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**ST ADALBERTUS DOMESTICUS.  
PATTERNS OF MISSIONING AND EPISCOPAL POWER  
IN POLAND AND SCANDINAVIA IN THE ELEVENTH  
TO THIRTEENTH CENTURIES\***

What a country, thought Szacki. No original songs – nothing but covers and adaptations. How can things possibly be normal here?

Zygmunt Miłoszewski, *Grain of Truth*<sup>1</sup>

**Abstract**

This article explores the ways episcopal milieus on the north-eastern peripheries of Europe created and renewed their identities and symbols of episcopal authority by domesticating their immigrant saints during the high Middle Ages. By comparing the examples of holy bishops arriving to Poland and Sweden (St Adalbert, St Sigfrid, St Henry), it studies the episcopal *mythopoesis*, that is, the creation of foundational myths and mythologies as well as their adaptation to specific local needs and changing historical circumstances. The article further probes to what extent these mythopoetic efforts were original or imitative in comparison to the Western European episcopal centres and other peripheries. How similarly or differently did the bishops in the “old” and “young” Europe respond to the question: What beginnings do we need today? And what role did the appropriation, modification, and domestication of holy bishops’ images and body parts play in building the institutional identities of bishoprics?

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<sup>1</sup> In the original: Zygmunt Miłoszewski, *Ziarno prawdy*: “Co za kraj, pomyślał Szacki. Nic tylko covery i przeróbki. Jak tu ma być normalnie?”.

**Keywords:** episcopal relics, *mythopoesis*, secondary mythologization, domestication, St Adalbert of Prague, St Sigfrid, St Henry of Finland, Gniezno

## I

## INTRODUCTION

This study focuses on the relationship between the most important Polish saint, St Adalbert/Vojtěch/Wojciech of Prague, and his successors in Gniezno as expressed in the hagiographical tradition concerning the holy man developed in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. By studying selected patterns of the episcopal power and missioning expressed in this tradition, also in comparison with examples from Scandinavia, this article explores the ways episcopal milieus in European peripheries created and renewed their identities and authority by domesticating their immigrant saints and exploiting them for resources such as claims of ancient lineage, *fama*, miracles, protection, and attractiveness in the eyes of the local population. In other words, these examples will be explored as episcopal *mythopoesis*, that is, the creation of foundational myths and mythologies as well as their adaptation to specific local needs and changing historical circumstances.<sup>2</sup>

Such occasional or cyclical necessity to reinvigorate and revise one's beginnings was by no means a predicament unique to episcopal milieus on the outskirts of Latin Christendom. Old, well-established episcopal sees in the West also sometimes sought to boost their authority and supremacy over their competitors in the bidding game of political influence in the Church, particularly by antedating the origins of the cities and dioceses over which they presided, or by inventing previously unheard-of connections to ancient saints. Famously, in the course of the tenth century the energetic archbishops of Trier created a wholly new and quite fantastic account of the history of their diocese. It essentially claimed that their city had been founded before Rome and that the dignity of its pontiffs was directly instituted by St Peter, who personally ordained the city's patron saints and first pontiff – St Eucharius, and his helpers, St Valerius and St Martenus. This ancient

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<sup>2</sup> Lars Boje Mortensen, 'Sanctified Beginnings and Mythopoetic Moments. The First Wave of Writing on the Past in Norway, Denmark, and Hungary, c. 1000–1230' in Lars Boje Mortensen (ed.), *The Making of Christian Myths in the Periphery of Latin Christendom (c. 1000–1300)* (Copenhagen, 2006), 249–73.

distinction was not only confirmed by a papal bull of 969 – itself based on a forged bull created in Trier – and materially embodied by the *baculus* (staff) of St Peter encapsulated in a lavish reliquary created for that occasion. The message was clear: Trier was an apostolic, Petrine church and should thus enjoy primacy over other churches in both Germany and Gaul, as well as other special political privileges.<sup>3</sup>

Notwithstanding the validity or success of such claims, nevertheless certain geographical, chronological, and thematic limits seemed to exist as to how fantastical the arguments bishops in need of authority could lever to support such genealogies. Broadly speaking, it has been suggested that in the tenth to twelfth centuries bishops in the West – those presiding either over time-honoured or up-and-coming sees – placed their bets on apostolic traditions and Roman lineages. By comparison, their counterparts in the north-eastern peripheries of Europe, to which Christendom expanded around and after the year 1000, had roughly two ways for creating *mythopoesis* on the backs of their patron saints: either by building on the missionary and martyr identities of their founders, or through sanctification of their rulers. The latter strategy, so popular for instance in Norway, Denmark, Hungary, Bohemia, or Rus', was conducted in concert with the ruling families, whose ancestors were utilized as a means of legitimacy.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Roman Michałowski, 'Ranga stolic biskupich we wczesnym średniowieczu i jej podstawy sakralne. Wybrane zagadnienia', in Aneta Pieniądz-Skrzypczak and Jerzy Pysiak (eds.), *Sacrum: Obraz i funkcja w społeczeństwie średniowiecznym* (Warszawa, 2005), 191–203; Cynthia Hahn, 'What Do Reliquaries Do for Relics?', *Numen*, 57 (2010), 284–316, here 284–288; more generally: Timothy Reuter, 'A Europe of Bishops. The Age of Wulfstan of York and Burchard of Worms', in Ludger Körntgen and Dominik Wassenhoven (eds.), *Patterns of episcopal power: bishops in tenth and eleventh century western Europe / Strukturen bischöflicher Herrschaftsgewalt im westlichen Europa des 10. und 11. Jahrhunderts* (Berlin, 2011), 17–38; see also Francesco Veronese, 'Foreign Bishops Using Local Saints. The *Passio et translation sanctorum Firmi et Rustici* (BHL 3020–1) and Carolingian Verona', in Michele C. Ferrari (ed.), *Saints and the City: Beiträge zum Verständnis urbaner Sakralität in christlichen Gemeinschaften (5.–17. Jh.)* (Erlangen, 2015), 85–114.

<sup>4</sup> Michałowski, 'Ranga stolic biskupich', *passim*; Grzegorz Pac, 'Problem świętości władców we wczesnym i pełnym średniowieczu – przypadek Polski na tle europejskim', *Historia Slavorum Occidentis*, 2 (2016), 90–121; Norbert Kersken, 'God and the Saints in Medieval Polish Historiography', in Mortensen (ed.), *The Making of Christian Myths*, 123–94; Gábor Klaniczay, *Holy Rulers and Blessed Princesses: Dynastic Cults in Medieval Central Europe*, trans. Éva Pálmai (Cambridge, 2002); Robert Bartlett, *Why Can the Dead Do Such Great Things? Saints and Worshippers from the Martyrs to the*

The scale of these mythopoetic ambitions was different too: on those peripheries the responsibility and prerogatives of the patron saints often encompassed entire polities and kingdoms, which was seldom the case in the West. But even if the past may have been invented differently beyond the Roman *limes*, bishops in both “old” and “young” Europe had to regularly answer the same question: what beginnings do we need today?

The case of how this question was answered by the Polish religious-political culture between the eleventh and thirteenth centuries, where no holy rulers were found, stands out against both the western and north-eastern European background. The patronage of the country was here provided by the relationship between the Piast dynasty, the Gniezno archbishopric, and their immigrant patron saint, St Adalbert of Prague. In fact, in some respects the cult of St Adalbert can be interpreted as an example of a competing way of association with the saint, in this case concerning the tension between the ruling secular elites and their ecclesiastical partners. It is thus worth exploring how this competition played out, and how the cults of saints were used to boost the institutional authority and political legitimacy in the Polish and other north-eastern peripheries vis-à-vis the apostolic trends in the West.

The main focus of this study rests on two high medieval texts which seem to have been a way to reinvigorate the cult of St Adalbert by retelling the story of his missionary efforts, martyrdom, and stressing the importance of his episcopal dignity anew. These two late *vitae* of St Adalbert: the twelfth-century *Tempore illo* and its thirteenth-century abbreviated reworking, the *Miracula Sancti Adalberti*, were local adaptations of the first two hagiographies of the saint penned at the turn of the millennium: *Vita prior* and *Vita altera*. It should be noted that

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*Reformation* (Princeton, 2013), 227–33; for recent studies on the creation of saints on the north-eastern peripheries of Europe, see particularly: Haki Antonsson and Ildar H. Garipzanov (eds.), *Saints and Their Lives on the Periphery: Veneration of Saints in Scandinavia and Eastern Europe (c. 1000–1200)* (Turnhout, 2010); Carsten Selch Jensen, Kurt Villads Jensen, Tuomas M. Lethonen, Nils Holger Petersen, and Tracey R. Sands (eds.), *Saints and Sainthood Around the Baltic Sea: Identity, Literacy, and Communication in the Middle Ages* (Kalamazoo, 2018); Carl Phelpstead, ‘Canonizing Kings: Nordic Royal Hagiography as Legitimation and Glorification’, in Wojtek Jezierski, Kim Esmark, Hans Jacob Orning, and Jón Viðar Sigurðsson (eds.), *Nordic Elites in Transformation, c. 1050–1250*, iii: *Legitimation and Glory* (London, 2020), forthcoming.

in the Polish religious political culture of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries St Adalbert did not represent a foreign element; saints were notoriously vagrant and their outsider status was no obstacle for local annexation. Still, the *Tempore* and the *Miracula* should be seen as essentially home-grown takes on an immigrant saint with a hagiography hitherto composed only outside Poland, and therefore offered an opportunity to creatively adopt him to the local milieu.<sup>5</sup> These two texts can be thus read as efforts to domesticate the saint.<sup>6</sup>

## II DOMESTICATING SAINTS

Any consideration of saints in the Middle Ages inevitably entails studying them as objects involved in, and essentially created by, countless cultural practices. Saints and martyrs, in order to achieve their holy status, could be slain and thus transformed into an object of veneration. Sanctified by their killing, saints and martyrs could be appropriated in numerous ways by being ‘consumed’ (Edward Gibbon, Gary Vikan), abducted and stolen, cut up and circulated as commodities (Patrick J. Geary), cursed at and humiliated (Geary, Lester K. Little) etc. To some degree it was by virtue of all these violent practices that saints were ascribed a position quite similar to that occupied by animals. They, too, were seen as non-human agents that could be appropriated and exploited, but above all used for identity-formation of human societies as vis-à-vis, even if the holy wo/men were placed above their devotees.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Bartlett, *Why Can the Dead Do Such Great Things?*, 541–6.

<sup>6</sup> The domestication of saints has been explicitly suggested in Susan E. Hylen, ‘The “Domestication” of Saint Thecla: Characterization of Thecla in the Life and Miracles of Saint Thecla’, *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion*, xxx, 2 (2014), 5–21. Though inspirational for this article, Hylen’s view of domestication differs from mine as she conflates taming and domestication and focuses primarily on Thecla’s domestication through marriage and the way her hagiographers framed her relationship with St Paul to make her teaching more acceptable.

<sup>7</sup> Edward Gibbon, *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (Basel, 1789), vol. i, 489–90; Gary Vikan, ‘Ruminations on Edible Icons: Originals and Copies in the Art of Byzantium’, *Studies in the History of Art*, 20 (1989), 47–59; Patrick J. Geary, *Furta sacra: thefts of relics in the central Middle Ages* (Princeton, 1990); Patrick J. Geary, ‘Sacred Commodities. The Circulation of Medieval Relics’, in Arjun Appadurai (ed.), *The Social Life of Things* (Cambridge, 1986), 194–218; Patrick J. Geary, ‘Humiliation of Saints’, in Stephen Nilson (ed.), *Saints and their Cults. Studies in*

Much like their beastly counterparts ranked below humans, medieval saints could thus also be tamed and domesticated.

Focusing on the processes of domestication<sup>8</sup> unavoidably implicates the question of the mutual, relational shaping of identities between the domesticating master and the target of his efforts.<sup>9</sup> In this article the question of how the identities of the domesticator (the Gniezno milieu) and its ever-present domesticate (St Adalbert) co-evolved will be addressed by focusing on two crucial mythopoetic moments: 1. The invention of new miracles and relics; and 2. The (in-)hospitality shown to missionaries. Although relatively uncharted by the previous research, these two processes and phenomena can be counted among the crucial patterns of missioning and episcopal authority. Needless to say, the perspective of domestication of saints should ideally take many more types of selective pressures and adaptive traits into account. These two foci of a symbiotic *mythopoesis* are nevertheless suitable for studying how identities of saints and their

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*Religious Sociology, Folklore and History* (Cambridge, 1983), 123–40; Lester K. Little, *Benedictine maledictions: liturgical cursing in Romanesque France* (Ithaca, 1993). It is perhaps not that surprising that on rare occasions cultural categories of saints and animals became (con)fused, cf. Jean Claude Schmitt, *The holy greyhound: Guinefort, healer of children since the thirteenth century*, trans. Martin Thom (Cambridge, 1983); see also the medieval and postmedieval Byzantine cult of St Christopher Cynocephalus: <https://www.ucc.ie/archive/milmart/Christopher.html> (Accessed: 12 Dec. 2017); and more generally: Bartlett, *Why Can the Dead Do Such Great Things?*, 390–8.

<sup>8</sup> Melinda A. Zeder, 'Core questions in domestication research', *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America*, 112 (2015), 3191–8, here: 3191: "Domestication is a sustained multigenerational, mutualistic relationship in which one organism assumes a significant degree of influence over the reproduction and care of another organism in order to secure a more predictable supply of a resource of interest, and through which the partner organism gains advantage over individuals that remain outside this relationship, thereby benefitting and often increasing the fitness of both the domesticator and the target domesticate".

<sup>9</sup> Cf. Peter Sloterdijk, 'Rules for the Human Zoo: A Response to a Letter on Humanism', trans. Mary Varney Rorty, *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 27 (2009), 12–28; Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*, trans. Daniel Heller-Roazen (Stanford, 1998), 75–80, 104–111; Giorgio Agamben, *The Open: Man and Animal*, trans. Kevin Attell (Stanford, 2004), 49–56; Jacques Derrida, *The Beast & The Sovereign*, trans. Geoffrey Bennington (Chicago and London, 2009), 56–7, 283–6, 297–304; Daniel L. Smail, *Deep History and the Brain* (Berkeley, 2007), 103–4, 147–8; Yuval Noah Harari, *Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind* (London, 2014), 89–107; James C. Scott, *Against the Grain. A Deep History of the Earliest States* (New Haven, 2017), 18–20, 87–92, 180–2.

domesticators, St Adalbert and the Gniezno archbishops respectively, could adapt – or sometimes fail to do so – both to each other and to their changing cultural habitats. In other words, thematically this article is stretched between the questions of the cult and cultivation of saints.

Adopting the perspective of domestication seems particularly fortunate for studying the local Polish responses to an immigrant saint such as St Adalbert. He was a Magdeburg-educated bishop of Prague, Roman cenobite, personal friend of Emperor Otto III, and something of a celebrity in Ottonian ecclesiastical politics.<sup>10</sup> In fact, already during his vagrant life Adalbert/Vojtěch displayed enough feral and unruly behaviour – such as the abandoning of Prague without permission – that he had to be ‘tamed’ by his superiors to reunite, albeit without success, with his diocese and his flock. This unruliness and waywardness of the shepherd were explicitly addressed and disarmed by his early hagiographers.<sup>11</sup> Understandably, there are no traces of the Gniezno milieu finding his waywardness unacceptable or rejecting the hagiographical accounts of St Adalbert composed by foreigners. Quite the contrary, these texts were actively perused and adapted. This type of mutual interest and influence was more than agreeable, as they only spread his *fama* throughout Europe and added to the local promotion of the cult of the martyred bishop.

But by the twelfth century – in fact much earlier than that – St Adalbert was considered a household saint of both the Gniezno bishops and the Piast dynasty, and it is reasonable to ask whether he needed to become an object of domestication at such a late point in time? I argue that the answer to this question should, perhaps counterintuitively, be positive. As it seems, St Adalbert might have been losing some of his international and local flair at that point in time and a renewed domestication of the holy man is exactly what the Gniezno milieu opted for. Producing fresh versions of his hagiography allowed for anchoring his cult more firmly in the local geography and history. Such a reworking also helped in dealing with St Adalbert’s

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<sup>10</sup> Gerd Althoff, *Otto III*, trans. Phyllis G. Jestice (University Park, 2003), 69–71, 90–103, 142–5; Chris Wickham, *Medieval Rome. Stability & Crisis of a City, 900–1150* (Oxford, 2015), 203, 378.

