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The Legend of Saint Kinga's Ring: A Comparative Analysis of the Sources

Although there has been a great deal of academic interest in the origins of salt mining in Poland, many issues relating to the historic mine in Bochnia remain extremely hard to clarify with regards to the primary sources available¹. These problems include the identification of specific people and institutions responsible for finding rock salt in Bochnia and the establishment of the mine itself, as well as the motives behind the entire endeavour. Precise dates have also proved hard to confirm. It was previously supposed that a decisive role in the enterprise had been taken by mining specialists purportedly brought by Kinga, the Hungarian princess who wed Boleslaus the Chaste (Bolesław Wstydlivy), Duke of Cracow and Sandomierz. Such

- 1 The following works should be mentioned: S. Fischer, *Dzieje bocheńskiej żupy solnej*, Warszawa 1962; A. Keckowa, *Instytucja stolników w żupach krakowskich*, Studia z Dziejów Górnictwa i Hutnictwa, vol. VI, Wrocław 1963, pp. 175–256; J. Grzesiowski, J. Piotrowicz, *Sól małopolska w nadaniach dla klasztorów (do początku XVI wieku)*, "Studia i Materiały do Dziejów Żup Solnych w Polsce" (hereinafter abbreviated to: SMDŻ), vol. I, (1965) pp. 71–189; J. Wyrozumski, *Państwowa gospodarka solna w Polsce do schyłku XIV wieku*, Kraków 1968; J. Piotrowicz, *Problematyka genezy i najstarszych dziejów górnictwa solnego w Polsce*, SMDŻ, vol. II (1968) pp. 173–234; J. Piotrowicz, *Żupy krakowskie w pierwszych wiekach rozwoju od połowy XIII do początków XVI wieku*, in: *Dzieje żup krakowskich*, ed. R. Kędra, Wieliczka 1988, pp. 103–158; J. Piotrowicz, *Górnictwo solne w Małopolsce w czasach księżnej Kingi – jego legendarne i rzeczywiste początki*, SMDŻ, vol. XVIII, (1994) pp. 9–26; J. Piotrowicz, *Początki kopalni soli w Bochni w świetle faktów, hipotez i legendy o pierścieniu księżnej Kingi*, "Wiadomości Bocheńskie: Kwartalnik Społeczno-Kulturalny Stowarzyszenia Bochniaków i Miłośników Ziemi Bocheńskiej", vol. XVII, no. 4 (2010), pp. 15–18; A. Jodłowski, *Eksploracja soli na terenie Małopolski w pradziejach i we wczesnym średniowieczu*, Wieliczka 1971.

a thesis was advanced by scholars including Adam Naruszewicz, Karol Szajnocha, Hieronim Łabęcki and Franciszek Skibiński, as well as a number of Hungarian historians². As a source for this premise, these scholars referred to a description of the miraculous discovery of a ring contained in *Vita et miracula sanctae Kyngae ducissae Cracoviensis*, a work set down in the early 14th century by an anonymous hagiographer³. However, this theory was vehemently rejected by Józef Piotrowicz, who pointed to the different nature of Hungarian salt mining which, in the era that concerns us, was characterised by open-pit mining. He likewise noted the depopulation of Hungary in the wake of the Mongol invasion, and the resultant problem that there was a shortage of miners. In the light of these factors, the arrival of German-speaking specialists from the south appears unlikely⁴.

The duchess was beatified in the 17th century and canonised in the 20th, and the hagiographic tradition relating to her stretches back as far as the medieval era. Yet whilst issues concerning the development of this hagiographic tradition have been explored by scholars, the source material pertaining to it has hitherto not been comprehensively studied with recourse to the methodology of critical evaluation⁵. This approach enables the scholar to look at a given hagiographical source as a text which may

- 2 A. Naruszewicz, *Historia narodu polskiego od początku chrześcijaństwa*, vol. V, Warszawa 1784, p. 3; K. Szajnocha, *Szkice historyczne*, vol. I, Warszawa 1854, pp. 23–29; H. Łabęcki, *Najdawniejsze dzieje salin krakowskich aż do żupnictwa Jana Bonera, czyli do r. 1515*, "Biblioteka Warszawska", vol. II, (1856) pp. 279–280; F. Skibiński, *Regale górnicze we wczesnym średniowieczu na Zachodzie i w Polsce*, „Przegląd Historyczny”, vol. XXVIII, no. 2 (1929) p. 212. See also J. Piotrowicz, *Problematyka...*, op. cit., p. 191 (footnote. 13).
- 3 *Vita et miracula sanctae Kyngae ducissae Cracoviensis*, ed. W. Kętrzyński, *Monumenta Poloniae Historica* (hereinafter MPH), vol. IV, Lwów 1884, pp. 662–744.
- 4 J. Grzesiowski, J. Piotrowicz, *Sól małopolska w nadaniach...*, op. cit., pp. 119–120; J. Piotrowicz, *Problematyka genezy...*, op. cit., pp. 190–192; J. Piotrowicz, *Górnictwo solne...*, op. cit., pp. 15–25.
- 5 Barbara Kowalska has written an extensive comparative analysis of sources relating to Kinga. However, this work contains many grave errors, one notable example being a reference to a vision had by the daughter of Bela IV, supposedly recorded in *Traska's Annals*. However, the author of the annals explicitly stated that this concerned Kunigunde of Bohemia, daughter of Ottokar II of Bohemia, who married the Duke of Płock Boleslaus II. It was only in the later works *Rocznik małopolski Szamotulskiego* and *Rocznik małopolski Gesselena*, that the wife of Boleslaus the Chaste was associated with this incident. The copyists likewise thoughtlessly rewrote information about Kunigunde of Bohemia taking the veil at the convent of the Poor Clares in Prague. See B. Kowalska, *Święta Kinga. Rzeczywistość i legenda*, Kraków 2008, p. 148; *Rocznik Traski*, ed. A. Bielowski, MPH, vol. II, Lwów 1872,

serve to describe the mentality, religiosity and customs of the society, or simply the milieu, from which the hagiographer came. Equally important is the separation of information pertaining to political events, the activities of individual people and so forth. These fuse with fictional events within the framework of a conventional narrative. Thus, the historian is faced with an exceptionally difficult task. Hagiographic legends, and indeed *The Life of St Kinga* represents just such a genre, are therefore not bereft of historical value, and should not be solely categorised as literary works. An analysis of the legend of the miraculous discovery of the ring can thus lead to useful findings, which can help us to illuminate the unclear genesis of Polish salt mining. Meanwhile, the charting of the development of the oldest hagiographic traditions can contribute towards the solving of certain source-related problems, for example in clarifying the relations among specific manuscripts which contain hagiographic elements about Kinga.

According to Wojciech Kętrzyński, the autograph manuscript of *Vita Sanctae Kyngae* was set down by its author in the years 1317–1329, hence relatively soon after her death (1292)⁶. The hagiographer stated that during a visit to her parents in Hungary, Kinga entreated her father to provide her with a salt mine. He consented, and she duly cast a gold ring into the mine. This ring was later discovered in a block of salt (*bancus salis*) extracted from the first Bochnia pit (*fovea*)⁷. It is widely believed that this legend highlights Kinga's role in the discovery of rock salt. In a work completed prior to the Second World War, Ludwik Kowalski and Stanisław Fischer even wrote that Kinga ordered miners to dig the first shaft at Bochnia⁸. However, the anonymous author of the original *The Life of St Kinga* mentioned only in

pp. 843–844; *Rocznik małopolski*, ed. A. Bielowski, MPH, vol. III, Lwów 1878, p. 177; K. Jasiński, *Rodowód Piastów mazowieckich*, Poznań, Wrocław 1998, pp. 19–23.

