence with Gregory IX**

The problem that the living saint posed to their promoter is that their behaviour did not always align neatly with their idealized hagiographic portrait. The legitimacy of papal power was reliant on, and could be tested

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44 Rossignol, 'The Authority and Charter Usage of Female Rulers in Medieval Silesia.'

by, the women through whom the Papacy had chosen to promote it. Crafting the narrative of Agnes's conversion as one in which she had been inspired by Elizabeth to reject all things temporal in favour of the eternal spouse, the pope had predetermined that she would be like her aunt. This was a useful narrative for the pope; the more a person turned away from the evils engendered by the imperial throne, the more their obedience and attention was directed towards a Church presided over by a supreme pontiff. The narrative that Gregory imposed on Agnes's conversion in which the pope delighted in her renunciation of the trappings of royalty would, however, be tested over the remainder of Gregory's pontificate. Gregory's portrait of Agnes's asceticism, combined with the curia's reliance on non-papal actors within Christendom to recognize its power through engagement with the arms of its governance through acts such as petitioning the curia, tied the legitimization of the curia's power to Agnes's actions.

The image of Agnes rejecting royal and imperial ties in order to pursue a religious vocation quickly gained traction, and led to the description of Agnes in hagiographic terms in her own lifetime. Shortly after Agnes joined the newly established community of nuns of the Order of San Damiano in Prague in 1234, Clare of Assisi (d. 1253) — whom Gregory also moulded into a saint within her own lifetime — wrote to Agnes to congratulate her on rejecting the possibility of marriage to the 'illustrious emperor' in favour of a 'nobler spouse'.<sup>45</sup> The spirit in which Clare praised Agnes was not the same as that in which the pope praised the living saint. But Clare's sketch demonstrates the cultural pervasiveness of the neat image of Agnes's rejection of the highest temporal power in Christendom. The magnitude of Agnes's actions and the drama in the narrative of rejection that became associated with her was a powerful image through which the Papacy could promote and make familiar its own power.

Agnes did not, however, simply walk away from temporal power.<sup>46</sup> Her brother, King Wenceslas (Václav) I of Bohemia (1205–1253), and sister-in-law, Cunigunde (1202–1248), were generous donors to Agnes's community in Prague, and consequently intervened on the community's behalf. The pope recognized this interest in a letter that he wrote to Agnes in 1235, in which he took the Prague monastery and an attached hospital under papal protection and recognized Wenceslas's donation of a foundation. The Prague community relied on donations from Agnes's royal siblings, who in turn relied on the nuns to pray for their souls and for the dynasty. The depiction of Agnes's rejection of the hand of Frederick II and the symbols of royalty glossed over a tangled set of vested interests.

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<sup>45</sup> *Claire d'Assise: Écrits*, p. 84.

<sup>46</sup> Bynum, 'Women's Stories, Women's Symbols' explores why walking away from temporal power may have been particularly difficult for women.

Anyone familiar with Agnes's story will know that she was engaged in securing a satisfactory religious life from the pope, one which enshrined the community's right to voluntary poverty and which was granted by Gregory on 15 April 1238.<sup>47</sup> As I describe in more detail in what follows, Agnes and the Prague community asked to modify various other aspects of their form of life, with varying degrees of success. It is possible to read Agnes's interaction with the pope as one in which Agnes strove doggedly to persuade the pope to grant her community the privilege of not being compelled to receive property. However, the particular form taken by Agnes's interaction with the pope did not, or did not only, owe to Agnes's determination and conviction. It was also the result of the particular narrative of worldly rejection and religious devotion into which the pope had inserted her.

Following her conversion, Agnes seems to have found various aspects of her and her community's religious life unsatisfactory, and both she and her brother petitioned or otherwise wrote to the curia on a number of occasions to modify aspects of her religious life. On 4 April 1237, for instance, Agnes was granted permission to leave the enclosed area of the monastery and to enter the choir of the monastery church during mass for a five-year period, so that she could see and hear the priest celebrating mass.<sup>48</sup> In a letter sent to Gregory before 5 February 1237, Wenceslas made clear that he would be 'ever more ready and available for [Gregory] and the Holy Roman Church in every necessity and opportunity, both public and private' if the pope would grant his sister's request.<sup>49</sup> We do not know what, particularly, Wenceslas was referring to, but on 15 April 1238, the pope granted a privilege to Agnes and her community which stated that the community could not be compelled to receive property, the document known as 'The Privilege of Poverty'.<sup>50</sup>