<sup>11</sup> Miłosz Sosnowski, *Studia nad wczesnymi żywotami św. Wojciecha – tradycja rękopiśmienna i polemika środowisk* (Poznań, 2013), 125–9; Roman Michałowski, ‘Święty Wojciech – biskup reformator w Europie X wieku’, in Zbigniew Dalewski (ed.), *Granica wschodnia cywilizacji zachodniej w średniowieczu* (Warszawa, 2014), 169–210.

outsider status (on which the later sources insisted and creatively explored, despite the cult's evident historicity in Poland) in novel ways, incorporating the posthumous fate of the saint as well as the traditions surrounding his relics into the hagiographical accounts, and in the process inventing new elements which served purposes different than the original.

These processes of transformation of hagiographic traditions are directly connected to the questions about the original and/or imitative character of Polish medieval culture. As will be posited here, the textual means of domestication of saints involved a re-contextualization of the original message through quotations, employment of literary motifs, symbols, and analogies. They also included introducing later local traditions and accounts – sometimes made-up – into the account of the saint's life. This can be best demonstrated by comparing how other authors working on the north-eastern peripheries adapted their hagiographical material in similar circumstances in order to emphasize the episcopal dignity of their protagonists, or to accentuate their missionary hardships. Focusing on the similarities, differences, and parallels that may not have been fully intended by the authors, rather than on just the deliberate, direct influences, corresponds well with the character of a textual culture in which imitation, likeness, and copy were often not only considered unproblematic, but downright desirable. As Mortensen argues, the way authors from the north-eastern peripheries of Europe established semiotic relations between local events and histories and their ancient and biblical equivalents or templates was by means of contact and contiguity. They performed these literary tasks with a selection and creativity which concurrently celebrated and actively manipulated the inherited traditions.<sup>12</sup>

### III

#### TEMPORE ILLO: WHEN EXACTLY?

As already mentioned, the hagiographical texts concerning St Adalbert came in two waves. The first one brought two crucial, and well-

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<sup>12</sup> Mortensen, 'Sanctified Beginnings', 262–7; Bruno Latour and Adam Lowe, 'The migration of the aura or how to explore the original through its fac similes', in Thomas Bartscherer and Roderick Coover (eds.) *Switching Codes. Thinking Through Digital Technology in the Humanities and the Arts* (Chicago, 2011), 275–97.



explored, texts written almost immediately after the martyr's death in April 997. These were the *Vita prior*, traditionally attributed to Johannes Canaparius, the monk and later abbot of SS. Boniface and Alexius on the Aventine Hill in Rome, who personally met Adalbert. The original text was composed *ca* 999 at the request of Otto III, though it survives only in three later eleventh-century redactions: the so-called Ottonian (A), Aventinian (B), and Montecassinian (C). The second is the *Vita altera* by Bruno of Querfurt, composed in two redactions, in 1004 and 1008, the latter coinciding with Bruno's stay in Poland.<sup>13</sup> Although this first wave, largely based on eye-witness accounts provided by St Adalbert's followers, was absolutely formative for how the saint was to be later portrayed, it will receive only limited attention in the course of this study as it does not represent a home-grown representation of the saint and cannot thus be treated as material for evaluating the imitative or original character of Polish medieval culture.

This first wave was followed by a small hagiographical ripple: the very brief *Passio s. Adalperti martiris*, written before 1025, traditionally referred to as the *Passio from Tegernsee* (*Passio*) after a Bavarian Benedictine monastery holding the manuscript where the cult of St Adalbert was practiced in the eleventh century. The *Passio* appears to be an abbreviation of an unidentified larger text with considerable overlapping with Thietmar of Merseburg's information about St Adalbert's death, and takes a somewhat polemical tone

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<sup>13</sup> Jadwiga Karwasińska (ed.), 'S. Adalbert Pragensis episcopi et martyris: Vita prior', Monumenta Poloniae Historica {hereinafter: MPH}, Series nova, iv, 1 (Warszawa, 1962); References here are given to: Cristian Gașpar (ed.), 'Passio Sancti Adalberti Martiris Christi', in Gábor Klaniczay (ed.), *Saints of the Christianization Age of Central Europe (Tenth–Eleventh Century)/Vitae sanctorum aetatis conversionis Europae Centralis (Saec. x–xi)* (Budapest and New York, 2013), 77–181; Jadwiga Karwasińska (ed.), 'S. Adalberti Pragensis episcopi et martyris: Vita altera auctore Brunone Querfurtensi', MPH Series nova, iv, 2 (Warszawa, 1969). For the most important secondary literature, see Cristian Gașpar, 'Preface', in Klaniczay (ed.), *Saints of the Christianization Age*, 79–84; Ian Wood, 'The Hagiography of Conversion', *ibid.*, 1–16; Jadwiga Karwasińska, *Święty Wojciech: Wybór pism* (Warszawa, 1996); Ian Wood, *The Missionary Life: Saints and the Evangelisation of Europe, 400–1050* (Harlow, 2001), 207–25; Gerard Labuda, *Święty Wojciech: biskup-męczennik, patron Polski, Czech i Węgier* (Wrocław, 2004), 16–21; Sosnowski, *Studia nad wczesnymi*; Canaparius's authorship of the *Vita prior* has been put into doubt by Miłosz Sosnowski, yet for the purposes of this study this issue remains irrelevant.

towards Bruno's *Vita altera*.<sup>14</sup> It contains some new details about the martyrdom of the saint as well as his first posthumous miracles, perhaps traceable to some oral tradition surrounding the memory of saint. This tradition might have been related to the milieu of St Adalbert's closest companion and the first archbishop of Gniezno, Radim-Gudentius, and the Benedictine community in Międzyrzecz.<sup>15</sup> Together with the first two hagiographies (i.e. *Vita prior* and *Vita altera*), the *Passio* brings a number of important elements and contains background information from people personally acquainted with the saint, against which his later cultivation needs to be considered.

This study, however, primarily zeroes in on the second wave of hagiographies of St Adalbert whose anonymous authorship is traceable to the Gniezno milieu, and which mix the information from Bruno's *Vita* and the Montecassino redaction of the *Vita prior* with later local legends and invented stories surrounding the saint. Unfortunately, in contrast to the lives by Bruno and Canaparius, whose dating is very exact, both the *Tempore illo* and its later adaptation, the *Miracula*, are notoriously difficult to pinpoint in time. Various attempts have been made to place the composition of the *Tempore illo* from the early twelfth to the early thirteenth century (almost definitely before 1248). Questions were also raised about whether the text emerged as a whole from the start, or if it is an effect of two redactions by two different authors. Regrettably, without certain dating we can say very little about the authorship of the *Tempore illo*, other than to reiterate the current scholarly agreement generally attributing it to the cathedral chapter in Gniezno – rather than the princely court – and with some conceivable personal influence that the bishops exerted on the shape of this *mythopoesis*. With both dating and authorship so imprecise

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<sup>14</sup> Thietmar von Merseburg, *Chronicon*, Robert Holzmann (ed.), Monumenta Germaniae Historica [MGH] SRG Nova Series IX (Berlin, 1935), iv, 28 (19), 165–7; Thietmar was Bruno's cousin (vi, 94 (58)–95, 386–8), so he was well-acquainted the stories surrounding St Adalbert and perhaps even knew the *Vita altera*: Wood, *The Missionary Life*, 211–12.

<sup>15</sup> Miłosz Sosnowski, 'Anonimowa *Passio* s. *Adalperti martiris* (BHL 40) oraz Wiperta *Historia de predicatione episcopi Brunonis* (BHL 1471b) – komentarz, edycja, przekład', *Rocznik Biblioteki Narodowej*, 43 (2012), 5–74, 22–33; Anna Rutkowska-Plachcińska, 'Pasje świętych Wojciecha i Brunona z tzw. kodeksu z Tegernsee', *Studia Źródłoznawcze*, 40 (2002), 19–37; Labuda, *Święty Wojciech*, 21–4; Karwasińska, *Święty Wojciech*, 137–8.

there is little that can be decisively asserted about the purpose of the *Tempore illo*, other than that its promotion of an updated vision of the saint's life, most likely aimed at renewing the relevance of the milieu's identification with the holy man – the very problem addressed in this study. In addition, assuming the text's close relation to the episcopal milieu it has been further suggested that the *Tempore illo* might have served as a scenario for the monumental bronze doors to the Gniezno cathedral narrating the life, death, and afterlife of the martyr, which would suggest an early dating. It should be added for the sake of clarity that although the Gniezno doors constitute an important source for the myth-making of St Adalbert and their imagery is consulted and referred to, they were largely excluded from the main focus of this investigation. This was done for the simple reason that the doors do not depict any of the scenes or episodes from the saint's life studied here, which in itself is quite significant and explicitly addressed below.<sup>16</sup>

The other text in this second wave, the *Miracula sancti Adalberti*, has been dated roughly in the thirteenth century, most likely in its second half (before 1295, that is, before King Przemysł II's ascension to the Polish throne, ending the feudal fragmentation of the country). It is a compilation of the life and miracles of St Adalbert excerpted from the *Tempore illo*, though containing a number of telling precisions, elucidations, and additions from other sources, for instance, a short description of the Gniezno summit. It has been suggested that the *Miracula's* formal character and standardized division between *vita*, *miracula*, and *translatio* might be the effect of the text being modelled on the *Miracula St Stanislai*, prepared for the canonization of the Cracowian martyr bishop in 1253.<sup>17</sup> For the purposes of this study, rather than taking an arbitrary stance on the dating of these two texts, I will treat

<sup>16</sup> 'De sancto Adalberto episcopo', Max Perlbach (ed.), MGH SS xv, 2 (Hannover, 1888), 1178–84; Labuda, *Święty Wojciech*, 33–6; Helena Chłopocka, 'Wstęp', in Jan Andrzej Spieź (ed.), *W kręgu żywotów św. Wojciecha* (Kraków, 1997), 175–7; Ryszard Grzesik, '"Tempore illo", dwunastowieczny polski żywot św. Wojciecha', *Rocznik Gdański*, lvii (1997), 57–74; Tomasz Ginter, 'Wątki hagiograficzne św. Wojciecha w ikonografii Drzwi Gnieźnieńskich', *Kwartalnik Historyczny*, cviii (2001), 17–46.

<sup>17</sup> 'Miracula sancti Adalberti', Wojciech Kętrzyński (ed.), MPH, iv (Lviv, 1883), 26–38; Labuda, *Święty Wojciech*, 36–7; Marian Plezia, 'Wstęp', in Spieź (ed.), *W kręgu żywotów św. Wojciecha*, 201–2; Aleksandra Witkowska, 'Miracula średniowieczne. Forma przekazu i możliwości badawcze', *Studia Źródłoznawcze*, xxii (1977), 183–7.

both as ridden with the temporal uncertainty principle, so to speak; the former roughly from the twelfth-century, and the latter roughly from the thirteenth-century. It is more fruitful to consider, within these parameters, what consequences an earlier or later dating of those works would have for the problems studied here.

## IV

DISMEMBERING & REMEMBERING:  
*CUIUS CORPUS, EIUS AUCTORITAS*

The fate of the physical remains of St Adalbert in the eleventh and early twelfth centuries, judged against the belatedness of his home-grown hagiography, strongly suggests that the primary cultivators and domesticators of the saint were not the Gniezno bishops but the Piast ruling elite. Already the first two lives *Vita prior* (C) and *Vita altera*, as well as the *Passio from Tegernsee* focused on the posthumous fate of the head and the rest of the body of the martyr: from the decapitation through to bringing of the head to Duke Bolesław I Chrobry/the Brave; the latter's purchase of the corpse and to its transfer (*translatio*) to Gniezno. Understandably, the medieval authors paid special attention to the many journeys of the head of St Adalbert: from the *furtum sacrum* of his remains to Prague by Duke Břetislav I's troops, who invaded Gniezno in 1039 to carry it off to Prague (appropriation or domestication by other means), through to the head's miraculous recovery in 1127 (in Gniezno) and 1143 (in Prague), and to its travels until the Middle Ages.<sup>18</sup> This privileging of the martyr's *caput* was particularly visible in the high and late medieval legends, in which narrations about the miraculous journeys of the head were used as a way to establish specific cult places in Poland and abroad, which well represents the traditional traits of Central and Western European hagiography.<sup>19</sup>

There is no doubt that the Piasts actively used the saint's severed members as material carriers of imagination and a means for spreading

<sup>18</sup> Martin Wihoda, *První česká království* (Prague, 2015), 91–4.

<sup>19</sup> Elżbieta Dąbrowska, 'Pierwotne miejsce pochowania i recepcja relikwii świętego Wojciecha we wczesnym średniowieczu', in *eadem*, *Groby, relikwie i insygnia: Studia z dziejów mentalności średniowiecznej* (Warszawa, 2008), 251–62, here 257–8; Masza Sitek, 'The Threefold Movement of St Adalbert's Head', *Mediaevistik*, 29 (2016), 143–74; Maria Starnawska, *Świętych życie po życiu. Relikwie w kulturze religijnej na ziemiach polskich w średniowieczu* (Warszawa, 2008), 67–92.

their own reputation through his cult – in itself a claim of ownership inherent to domestication. An oft-cited example is the episode reported in one of the many redactions and interpolations to the chronicle by the Aquitanian author, Adémar de Chabannes (composed c 1030). In 1000, that is three years after St Adalbert's death, Otto III supposedly set out to exhume the body of Charlemagne from under the floor of the Aachen cathedral. The Emperor had no clue where to look, however. After three days he received a vision of the fully adorned Emperor of the Franks, who pointed out a particular spot on the floor to excavate. Among the objects Otto III found there was a golden throne, which he sent to Bolesław I the Brave.<sup>20</sup> In exchange "King Bolesław, having accepted the gift, sent the emperor the arm from body of the said saint [St Adalbert], which he received joyfully". In addition Otto founded basilicas and monasteries commemorating St Adalbert both in Aachen and in Rome.<sup>21</sup> Although Adémar's story mixes apocryphal invention and several misconceptions, it reveals the basic logic of pious gift-giving that saturated the political culture of the West. Bolesław I seems to have mastered these practices to the degree that made him recognizable as a worthy member in this exchange system even in the eyes of a distant chronicler.

Another celebrated example concerns the Gallus Anonymous's early twelfth-century *Gesta principum Polonorum*, whose author referred to an unspecified *Liber de passione martyris* through which Emperor Otto III learned about the cruel death of St Adalbert.<sup>22</sup> Although nothing is

<sup>20</sup> Knut Görich, 'Otto III. öffnet das Karlsgrab in Aachen. Überlegungen zu Heiligenverehrung, Heiligsprechung und Traditionsbildung', in Gerd Althoff and Ernst Schubert (eds.), *Herrschaftsrepräsentation im ottonischen Sachsen* (Sigmaringen, 1998), 381–430; Levi Roach, 'Emperor Otto III and the End of Time', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 23 (2013), 75–102, here 92–3.

<sup>21</sup> Ademar de Chabannes, *Chronique*, Jules Chavanon (ed.) (Paris, 1897), iii, 31, 153–4: "Solium ejus [Charlemagne's] imperator Oto direxit regi Botisclavo pro reliquiis sancti Adalberii martiriis. Rex autem Botisclavus, accepto dono, misit imperatori brachium de corpore, ejusdem sancti, et imperator gaudens illud excepit, et in honore sancti Adalberii martiris basilicam Aquisgrani construxit ..."; Jacek Banaszkiewicz, 'Otto III jedzie do Gniezna. O sprawie ceremonialnej wizyty cesarza w kraju i stolicy Polan', in Wojciech Dzieduszycki and Maciej Przybył (eds.), "Trakt cesarski". *Ilawa – Gniezno – Magdeburg* (Poznań, 2002), 277–315, here: 295–7; Roman Michałowski, *The Gniezno Summit: The Religious Premises of the Founding of the Archbishopric of Gniezno* (Leiden, 2016), 139–42.