6 *Vita et maricula...*, op. cit., pp. 676–677.

7 *Contigit autem quadam vice felicem dominam visitacionis parentum causa Hungariam ingredi, ubi clemencia divina per eius merita miracula declaravit. Primum est omni recitatione dignum. Nam cum a patre suo, domino rege Bela unam fodinam salis sibi dari peccisset et eo benignissime annuente id promeruisset, stans super predictam foveam sibi assignatam felix Kynga invocataque divina gracia annulum suum in ipsam foveam proiecit. Post multum vero temporis cum fodine in Bochna diocesis Cracoviensis foderentur, in prima fovea in una salis banca predictus aureus annulus est repertus. Quem videns felix domina et suum esse recognoscens, Deo gracias egit, qui semper mira diligentibus operatur. Vita et maricula...*, op. cit., p. 696.

8 L. Kowalski, S. Fischer, *Żywot bł. Kingi i dzieje jej kultu*, Tarnów 1992, p. 53.

general terms that the miraculous event occurred '*post multum vero temporis cum fodine in Bochna diocesis Cracoviensis foderentur*'. The author did not include any information to the effect that the duchess had indicated a place where digging should take place, or that she gave any kind of recommendation whatsoever. This poses the question as to how the account of the miracle should be properly interpreted.

The author of *Vita Sanctae Kyngae* is unknown; we only know that he was a Franciscan based in Lesser Poland (Małopolska), who obtained an education that was typical for a monk around the dawn of the 14th century. Maria Helena Witkowska supported the theory of the Franciscan genesis of the work, above all surmising that the hagiography was commissioned by the Second Franciscan Order, in other words the Poor Clares of Stary Sącz. After all, the hagiographer wrote of them that they are '*dominae meae*', hence according to Witkowska, his aim was to portray 'the ideal of Franciscan sainthood'⁹. The medieval author drew upon a wide array of sources for his work, including documents and records from the convent in Stary Sącz. He likewise used narrative sources, such as *Vita Maior Sancti Stanislai Episcopi*, and another work whose author is hard to identify, *Cronica Hungarorum*, from which he garnered information about Hungarian matters. The author of *The Life of St Kinga* likewise made use of oral traditions, perhaps folk ones, but most likely those that developed in the circles of the Franciscans of Lesser Poland that were closely connected with the Poor Clares in Stary Sącz. Among those who could have given him credible information about Kinga was the abbess of the Stary Sącz convent, Katarzyna Odolana, who was recorded as holding that office in a document issued in 1293. Moreover, it was probably she who initiated the task of recording the life and miracles of Kinga, although Zofia Budkowa has considered the possibility that Jadwiga Bolesławówna had the decisive influence¹⁰.

The extent of the usefulness of the legend about the discovery of the ring in the context of pinpointing people responsible for the launch of

9 M. H. Witkowska, *Vita sanctae Kyngae ducissae Cracoviensis jako źródło hagiograficzne*, "Roczniki Humanistyczne", vol. X, no. 2 (1961), p. 152.

10 M.H. Witkowska, *Vita sanctae Kyngae*, *op.cit.*, pp. 86–106; Z. Budkowa, *Kunegunda*, in: *Polski Słownik Biograficzny*, ed. E. Rostworowski, vol. XVI, Wrocław 1971, p. 188. After all, Jadwiga Bolesławówna and Ladislaus the Short featured in *Vita sanctae Kyngae* as people who had testified to Kinga's preservation of her chastity. See *Vita miracula...*, *op. cit.*, p. 723.

mining rock salt is only possible once the milieu which contributed to its dissemination is brought into focus. Kowalski and Fischer noted that *The Chronicle of Greater Poland (Kronika Wielkopolska)*, which describes events of the period, does not link the duchess to such activity, in spite of the fact that certain other information about her is present in the work. This provided them with the basis for their surmise that the activity only got under way after her death¹¹. Questions regarding the authorship and time of writing of this chronicle have not yet been definitively settled. Particularly puzzling is its relation to a work from Lesser Poland, *The Chronicle of Dzierzwa (Kronika Dzierzwy)*, which is highly similar, both in terms of composition and contents. These problems are however not within the scope of the present essay. We shall refer above all to selected passages from *The Chronicle of Dzierzwa*, since Jacek Banaszekiewicz has convincingly explained that *The Chronicle of Greater Poland* is based on that work¹².

During the medieval era, *The Polish Chronicle* of Master Vincent (Wincenty Kadłubek) was one of the fundamental sources with regards to the earliest history of the Polish state. The historiographer wrote in a florid style, and the work itself, as a showcase of his erudition, is conspicuous for its abundance of metaphors, allegories and allusions to Antique authors. It should come as no surprise then that the work was challenging, even for the educated reader. Dzierzwa, in bygone times called Mierzwa, took up the task of condensing the aforementioned chronicle, creating a more lucid discourse on his native history. He likewise supplemented it with an extensive account of the origins of *gentis Poloniae*, which we cannot find in Master Vincent's work, and he also extended his chronicle as far as the year 1288, drawing on the now lost annals of Lesser Poland, namely the *Annales Polonorum*. It is not clear when the author finished working on the enterprise, and certain historians have conjectured that this was in the last years of the 13th century. However, the second decade of the following century seems more probable, particularly the period after 1312–1313, with the *terminus ad quem* most probably being determined by the coronation of Ladislaus the Short (Władysław Łokietek), in 1320. Little is known about the

11 L. Kowalski, S. Fischer, *Żywot bł. Kingi...*, op. cit., p. 54.

12 See J. Banaszekiewicz, *Kronika Dzierzwy. XIV-wieczne kompendium historii ojczyzny*, Wrocław 1979, pp. 78–117. See also *Kronika Wielkopolska*, ed. B. Kürbis, *Monumenta Poloniae Historica. Series nova* (hereinafter abbreviated to: MPHn), vol. VIII, Warszawa 1970.

author of the work, although he has been associated by certain researchers with Mikołaj Dzierzwa, who was mentioned in *Miracula sanctae Kyngae*, although there are many factors which suggest that he hailed from the sphere of the Cracow Franciscans¹³. This is reflected, among other factors, by the inclusion in the chronicle of a statement that Boleslaus the Chaste is '*religiosorum benefactor et precipue fratrum Minorum emulato*'¹⁴, and there are also short passages concerning the life and achievements of the duke's sister Salomea and his wife Kinga, who following the deaths of their husbands joined the Order of the Poor Clares¹⁵.

Of particular interest to us is the reference to a miracle that was supposed to have taken place following Kinga's birth. According to the chronicler's account, the newborn baby uttered the opening words of the Marian antiphon: '*Ave regina celorum!*' Following this occurrence, Kinga ceased to speak, until the time when nature permitted her to do so¹⁶. The author of *Vita Sanctae Kyngae* expanded on this episode, claiming that this utterance took place during the baptism of the baby by 'a certain bishop' on the day of her birth, and the author likewise extended the infant's proclamation as follows: '*Ave Regina celorum, [mater regis] angelorum!*' Such practice is absolutely understandable, as hagiographic legends are after all characterised by the further development of a given narrative. J. Banaszkiewicz rightly noted that *Traska's Annals (Rocznik Traski)*, most probably set down by Traska around 1340, also provide a description of this miracle. However, the chronicler did not associate the event with the birth of Bela IV's daughter.