Some of Agnes's requests pushed the boundaries of emergent norms for religious life, however. A cryptic curial letter — one into which Gregory may have had more direct input than, say, a petition — sent by Gregory to Agnes on 9 May 1238, *De conditoris omnium*, urged Agnes to 'strive to ascribe nothing to man but all to the creator'.<sup>51</sup> It is not entirely clear from the letter as to what the pope was responding to. The second half of the letter suggests, however, that Agnes had asked to change some aspect of her religious life, possibly in a way that might have

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47 For those who are unfamiliar, see Mueller, *The Privilege of Poverty*, pp. 73–88; and Felskau, *Agnes von Böhmen*.

48 *Bullarium Franciscanum Romanorum Pontificum* (referred to hereafter as BF), I, p. 213.

49 *Codex Diplomaticus Bohemiae*, pp. 182–83. See also Mueller, *The Privilege of Poverty*, pp. 71–72 (from whence my translation is taken).

50 BF, I, pp. 236–37.

51 'nihil homini, sed totum adscribere studeas Creatori.' BF, I, p. 242.

transgressed her monastic vow. Gregory stressed to Agnes that there were three communities, a 'minor orders of brothers, of enclosed sisters, and a community of penitents which are dedicated to the worship of the holy and individual trinity'.<sup>52</sup> In becoming an enclosed sister, Agnes had chosen a praiseworthy path: 'who of those fearing God would not say with full lips that in emptying yourself to virginal purity in the bride, she chose for herself the excellences of the Redeemer?'.<sup>53</sup> Not only ought Agnes to be content with her perfectly noble profession, but it was also incumbent upon her to 'frequently sing praises' for it so that she might 'deserve to be placed in the eternal fatherland'.<sup>54</sup>

A letter issued on 11 May of the same year, *Angelis gaudium*, addresses a similar issue. Gregory indicates in the letter that Agnes had asked to follow a form of life followed by the community of San Damiano in Assisi, which had been given to them by Francis of Assisi in the very earliest days of that community's life (c. 1210s).<sup>55</sup> He stated that the San Damiano community no longer followed that form of life, and impressed upon Agnes the importance of obediently following the rule that they had been given. The thread of obedience runs through the letter. Invoking the unblinking obedience of Christ to his Father, Gregory stated that Agnes must 'always be held prompt to the practice of obedience and ready for the glory of him who even to death on the Cross was made obedient to the Father'.<sup>56</sup> Listing the reasons why it would be inappropriate for the Prague community to follow Francis's early form of life, Gregory stated that their current rule — the rule of St Benedict, to which was appended a form of life drawn up by Gregory IX — was observed so consistently by all other communities of the Order of San Damiano that 'from the presumption of opposition, serious and intolerable scandal can arise'.<sup>57</sup> That said, if

52 'Intus enim quasi tribus propaginibus invite contentis, quas coram se per somnium pincerna Pharaonis inspexit, fratrum Ordinis Minorum, Sororum inclusarum et Poenitentium Collegia defignantur, que Sancte, ac Individue Trinitatis dedicata cultui'. *BF*, I, p. 242.

53 'Quis Deum timentium plenis non dicat labiis, quod te vacante Virginali munditiae in Sponsam, sibi elegerit excellentia Redemptoris'. *BF*, I, p. 242.

54 'Rogamus itaque devotionem tuam, & hortamur in Domino Jesu Christo, quatenus sollicita super his, laudis frequentare canticum; gaudentibus Angelis de se providisse dignoscitur praesidens curiae supernorum, ad hoc sine intermissione intentionis tuae summam dirigere studeas; ut quae pluribus in salutis exemplum constituta, cerneris, Sanctarum concursu comitata Virginum in aeterna tandem collocari Patria merearis'. *BF*, I, p. 242.

55 *BF*, I, pp. 242–44.

56 'Verum, ut in hac parte, auctore Domino, dirigi tua possit intentio, & compleri, est tibi sollicito vigilandum; ut quantumcumque cor tuum, inspirante Domino, ad virtutum observantiam instammetur; ad cultum obedientiae prompta semper, & facilis pro illius gloria, qui usque ad mortem crucis est Patri factus obediens, habearis'. *BF*, I, p. 243.