<sup>22</sup> Marian Plezia, 'Najstarszy zabytek historiografii polskiej: zaginiony żywot św. Wojciecha', *Przegląd Historyczny*, xliii (1952), 563–70; Przemysław Wiszewski,

known about the content of this non-extant – and quite likely non-existent – book, in the chronicle it is presented as setting in motion a whole chain of events known as the Gniezno summit in 1000, when the German emperor ceremonially visited Gniezno.<sup>23</sup> As a way to confirm their alliance, Otto III gave Bolesław I the Brave not only his diadem but also one of the nails from Christ's cross, as well as a copy of the lance of St Maurice. "In return Bolesław gave to him an arm of St Adalbert", which the emperor soon repurposed as a founding relic for the basilica he erected on the Isola Tiberina in Rome commemorating the saint (similarly to Adémar's version).<sup>24</sup> Again, regardless of the exact details of this story, based on the fact that it was part of Bolesław III the Wrymouth's (1107–38) historiographical propaganda, and the political implications of the gifts involved in this exchange, it is clear that the Piast rulers quickly learned to imitate the political commodification of relics practiced among the European elites.<sup>25</sup>

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*Domus Bolezlai. W poszukiwaniu tradycji dynastycznej Piastów (do około 1138 roku)* (Wrocław, 2008), 608–15.

<sup>23</sup> More recently on this meeting: Michałowski, *The Gniezno Summit*; see also Johannes Fried, *Otto III. und Boleslaw Chrobry: das Widmungsbild des Aachener Evangeliers, der "Akt von Gnesen" und das frühe polnische und ungarische Königtum* (Stuttgart, 2001); Althoff, *Otto III*, 90–103.

<sup>24</sup> Gallus Anonymous, *Gesta principum Polonorum/The Deeds of the Princes of the Poles*, (eds., tr., & ann.) Paul W. Knoll and Frank Schaer (Budapest, 2003), 1, 6, 36–7: 'pro quibus illi Bolezlauus sancti Adalberti brachium redonavit'; Aleksander Gieysztor, 'Rzymska studzienka ze św. Wojciechem z roku około 1000', in Gerard Labuda (ed.), *Święty Wojciech w polskiej tradycji historiograficznej* (Warszawa, 1997), 337–49; Michałowski, *The Gniezno Summit*, 142–3.

<sup>25</sup> Elżbieta Dąbrowska, 'Pierwotne miejsce pochowania', 252–6; Julia H.M. Smith, 'Rulers and Relics. Treasure on Earth, Treasure in Heaven', in Alexandra Walsham (ed.), *Relics and Remains, Past and Present Supplement*, 5 (2010), 73–96; Andrzej Pleszczyński, 'Poland as an Ally of the Holy Ottonian Empire', in Przemysław Urbańczyk (ed.), *Europe around the year 1000* (Warszawa, 2001), 409–25; Przemysław Wiszewski, *Domus Bolezlai. Values and social identity in dynastic traditions of medieval Poland (c. 966–1138)*, trans. Paul Barford (Leiden, 2010), 401–19. For more on gift-giving as means of politics, see: Roman Michałowski, 'Przyjaźń i dar w społeczeństwie karolińskim w świetle translacji relikwii', part 1: Studium źródłoznawcze', *Studia Źródłoznawcze*, xxviii (1983), 1–39; Roman Michałowski, 'Przyjaźń i dar w społeczeństwie karolińskim w świetle translacji relikwii', Part 2: 'Analiza i interpretacja', *Studia Źródłoznawcze*, xxix (1985), 9–96; Gadi Algazi, Valentin Groebner, and Bernhard Jussen (eds.), *Negotiating the gift: pre-modern figurings of exchange* (Göttingen, 2003); Arnoud-Jan A. Bijsterveld, *Do ut des: gift giving, memoria, and conflict management in the Medieval Low Countries* (Hilversum, 2007), 17–50.

The imagery of St Adalbert was extensively used for domestic propaganda too; for instance, through coinage. The first example consists of the silver so-called 'protective bracteates' of Prince Bolesław III the Wrymouth, probably from ca 1135–8. The type 2 of these coins features a scene of princely humility, that is, reverse sovereignty and submission to the saint. Namely, it depicts the kneeling prince and standing St Adalbert holding the pastoral in his left hand with his right hand, or perhaps just two benedictory fingers, raised horizontally over the prince's head in what has been interpreted as a gesture of (taming and dominating) protection. On the more rare type 1 of these bracteates, St Adalbert is pictured *en face*, standing alone.<sup>26</sup> He can be identified by his pontifical clothes and by the pastoral held in his right hand, which diagonally dissects his figure – an image strongly reminiscent of St Adalbert's depiction on the baptismal font from the Isola Tiberina from around 1000, but also very typical for the iconography of early medieval bishops.<sup>27</sup>

The second example consists of the silver dinars from Gniezno, coined by Bolesław III around 1118. These feature a portrait of the prince side by side with St Adalbert and the legend ADALBIBVS (Adalbertus) on the reverse. In addition, one should also mention the silver dinars coined by the Duke of Mazovia and High Duke of Poland, Bolesław IV the Curly (1146–73), the son and later successor of Bolesław III. One of several types of these coins features the duke himself, sitting with a sword resting on his knees, framed by the legend with his own name: BOLE[Z]LAVS. The reverse features the head of

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<sup>26</sup> It has been suggested, however, that the coin might not be of princely, but of episcopal origin, i.e. of Gniezno origin: Marcin R. Pauk, 'Quicquid pertinebat ad imperium: Kościół w Polsce a Rzesza do połowy XII wieku', in Józef Dobosz, Marta Matla, and Jerzy Strzelczyk (eds.), *Chrzest Mieszka I i chrystianizacja państwa Piastów* (Poznań, 2017), 249–80.

<sup>27</sup> For the reproduction, see Wojciech Danielski, *Kult św. Wojciecha za ziemiach polskich* (Lublin, 1997), 371; Edwin Rosenkranz, 'O gnieźnieńskich brakteatach ze św. Wojciechem z czasów Bolesława Krzywoustego', *Pomerania Antiqua*, 6 (1975), 585–96; Andrzej Schmid, 'Duży brakteat ze św. Wojciechem monetą arcybiskupstwa gnieźnieńskiego', *Gniezno. Studia i materiały historyczne*, 4 (1995), 179–88; Stanisław Suchodolski, 'Monety Świętego Wojciecha', in Cezary Buśko (ed.), *Civitas & villa. Miasto i wieś w średniowiecznej Europie Środkowej* (Wrocław and Praha, 2002), 447–452; Aleksander Gieysztor, 'Rzymska studzienka ze św. Wojciechem z roku około 1000', in Gerard Labuda (ed.), *Święty Wojciech w polskiej tradycji historiograficznej* (Warszawa, 1997), 337–49.

St Adalbert, unmistakably identified as S ADALBERTV[S], encapsulated in what seems to be a reliquary. It would not be off the mark to suggest that the use of the motif of the saint's head on the coin might have been inspired by the recent miraculous recovery of this relic in Gniezno in 1127. Above all, in this latter case, the ruler and his saint represented the two sides of the same coin, both literally and metaphorically.

The early twelfth century marked the apex of the ideological symbiosis between the Piasts and St Adalbert, and their appropriation and commodification of him as a means of political legitimacy. The saint was considered the guard not only of the ruling dynasty, but of what Thietmar dubbed, the *domus Boleslai*, that is, the Polish polity and its future fate.<sup>28</sup> This expression, used about Boleslaw I, might have been an exaggeration by the early eleventh-century standards, but it fit exceptionally well to Boleslaw III Wrymouth's rule, especially given the miraculous, protective apparition of St Adalbert noted by Gallus Anonymous.<sup>29</sup> In other words, St Adalbert was the closest the Piasts ever got to having a dynastical saint without actually going as far as to consecrate a member of their dynasty.<sup>30</sup> The Gniezno bishops' role in all this seemed somewhat overshadowed, however.

## V

### THE FINGER THAT WASN'T THERE: NEW MIRACLES AND RELICS

With this background in mind, it is time to turn the Gniezno's individual mythopoetic efforts related to their saint. As already mentioned, the *Tempore illo* brings little new information about his martyrdom: the cutting off of his head and putting it on top of a debranched tree largely

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<sup>28</sup> Thietmar von Merseburg, *Chronicon*, Holzmann (ed.), VI, 95, 389; Wiszewski, *Domus Boleslai*, trans. Barford, 44–50; Marcin R. Pauk, 'Eine Dynastie oder mehrere? Herrschaft und ihre Legitimation in der politischen Kultur Polens (12.–13. Jahrhundert)', in Grischa Vercamer and Ewa Wólkiewicz (eds.), *Legitimation von Fürstendynastien in Polen und dem Reich: Identitätsbildung im Spiegel schriftlicher Quellen (12.–15. Jahrhundert)* (Wiesbaden, 2016), 29–54, here 36–38.

<sup>29</sup> Gallus Anonymous, *Gesta principum Polonorum*, Knoll and Schaer (eds.), 2, 6, 130–1.

<sup>30</sup> Pac, 'Problem świętości władców', *passim*; Pauk, 'Eine Dynastie oder mehrere?', 39.



follows the accounts by Canaparius and Bruno. It is the posthumous miracles that offer novel elements, such as the stopover of the body of the saint, after Bolesław I purchased it from the pagan Prussians, in the monastery of the Canon Regulars in Trzemeszno, where some miraculous healings ensued.<sup>31</sup> This is a clear example how a twelfth-century monastic foundation created by Bolesław III, which was closely connected to the Gniezno Archbishopric, was retrofitted into the local reality of the late tenth century in order to boost its prestige and ancient lineage. In this sense, Trzemeszno entered the realm of sacred history and the landscape of St Adalbert, always already associated with him.<sup>32</sup> However, another entirely novel and more puzzling addition – and an outright invention – is the miracle regarding the collecting of the dismembered body of the saint proceeding with its transfer to Greater Poland. Particularly, the role played by his finger.

As the *Tempore illo* reports it, after his decapitation the Prussians chopped St Adalbert's body into pieces and angrily scattered them around – behaviour previously unreported by any other text related to the saint. The following night an anonymous Prussian neophyte, who hosted St Adalbert during the days immediately preceding his death, was admonished through an angelic vision to carefully collect all the members of the body and with due reverence guard these holy relics (*sacerrimas reliquias*). Having gathered everything he could find, the Prussian saw that one finger was missing. He looked for the finger for many days; long enough to awake the suspicion of his pagan wife and, eventually, of the villagers. Forced to reveal the whereabouts of the body, the neophyte was punished both physically (by his neighbors) and spiritually (by God) and the holy corpse fell into the hands of the infidels, who decided to trade it with King Bolesław I.<sup>33</sup> However, when the still incomplete body was in the custody of the heathens:

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<sup>31</sup> 'De sancto Adalberto episcopo', Perlbach (ed.), 18–19, 1183–4.

<sup>32</sup> Józef Dobosz, *Monarchia i możni wobec kościoła w Polsce do początku XIII wieku* (Poznań, 2002), 147–8, 194–5; Elżbieta Dąbrowska, 'Pierwotne miejsce pochowania', 259–62; Mortensen, 'Sanctified beginnings', *passim*; To put it in terms of evolutionary biology, in the case of Trzemeszno stopover St Adalbert seems to have been used for the construction of Gniezno's cultural niche and retroactively incorporated into it as its defining element: Zeder, 'Core questions', 3192, 3195–6; Greger Larson and Dorina Q. Fuller, 'The Evolution of Animal Domestication', *Annual Review of Ecology, Evolution, and Systematics*, 45 (2014), 115–36, here 117–20.

<sup>33</sup> 'De sancto Adalberto episcopo', Perlbach (ed.), 16–17, 1183.

[s]oon some fishermen who were fishing near the shores of the sea – which was the refuge of the saint [near to] where he suffered his martyrdom – saw a small fish swimming among the sea waves. In her belly they noticed something glowing like a candle. Amazed, they let go [of other fish] and together hastened to catch that one; they caught it quickly and by opening its viscera extracted the finger of the holy bishop which glowed like candle, which made them ask each other what it was. As they studied it more closely, thanks to God's will they soon recognized the shape of the finger which elapsed from the holy body. They thus hurried to the people, who they knew kept the venerable members and there they saw that also these [members] radiated with the same glow like the finger. The entire village gathered to this spectacle, in order to guard the celestial body all the more carefully.<sup>34</sup>

Although the story about the finger found in the belly of a fish is certainly apocryphal, echoing similar motifs popular in miracle stories,<sup>35</sup> it is not without consequence for the questions of domestication of saints nor for the problem of the originality and/or imitative character of the Polish medieval culture. It is also particularly helpful for reconstructing the ideas attached to St Adalbert's person, how Gniezno's episcopal community perceived itself, and the role of its patron saint in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. To address these problems, a simple yet pressing question needs to be answered first: which finger exactly was swallowed by the little fish (*pisciculum*)?

The text of the legend, unfortunately, does not specify which digit it was. An informed guess can be made, however. The source designates it as *the* finger of the holy bishop (*digitum sancti pontificis*). If a medieval bishop needed any fingers, he surely needed at least three, all belonging

<sup>34</sup> 'De sancto Adalberto episcopo', *ibid.*, 17, 1183: "Post aliquantulum vero temporis, dum quidam naute piscarentur in ripa maris, que hospicio sancti, ubi martirizatus est, erat contigua, repente vident inter fluctus quendam natantem pisciculum, cuius in visceribus miri fulgoris candela videbatur ardere. Quo attoniti miraculo, ceteris omissis, hunc omnes capere festinant, quem cito captum mox eviscerant atque de illius ventriculo digitum sancti pontificis in modum rutilantis candeles flammigerantem extrahunt, idque admirari non sufficientes, quid sit, inter se requirunt. Interea volente Deo curiosius intuentes formam digiti agnoscunt eumque de sancto corpore elapsum fuisse perpendunt. Tunc illos properanter adeunt, apud quos veneranda membra noverant esse recondita, ubi et ceteros eius artus ceu digitum, quem detulerant, itidem radiare conspiciunt. Ad quod spectaculum tota villa confluent, celeste corpus deinceps sedulo custodiunt".

<sup>35</sup> Frederic C. Turbach, *Index exemplorum: A Handbook of Medieval Religious Tales* (Helsinki, 1981), no. 3350, 260, no. 3835, 296, no. 4102, 315.

to his right palm. The first two were the index finger and the middle finger. These two digits were crucial for performing the gestures of benediction and consecration, which were a widespread and consistent motif in the iconography of bishops throughout the Middle Ages.<sup>36</sup> The third, and just as important, was the ring finger on which ever since the early Middle Ages a bishop wore the visual sign of his episcopal dignity and marriage with his church: the ring.<sup>37</sup>

That these three episcopal fingers were of greater value than others can be inferred, for instance, from the story of the so-called “cadaver synod” that took place in Rome in January of 897. Pope Stephen VI (896–7), seeking to nullify the decisions and episcopal appointments of Pope Formosus (891–6) opted for the drastic move of putting his predecessor’s body on trial. Without going into the complex political reasons behind this synod, the ritual aspects of this spectacle are quite telling. The body of the pope was exhumed, dressed in full papal vestments, and put on the pontifical seat with a deacon at its side to answer for the deceased. According to Liutprand of Cremona, who recounted the details of this scene half a century later, the main charge against Pope Formosus was the usurpation of the episcopal dignity in Rome while he was still bishop of Porto. Accordingly, the annulment of the pope’s decisions demanded stripping his body of the vestments and chopping off the three crucial fingers of the right palm, after which the body was tossed into Tiber.<sup>38</sup> Like in a mirror darkly, this story shows which of bishop’s fingers counted the most, both in life and after death.

Still, one of three potential fingers was too vague an answer for the Gniezno authors. Determining which finger glowed so brightly in the fish’s viscera must have seemed particularly pressing for the

<sup>36</sup> See reproductions of manuscripts in Eric Palazzo, *L'évêque et son image: l'illustration du pontifical au Moyen Âge* (Turnhout, 1999), 87, 131, 150, 157, 207, 216, 221, 226, 229, 240, 248, 296, 325, 327, 332.

<sup>37</sup> Katarzyna Bogacka, *Insignia biskupie w Polsce. Pierścień, pektorał, infuła XI–XVIII w.* (Warszawa, 2008), 19–31, 219–30; Ernst H. Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies: a Study in Medieval Political Theology* (Princeton, 1997), 212, fn. 54, 216–17; Visa Immonen and Jussi-Pekka Taavitsainen, ‘Finger of a saint, thumb of a priest. Medieval relics in the Diocese of Turku, and the archaeology of lived bodies’, *Scripta Instituti Donneriani Aboensis*, 23 (2011), 141–173.