13 *Kronika Dzierzwy*, publ. K. Pawłowski, MPHn, vol. XV, Kraków 2013, pp. VI–VII. Extensive consideration of *The Chronicle of Dzierzwa*, including its relation to *The Chronicle of Greater Poland* and the chief source used by the chronicler, can be found in the works of W. Drelicharz, *Annalistyka małopolska XIII–XV wieku. Kierunki rozwoju wielkich roczników kompilowanych*, Kraków 2003, pp. 214–216, 257–262, 333–373; W. Drelicharz, *Idea zjednoczenia królestwa w średniowiecznym dziejopisarstwie polskim*, Kraków 2012, pp. 295–315. Among Drelicharz's greatest academic achievements is his provision of evidence that while Dzierzwa was editing the first part of his chronicle, he not only drew on the work of Master Vincent, but also on the lost *Annales Polonorum*.

14 *Kronika Dzierzwy*, op. cit., p. 79.

15 Parts of works that deal with the oldest hagiographic traditions associated with Kinga are contained in the Annex. It should be emphasized that both *The Chronicle of Dzierzwa* and *The Chronicle of Greater Poland*, and *The Life and Miracles of Duchess Kinga* are not known to us from 14th-century autograph manuscripts, but only from copies made in the Late Middle Ages or the Early Modern period.

16 See M.H. Witkowska, *Vita sanctae Kyngae...*, op. cit., pp. 134–135.

He wrote about her birth in an entry for 1234 but described the proclamation of the words '*infra annos in quibus secundum naturam loqui non poterat*' in a separate entry for 1239. According to Banaszekiewicz, Dzierzwa developed this information 'in order to depart from the chronicler's precedent', and its basis can be supposed with regards to a separate notation, 'from a Franciscan quill, which was absorbed into the annalists' compilation that was being created within the mendicant order'¹⁷. The author of *The Life of St Kinga* could have drawn this information from *The Chronicle of Dzierzwa*, which is indicated by the combining in both works of the birth of the duchess with the utterance of her first words, albeit in an expanded version in *Vita sanctae Kyngae*, and also most probably by the earlier colophon of the *Chronicle*. Let us compare some specific passages:

Traska's Annals

1234. nascitur Kinga [...].

1239. dux Boleslaus accepit uxorem, filiam regis Ungarie, nomine Kingam, bonam mulierem et sanctam, que infra annos in quibus secundum naturam loqui non poterat, primam vocem protulit: Ave regina celorum! Quo dicto loqui desiit usque ad tempus secundum naturam prefinitum et tunc cepit formare verba.

The Chronicle of Dzierzwa

Boleslaus Pudicus [...] accepit uxorem sanctissimam nomine Kyngam, filiam domini Bele, incliti regis Ungarorum [...]. Hoc quoque notandum est, quod domina Kynga ducissa Cracovie nata est anno Domini millesimo CCXXXIII. Que primam vocem contra infantum morem protulit: Ave regina celorum! Quo dicto loqui desiit usque ad tempus secundum naturam prefinitum.

The Life of St Kinga

Cum igitur eadem die nativitatis eiusdem infantule sacrum baptisma ministrare deberetur manibus cuiusdam episcopi eam baptizare cupientis, non sine magno, mirabili prodigio primam vocem protulit dicens dicto: Ave regina celorum, [mater regis] angelorum etc.; amodo nullam vocem locucionis emisit, quousque nature modus concessit.

17 J. Banaszekiewicz, *Kronika Dzierzwy...*, op. cit., p. 105.

Such examples of textual reliance are also evidenced by the accounts of Kinga and her sister Jalanta Helena joining the Order of the Poor Clares following the death of Boleslaus the Chaste (Jalanta Helena was the widow of Duke of Wielkopolska, Boleslaus the Pious/Bolesław Pobożny):

Traska's Annals

1279. [...] Uxor autem Boleslai Kinga post sepulturam mariti sui suscepit habitum ordinis sancte Clare cum sorore Iohethe, relicta Bolezlay ducis Polonie, que fuerunt uterine sorores, filie Bele regis Ungarie.

The Chronicle of Dzierzwa

Uxor eiusdem ducis, domina Kinga, eodem momento sepulture mariti sui suscepit habitum ordinis fratrum Minorum una cum domina Iolenta, uterina sorore sua, ducissa maioris Polonie, relicta incliti ducis Boleslai et iacet in choro fratrum Minorum ante maius altare. Obiit autem anno Domini M^oCC^oLXXIX IIII Idus Decembris [10 december] die Dominico [...].

The Life of St Kinga

Tandem piissimo duce universe carnis via ingresso, mox felix domina habitum ordinis beati Francisci non modica cum devocione assumpsit in die beati Melchiadis [10 december], funere ducis in feretro existente. [...] domum cuiusdam religiose nomine Marthe ingressa ibique cum sorore sua nomine Iolenta maioris Poloniae ducissa, accepto domini ducis linteamine per medium sciderunt et inde peplis humilibus factis capita sua velaverunt et sic velate per totum chorum fratrum minorum in Cracovia [transierunt] ad peragendum exequias funeris ducis Boleslai.

This event is mentioned in *Traska's Annals*, but there is no information there about the circumstances; we are only informed that it occurred '*post sepulturam*'. Dzierzwa stated that it took place '*eodem momento sepulture*', and that '*iacet in choro fratrum minorum ante maius altare*'. It appears that the hagiographer expanded upon the chronicler's account in this instance too, as according to him the duchesses, taking a sheet that had belonged to the duke with them, journeyed to a certain nun named Marta, and they duly cut the sheet in two, and in this manner the material for their veils was created and '*sic velate per totum chorum fratrum minorum in Cracovia [transierunt] ad peragendum exequias funeris ducis*

Boleslai'. The manuscripts that provide accounts of these events follow a pattern of derivation:

The Life of St Kinga

The Chronicle of Dzierzwa

Annales Polonorum?

*The Chronicle of
Greater Poland*

Traska's Annals

Therefore, the oldest hagiographical traditions concerning Kinga would have been recorded in *The Chronicle of Dzierzwa* and *Traska's Annals*, which would have been known to the author of *The Chronicle of Greater Poland*. The aforementioned works undoubtedly drew upon a common source independently¹⁸. Certain passages that we can find in the works are almost word-for-word borrowings. This is how one should treat the account of the mourning for Boleslaus by the knights of the Duchy of Cracow and Sandomierz, and likewise by dukes and knights from neighbouring regions, in relation to which it seems that the subject was significantly reworked in *Vita Sanctae Kyngae*. For indeed, the hagiographer stated that the distraught knighthood attended the duke's funeral, after which the author wrote about the knights' attempts to get Kinga to rule over Cracow and Sandomierz, or to appoint someone to do this:

Traska's Annals

Cuius mortem non solum terre domini, sed eciam vicine provincie principes ac milites defleverunt.

The Chronicle of Dzierzwa

[...] cuius mortem non solum terrigene sui, verum vicine provincie principes et milites multo tempore defleverunt.

The Life of St Kinga

Fit autem nobilium concursus fitque luctus et planctus universalis omnium super morte et funere domini ducis sui statimque omnium nobilium fit humilis peticio ad felicem dominam, ut solita pietate

18 W. Drelicharz, *Annalistyka...*, op. cit., p. 352.

miseracionis sue eos deserere non deberet, sed regnum tocius ducatus assumeret aut aliquem nomine suo substitueret; indicibili enim gracia erga eam ratione sue devocionis afficiebantur.