57 'Tertio, quia, cum sit ita statutum, ut ubique ab omnibus eadem profitentibus uniformiter observetur, ex praesumptione contrarii grave posset, ac importabile scandalum exoriri'. *BF*, I, p. 243.

Agnes or her sisters wished to alter some aspects of the rule, 'we shall agree to your and their wishes over this according to God with paternal affections'.<sup>58</sup> In other words, as long as they were obedient to the rule and, implicitly, to the pope, then the rule could be modified according to the sisters' wishes.

This dialogue is a debate over the regulation of monastic life and papal attempts to curb religious diversity, but it tells us a lot also about the way in which the legitimization of papal power became intertwined with the obedience of women like Agnes. To Gregory's use of Agnes's rejection of the hand of Frederick II as means of legitimizing papal power and obedience to the Church, Wenceslas added the offer of support from the Bohemian Crown. Although he does not explicitly offer assistance against Frederick, given that he offered help at a time during which the papal-imperial relationship had become particularly frayed we might surmise that this is what he had in mind. If early hagiographic depictions of Agnes's conversion provided a compelling narrative for the reorientation of obedience away from royal power and wealth and towards the Church, Gregory was, at the same time, reliant on royal power and wealth. Entwining the promotion and legitimization of papal power with the royal would-be saint attached the pope to the mythos surrounding Agnes's rejection of the emperor and the 'hard power' of Agnes's relatives, which the pope needed for the defence of Christendom.

This complexity deepened when the would-be saint pushed against the structures through which her obedience was regulated. Gregory's two letters to Agnes narrate the importance not only of sticking to one's chosen profession and vow, but of conforming with the image carved out for her by Gregory. For the most part, Gregory is simply laying down canon law for Agnes. The interest, here, lies in the way in which Gregory explains himself. Where he could simply have refused her request, the level of detail into which he goes suggests that there was more at stake. In *De conditoris omnium*, Gregory's description of Agnes as a resplendent virgin and insisting that she delight in and promote the position conveys not only the pope's anxiety over the prospect that her monastic vow or the neat lines carved out between forms of religious life might be violated. The notion that Agnes had 'offered the whiteness of virginal purity' and that by adopting a life of poverty she had 'changed a humble queen once abounding in many delights and honours to a poor handmaid' and in so doing had chosen 'the excellences of the redeemer' connects Agnes's

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<sup>58</sup> 'firmam de Nobis habitura fiduciam, quod si a te aliquando, vel Sororibus jam dicti Monasterii de ipsius Regulae in aliquibus temperando rigore, aut super aliis requisiti fuerimus, super hoc tuis, & ipsarum votis secundum Deum paternis affectibus annuemus'. *BF*, I, p. 244.

vow to the particular brand of her sanctity.<sup>59</sup> Agnes was not at risk only of breaking her vow but shattering the hagiographic image that had been created for her by the pope, to which the legitimization of obedience to papal power had been inextricably linked. This is put in even more explicit terms in *Angelis gaudium*, in which the pope ties up this image with the virtue of obedience. The creation of religious confusion threatened to adulterate the obedience that Agnes and her sisters had pledged, which is also, in turn, the obedience of the crucified Christ. Gregory's letters to Agnes convey just how Agnes's image was tied to the legitimization of papal power, and the stakes at play if that image were to be redrawn.

## Conclusion

Papal power was made legitimate by the way in which people, lay and religious, interacted with its institutions. As people recognized this power by, for example, petitioning the curia, both the power of the pope and its legitimacy was reproduced. This was not new to the thirteenth century. What had changed by the early years of Gregory IX's pontificate was the nature of the Papacy's power. The notion that the supreme pontiff ought to exercise a monopoly over canonization bound together the pope's power as the ultimate earthly arbiter of orthodoxy with the power of the saints. An increasingly inquisitorial canonization process imbued saints' cults with the power of institutionalized proof, not only of the sanctity of the holy person but of God's power and of orthodoxy. In this way, saints' cults became important media for the communication and legitimization of papal power.