<sup>38</sup> Liutprand of Cremona, ‘Antapodosis’, in Paolo Chiesa (ed.), *Liutprandi Cremonensis Opera omnia*, i (Turnhout, 1998), 30, 23: “His expletis, sacratris mox exutum vestimentis digitisque tribus abscisis, in Tiberim iactare praecepit, ...”.

anonymous author of the *Miracula*, who used the finger and the fish story in the opening paragraph.<sup>39</sup> It was apparently so pressing that later in the text the author openly addressed this issue: the anonymous Prussian collecting the members of the body could not find the finger, for “it was cut off by one of the perfidious [pagans] because of the ring [anulum] and [then] tossed into the river”.<sup>40</sup>

Moreover, this finger not only a glowed like a candle, but was once it returned to the body, it ignited the whole corpse so that it radiated with the same glorious light. The motif and conviction that parts and entire bodies of martyrs and saints were luminous have long been one of the crucial and most widespread elements of the cult of saints in medieval Christendom, and a visible proof of their sanctity.<sup>41</sup> This is thus the right occasion to return to the texts constructing the cult of St Adalbert as well as to the more immediate geographical and textual context in which it was emerging, that is, the hagiography composed on the Baltic Rim.

In case of these secondary hagiographies of St Adalbert, the likely inspiration for their authors was the redaction C of the *Vita prior* by Canaparius, together with its offshoots. Towards the very end of the text its author added a wholly new sentence to the Roman text, stating that after decapitation the body of St Adalbert was thrown into the sea, which hid it from view. As a response, a column of burning light rose to the heavens which led the followers of the missionary back to the body. Having recuperated the head and transported the corpse elsewhere, they were joined by many other Christians and constructed a suitable church praising St Adalbert's name and virtue.<sup>42</sup> Also, the

<sup>39</sup> Kętrzyński (ed.), ‘*Miracula Sancti Adalberti*’, 1, 26.

<sup>40</sup> ‘*Miracula Sancti Adalberti*’, *ibid.*, 8, 33: “Veruntamen cum singula frustra sollerter coherentibus artibus adaptaret, unius manus deesse sibi digitum deprehendit, quem quidam ex perfidis abscisum propter anulum, abstracto eo, in flumen proiecerat”.

<sup>41</sup> Arnold Angenendt, *Heilige und Reliquien: die Geschichte ihres Kultes vom frühen Christentum bis zur Gegenwart* (Munich, 1997), 115–19; Arnold Angenendt, ‘Holy Corpses and the Cult of Relics’, in Marika Räsänen, Gritje Hartmann, and Earl Jeffrey Richards (eds.), *Relics, Identity and Memory in Medieval Europe* (Turnhout, 2016), 13–28, here 17–18; Cynthia Hahn, ‘Seeing and Believing: The Construction of Sanctity in Early-Medieval Saints’ Shrines’, *Speculum*, 72 (1997), 1079–106; Maria Sarnawska, *Świętych życie po życiu. Relikwie w kulturze religijnej na ziemiach polskich w średniowieczu* (Warszawa, 2008), 443–52.

<sup>42</sup> ‘*Sancti Adalberti episcopi Pragensis et martyris: Vita prior: Redactio Cassinensis*’, Karwasińska (ed.), 30, 84: “Inde uero indicio fulgide columnae super corpus

*Passio from Tegernsee* ruminated on the question of the light emanating from the martyr's body. It did this fleetingly however, and solely in negative terms. It says only that after the decapitation the murderers impaled the martyr's head and put his body into the nearby river "so that it would not be a burning and shining light for the people".<sup>43</sup> In addition, the figure of the fish entered this tradition for the first time, if only in form of a comparison. The text of the *Passio* states that seven days after the martyrdom – in between which St Adalbert's head had reached Bolesław I in Gniezno and worked its first miracle (a captive's chains fell off), which prompted the king to offer ransom for the corpse – the ruler's messengers together with the saint's companions reached the place of the killing. Upon their arrival they not only saw that "an eagle guarded the impaled head so that no other bird dared to touch it", but also found the corpse itself which "flowed up to the shore like a fish [*piscino more defluit adipam*]"<sup>44</sup>

With all those elements in place, we can now 'reverse engineer' the likely path of textual evolution which led to developing the fragment about the finger episode in the *Tempore illo* and the *Miracula*.<sup>45</sup> It seems that their authors took the scanty information and literary devices found in the previous texts and, by gluing them together with a great deal of imagination, perhaps even including oral traditions circulating in the Gniezno milieu, blew these up into an entirely new, mythologizing episode.<sup>46</sup> In this process of miraculous snowballing, a body that did not emanate any light later glowed; the fact that it floated *like* a fish soon turned it into an actual fish. Similarly, the sea changed into a river and changed back into a sea again; a previously

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eius in celum usque porrecte manifestatum est corpus eius discipulis, et uenientes cum multis christianis abstulerunt corpus eius, et coniungentes caput corpori honorifice sepelierunt, et dignam ecclesiam nomine eius construxerunt, ubi merita et uirtutes eius exhuberant usque in hodiernum diem".

<sup>43</sup> 'Passio s. Adalperti martiris (BHL 40)', Sosnowski (ed.), 66: "coruscantem populo lucere luceram", with a quote from John 5.35.

<sup>44</sup> 'Passio s. Adalperti martiris (BHL 40)', *ibid.*, 68–70: "Mira res et inaudibilis! Sex dies corpus alium in flumine cui inmerserant requieuit, septimo autem die piscino more defluit adipam, vbi inueniebatur, tribus uidelicet diebus caput in sude fixum ab aquila ne ab ullo uolucrum tangeretur, custoditum".

<sup>45</sup> Franco Moretti, *The Bourgeois: Between History and Literature* (London, 2013), 14, 80.

<sup>46</sup> For a discussion on the oral traditions and polemics of different milieus regarding the person and activity of St Adalbert, see Sosnowski, *Studia nad wczesnymi*.

only decapitated corpse was now being chopped into pieces that had to be collected; so that in the next step a finger could escape it, start to glow, and then start wearing an episcopal ring at the next turn of this textual evolution.

Moreover, with the addition of each new fantastic layer their authors inserted more and more witnesses to both the miracles and relics into their accounts. This started already in the Monte Cassino redaction of *Vita prior*, where the previously unheard of group of Christians returned with St Adalbert's disciples to recover his body and then started building the first church to propagate his cult. In the *Tempore illo*, it is the fishermen that fulfil a somewhat ambiguous function in the story. Although certainly pagan, in the logic of the narrative they were performing the *inventio* of a relic and, as God's tools (*volente Deo*), served as first witnesses recognizing (*intuentes ... agnoscunt*) the finger as a part of the sacred corpse. Even the murderous Prussian villagers to whom the fishermen returned the finger seemed to act as unwitting witnesses of a heavenly spectacle, which can be interpreted to mean that the *Tempore illo* was already a part of the new culture of visibility of relics coming from the West.<sup>47</sup> As we shall see below, colonizing these accounts with laypeople was not only a sign of Gniezno's way to popularize the cult of its patron during the high Middle Ages, but also a mutualist stage in the domestication process.

## VI

### SCANDINAVIAN PARALLELS: ST SIGFRID & ST HENRY

This is a good moment to zoom out of the Polish case and take a closer look at similar patterns of episcopal power and institutional self-legitimation through domesticated saints occurring on the north-eastern peripheries of Europe during the same period, whose correspondences go deeper than the ostensible resemblance of their use of glowing relics. For instance, in the Swedish *Legenda Sancti Sigfridi*, composed around 1200 in two different redactions, St Sigfrid is said to have been an English missionary and bishop (supposedly a former archbishop of York) who reached Sweden around the

<sup>47</sup> Angenendt, *Heilige und Reliquien*, 158–61; Hahn, 'Seeing and believing', *passim*; Starnawska, *Świętych życie po życiu*, 586–9; Bartlett, *Why Can the Dead Do Such Great Things?*, 239–50.

year 1000.<sup>48</sup> According to the sources produced by the episcopal milieu at Växjö, Sigfrid was a very ambitious missionary, whose activity was concentrated in the region of Varend (Latin: *Warendia*, historical part of today's Småland), where he destroyed many heathen temples and raised just as many churches.

The centre of St Sigfrid's activity was Växjö, where he installed his nephews – Unaman, Sunaman, and Vinaman – as priests. One day, while he was away from Varend attending the royal court, the three nephews were decapitated by the local apostates, who swiftly disposed of the martyrs' heads by sinking them into the waters of the nearby lake in a chest. The murder came as a shock to both the missionary and the newly converted king, and St Sigfrid had to hasten home. One night, as he wandered sorrowful along the shores of the Lake of Växjö (Swedish: *Växjösjön*), the bishop noticed three candles floating over the waves on the far eastern shore. Reaching the spot, he retrieved the three glowing heads from the bottom of the lake.<sup>49</sup> Uncorrupted

<sup>48</sup> Sara E. Ellis Nilsson, *Creating Holy People and Places on the Periphery: A Study of the Emergence of Cults of Native Saints in the Ecclesiastical Provinces of Lund and Uppsala from the Eleventh to the Thirteenth Centuries* (Gothenburg: Dissertation from the Department of Historical Studies, Gothenburg University, 2015), 86–7.

<sup>49</sup> 'Historia Sancti Sigfridi', in Ericus G. Geijer and Johannes H. Schröder (eds.), *Scriptores Rerum Svecicarum Medii aevi*, ii (Uppsala, 1828) 344–64, here 360, 362: "Eodem namque tempore, cum vir sanctus, pro nepotum suorum ostensione Dei jugiter clementiam exoraret, nocte quadam ex suo domicilio exiens, cum secus stagnum quod coemiterio ejusdem ecclesiae adjacet, deambulare vidit in stagno tria luminaria in modum stellarum clare lucentia, et ad littora orientalis ripae tendentia. ... Cum autem eadem luminaria littori appropriquarent, ejectis vir domini cothurnis, quos in pedibus habebat, seque in aquam mittens, obviam prosiluit. Vir itaque domini propius accedens, ut desiderium cordis sui acquireret celerius, lumen quod oculis ejus prius apparebat, ablatum est. Illo vero perseverante ut quaereret, diligentiusque perscrutante, invenit tandem situlam ligneam cum tribus capitibus, ... Apparebant namque capita eorum adeo recentia et incorrupta, ac si eadem hora a corporibus fuissent abscisa."; In the later, shorter redaction of the Legend this scene is framed the following way: 'Legenda Sancti Sigfridi [according to Cod. Ups. C 292]', in Alf Önnersfors, *Die Hauptaffsungen des Sigfridsoffizium. Mit kritischen Editionen* (Lund, 1968), 117–25, here 124: "Sanctus itaque sigfridus pro suis nepotibus gratias agens deo, qui eos tam preciosa morte per sanguinis effusionem ad se venire disposuit, semper intimo cordis affectu petuit a domino, ut de corporum eorum inuentione consolari mereretur. Quadam igitur uice cum ambularet cum suis tempore serotino iuxta stagnum, in quo capita eorum demersa intellexerat, uidit in medio stagni tria luminaria in modum stellarum lucentia et ad oram orientalis ripe tendentia, et letu deum benedicens ad locum illum cum suis

by the water, the heads spoke to St Sigfrid, explicitly asking God to take vengeance on the murderers and their offspring.<sup>50</sup> This prompted the saint to raise a church on the spot, which came to be the Våxjö cathedral, to where the heads of the martyrs were transferred.<sup>51</sup> As a further reminder of his activity, a stone edifice in the honour of the saint and John the Baptist was raised nearby. By means of contiguity, this second structure conveniently associated the beheading of the three nephews with the prophet, making the three martyred priests, as well as St Sigfrid, protagonists in a quasi-biblical story.<sup>52</sup> Needless to say, it was there that the episcopal seat presided when the *Legenda Sancti Sigfridi* was written.<sup>53</sup>

In many respects, St Sigfrid is a particularly fortunate parallel for St Adalbert. The legend insists on his close association with Olof Skötkonung (995–1022), the first Christian ruler of Sweden, whom Sigfrid supposedly baptized in Husaby in Västergötland. However, this claim goes against the information about Sigfrid provided by the chronologically much closer and more reliable evidence of Adam of Bremen's *Gesta*, which makes the meeting between the two men very unlikely.<sup>54</sup> Like St Adalbert, St Sigfrid too was considered to be the

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celeriter properauit. ... Que capita in ecclesia vexionensi honorifice sunt recondita, sed corpora eorundem martirum Christi exigentibus peccatis hominum usque in diem hodiernum non sunt inuenta”.

<sup>50</sup> ‘Legenda Sancti Sigfridi [C 292]’, Önnersfors (ed.), 124: “Intellexit enim uir sanctus se a domino exauditus <et> pro suorum reuelacione nepotum exultauit in domino. Et aquam aliquantulum ingressus inuenit urnam cum tribus capitibus lapide magno alligatam, quam assumens in terram detulit, et capita in sinum suum lacrimando colligans et eis pie paternitatis affectu condolens dixit: ‘Vindicet Deus’. Statim unius capitis uox emissa respondit: ‘Vindicabitur’. Aliud inquit: ‘Quando?’ Tertium subjunxit: ‘In filios filiorum’”.

<sup>51</sup> ‘Historia Sancti Sigfridi’, Geijer and Schröder (eds.), 356: “Cum beatus pontifex apud Regem moraretur, tres nepotes sui, ut dictum est, Unamannus, Sunamannus, et Vinamannus, in eodem loco, quem uir sanctus ædificauerat et ecclesiam de lignis construxerat, qui nunc dicitur Wexjö”.

<sup>52</sup> René Girard, *The Scapegoat*, trans. Yvonne Freccero (Baltimore, 1989), 125–48.

<sup>53</sup> ‘Historia Sancti Sigfridi’, 350: ‘In quo loco [Östrabo] ædificium constructum est lapideum in honorem ejusdem Sancti et memoriam Johannis Baptistæ quæ uidelicet ecclesia sede episcopal decorata est usque in hunc diem”.

<sup>54</sup> ‘Historia Sancti Sigfridi’, 356: “Lætificatus autem Rex in occursum ejus iuit, et suscepit eum cum magno honore. Post non multos dies, prædicante viro Dei verbum salutis populo, credidit Rex et baptizatus est, omnesque familiares et domestici ejus, universusque exercitus cum tota ejus familia”; The chronology of St Sigfrid’s



patron saint of his country, the first traces of his special protection stemming from the turn of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.<sup>55</sup> Finally, just like St Adalbert – who in the twelfth century began to be falsely considered the original archbishop of Gniezno<sup>56</sup> – so too St Sigfrid was misleadingly presented as the first bishop of Växjö.

Such fierce promotion of St Sigfrid coincides with an interesting moment in the history of the episcopal claims of Växjö in the second half of the twelfth century and its association with his cult. According to the *Legenda*, Sigfrid was singlehandedly responsible for instituting the original division of dioceses between Västergötland and Östergötland and for ordaining the first bishops of Uppsala and Strängnäs – neither of which actually occurred before the twelfth century. Such an exorbitant claim did not just ignore the historical

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life suggests he visited Sweden too late, in the 1020s at the earliest, in order to be able to procure King Olof Skötkonung's baptism. It has been suggested that Olof's baptism might have been the effect of Bruno of Querfurt's missionary activity in the Baltic region and the priests he dispatched to Scandinavia. The presumable connection between Bruno and Olof and his assistance in the king's baptism was Priest Turgot from Bremen, later bishop of Västergötland whom Bruno sent to Sweden – Henrik Janson, 'Konfliktlinjer i tidig nordeuropeisk kyrkoorganisation', in Niels Lund (ed.), *Kristendommen i Danmark før 1050* (Roskilde, 2004), 215–34, here 215–17. The second possible link was Mieszko I's daughter and Boleslaw I Brave's half-sister, Świętosława/Gunhild, married to Erik Segersäll, Olof Skötkonung's mother – Tryggve Lundén, *Sveriges missionärer, helgon och kyrkogrundare. En bok om Sveriges kristnande* (Helsingborg, 1983), 52–4. For the recapitulation of the complicated relationships and problems with identification of Świętosława/Gunhild/Sigrid Storråda and the role she/they played in connecting the Piasts with the Scandinavian ruling families, see Rafał T. Prinke, 'Świętosława, Sygryda, Gunhilda. Tożsamość córki Mieszka I i jej skandynawskie związki', *Roczniki historyczne*, lxx (2004), 81–110.