Traska's Annals appear to relay a version that is more faithful to the original work, as is indirectly indicated by the lack of information about the ducal couple preserving their chastity. The author of the annals had no reason to leave this information out¹⁹. Dzierzwa evidently supplemented or reworked passages from the common source that they both drew from. Let us take a closer look at the description of Boleslaus the Chaste's characteristics:

Traska's Annals

Fuit autem homo castus, pudicus, sobrius et mansuetus, nulli malum pro malo reddens, libertatum ecclesie conservator, militum verus amator, quia sibi nichil retinebat, sed omnia militibus largiebatur, religiosorum omnium fuit benefactor.

The Chronicle of Dzierzwa

[...] qui uterque [that is Boleslaus and Kinga — ed. M.G.] magis celibatum quam delicias thori preeligentes usque in finem vite illibatam pudiciam Domino conservarunt. Fuit itaque hic Boleslaus vir sobrius et mansuetus, nulli malum pro malo reddens, libertatum Ecclesie conservator, militum verus amator, qui nichil sibi retinebat, sed omnia suis militibus tribuebat; religiosorum benefactor et precipue fratrum Minorum emulator.

The chronicler has omitted the words *castus* and *pudicus*, and has instead included a description of how the ducal couple deliberately preserved their chastity, substantiating this with the fact that they died without issue. We learn more about this, when he informs the reader about the death of the duke: '*Mortuus est autem Boleslaus dux Cracovie et Sandomirie sine prole, vir Deo plenum, pudicia cum sua coniuge integraliter conservata*'. Dzierzwa likewise ascribed Boleslaus the Chaste a special role in aiding the Franciscan Order, to which in all probability the author belonged, after all.

¹⁹ As regards other common elements in other accounts contained in *The Chronicle of Dzierzwa* and *Traska's Annals*, see. W. Drelicharz, *Annalistyka...*, op. cit., pp. 383–385.

Dzierzwa indeed changed the phrase '*religiosorum omnium fuit benefactor*', as recorded in *Traska's Annals*, to '*religiosorum benefactor et precipue fratrum Minorum emulator*'. Some specific information has been slipped in here by the author, yet this fact is not however proof that Boleslaus and Kinga absolutely did not take a vow of chastity, or that they did not support the Franciscans in a particular way.

It is difficult to say whether the original source of this information was a later edition of the lost *Annales Polonorum*, or some other Franciscan records. The appearance of information concerning the utterance of miraculous words by Kinga, who features as a saint in both *The Chronicle of Dzierzwa* and *Traska's Annals*, could only have occurred after her death, thus in 1292 at the earliest. Moreover, according to Wojciech Drelicharz, the information about Bela IV and his closest relatives was only added in the 14th century, expanding on the main information provided by *Traska's Annals*, a factor apparently connected with the political rapprochement between Poland and Hungary, cemented by the marriage of Elizabeth of Poland (Elżbieta Łokietkówna) to Charles I of Hungary²⁰. We cannot be certain that the hagiographer really did use *The Chronicle of Dzierzwa*, as after all both works could have referred to a common source, containing already recycled information about the miracle or Kinga's joining of the Order of Poor Clares. It is peculiar that Dzierzwa mistakenly stated that Boleslaus the Chaste ruled for 55 years, given that in reality his entire life amounted to that length of time, and Traski referred to 38 years. One should also pose the question as to whether the nun Marta, who Kinga and Jolanta Helena supposedly went to, and who would thus have been an eyewitness to the events described by the hagiographer, is not the same person who supposedly told Dzierzwa about the posthumous miracle connected with Salomea, Boleslaus the Chaste's sister²¹. Although these issues will not be resolved in the current essay, we can nevertheless state that the cult of Bela IV's daughter initially developed within the milieu

20 W. Drelicharz: *Annalistyka...*, op. cit., pp. 385–386.

21 The chronicler twice referred to Salomea as a saint (*sancta*). See *Kronika Dzierzwy (The Chronicle of Dzierzwa)*, op. cit., pp. 75, 79. Dzierzwa described the circumstances of her death and the transportation of her body from Skąpa to Cracow. According to him, the body showed no signs of decomposition, gave off a pleasant scent and – as was recounted to him by the otherwise unknown nun Marta – emitted an oil with healing properties. An in-depth consideration of this miracle, and other claims about Salomea and Sister Marta, are to be found in W. Drelicharz, *Annalistyka...*, op. cit., pp. 347–364.

of the Franciscans in Lesser Poland, who were closely connected with the Poor Clares of Stary Sącz. It is logical that the Franciscans would have collected information about influential protectresses of their Order, thus about Salomea, Jolanta Helena and Kinga²².

The growth of the princess's cult was contributed to by Jan Długosz, who composed his own version of *The Life of St Kinga*, rich in details of his own providing. It is possible that he was acquainted with the original hagiography thanks to an autograph manuscript or an early copy²³. He even encouraged — without success — the Cracow bishop James of Sienna (Jakub z Sienna) to take up the matter of Kinga's canonisation²⁴. The chronicler stated that Kinga, inspired by the Holy Ghost, entreated her father to give her a salt mine (*salisfodina, fovea*) located in Maramures (then a part of Hungary). According to Długosz, the actual act of casting the ring into that mine was, as it were, a gesture that confirmed her acquisition of the site. Bela agreed to the request, but it was treated in a light-hearted manner by both the royal couple and other people who had witnessed the event, as the duchess did not need the mine, owing to the great abundance of salt both in Hungary and Poland. The unexpected discovery of the ring during the excavation of blocks from the first mine-shaft in Bochnia, an event that took place several years later, signified its transferral to Poland, along with the rock salt. The latter became a great treasure that was exploited not only by Poles, but also by the inhabitants of northern Hungary, who brought it by cart to their country in exchange for gold²⁵.

Długosz referred to this legend once again in his *Annals*. In all likelihood he learned about it during his work on *The Life of St Kinga*, given that he wrote an annotation in his own hand under an entry in *The Annals of the Cracow Cathedral Chapter (Rocznik kapituły krakowskiej)* that referred to the discovery in Bochnia of '*salis durum et compactum*', that '*que quidem salis repercio beate femine Kunegundi ducisse, Boleslai Pudici Cracoviensis consortis, meritis, iam tunc fulgentis virtutum iubare, ascripta est*'²⁶. He was therefore the first person to directly mention the role of Kinga in the

22 J. Dąbrowski, *Dawne dziejopisarstwo polskie (do roku 1480)*, Wrocław 1964, p. 95.

23 See *Vita sanctae Kyngae...*, op. cit., p. 675.

24 Z. Budkowa, *Kunegunda*, op. cit., p. 188.

25 J. Długosz, *Vita beatae Kunegundis*, ed. I. Polkowski, Ż. Pauli, in: *Opera omnia*, vol. I, Kraków 1887, pp. 236–237.