The trope of the submissive and obedient ascetic woman, as Elliott has demonstrated, was integral to this process. In this chapter, I have shown how the sanctity of East Central European royal women in particular may have been especially attractive to the Papacy as a channel through which to promote the legitimacy of its power. The harsh asceticism of these women attacked the symbols of temporal power and wealth and promoted obedience to the Church. In refusing the hand of Frederick II, Agnes of Bohemia rejected the empire in a very literal way. These acts of devotion would have been powerful if they had been performed by any Christian, but were especially useful to the pope when performed in the heartlands of the empire. That the women who executed them embodied a tension between temporal and spiritual power posed a danger to the legitimacy of papal power but, in part owing to this danger, this tension also held

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<sup>59</sup> 'obtulisti candorem munditiae ... in ancillam pauperem, & humilem Reginam transtuleris, olim multis deliciis, & honoribus abundantem ... elegerit excellentia Redemptoris'. *BF*, I, p. 242.

great potential for the pope. Redefining the penitential rejection of the symbols of royalty or empire to mean showing obedience to the Church, and to the pope, was a powerful act through which orthodoxy centred on the Latin Church, and the pope, was made legitimate. The familial ties that women like Agnes shared with rulers whose 'hard power' the pope could call upon in times of crisis was also undoubtedly of benefit to the pope and his curia. Following the traces of these dynamics in the existing evidence demonstrates that East Central European elite women — both real women and 'women' as an idea — were not marginal but central to the legitimization of papal power and conceptions of orthodoxy in the thirteenth century.

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# Conclusions



## 17. The Cult of Saints and the Legitimization of Ecclesiastical and Secular Elites on the Periphery: Conclusions\*

Our goal in this volume has been to analyse comparatively the cult of saints on the Eastern and Northern periphery of Latin Christendom in the context of one specific aspect, namely how the veneration of saints could help to legitimize the elites. We believe that this approach not only allows us to see some important elements of the phenomenon of the cult of saints itself, but also makes it possible to link the cult of saints to other phenomena crucial to the transformations taking place on the peripheries of Latin Christianity during their Christianization. This volume has therefore two collective protagonists: the saints and the elites. However, in practice, the

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\* The research leading to these results has received funding from the Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2014–2021 (2019/34/H/HS3/00500). This chapter is part of a joint research project of the University of Warsaw and the University of Oslo ‘Symbolic Resources and Political Structures on the Periphery: Legitimization of the ELITES in Poland and Norway, c. 1000–1300’.

**Steffen Hope** • is currently a Postdoctoral Researcher at the Department of Archaeology, Conservation, and History at the University of Oslo. His main research interests are the cult of saints, history-writing, identity-construction, and how these phenomena intersect. He also works on fragments of medieval manuscripts.

**Grzegorz Pac** • is Professor at the Faculty of History, University of Warsaw. His research interests include the cult of saints, papal canonization, queenship, and the role of women in the Early and High Middle Ages.

**Jón Viðar Sigurðsson** • is Professor in medieval history at the Department of Archaeology, Conservation and History, University of Oslo.

*The Cult of Saints and Legitimization of Elite Power in East Central and Northern Europe up to 1300*, ed. by Grzegorz Pac, Steffen Hope, and Jón Viðar Sigurðsson, *Comparative Perspectives on Medieval History*, 2 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2024), pp. 439–448

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10.1484/M.CPMH-EB.5.137547

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structure of this anthology is marked by a division between non-native and native saints. Each chapter takes as its starting point the problem of the legitimization of elites through a particular saint or saints. It is, after all, the saints who are found in the titles of most chapters, whereas the representatives of the other collective protagonist, the elites, are usually first encountered in the content of the chapter. This is also why we thought it worthwhile in the conclusions to this volume to look at the material presented here precisely from the perspective of the elites, which allows us to compare particular cases discussed in this volume from an alternative perspective.

As discussed in the Introduction, the division of the elites into ‘secular’ and ‘ecclesiastical’ is, for many reasons, problematic and simplistic. However, in the case of the elites’ relationship with saints, the division into secular and ecclesiastical may serve as a useful analytic tool. It is a useful tool because different elite groups presented their deservedness for power in different ways. For instance, a bishop and a secular aristocrat would employ different rituals or acts of piety, or at least serve different roles in those rituals and acts, in order to legitimize their positions. This focus on *how* the members of various elites used the cult of saints for legitimizing purposes allows us to compare how the cult of saints functioned in the legitimization of various elite groups.

