

MARIA STARNAWSKA

<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9814-7489>

Department of History, Faculty of Humanities,
Siedlce University of Natural Sciences
and Humanities

WAS CENTRAL EUROPE INDEED A ‘COLD’ REGION WHEN IT CAME TO THE CULT OF SAINTS? SOME REMARKS ABOUT A VOLUME EDITED BY FRENCH HISTORIANS*

Abstract: The article is an analysis of a collection of a dozen or so studies focused on the cult of saints in Central Europe between the eleventh- and the early sixteenth centuries. The author points both to the merits of the publication in question (its emphasis on the intensity of the cult of saints and presentation of the subject matter in international conference languages) as well as its shortcomings: leaving out the question of saintly duchesses and saintly Christianizing dukes, and the shortage of articles discussing the analysed phenomena in a broad Central European context.

Key words: saint, cult, Central Europe, mendicants, hagiography.

The publication under review seeks to examine the phenomenon of the cult of saints in Central Europe in the Middle Ages. The authors were inspired by an observation by André Vauchez, one of the most outstanding experts on the cult of saints in the Middle Ages, that the region was ‘cold’ when it came to creating new cults, for there were considerably fewer individuals elevated to the glory of the altars than in Western Europe. That is why the authors decided to examine in greater detail how this aspect of religious life looked in practice in the ‘younger Europe’, which could make it possible to test the French scholar’s thesis. The idea to present the reception in this region of a universal Christian phenomenon, and – through the cult of saints – of European cultural models, is commendable, especially given the fact that even today the history of the ‘younger Europe’ interests relatively few Western European historians.

The chronological and geographical frameworks adopted by the editors are relevant, although the starting date seems to be too late. If Christianity reached Great Moravia in the ninth century – and not just from Byzantium, in the form

* *Les saints et leur culte en Europe centrale au Moyen Âge (XI^e-début du XVI^e siècle)*, ed. Marie-Madeleine de Cevins and Olivier Marin, Turnhout, 2017, *Hagiologia: Études sur la sainteté et l’hagiographie* – Studies on Sanctity and Hagiography, vol. 13.

of the Cyrillo-Methodian mission, but also through Latin clergymen from Bavaria, who ultimately prevailed – and Bořivoj and Ludmila were baptized towards the end of that century, in the tenth century the Church structures in Bohemia were developed enough for us to be able to observe the cult of saints in the country. In any case, as early as the tenth century Bohemia produced two martyrs who immediately came to be venerated; in addition, hagiography devoted to both St Ludmila and St Wenceslaus developed or at least was circulated there,¹ and *vitae* of St Cyril and St Methodius emerged in Great Moravia before the end of the ninth century.² We know less about Polish Christianity, younger than Bohemian Christianity, but it is worth noting that St Adalbert, martyred in 997, was canonized before the tenth century had closed, as well as the fact that after being wounded Mieszko I sent a votive gift to the tomb of St Ulrich in Augsburg³ manifesting veneration of the saint. Therefore, it would have been better to adopt the tenth century as the starting point.

The territorial scope of the authors' and editors' research interests encompasses Poland, Bohemia and Hungary with Transylvania and today's Slovakia, but without the Kingdom of Croatia, incorporated in the eleventh century but Christianized before Hungary. Such a scope of research is generally justified, although it might be worth also examining the cult of saints at the beginning of Christianity in Rus'. Although Rus' adopted Christianity in its Byzantine version, for over sixty years following Vladimir's baptism the unity of the Eastern and Western Church continued, and the awareness of the split as well as hostility towards the Latins and their religious practices grew gradually only in the twelfth century, especially under the influence of clergymen of Greek origin.⁴ Strong

¹ Joanna Nastalska-Wiśnicka, *Rex martyr: Studium źródłoznawcze nad legendą hagiograficzną św. Wacława (X–XIV w.)*, Lublin, 2010, pp. 23–34, 40, 44–65; Agnieszka Kuźmiuk-Ciekanowska, *Święty i historia: Dynastia Przemyślidów i jej bohaterowie w dziele mnicha Krystiana*, Cracow, 2007, pp. 16–36; Grzegorz Pac, 'Wokół wczesnego kultu św. Ludmiły', *Historia Slavorum Occidentis*, 2019, 1, pp. 11–52 (pp. 12–18).