26 J. Długosz, *Annales seu Cronicae incliti regni Poloniae. Lib. VII et VIII (1241–1299)*, ed. Z. Budkowa et al., Warszawa 1975, p. 76.

discovery of the salt deposits. To be sure, Maciej Miechowita wrote after him that in Bochnia in 1251 '*sal minerale in bancis et peciis magnis repertum est, quod meritis beatae Kunegundis Boleslai Pudicis consortis est adscriptum*', but he also provided a literal interpretation of the legend about the discovery of the ring: '*ita ut vulgus in Polonia ex Hungaria sal transtulisse et secum advexisse* [the author's own stressing — M.G.] *affirmaret*'²⁷. Marcin Bielski wrote in a similar manner in *The Chronicle of the Whole World* (*Kronika wszystkiego świata*), that 'the simple folk said that it [i.e. the salt] had been brought from Hungary by the virtuous wife Kunegundis [Kinga]', although his account also contained a more rational claim about the peasants, who supposedly reached the layer of salt while digging a well²⁸. Joachim Bielski connected this second event about the discovery of salt in Bochnia in 1251, but omitted the information about Kinga 'bringing' salt from Hungary, suggesting instead in reworded versions of Długosz and Miechowita that 'as the others write, Kunegundys [Kinga], the virtuous wife, thence found it in the year of our Lord 1252 in Wieliczka'²⁹. Nevertheless, according to Marcin Kromer's work *De origine et rebus gestis Polonorum libri XXX*, the duchess contributed to the discovery of the Bochnia deposits, although this supposedly took place in 1252. It was only in the later edition of this work that information was included about the launch of mining and salt production in Wieliczka as well³⁰. Meanwhile, in a description of the mines there, the well-informed poet Adam Schroeter stressed clearly that it was the duchess who indicated where the first shaft should be dug. However, he did not give credence to the legend concerning the ring, and he was the first to suggest that the most significant role was played by foreign miners³¹. The authors mentioned above wrote nothing about Hungarian newcomers; it was only Adam Naruszewicz who explained their presence at the time of the establishment of the salt mines³².

At this point, it is worth mentioning the intriguing proposition of L. Kowalski and S. Fischer, according to whom the cult of the duchess

27 M. Miechowita, *Chronica Polonorum*, Kraków 1519, p. CLX.

28 M. Bielski, *Kronika wszystkiego świata*, Kraków 1551, p. 198–198v.

29 J. Bielski, *Kronika polska Marcina Bielskiego, nowo przez Joachima Bielskiego, syna jego, wydana*, Kraków 1597, p. 176.

30 M. Kromer, *De origine et rebus gestis Polonorum libri XXX*, Basel 1568, p. 152.

31 A. Schroeter, *Salinarum Wieliciensium iucunda et vera descriptio*, Kraków 1553, verses 510–539.

32 A. Naruszewicz, *Historia narodu polskiego...*, op. cit., p. 3.

initially developed in the Bochnia salt mine. They based their claim on the supposition that it was indeed her, and not Duchess Grzymisława of Luck or Boleslaus, who founded the parish church in Bochnia in 1253, and also on the existence of a tradition by which the duchess contributed to the discovery of the deposits there³³. Evidence of this cult was a pilgrimage undertaken in 1441 by Mikołaj Serafin, the Cracow *żupnik* (manager of the salt mines) and Paweł Gładysz, the Bochnia *karbarz* ('*zuppae director alias carbarius*', the official who supervised production in the salt-works). This pilgrimage was to Kinga's grave in Stary Sącz, so as to pray for her help in putting out a fire that was raging at that time in the Bochnia mine. Information about this event can be found in *The Life of St Kinga* edited by Jan Długosz³⁴. The source of the story is most probably Paweł Gładysz, given that his role is highlighted in it by the indication that it was indeed he who proposed to Serafin that they should plead for Kinga's intercession. Not without reason, Paweł and his closest relatives appear extraordinarily often in the pages of *Miracula...* According to one of the descriptions of the miracles, a previous *karbarz* of Bochnia, Mikołaj, who had been fighting an illness for two years, and undoubtedly we are referring to Paweł's uncle here, went to Stary Sącz around the year 1410, thanks to which he was cured. Paweł, along with his father, Pełka, were likewise eyewitnesses who claimed that they advised Mikołaj and Krystyna from Bochnia to accompany them to the holy woman's grave, so as to present their son to her, as he had been born without bones. According to Długosz this boy was healed in 1431³⁵.

The Cracow *żupnik* had been incapable of containing the flames in the mine, which is why he listened to the advice of the *karbarz* and duly organised a pilgrimage to Stary Sącz. Many people joined the procession, among them Serafin's wife Urszula, and Dobiesław Kmita from Wiśnicz,

33 L. Kowalski, S. Fischer, *Żywot bł. Kingi...*, op. cit., pp. 167–170. See also Ł. Walczy, *Kult błogosławionej Kingi w małopolskich ośrodkach górnictwa solnego*, SMDŻ, vol. XVIII (1994), pp. 27–28.

34 J. Długosz, *Vita sanctae Kyngae...*, op. cit., pp. 330–331.

35 Ibid., p. 326, pp. 329–330. The Gładysz family was closely connected with the Bochnia salt mine. Paweł inherited from his father the office of *bachmistrz* (mine foreman). He held this until 1473, when he sold the rights to the office, and he also served as the *podzupek* (governor of the mine) for some time. See A. Marzec, *Gładysze z Łosia w XIV i pierwszej połowie XV wieku*, in: *Miasta, ludzie, instytucje, znaki: księga jubileuszowa ońarowana profesor Bożenie Wyrozumskiej w 75. rocznicę urodzin*, ed. Z. Piech, Kraków 2008, pp. 215–233.

who later became the *kasztelan* (castellan) of Lublin³⁶. Kinga could not after all permit such an important and lucrative place to fall into ruin, one which had indeed come into being thanks to her efforts and prayers. The *żupnik* gave a generous donation to the Poor Clares, in the form of ten blocks of salt, five *grzywny* (units of commodity money), a beautiful carpet, and many wax candles for the grave of the holy woman. Owing to her apparent intervention, the fire went out without causing significant damage to the mine. The account of the pilgrimage is very detailed, and in this respect it stands out in comparison to Długosz's descriptions of other miracles. We can thus regard it as credible, although the direct source of the story could have somewhat exaggerated the scale of the fire. The historian recorded that a miner had caused the fire while attempting to illuminate his workplace. We cannot know whether the fire indeed started in this fashion, but there is no doubt that given the lack of further information, such an explanation was highly credible for people in those times. Meanwhile, fire could have spread in the mine if — as we gather from Długosz's account — a great deal of wood was used there to prop up the areas being excavated³⁷.

The fact that there are references to inhabitants of Wieliczka and other nearby settlements in the 14th-century *Miracula...* could mean that the first signs of Kinga's cult appeared in this area shortly after her death³⁸. However, this information is not extensive enough to be able to consider the salt mine as the original centre of the cult. After all, the mining element is just one of several episodes in the life of the duchess described in *Vita sanctae Kyngae*. Traces of the oldest hagiographic traditions created by Franciscan circles in Lesser Poland can however be found in *Traska's Annals* and *The Chronicle of Dzierzwa*. For the chronicler, the most significant fact was the ducal couple's preservation of chastity. The miracle

36 Dobiesław, as castellan of Lublin, appeared for the first time on 2 I 1464 and lastly on 5 VII 1474. See *Urzednicy malopolscy XII–XV wieku. Spisy*, ed. A. Gąsiorowski, Wrocław 1990, no. 541. The final miracle to be noted by Długosz was dated by him to IV 1471. J. Długosz: *Vita sanctae Kyngae...*, op. cit., p. 335. These last two dates provide us with a time-frame for the completion of the life.

37 None of the four (or five) preserved letters from 1441, addressed to Mikołaj Serafin, contain clues that would suggest that a catastrophe had occurred in Bochnia. See *Korespondencja żupnika krakowskiego Mikołaja Serafina z lat 1437–1459*, ed. W. Bukowski, T. Plóciennik, A. Skolimowska, Kraków 2006, nos 3–7.