From this perspective, we present a couple of chapters that focus on the role of the cult of saints in the legitimization of ecclesiastical elites. What is notable in these contributions is that, although the actions of individuals are sometimes addressed in them, the question of legitimacy is usually connected with religious institutions: bishoprics, monasteries, or religious orders. This is clear in Grzegorz Pac’s chapter dealing with the role of St Ludmila in the legitimization of the Prague St George Abbey. The author claims that the role of the holy duchess was crucial, particularly for stressing the bond between the nunnery and its founders, the Přemyslids, in the period when the institution was weakened. At the same time Pac highlights the mutual relationship between the monastery and its patroness, whose relatively new cult needed active support from the abbey. This created a specific correlation: on the one hand, St Ludmila’s cult obviously strengthened the monastery where her body rested; on the other hand, as the author suggests, it was the strong position of St George’s Monastery, linked to the dynasty through its origins, that gave the institution a chance to create its own cult at an early stage of Christianization.

This role of saints in the legitimization of institutions is also addressed by Steffen Hope, who analyses the cases of three martyrs’ cults in three Danish bishoprics: St Liufdag in Ribe, St Cnut Rex in Odense, and St Thomas of Canterbury in Lund. Going beyond the general statement of the legitimizing role that the aura of patron saints provided to a religious institution, he identifies the specific purposes that the creation,

propagation, and promotion of cults may have served at various points of the history of these bishoprics. Thus, he points out that on the one hand cults may have been part of the rivalry between bishops and instrumental in their efforts to strengthen the prestige of their respective bishoprics. Yet on the other hand, such cults influenced the relationships between different groups of clergy, such as the bishop and the chapter, and also between the bishop and the laity, especially the king.

Sara Ellis Nilsson is also interested in ecclesiastical institutions and there are some partial overlaps with Hope's chapter, but her approach is different. Her chapter begins with a discussion of Lars Boje Mortensen's concept of 'mythopoetic moments', a term that was formulated to describe the beginnings of the writing of the biographies of saints, which formed origin legends for the peripheral polities. Ellis Nilsson proposes to use it to describe the similar role played by hagiography in the history of ecclesiastical institutions. Building on Mortensen, she has coined the term 'mythopoetic movements' in order to stress the long-term nature of the process of consciously using local saints for legitimation purposes. Her chapter focuses on the presence of ecclesiastical institutions in landscape. Ellis Nilsson shows how hagiography could be a useful tool for legitimizing the geographical placement of church institutions or the range of the territory subjected to them, for example through underlining the role of a particular institution's patron saint in the conversion of these lands.

Another chapter, written by the musicologist Karen Lagergren, focuses on the legitimizing role of liturgy, and looks in particular at saints' offices in medieval Sweden. The author stresses the close cooperation between the ecclesiastical and secular elites; however, as the liturgy was naturally under the control of the ecclesiastical elites, it could be a useful tool — indeed a very powerful one, due to its sacral status — for ecclesiastical institutions and their leaders. Lagergren shows how the members of the elites could use the categorization and hierarchization of saints — provided by the liturgical order and various levels of the solemnity of liturgical commemorations, as well as the choice of music or the attribution of the authorship of offices — to demonstrate the importance of a particular saint. In most cases this meant the native one, as her chapter discusses, and this thereby increased the prestige of the institution of which the saint was a holy patron.

The last chapter in this group, written by Eszter Konrád, focuses mainly on ecclesiastical circles, and discusses the presence of the Order of Preachers in Hungary. It shows how the relatively early appearance in Hungary of relics of two Dominican saints — the founder of the order, Dominic, and the martyr Peter of Verona — and the fortunate growth of their local cult was a source of prestige for the Hungarian Dominicans. It was, as Konrád claims, the result of the friars' own activities, as they promoted their patrons as miracle workers and at the same time used sermons for

the feasts of both saints to promote the excellence of the Order itself. Interestingly, as the author suggests, the local cults of these Dominican saints might also have been useful for the Hungarian branch of the Order - not only to legitimize it in its local context, but also to present its importance and justify its position in the Order as a whole.

The last point led us to the observation, which is possible when we compare all the cases discussed above, that the cult of saints played an important role in the legitimization of ecclesiastical institutions vis-à-vis both their secular and their ecclesiastical milieus. On the one hand, it might be useful in contact with rulers and secular founders or for the promotion of the institution amongst regular laymen. On the other hand, in relations with other ecclesiastical institutions it could be an important tool for demonstrating one's elevated position in the hierarchy.