² Tadeusz Lehr-Spławiński, 'Wstęp', in *Apostołowie Słowian: Żywoty Konstantyna i Metodego*, transl. and ed. Tadeusz Lehr-Spławiński, supplement Leszek Moszyński, Warsaw, 1988, pp. 7–49 (pp. 27–38).

³ *Gerhardi vita Sancti Oudalrici episcopi*, ed. Georg Waitz, in MGH SS, vol. 4, Hanover, 1841, pp. 377–428 (p. 423); Teresa Dunin-Wąsowicz, 'Kulty świętych w Polsce w X w.', in *Polska w świecie: Szkice z dziejów kultury polskiej*, ed. Jerzy Dowiat et al., Warsaw, 1972, pp. 61–78 (pp. 62–63); Jacek Banaszkiewicz, 'Złota ręka komesa Żeliszława (Gall, II, 25; Kadłubek, II, 24, 26)', in *Imagines potestatis: Rytuały, symbole i konteksty fabularne władzy zwierzchniej: Polska X–XV w.*, ed. idem, Warsaw, 1994, pp. 228–48 (pp. 237–38); Henryk Łowmiański, *Religia Słowian i jej upadek (w. VI–XII)*, Warsaw, 1979, p. 335.

⁴ Franciszek Sielicki, 'Polsko-ruskie stosunki wyznaniowe w XI i XII wieku', in *Dzieło chrystianizacji Rusi Kijowskiej i jego konsekwencje w kulturze Europy*, ed. Ryszard Łużny, Lublin, 1988, pp. 35–49; Bolesław Kumor, 'Problem jedności Kościoła na Rusi z Kościołem katolickim do końca XII wieku', in *Chrystus zwyciężył: Wokół Chrztu Rusi Kijowskiej*, ed. Jan Sergiusz Gajek and Wacław Hryniewicz, Warsaw, 1989, pp. 45–54 (pp. 47–52); Wojciech Brojer, 'Polska–Ruś w XI–XII wieku: Granica misyjności', in *Granica wschodnia cywilizacji zachodniej w średniowieczu*, ed. Zbigniew Dalewski, Warsaw, 2014, pp. 297–373 (pp. 370–73).

cultural contacts between Bohemia and Rus'⁵ and the similarity of the situation in both young countries may also have led to the emergence of analogies when it came to the veneration of saints. Both in Bohemia and in Rus' people venerated the prince who played an important role at the beginning of Christianity as well as his grandmother⁶ and in both countries there emerged a cult of a saintly prince (or even two princes in Rus') killed by his/their wicked brother.⁷ It would be worth investigating whether this was a coincidence or an imitation of Bohemian models of sainthood in Rus'. The cult of SS Nicholas, Pantaleon and Clement was transplanted to the Kyivan state just as the popularity of these patrons increased in the Latin Church.⁸ Thus it would be appropriate to include in the analysis Kyivan Rus' in the period before the Tatar invasions.