<sup>55</sup> However, this conviction did not become widespread before the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. In the early fifteenth-century St Sigfrid's *officium*, contained in the *Breviarium Scarense*, the saint is called 'pater Suecie'. Also two diplomas (Svenskt Diplomatariums huvudkartotek över medeltidsbrevet, hereinafter: SDHK nno. 5512: <https://sok.riksarkivet.se/dokument/sdhk/5512.pdf>, and 5782: <https://sok.riksarkivet.se/dokument/sdhk/5782.pdf>) of King Magnus Eriksson (1319–64) given to the cathedral of Växjö in 1347 and 1349 contain invocations of St Sigfrid as patron of Sweden: "Beatissimi sigfridi regni nostri suecie patroni" and, "necnon beatissimi Sigfridi, regni nostri Suecie patroni", respectively; Lundén, *Sveriges missionärer*, 48–50; Charlotte Vainio, 'Patroni regni och folket. En studie i helgonkultens folkliga förankring', *Historisk tidskrift för Finland*, 94 (2009), 277–93.

<sup>56</sup> Ginter, 'Wątki hagiograficzne', 33–4; Wiszewski, *Domus Boleszlai*, 188–9; Pauk, 'Quicquid pertinebat', 270–2.



Fig. 1. A quite literal late-medieval interpretation of the miraculous recovery of the heads glowing like candles can be seen in the frescoes by Johannes Ivan, dated to ca 1451–2 in the early-fourteenth century Vendels church (*Vendels kyrka*) in Uppland, ca 40 km north of Uppsala (Source: Riksantikvarieämbetet, Stockholm, sign. K 1 C: 782 Vendel Gr 3-12; Wikimedia Commons, Creative commons license<sup>57</sup>)



Fig. 2. The seal of the episcopal chapter of Växjö attached a diploma issued in July of 1292 representing the three heads of the martyr brothers with lights over their heads (Source: Riksarkivet, Stockholm; photo: Emre Olgun<sup>58</sup>)

<sup>57</sup> The image can be consulted online at the Arkivalisk-Topografiska Arkivet in Riksarkivarieämbetet: <http://kmb.raa.se/cocoon/bild/show-image.html?id=16000200139790> (Accessed: 5 Dec. 2017). For more on the dating and the author of these frescoes, see Henrik Alm, 'Vendels kyrkmålningar av Johannes Ivan 1451–1452', *Fornvännen: Journal of Swedish Antiquarian Research* (1930), 376–80.

<sup>58</sup> The 1292 diploma issued by the Växjö cathedral chapter for Uppsala can be consulted in its entirety (including the seal) here: [https://sok.riksarkivet.se/sdhk?SDHK=1568&postid=sdhk\\_1568](https://sok.riksarkivet.se/sdhk?SDHK=1568&postid=sdhk_1568) (Accessed: 7 Dec. 2017).

and institutional episcopal precedence of Skara, which dated back to the early eleventh century, but openly defied the episcopal supremacy of the bishops of Linköping, in whose province Växjö was located. However, even if the information about this is scanty, at some point between 1163 and 1170 Växjö's cathedral chapter, led by a certain Baldwin (Balduinus), its first historical bishop, seceded from the bishopric of Linköping.<sup>59</sup> It appears therefore that the creation of the legend of St Sigfrid, its proliferation as an *officium*, and the doggedness to antedate the saint's association with the converter king – all of which essentially suggested Växjö was the most ancient see in the country – were used as leverage to elevate the new and feeble episcopal dignity in the delicate period of transition to autonomy. In other words, the invention of the miracle of the radiant heads of the three martyrs for the creation of a completely new local *mythopoesis* and sacred geography linking the Växjö cathedral and the episcopal estate in Östrabo, that is, the cultural niche of both St Sigfrid and his successors, was instrumental for building the new identity.<sup>60</sup>

Moreover, creating such a strong mission- and martyr-oriented identity, spiced with vengeful overtones targeting the paganism of the local populations over generations ('Vindicet Deus' ... 'In filios filiorum'), made a lot of sense in a region such as Varend considering that it saw some sort of crusading military intervention known as the Kalmar naval levy (Swedish: *Kalmare ledung*) by the Norwegian King Sigurd the Crusader (Jorsalfarare) in 1123.<sup>61</sup> This martyr identity was so strong that by the end of the thirteenth century the three radiant heads floating above the lake were featured on the episcopal seal of Växjö bishops (the legend: [SIGILL]VM CAPITVLI WEXIONESIS). It was an expression *par excellence* of the episcopal

<sup>59</sup> Nilsson, *Creating Holy People*, 175–82.

<sup>60</sup> 'Historia Sancti Sigfridi', in Ericus G. Geijer and Johannes H. Schröder (eds.), *Scriptores Rerum Svecicarum Medii aevi*, ii (Uppsala, 1828), 344–64, here 350: "[St Sifrid] pervenit tandem in terram, quae Værendia dicitur, quæ prima est terrarium in partibus Gothiæ ad meridiem ... In hanc ergo, ut diximus, sanctus vir Sigrirdus Eboracensis Archiepiscopus primum ingressum habuit, et in loco Östrabo, qui nunc ab incolis dicitur Wexiö, domino ducente pervenit."; Ellis Nilsson, *Creating Holy People*, 212–14.

<sup>61</sup> For a more extreme case of how the crusading context influenced the promotion of saints, see Carsten Selch Jensen, 'History Made Sacred: Martyrdom and the Making of a Sanctified Beginning in Early Thirteenth-Century Livonia', in *Saints and Sainthood*, 145–72.

identity presented through the fundamental mythopoetic moment of martyrdom (Fig. 2).<sup>62</sup>

The glowing heads and bodies of the martyrs aside, the example from the Baltic region that comes perhaps closest to St Adalbert's finger-ring-fish episode is that of St Henry (d. 1156), the legendary first bishop-martyr of Turku (Åbo) and missionary to Finland, then a part of Sweden. According to the tradition, Henry was an English cleric who accompanied the papal legate Nicholas Breakspear – later pope as Hadrian IV (1154–9) – during the latter's visit to Scandinavia in the mid-1150s. After the departure of the papal legate, Henry stayed behind and became responsible for the Swedish Christianization of Finland Proper in the so-called First Finnish Crusade, which he allegedly organized together with the Swedish King Erik the Saint (Erik IX Jedvardsson, 1155–60). Notwithstanding the fact that St Henry has never been officially canonized, that the very historicity of the events surrounding both his and Erik's actions and their very figures have been put into doubt, and that the initial Christianization of Finland almost certainly predated his arrival, the contemporary hagiographic material concerning him and the popularity of his cult are valuable for the purposes of this study.<sup>63</sup>

The primary source for St Henry's missionary life and death is the brief *Legenda Sancti Henrici*, also known as *De sancto Henrico*. Written most probably at some point between 1270 and 1290 in the milieu of the Turku/Åbo Cathedral (in Finland Proper), which was almost exclusively populated by Swedish clerics at the time, it consists

<sup>62</sup> Toni Schmid, *Den helige Sigfrid* (Lund, 1931), 85–6; Brigitte M. Bedos-Rezak, *When Ego Was Imago: Signs of Identity in the Middle Ages* (Leiden, 2011), 96–107, 243–7; Cf. Lars Bisgaard, 'Saints, Guilds, and Seals: From Exclusivity to Competition', in *Saints and Sainthood*, 201–28, here 206–8, 212–14, 217–21.

<sup>63</sup> Tuomas Heikkilä, *Sankt Henrikslegenden*, trans. Rainer Knapas (Helsinki, 2009), 48–52, 140; Tuomas Heikkilä, 'An Imaginary Saint for an Imagined Community: St. Henry and the Creation of Christian Identity in Finland, Thirteenth–Fifteenth Centuries', in Wojtek Jezierski and Lars Hermanson (eds.), *Imagined Communities on the Baltic Rim, from the Eleventh to Fifteenth Centuries* (Amsterdam, 2016), 223–52; Philip Line, 'Sweden's Conquest of Finland: A Clash of Cultures?', in Alan V. Murray (ed.), *The North-Eastern Frontiers of Medieval Europe: The Expansion of Latin Christendom in the Baltic lands* (Farnham, 2014), 57–99; Jens E. Olesen, 'The Swedish Expeditions ('Crusades') Towards Finland Reconsidered', in Kirsi Salonen and Sari Katajala-Peltomaa (eds.), *Church and belief in the Middle Ages: Popes, Saints, and Crusaders* (Amsterdam, 2016), 251–67, here 255–9.

of two parts: the *vita* proper (*lectio* I–IV) followed by the *miracula* (*lectio* V–IX).<sup>64</sup>

To briefly present his fate emerging from the legend, Henry is said to have come to Finland directly from Uppsala where he previously served as bishop. Together with King Erik, “like two great lights” (“quasi duobus magnis luminaribus”), they put great effort into converting – somewhat forcibly – the local population and raising churches, partially motivated by revenge for the ravaging of the Swedish coasts by the Finnish pirates. Once peace was achieved, Erik returned to Sweden, leaving Henry behind. Similarly to St Sigfrid, throughout the text of the *Legenda* Henry’s bravery and the great risks he was taking are repeatedly stressed as a way to foreshadow his martyrdom.<sup>65</sup> As it were, among the many sheep in his flock was one person (the name Lali by which the man is known is a post-medieval invention) who particularly hated the man of God. One day he simply killed Henry (the use of an axe and the decapitation, which flourish in numerous depictions of St Henry, were also added later), who thus immediately entered the heavenly Jerusalem crowned with a palm of glory. The ensuing eleven miracles fall into two categories: punitive and protective (mainly concerning healing from various illnesses), strongly echoing similar miracles from other parts of Europe.

As far as parallels between St Henry’s miracles and St Adalbert’s miracles in the *Tempore illo* are concerned, the second miracle in particular stands out, as it combines the bishop’s finger wearing a ring as well as an animal protecting it. After St Henry’s death – and after his murderer was miraculously scalped by the *birretum* he stole from the bishop – the following second miracle occurred:

The finger of the glorious martyr had been cut off in winter<sup>66</sup> and long afterwards, in spring, when the ice had melted and dissolved everywhere

<sup>64</sup> The newest and the most comprehensive edition of the *Legenda* can be found in Tuomas Heikkilä, *Pyhän Henrikin legenda* (Helsinki, 2005); here I am using the Swedish translation of this book, which contains the Latin edition of the *Legenda sancti Henrici*: Tuomas Heikkilä, *Sankt Henrikslegenden*, trans. Rainer Knapas (Helsinki, 2009), 254–75.

<sup>65</sup> Wojtek Jezierski, ‘Risk Societies on the Frontier. Missionary Emotional Communities in Southern Baltic, 11th–13th c.’, in Wojtek Jezierski and Lars Hermanson (eds.), *Imagined Communities on the Baltic Rim, Eleventh–Fifteenth Centuries* (Amsterdam, 2016), 155–90.

<sup>66</sup> St Henry is said to have died on Jan. 20, so the miracle supposedly occurred the following spring.

else, a raven was found croaking over the finger with the ring on, lying on a piece of ice.<sup>67</sup>

Contrary to Gniezno, where both the previous hagiographic tradition and unbroken apostolic succession were already in place, the author(s) of the legend of St Henry were in a much more difficult position. Everything had to be invented and constructed from scratch. Thus unlike the initial ambiguity and the two-stage process of textual identification of St Adalbert's relic with the episcopal dignity of Gniezno, which occurred between the *Tempore illo* and the *Miracula*, the anonymous author(s) of the *Legenda sancti Henrici* made it clear from the start which finger wearing what ring was essential to the story. After all, the textual institution of this cult must have seemed to have arrive quite belatedly, almost a century and a half after Henry's supposed martyrdom. It was thus all the more important to get everything right from the start.

As argued by Tuomas Heikkilä, the writing of the *Legenda* needs to be considered in close relation to the construction of the Turku Cathedral in the 1290s and the translation of the saint's relics in the preceding decades. The original site of burial of St Henry from the mid-twelfth century – after his murder at Lake Köyliö (Finnish: Köyliönjärvi) – was the church in Nousiainen in south-western Finland (ca 20 km north of Turku/Åbo). From there some part of the relics, it seems, was moved to Korois in Rântämäki (a suburb of modern-day Turku/Åbo) by the River Aura (Finnish: Aurajoki) in 1229, at the time the bishopric of Turku was being established, while Nousiainen retained the reputation as the burial place of the saint and destination of pilgrimages. Half a century later, the vagrant relics were on the move again. A new cathedral was being built in downtown Turku and its bishops were in dire need to legitimize their authority by taming the wayward saint and associating themselves with his image. How intimate was this relationship between the domesticator (the Turku milieu) and the domesticate (St Henry) in south-western Finland? It suffices to say

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<sup>67</sup> 'Legenda sancti Henrici', Heikkilä (ed.), vi, 266–7: "Digitus martyr is gloriosi in hyeme abscisus longe post in vere, cum ubique glacies tota liquefacta et resoluta est, corvo super ipsum crocitante, cum annulo ipsius est inventus in particula glaciei [emphasis mine]". It is interesting to note that the piece of frozen water acts as a preservative for St Henry's finger, similarly as sea waters do in the case of St Adalbert's: 'De sancto Adalberto episcopo', Perlbach (ed.), 17, 1183: "que hospicio sancti, ubi martirizatus est, erat contigua".

that the feast of the dedication of the Turku cathedral was celebrated on June 17th, and the transfer of the relics on June 18th. In this light the invention of the miracle about the convenient finding of the finger and the ring should be interpreted as an example of a blatant insistence on the episcopal succession of the chapter of Turku.<sup>68</sup>

Little is known about the subsequent veneration of St Henry's finger, almost as little as in the case of St Adalbert's finger, of which virtually no traces remain. It seems that the *miracula* from the *Legenda* were featured in the sung liturgy from the late thirteenth century on. Otherwise it is the iconographic evidence that sheds some light on the importance of his digit. The first is the depiction of the miracle included in the engraved brass plate of St Henry's sarcophagus that was ordered from Flanders in the 1420s by the church in Nousiainen. The fact that such a costly object was installed there, the traditionally first Finnish bishopric, and not in Turku, where the relics of the saint resided at the time, should not be surprising though. By the early fifteenth century Nousiainen was not a competition, but a complement to the power of the Turku bishops, which marked out the cultural niche of their patron saint.<sup>69</sup>

On one of the side panels of the tomb the spectators could see a disproportionally large, elongated finger with a ring resting on a big piece of ice floating in the middle of the river and being guarded by the raven mentioned in the *Legenda* (Fig. 3). By consulting the cover of the sarcophagus on which the portrait of a fully-vested St Henry embedded in a lavish Gothic portal is presented, one can conclude that the digit on the ice is not the ring finger, but that the middle finger of the right palm is the one on which the bishop wears the sign of his dignity in the depiction. In addition, the side panel also features a presumably peasant couple at the moment of *inventio*, standing in a row boat floating in the middle of the river.

<sup>68</sup> Tuomas Heikkilä, 'Tracing the Heavenly *Pater Patriae* of Medieval Finland', in Marika Räsänen, Gritje Hartmann, and Earl Jeffrey Richards (eds.), *Relics, Identity and Memory in Medieval Europe* (Turnhout, 2016), 225–54; Heikkilä, *Sankt Henrikslegenden*, 57–64; Jarl Gallén, 'Till historien om St. Henriks relikier och hans grav i Nousis', *Finskt Museum* (1972), 33–8; Bertil Nilsson, 'Några anteckningar till frågan om Åbo domkyrkas invigning', *Historisk tidskrift för Finland*, 102 (2017), 662–92; Immonen and Taavitsainen, 'Finger of a saint, thumb of a priest', *passim* and more generally, Ellis Nilsson, *Creating Holy People*, 87–8, 197–201.

<sup>69</sup> Heikkilä, *Sankt Henrikslegenden*, 165–8.