38 See *Vita sanctae Kyngae...*, op. cit., pp. 732–744.

that served to justify her saintliness is based on a motif popular in medieval hagiographical literature, the utterance of words by an infant³⁹. If the distinctive and indeed more interesting legend about the discovery of the ring had already been widely known, then would not the Franciscan compiler have possessed this information and noted it in his work? The first account of this miracle appeared in the life that was recorded at the beginning of the 14th century, possibly by a confessor from the Poor Clares in Sary Sącz, but the hagiographer did not write of Kinga's role in conducting mining work in Bochnia, only of 'bringing' salt from Hungary to Poland. Thus it cannot be regarded as evidence of the involvement of Hungarian miners concerning Polish salt mining (and here we are referring above all to — as J. Piotrowicz so rightly noted — German-speaking 'guests' who were residing in Hungary, and who indeed had the necessary skills to carry out mining activity), supposedly brought to the Duchy of Cracow and Sandomierz by the wife of Boleslaus the Chaste. After all, the hypothesis that posited such a situation only appeared at the end of the 18th century, and it was the result of a free interpretation of the sources. It is nevertheless certain that the cult of the duchess intensified at the beginning of the 17th century, along with the appearance of a Polish translation of Długosz's life. It was indeed at this time that efforts were launched to have her canonised, and only then can one speak of the duchess as a patroness of the salt miners⁴⁰.

It is very difficult to provide an unequivocal answer to the question as to whether Kinga's possible role in the discovery of rock salt was mentioned in *The Life of St Kinga*. Although it is unlikely that at the beginning of the 14th century it was no longer remembered how things had happened, the hagiographer or his direct sources of information (most probably the Poor Clares in Sary Sącz) could only loosely associate the facts, namely that the mine in Bochnia was established during the reign of Boleslaus the Chaste, who was married to a Hungarian princess⁴¹. The apparent factor that the author was not very well-oriented in the sphere of mining could

39 Examples drawn from Jacobus de Voragine's *Golden Legend* are provided in M.H. Witkowska, *Vita sanctae Kyngae...*, op. cit., pp. 134–135.

40 Z. Budkowa, *Kunegunda*, op. cit., p. 188. See also J. Długosz, *Żywot św. Kunegundy*, trans. P. Mojecki, Kraków 1617.

41 See M. Rokosz, *Szkic do wizerunku księżny Kingi na tle jej czasów*, „Rocznik Bocheński”, vol. I, (1993), pp. 75–76.

be testified to by an indirect clue. In 1262, Bela IV and his son Stefan concluded an agreement, whereby among other factors, the salt miners, who were referred to in a document set down at that time as *salifossores*, were to be divided between them on a 50-50 basis. This document also mentions so-called *salium incisores*, free, hired labourers who were working in accordance with a piecework system, paid by both parties from their own resources. István Draskóczy assumed that they already possessed the qualifications necessary to carve out shafts, tunnels and passages, because this is how miners involved in underground work were termed in the Late Middle Ages⁴². However, there is a lack of clear signs indicating that the exploitation of Hungarian salt mines in the 13th and early 14th centuries was conducted, albeit to a small degree, according to an underground method that was expensive and complicated and gave rise to many problems of a technical nature. If one were to credit the hagiographer with understanding the term *fovea* (pit, cavity, shaft in the mine, mine), which he refers to in *The Life of St Kinga* as a shaft, not only in relation to the Hungarian, but also the Bochnia mine, this fact does not have to mean that they were dug in Hungary. It is more probable that the author did not have a full picture of the characteristics of Hungarian salt mining, and only provided his account with features known from observing the situation in Poland. The free interpretation of the term used by the author here does not enable us, however, to draw far-reaching conclusions, because taking possession of the Hungarian mine and launching the Bochnia one provided only the backdrop for the presentation of the key event, that is the 'marriage' of Kinga to rock salt, through a symbolic ceremony, as well as her appearance in Poland, along with the ring.

Motifs accentuating the geological aspects of mining or referring directly to the exploitation of salt did not enjoy popularity among medieval hagiographers⁴³. It is thus hard to find a description of an analogous miracle

42 I. Draskóczy, *Salt Mining and Trade in Hungary from the Mid-Thirteenth Century until the End of the Middle Ages*, in: *The Economy of Medieval Hungary*, ed. J. Laszlovsky, B. Nagy, P. Szabó, A. Vadas, Lejda, Boston 2018, p. 207.

43 Admittedly, there was a cult of St Anatoile in the French town of Salins, although one of his posthumous miracles was connected with the production of salt, rather than the actual mining of it. This concerns an event depicted on one of the Late Gothic tapestries, commissioned by the church in Salins, from the Bruges workshop of Katherine Hasselet and Jan de Wilde. Three of these tapestries, dated 1502–1506, have survived the vicissitudes of history, and they can be found

in other hagiographical works. However, this does not mean that we are unable to look at the themes present in the miracle in a comparative context. The point of reference for us shall be the symbolism of the ring, which in the Middle Ages was regarded above all as a sign of perpetuity, as well as a connection with or membership in a specific group. In hagiographic literature, the ring symbolises purity, whereas in court literature, it denotes fidelity to a lover and mutual acceptance of love, very often kept in secret. Thus the ring served to seal marital vows, but it was also used in other situations associated with the taking of vows⁴⁴. For example, when doctoral degrees were conferred by the University of Bologna, the culmination of the ceremony involved the handing out of a book (open and closed), a biretta and a gold ring, and this was also practised at the University of Cracow⁴⁵. In the case of female religious orders, bishops presented nuns with a ring during the profession ceremony. *Annulus pronubus* or *sponsalicius* symbolised the marriage to Christ, and each nun became his bride, in the image of Mary⁴⁶. In special circumstances, the ring was endowed with the rank of the insignia of power. In 1172, Richard the Lionheart was proclaimed Duke

today in the Louvre. The scene that interests us takes place in a splendid stone building. The ground floor has rib vaulting, supported by ornate columns. The tapestry also portrays treadmills with bladed wheels, propelled with the aid of horses. These treadmills were used to draw out brine using chained lifting devices (that is in wooden buckets connected by chains). A reliquary in the form of the saint's head (herma) was prepared by the clergy, so as to immerse it in the well, which was drying up. However, thanks to the miraculous intervention of the saint, the brine started to flow back to the surface again in abundance. See G. Delmarcel, *Flemish Tapestry from the 15th to the 18th Century*, Tielt 1999, pp. 180–181.

- 44 G.J. Brault, *Isolt and Guenevere: Two Twelfth-Century Views of Woman*, in: *The Role of Woman in the Middle Ages: Papers of the Sixth Annual Conference of the Center for Medieval and Early Renaissance Studies State University of New York at Binghamton, 6–7 May 1972*, ed. R.T. Morewedge, Albany 1975, pp. 46–48.
- 45 S.A. Sroka, *Dyplom doktorski Uniwersytetu Bolońskiego z 1472 r.*, "Studia Źródłoznawcze", vol. L (2012), pp. 65, 67; K. Estreicher, *Collegium Maius Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego w Krakowie. Dzieje. Obyczaje. Zbiory*, Warszawa 1961, p. 55.
- 46 T. Dobrzeniecki, *Prezentacja Marii w świątyni według Wita Stwosza w krakowskim Ołtarzu Mariackim*, "Biuletyn Historii Sztuki", vol. XXXVI, no 1 (1974), pp. 8–9. These sculptures, executed in accordance with the *mater et sponsa* convention, depict the Virgin Mary holding the Infant Jesus in her left arm, as The Christ Child places a ring on a finger of her right hand. St Catherine and St Agnes were portrayed in a similar manner in the 15th century. Tadeusz Dobrzeniecki aptly noted that such depictions were probably an allusion to the old conventual profession ritual. *Ibid.* p. 19.

of Aquitaine. This occurred during a ceremony at the abbey of St Hilary in Poitiers, where he received a lance and a pennant from the Archbishop of Bordeaux and the local bishop while sitting on the abbey's throne. The ceremony was subsequently repeated in Limoges, and the culmination was the moment when a ring of St Valerie, the patron saint of the duchy, was placed on Richard's finger. Thus, in a distinctive manner, the ring legitimised his rule over the people of Aquitaine, who he was connected to by an indissoluble oath⁴⁷.