Each of the countries analysed in the book has been examined to a different degree. No fewer than seven articles are devoted to Hungary, four to Bohemia, and only three to Poland, as a result of which the cult of saints in Poland and Bohemia is presented fragmentarily. This cannot be justified by the fact that many studies by Polish, Czech and Hungarian historians are published in their mother tongues, little known in Western Europe. The editors should have used the help of scholars from Central Europe more extensively, asking them not only to submit papers, but also to collaborate with them in the planning of the volume. Despite the fact that three articles are devoted to Polish saints, the Polish historians are represented only by Anna Zajchowska with an article providing a detailed analysis of the hagiography of St Hyacinth. I think that the editors of a publication devoted to the cult of saints in medieval Poland should be familiar with the names and at least the titles of studies by scholars like Miłosz Sosnowski, Maciej Michalski, Elżbieta Dąbrowska, Aleksandra Witkowska, Wojciech Mrozowicz, Halina Manikowska, Barbara Kowalska, Jerzy Rajman or Maria Starnawska, often published in major conference languages, and that they should have asked these authors to submit relevant contributions. The selection of texts in the volume provides only a fragmentary picture of the cult of saints without making up a synthesis.

⁵ Kuźmiuk-Ciekanowska, *Święty i historia*, pp. 18–19; Pac, 'Wokół wczesnego kultu', pp. 18–20.

⁶ The cult of St Olga and St Vladimir began to develop in Rus' in the eleventh century, although both were not officially canonized until the thirteenth century, Gerhard Podskalsky, *Chrześcijaństwo i literatura teologiczna na Rusi kijowskiej (988–1237)*, transl. Juliusz Zychowicz, Cracow, 2000, pp. 33, 168–76, 330–32; Andrzej Poppe, 'The Sainthood of Vladimir the Great: Veneration in-the-Making', in idem, *Christian Russia in the Making*, Aldershot, 2007, pp. 8–12, 21–30, 38–52.

⁷ Andrzej Poppe, 'Losers on Earth, Winners from Heaven: The Assassinations of Boris and Gleb in the Making of Eleventh-Century Rus', *Quaestiones Medii Aevi Novae*, 8, 2003, pp. 133–68 (pp. 158–68); idem, 'Spuścizna po Włodzimierzu Wielkim: Walka o tron kijowski 1015–1019', *KH*, 102, 1995, 3/4, pp. 3–22 (pp. 12–17); Podskalsky, *Chrześcijaństwo*, pp. 156–62.

⁸ Grzegorz Pac, 'Kult świętych a problem granicy między chrześcijaństwem zachodnim i wschodnim w Europie Środkowo-Wschodniej X–XII wieku', in *Granica wschodnia*, pp. 375–434.

The publication is divided into three parts. The first is devoted to the role of the cult of old and universal Christian saints, and their possible impact on new cults; the second discusses the role of mendicants in the development of new cults in Central Europe in the High and Late Middle Ages; the third analyses cults which could be described as national. This fairly clear structure reflects an obvious thesis, shared by the editors, that from the thirteenth century the activity of mendicant orders was an important factor in the evangelization of Europe, including 'younger Europe', and led to more and more people living in the recent past being canonized.

The role of the mendicants is emphasized in the introduction by Olivier Marin, who illustrates it with a table listing mendicants venerated in the Middle Ages (p. 16). Despite the fact that the number of mendicants with regard to whom there were at least attempts to create a cult in medieval Poland (eleven individuals of both sexes and two collective cults: the martyrs of Sandomierz from 1260 and from Ząbkowice Śląskie from 1428) is impressive in comparison with Bohemia (one person) and Hungary (five persons), the list does not include several other individuals: Blessed Ofka,⁹ Bishop Vitas of Lithuania,¹⁰ Blessed Yolanda,¹¹ Alexius of Bytom,¹² or the Bernardines Louis of Warka, Nicholas of Koźle and Nicholas Wróbel mentioned in Jan of Komorowo's chronicle.¹³ It is possible that similar gaps could be found in the lists concerning Bohemia and Hungary, but at least in Poland's case the opinion that it was a 'cold' country when it came to the creation of new cults of saints should be revised. The table includes only venerated friars and sisters from mendicant orders. However, the mendicants also inspired, though not always successfully, the cults of persons from outside their orders, for example the cult of Duchess Anna of Silesia¹⁴ or Blessed Werner.¹⁵ Above all, they

⁹ Benigna Suchoń, 'Ofka-Eufemia', in *Hagiografia polska: Słownik bio-bibliograficzny*, ed. Romuald Gustaw, 2 vols, Poznań, 1971–72, vol. 2, pp. 160–71 (p. 167).