The man, turned to the praying woman, points to the relic resting on the ice. As regards the above-mentioned theme of popularization, the medieval spectator did not only see the relic finger, but s/he saw it *as seen*. In other words, the relic was presented already in a context of a popular testimony and proof of sanctity, embedded in a normative gesture and signifying the devout attitude the spectator should assume towards it.<sup>70</sup>



Fig. 3. St Henry's finger on the saint's fifteenth-century brass cenotaph in the Nousiainen church (Source: Museiverket, Finland; Wikimedia Commons, *Creative commons* license; photo: Tuomas Heikkilä)

The other depictions of St Henry's finger are included in the *Missale Aboense*, printed in 1488, on which the bishop holds in his hands a book with his own finger relic resting on it.<sup>71</sup> The imagery stressing the apostolic succession and episcopal dignity derived from the saint proved so strong that it survived the Reformation and the rejection of the cult of the relics in Scandinavia, e.g. by being used on the seal of the Lutheran bishops of Turku from 1618 (Fig. 4).<sup>72</sup>

<sup>70</sup> Hahn, 'Seeing and Believing', *passim*; Hahn, 'What Do Reliquaries Do?', *passim*; C. Stephen Jaeger, *Enchantment: On Charisma and the Sublime in the Arts of the West* (Philadelphia, 2012), 125–30.

<sup>71</sup> The image from the *Missale Aboense* can be consulted here: [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Missale\\_Aboense\\_cropped.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Missale_Aboense_cropped.jpg).

<sup>72</sup> Heikkilä, *Sankt Henrikslegenden*, 106–9; Heikkilä, 'Tracing the Heavenly *Pater Patriae*', 232–5.



Fig. 4. St Henry's finger on the seal of the Bishopric of Turku/Åbo, 1618 (Source: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Henrik\\_sormi.JPG](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Henrik_sormi.JPG), Wikimedia Commons, Creative commons license)



## VII GNIEZNO UNDER PRESSURE

It is beyond doubt that the invention of St Adalbert's finger imitated the wider traditions of the veneration of saints' relics (among which fingers were very typical) included in lists of relics in the contemporary north-eastern peripheries and generally all over Europe from the early to the late Middle Ages. In contrast to the two examples presented here, the ring finger story of St Adalbert did not inspire any iconographical following, however.<sup>73</sup> Neither before nor after the composition of the *Tempore illo* and the *Miracula* can we find depictions of St Adalbert being identified by his ring in any specific way.<sup>74</sup> Nor did any high medieval depiction of the saint hone in on his severed relic finger, let

<sup>73</sup> This motif about the fish ring from the *Tempore illo* seems to have inspired a great deal of hagiographical stories about other saints, including St Stanislaus, in later medieval Polish culture: Starnawska, *Świętych życie po życiu*, 93–7.

<sup>74</sup> For the iconographical corpus regarding St Adalbert, see Wojciech Danielski, *Kult św. Wojciecha za ziemiach polskich* (Lublin, 1997); Alicja Karłowska-Kamzowa, 'Wyobrażenia św. Wojciecha w sztuce polskiej XII–XX wieku. Warianty ujęć ikonograficznych', in Zofia Kurnatowska (ed.), *Tropami Świętego Wojciecha* (Poznań, 1999), 355–71.

alone the fish swallowing it. And since any external inspirations of this miracle story that would help determine its imitative character are difficult to identify, we should see it as an original, even if absolutely apocryphal and fantastic, take on the motifs of episcopal fingers that was conceived by the Gniezno milieu, which eventually represents a blind alley in how the cultivation of the saint developed.

As the examples from the Scandinavian detour clearly show, however, such renewed mythopoetic investments into missionary beginnings and inventions of episcopal relics and rings usually occurred during periods of institutional identity crises, for which the reconfigured connection to the holy founder was a remedy. It is thus worth asking what crisis this particular adaptation was addressing, other than the above-sketched speculative connection of St Adalbert with the ruling dynasty? Was there some other selective cultural pressure that led to taking and eventually abandoning this path of evolution represented by the saint's bejewelled member?

It has been suggested that the invention of new miracles and relics of St Adalbert in the twelfth century, as well as the intensified spreading of his cult across the Gniezno's diocese in the second half of the thirteenth century, might have been triggered by the unusual proliferation of the cult of the martyr-bishop St Stanislaus (d. 1079) in the Cracow diocese after his canonization in 1253.<sup>75</sup> This suggestion seems particularly convincing for the late thirteenth century, during the archiepiscopate in Gniezno of Jakub Świnka (1283–1314), who witnessed Cracow's growing influence. The archbishop was an unusually vehement sponsor of the cult of St Adalbert and in 1285 included him among the statues that he gave after the synod in Łęczycza. One of their provisions explicitly stipulated that each and every cathedral and monastic church in Gniezno province should receive a written version of St Adalbert's *vita* to be read annually as commemoration of the transfer of his relics on 20 October, which suggests that this was not the usual case.<sup>76</sup> It is not a wild guess that the *Miracula*

<sup>75</sup> Plezia, 'Wstęp', in *W kręgu żywotów św. Wojciecha*, 201–2; Gábor Klaniczay, 'Saints' Cults in Medieval Europe: Rivalries and Alliances', in Nils Holger Petersen, Anu Mänd, Sebastián Salvadó, and Tracey R. Sands (eds.), *Symbolic Identity and the Cultural Memory of Saints* (Newcastle upon Tyne, 2018), 21–41, here 22–27.

<sup>76</sup> *Kodeks dyplomatyczny Wielkopolski*, i, (Poznań, 1877), no. 551, 510–15, here 511: "Item statuimus, ut in omnibus ecclesiis nostre provincie katedralibus et conventualibus hystoria beati Adalberti habeatur in scriptis, et at omnibus usitetur

*sancti Adalberti* might exactly be this updated and adapted “hystoria beati Adalberti” stipulated by the statutes, which would narrow down its dating to the decade following the synod (1285–95). Furthermore, Archbishop Świnka’s close relation to St Adalbert is suggested by one particular object: his episcopal ring, which would additionally explain the *Miracula* author’s preoccupation with the finger story. This unusual, magnificent octagonal golden ring with a large topaz has been dated to mid-thirteenth century. Its late Romanesque iconography features two figures on each side of the ring; on one side a female figure holds her palm in a gesture of oath-taking, which has therefore been interpreted as a personification of *fides*. The other side features a diagonally dissected image of a bishop, commonly interpreted as St Adalbert.<sup>77</sup>

The ring-related inspirations of the *Miracula* do not end here. If the rapidly spreading cult of St Stanislaus really did act as a selective pressure behind the mythopoetic co-evolution of St Adalbert and the Gniezno milieu, it is in the context of the Cracow bishop’s canonization that additional explanations of this story can be found. After all, the archbishops of Gniezno were deeply engaged in this process ever since its inception in 1249 until the successful canonization of the second patron saint of Poland in 1253.<sup>78</sup> In contrast to St Adalbert, whose rather informal canonization in 999 tightly followed his martyrdom,<sup>79</sup> St Stanislaus was a modern saint who had to undergo the full vetting process commanded by the new model of curial canonization put into place in the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries, which was reaching the Baltic Rim at that time.<sup>80</sup> This entailed the attestation of

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et cantetur.”; Jadwiga Karwasińska, ‘Drzwi gnieźnieńskie a rozwój legendy o św. Wojciechu’, in Gerard Labuda (ed.), *Święty Wojciech w polskiej tradycji historiograficznej* (Warszawa, 1997), 271–89, here 283.

<sup>77</sup> Bogacka, *Insignia biskupie*, figs. 18–20, 90–1, 104, 121; <http://muzeumag.com/wystawa/wystawa-stala-slidebar/>.

<sup>78</sup> Gerard Labuda, *Święty Stanisław, biskup krakowski, patron Polski* (Poznań, 2000), 156–60.

<sup>79</sup> Petr Kubín, ‘Svatořečení biskupa Vojtěcha’, in Józef Dobosz (ed.), *Kościół w monarchiach Przemyślidów i Piastów* (Poznań, 2009), 99–103.

<sup>80</sup> Haki Antonsson, ‘Saints and relics in early christian Scandinavia’, *Medieval Scandinavia*, 15 (2005), 51–80, here 77–80; Cordelia Heß, ‘Hur man skapar ett helgon. Normering och censur i senmedeltida kanonisationsprocesser’, *Historisk tidskrift* (S), 130 (2010), 191–214; see also many of the contributions in *Saints and Sainthood*.

miracles, witnesses' lists, and documented popular veneration.<sup>81</sup> It is quite symptomatic in this context that the most prominent material and miraculous agent of St Stanislaus's posthumous healing powers was... his episcopal ring.<sup>82</sup> Better yet, in the run-up to the canonization process and in response to the growing influx of afflicted pilgrims in search of healing in the early thirteenth century, the milieu of Cracowian bishops went so far as to procure at least two such apocryphal rings.<sup>83</sup> Again, it is not implausible that by observing this process from up close the Gniezno milieu realized what adaptive traits were selected and became enticed to emulate some of St Stanislaus's most successful traits and transfer them to their own holy resource. Though rather than giving St Adalbert's physical remains a different present, similar to the Cracowian bishop's – a move superfluous outside the requirements of canonization – the Gniezno milieu gave those bones a new past to enhance their overall sanctity credentials. Competition spurred adaptation, and in the process it transformed the identification between the domesticator and domesticate.

If the Cracowian inspiration for St Adalbert's fish-ring stories is conceivable and therefore of consequence for the dating of the *Miracula sancti Adalberti*, the relationship between the cult of the martyr-bishop from Lesser Poland and the writing of the *Tempore illo* is more tangential and unlikely. Although the cult of St Stanislaus took off immediately after the transfer (*translatio*) of his relics in 1088, it spread and intensified only in the years following Archbishop Thomas Becket's martyrdom in 1170 and after the Cracow martyr-bishop's renewed *translatio* in 1184.<sup>84</sup> His ring miracles seem to be an invention later still. Their attestation is traceable to the 1220s–30s, when *Vita S. Stanislai episcopi Cracoviensis (vita minor)* and the *Miracula S Stanislai*

<sup>81</sup> André Vauchez, *Sainthood in the later Middle Ages*, trans. Jean Birrell (New York, 1997), 22–57; Cordelia Heß, *Heilige machen im spätmittelalterlichen Ostseeraum: die Kanonisationsprozesse von Birgitta von Schweden, Nikolaus von Linköping und Dorothea von Montau* (Berlin, 2008), 21–6.

<sup>82</sup> 'Miracula sancti Stanislai', Wojciech Kętrzyński (ed.), MPH (Warszawa, 1961), 292–318, here xiii (296), xv–xvii (297–8), xxiv (303), xxvii (306), xxxiii (310), xxxv (311), xxxix (313), xliii (316).

<sup>83</sup> Bogacka, *Insygnia biskupie*, figs. 16–17, 72, 89–90; <http://www.wirtualnakatedra.pl/altar-of-st-stanislaus-2/relikwie/pierscien-zw-sw-stanislawa/>.

<sup>84</sup> Krzysztof Skwierczyński, *Recepcja idei gregoriańskich w Polsce do początku XIII wieku* (Wrocław, 2005), 238–42.

were composed, even though those stories conceivably circulated for at least a generation given that these relics “quia ab antiquis temporibus habebatur in opinione sanctitatis”.<sup>85</sup>

As for the cross-contamination and dissemination of forms of cultivation of saints in the thirteenth century, it is not unthinkable that in order to popularize St Adalbert's veneration in Gniezno so that it would attract as many flocking pilgrims as in Cracow, the episcopal milieu might have entertained the idea to produce a suitable finger. If finding a new head in 1127 was no major problem, inventing a finger relic and perhaps even an episcopal ring a half-century or a century later was a lesser trouble still. This, as pointed out, seems not to have materialized, however.

Summing up, in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries the Gniezno bishops' ways of cultivating St Adalbert as a resource began to resonate with the wider European trends in how saints were to be venerated and presented, a process that was most likely mediated and triggered by St Adalbert's direct competition from the cultural niche occupied by the second most powerful Polish saint. In this new context, *fama sanctitatis* regarded primarily the benefits a saint could yield for the wider population, which shifted the concerns of saints' relational identities from their associations with the ruling elites to their bonds with commoners. As shown here and as will be demonstrated in more detail below, in the search for popular recognition of their holy domesticates, the authors working for the episcopal milieu of Gniezno also offered an elaborate reflection about the nature and level of culture of the people they were taking care of in St Adalbert's stead. In other words, what kind of leash for the people was their bond with the saint supposed to be?

## VIII HOSTS OF AN OFFENDED SAINT

As mentioned on the outset, in writing their accounts of St Adalbert's life his Polish hagiographers had an opportunity to creatively utilize his foreign origin and alien status. Through the saint's entrance and confrontation with people inhabiting the outskirts of Christendom,

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<sup>85</sup> Wojciech Kętrzyński, 'Wstęp', MPH, iv, 244–5, 285–6; 'Miracula sancti Stanislai', Kętrzyński (ed.), viii (293).

writers could emphasize the hardships connected to his missioning and his rejection by the visited communities. In more general terms, it could be claimed that medieval missionaries – particularly those who suffered martyrdom – were victims of inhospitality. As strangers or, perhaps better, as guests to foreign regions and pagan people, their killing by their (involuntary) hosts could be interpreted as a *sui generis* sacrifice on the altar of hospitality.

Although already the early *vitae* of St Adalbert, in different redactions, stress the ritualistic and offertory character of his death from the hands of the Prussians,<sup>86</sup> nowhere is this conviction spelled out more clearly than in the *Vita altera*, where Bruno states that through his martyrdom the saint became, metaphorically, a *hostia*.<sup>87</sup> As stressed by Paweł Figurski, such imagery and conceptualization were employed in order to stress the transformative character of martyrdom and the liturgical dimension of the identity of the martyrs killed on the shores of the Baltic – something Bruno of Querfurt was hoping for himself.<sup>88</sup> Almost three centuries later, St Henry of Finland, too, was described as an ‘acceptabilis hostia’, which he became through his cruel sacrificial death.<sup>89</sup> The author(s) of his *Legenda* used this expression to stress St Henry’s entering a fast-track to heavenly Jerusalem and, it seems, the transformation of identity required for him to start working miracles.

Insofar as such expressions served as a means of textual glorification of the martyr-saints, their primary purpose seems to have been limited to expressing the identities of individuals through their relationship to

<sup>86</sup> Jacek Banaszkiewicz, ‘Dwie sceny z żywotów i z życia św. Wojciecha: misjonarz i wiec Prusów, martyrium biskupa’, in *Trzy po trzy o dziesiątym wieku* (Kraków, 2014), 292–314.

<sup>87</sup> Bruno of Querfurt, ‘Vita altera (redactio brevior)’, Karwasińska (ed.), 24, 62: “Ibi ergo quia in uia sua errat, cuius longo tempore silencium exeruit missam celebrat, sacras hostia oblaturus, uiua hostia mox et ipse Christo futurus.”; 34, 69: “reuelans Spiritus ad aures dixit, ut beati martyris Adalberti suffragia laboranti mundo imploret. Paret ille libens montiis diuinis, et intra memoriam sanctorum martyrum Adalbertum vocat, ut pro nobis erroribus diuine misericordie mactata hostia intercedat”.

<sup>88</sup> Paweł Figurski, ‘Mactata hostia. O tożsamości Brunona z Kwerfurtu oraz „logice wizji” dla czasów ottońskich’, in Ludwik Jurek et al. (eds.), *Ja – my – oni. Tożsamości ludzi średniowiecza* (Warszawa, 2012), 67–84; see also Sosnowski, *Studia nad wczesnymi*, 107–14.

<sup>89</sup> ‘Legenda sancti Henrici’, Heikkilä (ed.), 4, 264–5: “Sic sacerdos domini, acceptabilis hostia diuinis oblata conspectibus, occumbens pro iusticia, templum superne Iherusalem cum gloriosi palma triumphi feliciter introiuit”.

God. Such an approach was perfectly understandable in the case of the first two hagiographers of St Adalbert. After all, their main concerns regarded his personal sanctity, and Canaparius and Bruno wrote their texts too early and from too-distant locations or external points of view to take any deeper interest in the relational identification between the saint and his Polish ecumene. However, in the second, domestic, wave of hagiographical writing, something else was at stake when it came to the sacrifice of this particular *hostia* on the altar of inhospitality: the transformation of the hosts and not so much of their guest.<sup>90</sup> Although still writing about the personal qualities of the saint, these later authors dispensed with liturgical metaphors and both shifted and widened the focus of his missionary hardships. In so doing they put more stress on the relationship between St Adalbert and the Polish populace, though in a way that was neither uncomplicated nor straightforwardly beneficial. The following, entirely fabricated, visit to Poland narrating the missionary hardships of St Adalbert in the *Tempore illo* is telling in this respect.