The above considerations lead us to the conclusion that the layers of meaning of the legend of Duchess Kinga's ring evolved during the Late Middle Ages and the Early Modern period, owing to which Kinga came to be credited with a particular role in the discovery of salt deposits in Bochnia. Jan Długosz interpreted her act of casting a ring into a Hungarian salt mine as part of a ceremony by which she acquired the property. However, it seems that in referring to this gesture, the 14th-century hagiographer wanted above all to show that Kinga symbolically became wedded to rock salt for the good of her adopted homeland, thanks to which salt deposits likewise appeared near Cracow, owing to her miraculous ability to make it multiply (the bringing of salt to Poland did not mean that it decreased in Hungary). Medieval writers often endowed rings with exceptional powers. In chivalric romances, particularly the works of Chrétien de Troyes, characters wearing rings enjoyed supernatural powers, such as invisibility⁴⁸. Kinga stood over the Hungarian mine (*fovea*) '*invocataque divina gracia*', and cast a ring into it, thus the miracle occurred thanks to divine providence. When she later recognised the piece of jewellery later, following the extraction of a block of salt, '*Deo gracias egit, qui*' — as the hagiographer notes — '*semper mira diligentibus operatur*⁴⁹. The causing of an object to multiply, so characteristic of medieval hagiography, can likewise in this instance be interpreted as the heroine of the tale imitating an act of Christ.

It is therefore hard to rationalise the legend in question, and to see traces in it of actual events, even though certain researchers have done so. According to Karol Szajnocha, Kinga's request for a mine to be given

47 J. Gillingham, *Richard I*, New Haven 1999, p. 40.

48 G.J. Brault, *Isolt and Guenevere...*, op. cit., p. 49.

49 Cf. *Vita...*, p. 696.

to her was dictated by the desire to take the miners working there to Poland, along with countless carts, which were 'loaded with salt from the Maramures pit'⁵⁰. L. Kowalski and S. Fischer argued that the duchess was motivated by 'concern for the good of her [Polish] subjects, who at that time were still greatly afflicted by a lack of salt, and who thenceforth could benefit from its import and obtain it easily and cheaply'⁵¹. Although we cannot ascertain whether there actually was an increase in the trade in salt between Hungary and the Polish duchy following the marriage of Bela IV's daughter to Boleslaus the Chaste, it cannot be ruled out that memory of such contacts contributed to the development of the hagiographic tradition. In turn, J. Wyrozumski theorised that Kinga perhaps provided some sort of financial support for the mining activity in Bochnia. After all, one can assume that she brought a large dowry with her, and her name appeared alongside that of her husband in numerous documents. The same researcher also viewed the legend in symbolic terms, as a reflection of the increase in the flow of commodity money and merchandise between the two neighbouring states⁵². Although J. Piotrowicz negatively assessed the legitimacy of interpreting it in the context of revealing the role of miners from Hungary in the development of salt mining in Poland, he did not rule out that there could be 'a grain of truth in this'. According to him, the concept of the royal salt privilege, understood as the indivisible right of the ruler to all places where salt was produced, could have come to Poland with Kinga⁵³. Corroboration of this hypothesis would require an extended study of the aforementioned privilege, thus going beyond the scope of this study. Meanwhile, the remaining propositions are confined to the sphere of conjecture.

50 K. Szajnocha, *Szkice historyczne...*, op. cit., pp. 25–26.

51 L. Kowalski, S. Fischer, *Żywot bł. Kingi...*, op. cit., p. 53.

52 J. Wyrozumski, *Pierścień Kingi*, „Dzieje Narodu i Państwa Polskiego”, vol. 7, Warszawa 1999, p. 2.

53 J. Piotrowicz, *Górnictwo...*, op. cit., p. 25.

Annex

<p><i>Vita et miracula sanctae Kyn-gae ducissae Cracoviensis</i>, ed. W. Kętrzyński, <i>Monumenta Poloniae Historica</i>, vol. IV, Lwów 1884, pp. 662–744.</p>	<p><i>Cum igitur eadem die natiuitatis eiusdem infantule sacrum baptisma ministrare deberetur manibus cuiusdam episcopi eam baptisare cupientis, non sine magno, mirabili prodigio primam vocem protulit dicens dicto: Ave regina celorum, [mater regis] angelorum etc.; amodo nullam vocem locucionis emisit, quousque nature modus concessit.</i> (p. 687)</p>
<p><i>Kronika Dzierzwy</i>, ed. K. Pawłowski, <i>Monumenta Poloniae Historica. Series nova</i>, vol. XV, Kraków 2013.</p>	<p><i>Boleslaus Pudicus [...] accepit uxorem sanctissimam nomine Kyngam, filiam domini Bele, incliti regis Ungarorum [...]. Hoc quoque notandum est, quod domina Kynga ducissa Cracovie nata est anno Domini millesimo CCXXXIII. Que primam vocem contra infantum morem protuit: Ave regina celorum! Quo dicto loqui desiit usque ad tempu secundum naturam pefinitum. Hanc Boleslaus sibi copulat anno Domini millesimo CCXXXIX.</i> (pp. 79–80)</p>
<p><i>Rocznik Traski</i>, ed. A. Bielowski, <i>Monumenta Poloniae Historica</i>, vol. II, Lwów 1872, pp. 826–861.</p>	<p><i>1234. nascitur Kinga, filia regis Ungarie Bele et de matre nomina Maria, in dominica quinquagesima, quam duxit Bolezlaus, filius Lestconis, dux Cracoviensis et Sandomiriensis, in uxorem. [...]</i> (p. 837)</p> <p><i>1239. dux Bolezlaus accepit uxorem, filiam regis Ungarie, nomine Kingam, bonam mulierem et sanctam, que infra annos in quibus secundum naturam loqui non poterat, primam vocem protulit: Ave regina celorum! Quo dicto loqui desiit usque ad tempus secundum naturam pefinitum et tunc cepit formare verba.</i> (p. 837–838)</p>