Therefore, in summarizing these analyses one might notice that ecclesiastical institutions on the peripheries were not significantly different from those at the centre of the Christian world when it came to the use of the saints to demonstrate legitimacy. However, let us note that the peripheral institutions were somewhat poorer in terms of the means they could use for legitimization. Institutions from the area of the former Roman Empire could easily invoke their antiquity and apostolic roots, as well as through the cults of Roman-era saints (it was irrelevant whether they were real or invented).<sup>1</sup> On the periphery, one of the few ways to legitimize ecclesiastical institutions was the cult of new saints, often those of missionaries (and in this sense apostles),<sup>2</sup> who were local saints, or through the translation of relics of old saints from more central areas.

From the point of view of the elites involved in the cult of the saints, the next group of chapters concentrate on the secular elites. Four chapters deal with the phenomenon of so-called dynastic saints, that is, figures from ruling dynasties who were the object of veneration. This is not surprising, given that, as Gábor Klaniczay noted, the cult of dynastic saints could be seen 'as an ideological innovation originated on the north-western, northern and eastern borderlands of Europe, in the newly converted, newly established kingdoms that joined Western Christendom sometime in the period from the seventh to the eleventh century'.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, it was dynastic saints, as Lars Boje Mortensen's analysis of the cases of Denmark, Norway and Hungary shows, who dominated the ideological space of the periphery in the early stages of Christianization.<sup>4</sup>

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1 e.g. Ewig, 'Kaiserliche und apostolische Tradition'; Poensgen, *Geschichtskonstruktionen*; Boschof, 'Köln, Mainz, Trier'; Sot, 'Le Mythe des origines romaines'; Krönert, 'Between Identity, History, and Rivalry'.

2 Michałowski, *The Gniezno Summit*, pp. 128–34.

3 Klaniczay, *Holy Rulers*, p. 63.

4 Mortensen, 'Sanctified Beginnings', pp. 249–62.

The Bohemian main patron saint, Duke Wenceslas, and the political role of his cult has often been analysed by previous research. In his chapter David Kalhous, however, sets himself a slightly different goal. As the cult in a short space of time gained a surprisingly large number of texts, both in Latin and the vernacular, and of both local and foreign origin, Kalhous looks mainly at the hagiographical texts about the saint. He shows how certain themes in the saint's lives responded to specific issues that were crucial for the legitimacy of the Přemyslid dukes: these include their relations with the emperor and the local aristocracy, and, finally, the problem of the ecclesiastical independence of the Prague bishopric.

St Wenceslas, along with the Danish dynastic saint, Cnut Rex, is the subject of another text, by Kacper Bylinka. He refers to the concept of the textual community, as proposed by Brian Stock, to show the importance of saints' hagiographies as expressions of the identity of the elites of the two peripheral polities. In a detailed analysis of the texts, the author shows how — by linking the figures of the saintly rulers to earlier, already recognized, saints — hagiography placed new saints in the broader Christian tradition. Through that, he suggests, the saints' *vitae* indirectly legitimize the elites, who recognized St Wenceslas or St Cnut as their patrons, and their position in Latin Christendom. The hagiographies of patron saints were therefore a way for elites of Bohemia and Denmark to anchor themselves in the Christian world.

Anna Agnieszka Dryblak's chapter also focuses on the secular elites and refers to the concept of a dynastic saint. She analyses the figure of St Hedwig of Silesia, canonized in 1267, who differs from holy rulers described above. In contrast to them, Hedwig was not the first, main saint of the newly Christianized areas, as discussed by Mortensen. Paradoxically, however, as Dryblak notes, she was the first dynastic saint in Poland, as this realm was exceptional in this respect within the area of 'Younger Europe'. Dryblak highlights the close connection between two actions of the Silesian Piasts, which were important for their legitimizing purposes: the foundation of a dynastic nunnery and the creation of a cult of a dynastic saint closely associated with that monastery. Pondering the dynastic aspects of Hedwig's cult, the author identifies important themes linked to family in the texts dedicated to her, including her marriage. Dryblak also notes the involvement of Hedwig's family in the promotion of her cult, including their support for the efforts to obtain her papal canonization.