As the *Christi adletha* was travelling through Poland he came to a village where he asked some peasants for directions to Gniezno. However, “the inhabitants of this place, hearing how much his speech differed from the Polish, could not contain their laughter or derision, especially when they saw his monastic clothes, something they had never seen before”.<sup>91</sup> In spite of his inquiries they refused to speak to

<sup>90</sup> It is often forgotten that the notion of *hostia* belongs to the semantic field of hospitality: Émile Benveniste, *Dictionary of Indo-European Concepts and Society*, trans. Elizabeth Palmer (Chicago, 2016), 66: “Finally, a very well-known word, *hostia*, is connected with the same family: its real sense is “the victim which serves to appease the anger of gods, hence it denotes a compensatory offering, and herein lies the distinction which distinguishes *hostia* from *victima* in Roman ritual”; cf. Wojtek Jezierski, ‘*Convivium in terra horroris*. Helmold of Bosau’s Rituals of Hospitality’, in Wojtek Jezierski, Lars Hermanson, Hans Jacob Orning, and Thomas Småberg (eds.), *Rituals, Performatives, and Political Order in Northern Europe, c. 650–1350* (Turnhout, 2015), 139–73, here 148–9; Wojtek Jezierski, ‘Livonian Hospitality. The ‘Livonian Rhymed Chronicle’ and the Formation of Identities on the Thirteenth-Century Baltic Frontier’, *Frühmittelalterliche Studien*, 54 (2020), forthcoming.

<sup>91</sup> ‘De sancto Adalberto episcopo’, Perlbach (ed.), 10, 1181: “Indigene autem loci illius videntes eius loquelam in plerisque sermonibus a Polonica discrepare, nec a risu nec a derisu se continent, presertim cum ante sibi incognita monastica eum veste indutum pro monstro spectarent”; The linguistic and cultural handicap is a popular motif in explaining pagans’ intentions to attack missionaries. Compare a similar situation regarding St Sigfrid’s three nephews: ‘Historia Sancti Sigfridi’,

him, nor did they provide him with any directions. In response, St Adalbert, “not ignited by anger, but by the holy spirit”, said: “Because you do not want to speak for God’s honour, for His honour I command you: stay silent!” As he left, the peasants realized they could not open their mouths to speak and sorely regretted scorning him.<sup>92</sup> This scenario was repeated in the next village: St Adalbert was “likewise loathed, and received without any kindness [*humanitas*]”, which left the obnoxious peasants mute.<sup>93</sup> It was only in the third village that kind and helpful peasants showed him the way to Gniezno. Once in the city, the vagrant bishop began to preach and perform miracles and his *fama sanctitatis* spread like wildfire, reaching the ears of the punished peasants. They hastened to Gniezno and “fell to his feet, and through tears, sighs, and various gestures begged his pardon”.<sup>94</sup> In exchange for this submission the *famulus Dei* offered them forgiveness and restored their speech. Praising the Lord they asked to be baptized. The holy man fulfilled their wish and, prompted by their passionate compunction, instituted an unusually long nine-week fast (rather than the customary seven) preceding Easter.<sup>95</sup>

This fictional itinerary through the inhospitable Polish countryside is sandwiched between two journeys to the shores of the Baltic Sea, which in reality was just one missionary journey consisting of several stages, as presented in both *Vita prior* and *Vita altera*.<sup>96</sup> In the *Tempore illo*

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Geijer, Schröder (eds.), 356: “Sed quia morem terræ et linguam non perfecte noverant, quosdam viros nobiliores genere, et dignitate famosos, qui etiam aliis sapientiores in tractandis negotiorum causis videbantur, sibi allexerant, et plerumque consiliis eorum, quid eis faciendum foret, innitebantur”.

<sup>92</sup> ‘De sancto Adalberto episcopo’, Perlbach (ed.), 10, 1181: “non ira conmotus, sed Spiritu sancto ... ‘Quoniam quidem ad honorem Dei loqui noluistis, ad eius honorem, iubeo, taceatis’. ... Illi autem, Deo per servum suum iubente, muti conticescunt, quia ad usum loquendi aperire ora non possunt, et qui beato viatori ostendere viam recusant, viam loquendi se amisisse deplorant”; Ryszard Grzesik, ‘Miasto i wieś w hagiografii św. Wojciecha’, *Ciechanowskie Studia Muzealne*, 2 (1990), 9–21.

<sup>93</sup> ‘De sancto Adalberto episcopo’, 10, 1181: “itidem contemptui habitus, nulla est humanitate susceptus”.

<sup>94</sup> ‘De sancto Adalberto episcopo’, 10, 1181: “pedibus eius advoluti, lacrimis, gemitibus variisque nutibus veniam poscunt”.

<sup>95</sup> This fast was cancelled by a papal legate in 1248 at the Wrocław synod, and has thus been used as *terminus ad quem* for dating of the *Tempore illo*.

<sup>96</sup> ‘Passio Sancti Adalberti [Vita prior]’, Gašpar (ed.), 27–30, 168–81; Bruno of Querfurt, ‘Adalberti Pragensis episcopi et martyris: Vita altera’, *redactio longior*, Karwasińska (ed.), 24–34, 29–41.



the first journey takes St Adalbert to an unnamed coastal (conceivably Prussian) village where St Adalbert, presenting himself as coming ‘de terra Polonorum’, is physically maltreated by one of the pagans as he tries to convert them and is subsequently banished.<sup>97</sup> To save his life he returns to Poland. The second journey, after the successes in Gniezno, takes him first to Gdańsk and to an anonymous, previously unknown, and fictitious prince of Pomerania determined to baptize his people, who employs St Adalbert for this task. In contrast to their ruler, the people of Pomerania prove to be unwilling to convert. At first they debate with St Adalbert over the advantages of polytheism, going so far as to propose adding the holy man to their pantheon, but they eventually reject the offer altogether. From there, finally, the holy man proceeds to the Prussian village where he will suffer his cruel martyrdom.<sup>98</sup>

Such a framing of St Adalbert’s interim stay in Poland is important, as it enables the establishment of a crucial religio-political asymmetry. Taken together, this sequence of confrontations presents four types of rejection of the holy man by his hosts in Pomerania, Poland, and Prussia, respectively, and his ways of (not) communicating and relating to the peoples he was converting. The implicit lesson is that some of these hardships could be overcome, leading to missionary success and to establishing a lasting bond with the converted people, while others could not. During the first episode, the ‘ferocious’ inhabitants of the coast have hardly any way to communicate with the saint other than – similar to the transiently aphasiac Polish peasants – with signs and gestures. They are physically threatening, but they only insult the holy man.<sup>99</sup> In contrast, the Pomeranians are presented as non-threatening and able to both listen to and conduct conversations with St Adalbert, but they prove to be obstinate and, explicitly, inconvertible.<sup>100</sup> The murderous Prussians, finally, occupy the most extreme position. Except for the above-mentioned Prussian neophyte, who is singled out as speaking Polish, others do not talk with

<sup>97</sup> ‘De sancto Adalberto episcopo’, 9, 1180–1.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, 13–16, 1182–3.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*, 9, 1180: “mente ferocissimi”, “dedignantes et eterne vite verba deludentes”; “deinde, quod vocem proferens indicare non poterat, signis et nutibus aut cito fugiendum aut in tormentis moriendum esse notabat”; Peggy McCracken, *In the Skin of a Beast: Sovereignty and Animality in Medieval France* (Chicago, 2017), 63–4.

<sup>100</sup> ‘De sancto Adalberto episcopo’, 12, 1182: ‘obstinato animo’, ‘inconvertibiles’.

St Adalbert at all – contrary to what is reported in the *Vita prior* and *Vita altera*. Instead they are said to be furious, speaking in insane voices and barking like dogs.<sup>101</sup> They are, in other words, the savages who cannot be reached, the utter negation.<sup>102</sup>

Against this backdrop of (in-)communicability, the yet unconverted Polish peasants are not presented through epithets like the other peoples. Admittedly, they do appear as rude and inhospitable, but it is possible to communicate with them, even if they ridicule their interlocutor's speech. In other words, lacking in *humanitas* they are still imperfect and it is the confrontation with the saint that puts them on the path to salvation. In the process, however, both parties make some type of sacrifice: St Adalbert becomes offended, whereas the boorish peasants are temporally struck dumb, i.e. fall down briefly on the hierarchy of beings.<sup>103</sup> Additionally, in order to fully and lastingly bond with their new saint, they also have to permanently alter their eating habits.

This crisis is necessary to establish a special communion between the saint and his Polish hosts, one which no other people can enjoy and which, from then on, becomes facilitated by a fully transparent communication between the parties. The role of St Adalbert is thus repeatedly presented as that of master intercessor and instrument of divine intervention, who reestablishes the *humanitas*, that is, both kindness and, literally, the very humanity of his new subjects.<sup>104</sup>

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<sup>101</sup> 'De sancto Adalberto episcopo', 15–16, 1182–3: 'insanis vocibus', 'rabido latratu', 'insani', 'furentes'; 'limphata mente'; Miłosz Sosnowski, "'Prussians as Bees, Prussians as Dogs": Metaphors and the Depiction of Pagan Society in the Early Hagiography of St. Adalbert of Prague', *Reading Medieval Studies*, 39 (2013), 25–48; see also Ian Wood, 'Where the Wild Things Are', in Walter Pohl, Clemens Gantner, and Richard Payne (eds.), *Visions of Community in the Post-Roman World. The West, Byzantium and the Islamic World, 300–1100* (Farnham, 2012), 531–42.

<sup>102</sup> Hayden White, 'Forms of Wildness: The Archeology of an Idea', in *Tropics of Discourse: Essays in Cultural Criticism* (Baltimore, 1978), 150–82; McCracken, *In the Skin of a Beast*, 130–1.

<sup>103</sup> McCracken, *In the Skin of a Beast*, 54; Agamben, *The Open*, 33–8, 77; Daniel Heller-Roazen, *Echolalias: On the Forgetting of Language* (New York, 2008), 121–33; this, too, was a popular motif in miracle stories: Turbach, *Index exemplorum*, nos. 4560–4566, 347.

<sup>104</sup> 'De sancto Adalberto episcopo', 9, 1180–1: "non ira conmotus, sed Spiritu sancto"; "Deo per servum suum iubente"; "per suum famulum Christus"; "Unde ego servus eius ... in eiusdem nomine Ihesu Christ, videlicet domini nostri Creatoris

Furthermore, his miraculous powers and proselytizing activity spatially privilege Gniezno as the centre of the cultural niche of the saint and the apostolic rock of Poland, radiating to the neighbouring regions.<sup>105</sup> Just as with ‘the apostles and prophets’, in order to make this arrangement permanent St Adalbert’s individual charisma was immediately institutionalized by him personally appointing his successor, Gaudentius.<sup>106</sup> As a matter of fact, this fragment is further developed in the *Miracula* and the saint turns out to be quite similar to St Sigfrid or St Henry. Like his Scandinavian foils, he too is a latecomer who, in retrospect, begins to be presented as *the* person who originally christened his people: “Thanks to God’s spirit speaking and working his many miracles through St Adalbert, the whole of Poland accepted the Christian faith”.<sup>107</sup>

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omnium”; “fidelis dispensator Christi”; Reinhart Koselleck, ‘The Historical-Political Semantics of Asymmetric Counterconcepts’, in *Futures Past. On the Semantics of Historical Time*, trans. Keith Tribe (New York, 2004), 155–90, here 157–84.

<sup>105</sup> For more on the relationship between St Adalbert and Gniezno, see Miłosz Sosnowski, ‘Est in parte regni ciuitas magna – św. Wojciech w Gnieźnie’, in Tomasz Janiak (ed.), *Chrzest – św. Wojciech – Polska. Dziedzictwo średniowiecznego Gniezna* (Gniezno, 2016), 39–58.

<sup>106</sup> ‘De sancto Adalberto episcopo’, 11, 1182: “Sancto igitur Spiritu per famulum suum predicante multaque illic signa mirabiliter faciente, christianam legem Polonia gratanter universa suscipit, sanctique instituta viri ovanter amplectens, supra firmam petram fundari meruit. *Vir namque sanctus fundamentum apostolorum et prophetarum ibi stabilire cupiens*, quendam christianissimum virum, sui socium laboris et itineris, Gaudencium nomine ibidem archiepiscopum pro se constituit, quia ipse videlicet ad alias regiones paganorum festinabat, quas lucrifacere Christo nichilominus anelabat”. [emphasis mine]; 20, 1184: “desiderabiles reliquias 8. Idus Novembris in metropolim sollempnissime transtulit ubi ad eius tumulum quam plurima divinitus per eum parantur beneficia omnibus”; cf. Kersken, ‘God and the Saints’, 170–2.

<sup>107</sup> ‘Miracula Sancti Adalberti’, 4, 31: “Spiritu ergo dei per beatum Adalbertum predicante, multa miracula faciente, fidem christianam tota Polonia suscepit”; It could be claimed that the authors only suggest that the saint was only involved in the processes of Christianization and conversion, that is, a deepening of the belief of the nominally Christian people already reached by the mission. It seems more probable to assume that they purposefully exploits the ambivalence between these processes to antedate the missionary efforts of the saint, thereby boosting his, and thereby Gniezno’s, authority. On the conceptual differences between Christianization, mission, and conversion see Wood, *Missionary Life*, 3; Miłosz Sosnowski, ‘Strategia misyjna *ad gentes* na łacińskim Zachodzie – dylematy i rozwiązania’, in Józef Dobosz,

## IX

## ST ADALBERT BETWEEN TAMING AND DOMESTICATION

The nine-weeks fast, rather than ordinary seven, becomes therefore the fundamental and lasting sign of this transformed relationship, tacitly mediated by the Gniezno bishops, between the holy man and the Polish people. It is a truly mythopoetic moment:

They accepted this precept most eagerly; willingly observed it in their own lives and took care so that their descendants also observed it. For this reason until today people all over Poland most piously and inviolately observe this rule, as if it was instituted by the apostles, although this consists only of abstaining from eating meat for two weeks preceding Lent.<sup>108</sup>

In order to better grasp the mutualistic character of the socio-religious contract between the saint and the Polish people, something that was denied to other people visited by St Adalbert, we can again resort to the perspective of domestication proposed in this work. This regards particularly a sharper conceptual distinction between taming and domestication.<sup>109</sup> Although often seen as synonymous and interchangeable, the senses of these terms are very different. Taming is a modification of behavior of an individual specimen. Domestication, on the other hand, comprises “a permanent genetic modification of a bred lineage that leads to, among other things, a heritable predisposition toward human association”, almost always entailing, among others,

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Jerzy Strzelczyk, and Marzena Matla (eds.), *Chryścianizacja “Młodszej Europy”* (Poznań, 2017), 221–49, here 223; more generally: Christopher Abram, ‘The Two “Modes of Religiosity” in Conversion-Era Scandinavia’, in Ildar Garipzanov (ed.), *Conversion and Identity in the Viking Age* (Turnhout, 2014), 21–48.

<sup>108</sup> ‘De sancto Adalberto episcopo’, 10, 1181–2: “Precepit itaque illis vir Dei, ut novem septimanas ante pascha unoquoque anno ita custodiant, sicut ceteri fideles christiani generali abstinencia septem ebdomadas rite observant. Quod illi preceptum desiderantissime suscipientes et in vita libenter custodierunt et posteritati custodiendum tradere curaverunt. Nec frustra, namque et in presens usque tempus eadem abstinencia per universam Poloniam devotissime observatur et, quasi ab apostolis id traditum sit, inviolabiliter colitur et tenetur, ita tamen, ut per duas ebdomadas precedentes ab esu duntaxat carniun se custodian” [emphasis mine]; On this extraordinary fast see Roman Michałowski, ‘The Nine-Week Lent in Boleslaus the Brave’s Poland. A Study of the First Piasts’ Religious Policy’, *Acta Poloniae Historica*, lxxxix (2004), 5–50.