<p><i>Vita et miracula sanctae Kyngae ducisse Cracoviensis</i>, ed. W. Kętrzyński, <i>Monumenta Poloniae Historica</i>, vol. IV, Lwów 1884, pp. 662–744.</p>	<p><i>Tandem piissimo duce universe carnis via ingresso, mox felix domina habitum ordinis beati Francisci non modica cum devocione assumpsit in die beati Melchiadis, funere ducis in feretro existente. Fit autem nobilium concursus fitque luctus et planctus universalis omnium super morte et funere domini ducis sui statimque omnium nobilium fit humilis peticio ad felicem dominam, ut solita pietate miseracionis sue eos deserere non deberet, sed regnum tocius ducatus assumeret aut aliquem nomine suo substitueret; indicibili enim gracia erga eam ratione sue devocionis afficiebantur. Ipsaque petitis induciis, ut in veste viduali inter eos appareret, domum cuiusdam religiose nomine Marthe ingressa ibique cum sorore sua nomine Iolenta maioris Poloniae ducissa, accepto domini ducis linteamine per medium sciderunt et inde peplis humilibus factis capita sua velaverunt et sic velate per totum chorum fratrum minorum in Cracovia [transierunt] ad peragendum exequias funeris ducis Boleslai. (pp. 698–699)</i></p>
<p><i>Kronika Dzierzwy</i>, ed. K. Pawłowski, <i>Monumenta Poloniae Historica. Series nova</i>, vol. XV, Kraków 2013.</p>	<p><i>Boleslaus Pudicus patri suo Lestkoni succedit. [...] qui uterque [that is Boleslaus and Kinga — ed. M.G.] imagis celibatum quam delicias thori preeligentes usque in finem vite illibatam pudiciciam Domino conserrarunt. Fuit itaque hic Boleslaus vir sobrius et mansuetus, nulli malum pro malo reddens, libertatum Ecclesie conservator, militum verus amator, qui nichil sibi retinebat, sed omnia suis militibus tribuebat; religiosorum benefactor et precipue fratrum Minorum emulatur. (p. 79)</i> <i>Mortuus est autem Boleslaus dux Cracovie et Sandomirie sine prole, vir Deo plenus, pudicicia cum sua coniuge integraliter conservata. Sepultusque est aput fratres Minores in Cracovia, cuius mortem non solum terrigene sui, verum vicine provincie principes et milites multo tempore defleverunt. Uxor eiusdem ducis, domina Kinga, eodem momento sepulture mariti sui suscepit habitum ordinis fratrum Minorum una cum domina Iolenta, uterina sorore sua, ducissa maioris Polonie, relicta incliti ducis Boleslai et iacet in choro fratrum Minorum ante maius altare. Obiit autem anno Domini M^oCC^oLXXIX IIII Idus Decembris die Dominico, unius anni erat, cum regnare cepisset et LV annis regnavit. (p. 82)</i></p>

<p>Rocznik Traski, ed. A. Bielowski, <i>Monumenta Poloniae Historica</i>, t. II, Lwów 1872, pp. 826 – 861.</p>	<p>1279. [...] Anno eodem obiit gloriosus princeps Boleslaus, filius Lestconis filii Kazimiri, dux Cracovie et Sandomirie. Fuit autem homo castus, pudicus, sobrius et mansuetus, nulli malum pro malo reddens, libertatum ecclesie conservator, militum verus amator, quia sibi nichil retinebat, sed omnia militibus largiebatur, religiosorum omnium fuit benefactor. Cuius mortem non solum terre domini, sed eciam vicine provincie principes ac milites defleverunt. Regnavit autem 37 annis obiit autem sine prole. [...] Uxor autem Boleslai Kinga post sepulturam mariti sui suscepit habitum ordinis sancte Clare cum sorore Iohethe, relicta Boleslay ducis Polonie, que fuerunt uterine sorores, filie Bele regis Ungarie. (p. 846)</p>
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Abstract

Mateusz Gil

The Legend of Saint Kinga's Ring: A Comparative Analysis of the Sources

The author has carried out a comparative analysis of sources pertaining to the legend of Kinga's ring. Kinga was the daughter of Hungarian King Bela IV, and she wed Boleslaus the Chaste (Bolesław Wstydlivy), Duke of Cracow and Sandomierz. According to a life of the duchess written by an anonymous hagiographer in 1317–1329, she journeyed to Hungary and asked her father to bestow a salt mine upon her. After her request was granted, Kinga cast a gold ring into the mine, and some time later it was found in a block of salt that came from the first pit (*fovea*) to be mined in Bochnia (Poland). Certain scholars have detected in this legend echoes of actual events, duly ascribing mining specialists from Hungary a key role in the development of salt mining in Poland (Adam Naruszewicz, Karol Szajnocha, Hieronim Łabęcki, Franciszek Skibiński, and also several Hungarian historians). Even Józef Piotrowicz, who emphatically rejected such an interpretation of the legend, reflected that there was 'a grain of truth in it'. The collation of passages that refer to the oldest hagiographic tradition about this Hungarian princess has enabled the author of this study to clarify the relations among the works containing these references (*Traska's Annals, The Chronicle of Dzierzwa, The Chronicle of Greater Poland, The Life and Miracles of Duchess Kinga*). However, above all, this undertaking allowed the author to establish the milieu which contributed to the dissemination of the legend, namely the Franciscans of southern Poland, most probably the Poor Clares of Stary Sącz. Aided by these religious communities, the hagiographer explained how deposits of rock salt appeared near Cracow, whereas the fact of the actual establishment of the Bochnia was only of secondary importance to him. Kinga symbolically married salt for the good of her adopted homeland, thanks to which salt deposits miraculously appeared near Cracow, having multiplied in a characteristic manner. It was only Late Medieval and Early Modern writers who started to interpret the legend in a different way, stressing that the wife of Boleslaus the Chaste contributed to the mining of the first pit at Bochnia. The account of the discovery of the ring should thus not be treated as a testimony to any kind of influence of Hungarian specialists on the development of Polish salt mining.

Keywords: St Kinga, Cracow salt mines, rock salt, ring

Abstrakt

Mateusz Gil

Analiza źródłoznawcza legendy o pierścieniu księżnej Kingi

Słowa kluczowe:

św. Kinga, żupy krakowskie, sól kamienna, pierścień

Autor, wykorzystując metodę krytyki źródłoznawczej, analizuje legendę o pierścieniu Kingi, córki króla Węgier Beli IV, która została wydana za księcia krakowsko-sandomierskiego Bolesława Wstydlwego. Według żywotu księżnej, sporządzonego przez nieznanego z imienia hagiografa w latach 1317–1329, podczas wizyty u swoich rodziców na Węgrzech poprosiła ona ojca, by ten dał jej kopalnię soli. Gdy ojciec spełnił jej prośbę, Kinga wrzuciła do kopalni złoty pierścień, który po długim czasie miał zostać odnaleziony w bałwanie solnym wydobytym z pierwszej bocheńskiej góry. Poszczególni badacze doszukiwali się w owej legendzie śladu rzeczywistych wydarzeń, przypisując specjalistom górniczym z Węgier kluczową rolę w rozwoju polskiego górnictwa solnego (Adam Naruszewicz, Karol Szajnocha, Hieronim Łabęcki, Franciszek Skibiński, a także niektórzy węgierscy historycy). Nawet Józef Piotrowicz, który w zdecydowany sposób odrzucił zasadność takiej interpretacji, przypuścił, że *tkwi w niej ziarno prawdy*. Zestawienie zapisek odnoszących się do najstarszej tradycji hagiograficznej o tej węgierskiej księżniczce pozwoliło na doprecyzowanie relacji między zawierającymi je dziełami (*Rocznik Traski, Kronika Dzierzwy, Kronika Wielkopolska, Żywot i cuda księżnej Kingi*), ale przede wszystkim na ustalenie środowiska, które przyczyniło się do rozpowszechnienia omawianej legendy, a które stanowili małopolscy franciszkanie i najpewniej klaryski starosądeckie. Hagiograf objaśnił za jej pomocą, w jaki sposób złożę soli kamiennej pojawiło się pod Krakowem, natomiast fakt otwarcia bocheńskiej kopalni miał dla niego drugorzędne znaczenie. Kinga za pomocą pierścienia symbolicznie zaślubiła sól dla przybranej ojczyzny, dzięki czemu, w wyniku swoistego rozmnożenia, złożę w cudowny sposób pojawiło się pod Krakowem. Dopiero późnośredniowieczni i nowożytni pisarze zaczęli interpretować omawianą legendę w odmienny sposób, zwracając uwagę, że to żona Bolesława Wstydlwego przyczyniła się do wykopania pierwszego bocheńskiego szybu. Opis cudu o odnalezieniu pierścienia nie powinien być więc traktowany jako świadectwo jakiegokolwiek wpływu węgierskich specjalistów na rozwój polskiego górnictwa solnego.