The topic of legitimization of secular elites in general and of use of dynastic saints for this purpose in particular is interestingly problematized in Haki Antonsson's comparative chapter. He shows three different saints with different functions in the legitimization of secular elites, expressed in the different ways that their hagiographies depict both the saints themselves and the recognition of their sanctity. Thus, on the one hand, we have the holy king of Hungary, St Stephen whose cult from its very beginnings

was clearly a part of the royal ideology of his successors. On the other hand, however, Haki Antonsson analyses the case of Cnut Rex, discussed above also in the context of the legitimization of the ecclesiastical elites, or more precisely the bishopric of Odense. As he shows, the way the Danish holy king is described in the emerging hagiography 'reveals a transitional process where a cult that primarily expressed the identity of a local ecclesiastical community becomes integrated into an emerging royal identity and ideology.' Finally, perhaps most interestingly in this context, is the case of the recognition of the sainthood of a holy bishop, St Thorlak of Skálholt. Perhaps surprisingly, the ideological message associated with this act is less related to the bishopric he led and its ecclesiastical elites, but refers to the Icelandic political community and its elites as a whole, seeing in the first native cult a tool to legitimize the prevailing order and the idea of unity.

Two other chapters concerning the legitimization of the secular elites concentrate on the cults of non-native saints. Karen Stark takes up the theme of the Hungarian kings' special devotion to the Virgin Mary and the idea of the protection she offered their realm. This topic has already been discussed by researchers, but Stark takes a new perspective, seeing the Marian cult as an alternative to the cult of St Peter which was connected to the idea of the rulers being dependent on the Papacy. In addition to discussing the importance that the various manifestations of devotion to the Virgin Mary had for royal legitimacy, the author also draws attention to aristocratic foundations dedicated to the Mother of God. They were, as she convincingly shows, a way for the secular elites to demonstrate their connection to the rulers or to imitate their devotional practices.

We find a similar theme in the chapter by Miłosz Sosnowski, who analyses the cult of St Giles in Poland in the late eleventh and the first half of the twelfth century. It found its way there thanks to the direct ties the ducal family had with the southern French abbey of Saint-Gilles. Interestingly, the veneration of St Giles soon became popular among the nobility, who made an effort to establish their own relations with the distant monastery. It is hard to resist the impression that during the period in question, participation in the cult of St Giles was, in Poland, a kind of marker of belonging to the elite, and of close ties with the Piast court. At the same time, the fact that their patron saint had devotees in distant lands was important for the Abbey of Saint-Gilles, in order to be able prove their own special position, as well as that of their holy patron.

This last observation leads us to an important reflection on the legitimizing role of the cult of saints. It is peculiar that in virtually all of the above-mentioned cases, although the emphasis was rather on the secular elites, an important role was always also played by the ecclesiastical institutions, which attempted to establish their own legitimacy. These included: the bishopric of Prague which sought to emphasize its independence;

the chapter of Odense Cathedral that promoted the cult of St Cnut; the dynastic nunnery of Trzebnica, which hosted the body of St Hedwig; the bishopric of Skálholt, to which cathedral the body of St Thorlak was translated; the Cistercian monasteries dedicated to the Virgin Mary that were founded by Hungarian nobles; and, finally, the abbey of Saint-Gilles, which benefited from the recognition it received from the Polish elites. This pattern fits with the conclusion that while the ecclesiastical elites could perform their legitimizing roles in connection to the cult of saints without the involvement of the secular elites, it was not possible the other way round. The cult of saints, by its very nature, required some involvement from the ecclesiastical institutions, even when used by the secular elites. One might call them tools which, however, suggest a certain passive role in the hands of ruler and secular aristocrats, while the analysis presented in this volume suggests that ecclesiastical elites were always active actors in these matters.

This is related to another topic, which is the conflict of interests between the secular and ecclesiastical elites and the ideological use of the cult of the saints. This issue is mentioned in several of the chapters discussed above, but it is the main theme of the four chapters, which examine the role of the cult of saints in the tensions between ecclesiastical and secular elites. It is worth noting that all these texts focus on a relatively late period from the point of view of the chronological scope of this anthology: the last quarter of the twelfth and the thirteenth centuries. This can be linked to the changes brought about by the Gregorian Reform with its emphasis on the independence of ecclesiastical institutions from the secular authorities and its stress on the defence of *libertas ecclesiae*.