<sup>109</sup> McCracken, *In the Skin of a Beast*, 37–67.

a profound change in diet.<sup>110</sup> Thus, metaphorically speaking the pious observation of this extraordinary fast concurrently commemorated the transgressions of the rude ancestors and constituted an inheritable predisposition of future generations towards association with the saint and his *locus*.<sup>111</sup> The fast linked the present to the past, thus becoming a lasting bond between the domesticator (St Adalbert) and the domesticated (the Polish people) in the form of a recurring dietary restraint, which both in imaginary and historical terms was unique in its rigour.<sup>112</sup> Even decades after its cancellation in 1248 – given the *Miracula's* late thirteenth-century provenance – the reminiscence of this fast was still the symbol of the covenant between the saint and his chosen people; an erased but still visible trace of a privileged relationship and distinction vis-à-vis others.<sup>113</sup>

In contrast to the Poles, the other people mentioned in this fragment did not undergo the same type of durable transformation. With the

<sup>110</sup> Carlos A. Driscoll, David W. Macdonald, and Stephen J. O'Brien, 'From wild animals to domestic pets, an evolutionary view of domestication', *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the USA*, 106 (2009), 9971–8, here 9972: "Taming is conditioned behavioral modification of an individual; domestication is permanent genetic modification of a bred lineage that leads to, among other things, a heritable predisposition toward human association"; Scott, *Against the Grain*, 76–86, 166–9, 180–2, 220–2; On how domestication impacts diet see also Harari, *Sapiens*, 85–95, 104–7.

<sup>111</sup> 'De sancto Adalberto episcopo', 9, 1181: "Sanctitatem tuam, serve Dei omnipotentis, unanimiter inploramus, ut pro tanta iniuria, quam tibi furiosa et ceca mente intulimus, aliquid rigidum nobis iniungas, quod ad memoriam posterorum nostrarum tempore perferamus, quia pro reatus nostri magnitudine nondum digne puniti sumus."

<sup>112</sup> McCracken, *In the Skin of a Beast*, 58–9; It is somewhat ironic that it was Bolesław I the Brave – the actual prime punisher, castrator, and violent tamer of the Polish people – who introduced this extraordinary fast; Michałowski, 'The Nine-Week Lent', 5–9, 34–6, 41–6; cf. Thietmar von Merseburg, *Chronicon*, Holzmänn (ed.), viii, 2–3, 495–6: "Populus enim suus [Bolesław I's] more bovis est pascendus et tardi ritu asini castigandus et sine poena gravi non potest cum salute principis tractari. Si quis in hoc alienis abuti uxoribus vel sic fornicari presumit, hanc vindicatae subsequentis poenam protinus sentit. In pontem mercati is ductus per follem testiculi clavo affigitur et novacula prope posita hic moriendi sive de his absolvendi dura ellectio sibi datur. Et quicumque post LXX. carnem manducasse invenitur, abcisus dentibus graviter punitur."

<sup>113</sup> Michałowski, 'The Nine-Week Lent', 46–9; Kersken, 'God and the Saints', *passim*; Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (Baltimore, 1997), 46–67, 75, 123.

exception of the insane, feral Prussians, they could be tamed at best. As pointed out by Émile Benveniste, the distinction between taming and domestication is preserved in the Latin verb *domo*, *domāre* (to do violence, to oppress, to subject) which, counterintuitively, is semantically distinct from *domus*. Instead, both etymologically and culturally it reaches deep into conceptualizations of practices of subjugation and domination, which only later became associated with the taming of animals and which originally were unrelated to the question of households.<sup>114</sup> This politico-linguistic distinction between taming and domestication was not unknown in twelfth-century Poland. As Gallus Anonymous expressed this in a song praising Bolesław III the Wrymouth, which he put into the mouths of the German troops fighting the prince in 1109: “He would well deserve a kingdom, nay even imperial rights/ who can tame [*domabat*] such hordes of warriors with a handful of his knights!”.<sup>115</sup> Also Bolesław I the Brave received a similar praise for his conquests east of the Saale: “He subjugated [*edomuit* – tamed] the valour of the indomitable [*indomitos* – literally: untameable] Saxons”.<sup>116</sup> Correspondingly, Bolesław III’s early twelfth-century campaigns against the Pomeranians, the traces of which are visible in the *Tempore illo*, were wars of taming, conquest and domination, though followed up with missionary efforts.<sup>117</sup> However, these people were not included into his polity because of that. None of these conquests led to any of those people inhabiting even the most broadly conceived *domus Boleslai* – this type of violent taming did not automatically entail domestication.

The final point relates to what this new social contract says in terms of how imitative or original the invented beginnings of the episcopal identity in Gniezno and the successors’ ties to their founder were. As already quoted, the author is unequivocal in this regard: “For this reason until today people all over Poland most piously and inviolately

<sup>114</sup> Benveniste, *Dictionary of Indo-European*, 250–1; Émile Benveniste, ‘Homophones radicales en Indo-Européen’, *Bulletin de la Société de Linguistique*, 51 (1955), 14–41, here 15–29; Scott, *Against the Grain*, 248–56.

<sup>115</sup> Gallus Anonymous, *Gesta principum Polonorum*, Knoll and Schaer (eds.), iii, 11, 242–3: “Talem virum concederet regnum et imperium,/Qui cum paucis sic domabat tot catervas hostium.”

<sup>116</sup> Gallus Anonymous, *Gesta principum Polonorum*, i, 6, 32–3: “Indomitos vero tanta virtute Saxones edomuit, quod in flumine Sale in medio terre eorum meta ferrea fines Polonie terminavit.”

<sup>117</sup> Karol Maleczyński, *Bolesław III Krzywousty* (Wrocław, 1975), 125–202.

observe this rule, as if [*quasi*] it was instituted by the apostles". Tellingly, the author of the *Miracula* follows the exact same line of thinking. Through St Adalbert's actions as well as through his extraordinary fast; it was "as if [*veluti*] through one of the apostles the whole of Poland found a firm fundament on the apostolic rock".<sup>118</sup> *Quasi, veluti* – the consistent use of these qualifying adverbs unmistakably demonstrates the self-imposed limits on Gniezno's fantasy of the apostolic prerogatives on the north-eastern peripheries, which nonetheless could not eschew apostolic mimesis altogether.<sup>119</sup> Similarly, in St Sigfrid's case, though his arrival to Scandinavia was displayed with quasi-biblical suggestions and apostolic overtones, he never actually received the latter title explicitly. Instead he rather drew his institutional authority from the archiepiscopal see of York, just like St Henry drew his from Uppsala.<sup>120</sup> To put it in a different way, missionaries arriving to these peripheries and founding fathers of those institutions were quite self-consciously presented as only very distant echoes of the apostles. They were covers and adaptations rather than the original songs.

## X

### CONCLUDING REMARKS: HOLY HUSBANDRY & VICARIOUS APOSTOLATE ON THE PERIPHERY

In his Easter sermon devoted to John 12:24, the exiled Bishop of Exeter, Ralph Brownrigg (aka Brownrig; 1642–59) employed a fortunate phrase – the holy husbandry – to explain the paradox of how the Christ's death, like that of a single kernel thrown onto fertile ground, can lead to an abundant harvest in the form of mass salvation.<sup>121</sup>

<sup>118</sup> 'Miracula Sancti Adalberti', Kętrzyński (ed.), 4, 31: "et fundata est *veluti per unum de apostolis* super apostolice fidei firmam petram." [emphasis mine].

<sup>119</sup> Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies*, 49, fn. 13.

<sup>120</sup> 'Historia Sancti Sigfridi', Geijer, Schröder (eds.), 350, 356; Toni Schmid, 'St Sigfrid', in John Granlund (ed.), *Kulturhistoriskt lexikon för nordisk medeltid*, xv (Malmö, 1970), 185–7; see however Toni Schmid, *Den helige Sigfrid* (Lund, 1931), 116 fn. 1; 'Legenda sancti Henrici', 1–3, 254–61.

<sup>121</sup> Ralph Brownrigg, *Forty Sermons* (London, 1661), sermon III, 259–60: "Husbandmen do not sow one grain of Wheat, but a greater quantity, ... but here, in this holy Husbandry, Christ speaks but of one grain of Wheat cast into the earth", "Every grain of God's feed-corn shall rise again. Tis not so in your ordinary Husbandry: ... but every grain of this holy husbandry shall spring up, and fructifie. *Curat singulos, sicut universos.*"

Although the bishop's metaphorical inclinations were decisively more horticultural, his expression well captures also the type of cultivation of sacrosanct livestock practiced by episcopal milieus inhabiting the outer orbits of high medieval Christianity.

In the hands of those milieus of both Central and North-Eastern Europe, saints proved to be a powerful and versatile means of both institutional *mythopoesis* and ways of tying their believers to the *loca sanctorum* those institutions represented. The way the role of martyr-saints in the holy husbandry was practiced in those regions studied here may seem self-contradictory however, as it presents saints as both domesticates and domesticators. This inconsistency is only apparent, as it attests to the multiplicity of positions occupied by the holy wo/men. In certain respects they were treated as target objects of initial taming, primarily because of their outsider status. Through the transfers of their remains, which often included important stopovers at institutions tied to the bishopric in question, and through the erection of episcopal cathedrals their peregrinations were arrested, anchored in a specific place, and attached to a concrete institution or group.

It seems that in the specific case of St Adalbert we can speak of two parallel lines of taming, one secular and one episcopal – that is, appropriations of his remains and utilizing him as a sign of identity and means of political and institutional recognition. This parallelism should not be overstated though, as it most likely involved as much competition as collaboration between those two groups.<sup>122</sup>

Still, this duality makes the Polish case both original and exceptional with respect to the examples from the north-eastern peripheries, where ruling elites in almost all countries had at their disposal two types of patron saints, dynastical and ecclesiastical, functioning next to each other; such as the holy Dioscouri, St Henry and St Erik did in Sweden.<sup>123</sup> Nor did Poland have a counterpart to someone like St Olaf

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<sup>122</sup> Compare the cooperation between the secular and ecclesiastical elites trying, in vain, to establish the archbishopric of Prague under St Adalbert's aegis in the eleventh century: Martin Wihoda, 'Pražské arcibiskupství svatého Vojtěcha', in Dobosz (ed.), *Kościół w monarchiach Przemysławów i Piastów*, 205–17; Wihoda, *První česká království*, 159.

<sup>123</sup> Christian Oertel, *The Cult of St Erik in Medieval Sweden* (Turnhout, 2016), 50, 114–115, 136–46, 204–6, 231; Gábor Klaniczay, 'Conclusions: North and East European Cults of Saints in Comparison with East-Central Europe', in Antonsson and Garipzanov (eds.), *Saints and Their Lives*, 283–304.



functioning as the *rex perpetuus Norvegiæ*. Instead, St Adalbert operated as an unusual hybrid of these two types. St Adalbert stands out against the western background too, where apostolic martyr-saints almost never attained such prominent positions of patronage, and therein lies his undeniable originality against these two backgrounds. This ultimate fusion of St Adalbert's two functions – dynastical and ecclesiastical – is perhaps best illustrated by the fact that the story of the Gniezno summit – so important for the Piasts but consciously erased from the *Tempore illo* – made its way back into the saint's hagiography as the final chapter of the *Miracula sancti Adalberti*, composed in the run-up to the political consolidation of the Polish lands at the end of the thirteenth century.<sup>124</sup>

Once St Adalbert assumed a sedentary lifestyle and inhabited a niche of sacred geography with its centre in Gniezno, the peripheries, and areas of prospective evangelization, the symbiosis and mutual identification between him and his episcopal successors began to evolve into a transgenerational bond of domestication. Sometimes this co-evolution led to physical adaptations, such as when the holy domesticates suddenly evolved new limbs and appendages. In this context, it seems, the history of St Adalbert's finger is an example of maladaptation. First, around the turn of the millennium there was no finger at all. Then in the twelfth century a finger floated up, only to be further specified as *the* episcopal ring-finger in the thirteenth century. And finally, there was merely the absence of the finger. This transition from nothing, to an indefinite *a*, to a certain *the*, and back to nothing again is the story of an attempted, but ultimately unsuccessful, fixation of an episcopal attribute and a material stand-in for the association between the martyr-saint and Gniezno bishopric.<sup>125</sup> It was a fiasco compared to the successes of similar efforts in Turku and Växjö.

However, after the domestication through stories and objects of cult, the episcopal milieus employed holy men as imaginary domesticators of the people for whose *cura animarum* they were responsible. The projections of St Adalbert as the locus of external control presented him as *the* agent of holy husbandry and the prime tamer of the Polish people through miraculous healings and exceptional fasts – the latter

<sup>124</sup> 'Miracula Sancti Adalberti', 9, 36–8.

<sup>125</sup> Franco Moretti, 'Style, Inc. Reflections on Seven Thousand Titles (British Novels, 1740–1850)', *Critical Inquiry*, 36 (2009), 134–58, here 146.

being a sign of the uniquely rigorous piety in Poland. Eventually, after the saint – counterfactually – founded his own archbishopric, he was transformed into an absent sovereign in whose stead the Gniezno bishops operated.<sup>126</sup> Seen in this light, his original missionary efforts in Prussia and Pomerania paled somewhat as the covenant between the saint and his chosen people came more to the fore.

As to the question of imitation or originality of the Polish politico-religious culture, this study offers somewhat complex conclusions. The similarities with St Henry and St Sigfrid, two saints with largely made-up pedigrees and life stories, suggest that in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries St Adalbert, irrefutably a historical and well-documented figure, was also undergoing a process of secondary mythologization, which took wide liberties from whatever initial information was available about him in order to update his image to meet current needs. The general tendency of these secondary hagiographical waves – roughly a century and a half after the actual or imagined death of a saint – was that a legendary tone and fabrications were a much more viable means of *mythopoesis* than accurate details. The latecomers' advantage was that the less was there to begin with, the less restricted was the fantasy, as the authors of the *legendae* of St Henry and St Sigfrid would surely concede. The new, fantastical aspects of the late lives of St Adalbert, perhaps due to the relative abundance of prior information, seemed more moderate in comparison.

The legitimizing benefits of secondary mythologization came at a cost, however. The most salient effect was the smoothing out of the edges as well as evaporation of individual idiosyncrasies of the holy men, who fell prey to the standards of sainthood circulating in the twelfth and thirteenth century Europe. Those mythopoetical adaptations, galvanized by ever more stringent requirements of canonization emanating from the central institutions of the Catholic Church, led to the imitative use of miracle stories and ways of popular attestation coming mainly from Western Europe, but also circulating between the different peripheries. Put otherwise, the content of the historical and institutional claims made during these phases of secondary mythologization may have been widely inflated – though not as much as in Trier – but their forms of cultural expression and building blocks were at least partially prefabricated elsewhere and appeared ever more

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<sup>126</sup> McCracken, *In the Skin of a Beast*, 12, 41–2, 78, 92.

isomorphic. Furthermore, the high medieval demands of popularization posed problems for older, high-end saints like St Adalbert. The advantages of his instantaneous canonization and immediate recognition and commodification by the ruling elites – both at home and abroad – proved in the long run to be disadvantageous, especially on the local level. The saint was a victim of his own early success, so to speak. These aspects and political ties had to be toned down in his image and replaced with other attributes and myths supposedly considered as more attractive in the eyes of Polish pilgrims and believers.

Finally, the creation of episcopal myths on the north-eastern outskirts of Christendom entailed serious limitations as to what types of identities and historical heritages could be asserted. Although the range of examples studied here is very narrow, it seems that the episcopal milieu of the younger *christianitas* quite self-consciously restrained their claims of ancient apostolic authority vis-à-vis their western counterparts, presenting it as vicarious and derivative: quasi-apostolic and Bible-like rather than actually Biblical. They were lesser, lo-res simulacra of their foils in the West.<sup>127</sup> In this respect, the means of holy husbandry practiced by the Gniezno milieu do not seem particularly original or out of the ordinary, but fit into a wider pattern visible in East-Central and Nordic Europe. These patterns seem not to have resulted from direct imitation, however, but from operating under similar conditions and constraints.

*proofreading James Hartzell*

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<sup>127</sup> Cf. Jan Sowa, *Fantomowe ciało króla. Peryferyjne zmagania z nowoczesnością* (Kraków, 2011); Latour, Lowe, 'The migration of the aura', *passim*.

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