Haraldur Hreinsson considers the changes which took place in the church in Iceland in the last quarter of the twelfth century, and their connections with the figures of the apostles. It was then under the influence of the Gregorian Reform that some local church leaders, supported by archbishop of Nidaros, began to defend *libertas ecclesiae* and to struggle against the supremacy of the chieftains in the Icelandic Church. The author shows how the religious discourses relating to the apostles helped to legitimize the efforts of the ecclesiastical elites. The cult of the apostles, which had been popular in Iceland since the time of the conversion, and was abundantly represented in the local writing, could therefore provide the ideological underpinning for the distancing and exclusion of the chieftains from the ecclesiastical elites, of which they used to be an important part.

The opposite example, when the cult of a saint becomes a tool for legitimizing secular power, including in countering ecclesiastical elites, is shown by Karolina Morawska. She highlights the role of Duke Kazimierz II, who ruled Kraków in the last quarter of the twelfth century, in bringing the Italian (according to the late hagiographical texts even Roman) relics of St Florian. Morawska points to the possibility of the

ideological use of the cult of the new saint in the struggles between the Piast dukes; however, she suggests that this was not the only purpose of Kazimierz's involvement in the translation. The new cult was perhaps intended to overshadow the cult of eleventh-century bishop of Kraków, Stanislaus, promoted by local church circles. The ducal resentment of the latter's cult would have its origins in its content, as St Stanislaus was presented as a holy bishop, a defender of the Church and its subjects against King Bolesław II's cruelty, who was ultimately martyred by the Piast ruler.

The idea of competing cults is also strongly present in the chapter by Jerzy Pysiak. He begins with the well-known phenomenon of the Norwegian Church's use of the cult of St Olaf to establish its dominant position in the country and gain supremacy over the rulers. Above all, however, he points to the kings' response to these actions, which was an attempt to find an independent cult controlled by the court, that is the cult of the Crown of Thorns. Pysiak shows how, following the model of the Capetians, from whom the Norwegian kings obtained these relics, the latter gave the palace chapel in Bergen new significance and even attempted to create an autonomous network of chapels royal.

Kirsty Day's chapter turns to the struggles between ecclesiastical and secular elites at the highest level: that is, the disputes between the Papacy and imperial power. She shows how the sanctity of thirteenth-century East Central European royal women — from the perspective of this volume native and, paradoxically, in fact rather local saints — may have been used by the Papacy to legitimize its own power. Through their radical ascetism these women rejected the symbols of temporal power, accepting instead obedience to the Church. This relationship was epitomized by the women's submission to their confessors, who represented orthodoxy, but who at the same time might be seen as agents of papal power. As a result, the author concludes, 'East Central European elite women — both real women and "women" as an idea — were not marginal but central to the legitimization of papal power and conceptions of orthodoxy in the thirteenth century'.

This conclusion leads us to a more general remark about the relevance of the cult of the saints in the periphery to the problem of their relationship with the centre. In several of the cases discussed, the centres are sources of legitimacy for the periphery. This is the case when the cults that helped to legitimize the local elites came from the centre, like, for instance, the cult of the apostles in Iceland or, even more literally, the body of St Florian translated from Rome itself. This situation does not necessarily exclude the fact that the centres may also be the addressees of the legitimizing efforts of the elites from the periphery. A good example of this is the Hungarian cult of the two Dominican saints, based on the relics brought from the centre, which played an important role in legitimizing the Hungarian branch of the order in the eyes of the order as a whole.

Similarly, the centre was, if not the addressee, then the point of reference for the authors of the hagiographies of St Wenceslas and St Cnut, who sought to demonstrate their connections to the centre.

Sometimes, however, there is a clear reversal of roles — it is the centre that seeks its legitimacy in the periphery and the cult of the saints present there. Such a situation is encountered in the last chapter, which showed how important East Central European female saints were for legitimizing the Papacy in the thirteenth century. In a sense, an analogy is the story of the well-established Abbey of Saint-Gilles, for which the cult of its patron saint in a remote, 'exotic' territory became an important element for legitimization in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. However, it seems that in most cases the legitimization efforts of the local elites, including those efforts that involved the use of the cult of saints, was predominantly addressed to local audiences. In this sense, the cult of saints, in principle, played a similar role for the elites throughout Latin Christendom, both at its centre and on its periphery.

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*New Perspectives on the 'Civil Wars' in Medieval Scandinavia*, ed. by Hans Jacob Orning, Kim Esmark, and Jón Viðar Sigurðsson (2024)