¹⁰ Paweł Kielar, 'Wit', in *Hagiografia polska*, vol. 2, pp. 550–54.

¹¹ Witold Sawicki, *Błogosławiona Jolanta: Życie i dzieje kultu*, Gniezno and Niepokalanów, 1980, pp. 123, 139–43.

¹² Jan Kopiec, 'Der gottgefällige Alexius von Beuthen — ein unbekannter Heiliger', in *Heilige und Heiligenverehrung in Schlesien: Verhandlungen des IX. Symposiums in Würzburg von 28 bis 30 Oktober 1991*, ed. Joachim Köhler and Gundolf Keil, Sigmaringen, 1997, pp. 217–21 (p. 219).

¹³ Maria Starnawska, *Świętych życie po życiu: Relikwie w kulturze religijnej na ziemiach polskich w średniowieczu*, Warsaw and Siedlce, 2008, p. 44.

¹⁴ Maciej Michalski, *Kobiety i świętość w żywotach trzynastowiecznych księżnych polskich*, Poznań, 2004, pp. 57–60; Patrycja Magdalena Ksyk, 'Vita Annae ducissae Silesiae', *Nasza Przyszłość*, 78, 1992, pp. 127–50 (pp. 144–49); Marek Cetwiński, "'Anna beatissima": Wokół średniowiecznej biografii dobrodziejki benedyktynów krzeszowskich', in idem, *Śląski tygiel: Studia z dziejów polskiego średniowiecza*, Częstochowa, 2001, pp. 132–42 (pp. 137–42).

¹⁵ Stefan Kwiatkowski, *Powstanie i kształtowanie się chrześcijańskiej mentalności religijnej w Polsce do końca XIII w.*, Warsaw, 1980, p. 78; Starnawska, *Świętych życie po życiu*, pp. 53–54, 300–01; Paweł Figurski, 'Przekaz ideowy i datacja "Mors et miracula beati Veneri"', *St. Żr.*, 48, 2010, pp. 39–57 (pp. 46–48, 56).

played an important part in the canonization of St Stanislaus.¹⁶ Thus their role in the creation of cults of saints seems to be considerable.

The first part of the book, examining the co-existence of older cults common to all Christendom and local cults, features examples only from Hungary and Bohemia, with the two studies concerning the latter being reviews. In 'Saints fondateurs et saintes modernes dans la Bohême médiévale' Petr Kubín discusses the emerge of Bohemian saints, beginning with St Ludmila and St Wenceslaus, patrons of the beginning of Christianity in the country, through St Adalbert, the hermits St Procopius and St Günter, to Jan Hus and Jerome of Prague, regarded as patrons of Bohemia and martyred at the Council of Constance. Kubín points out that the group also included foreign saints: Vitas or Sigismund, while some saints from the twelfth and thirteenth century (Hroznata, Agnes, Zdislava) failed to achieve the status of national patrons. As David C. Mengel demonstrates in his study, a more universal group of saints was the one of those saints who relics were collected by Charles IV, who turned the ostension of relics and the indulgencies associated with them into acts ensuring prosperity also for the body politic. These matters are fairly well-known, at least to Polish scholars studying medieval religiosity, but of course it is good that they have been presented in international conference languages.

Three articles devoted to medieval Hungary concern more detailed topics. Carmen Florea discusses the cult of early Christian virgin martyrs (Saints Barbara, Dorothea, Catherine, Margaret and Ursula) in late medieval Transylvania manifested in dedications of churches and altars as well as images. The author stresses the universal Christian nature of these cults — transplanted to Transylvania from Vienna by bishops and educated clergymen from their entourage, who had studied there — as well as the popularity of the cult of the first three saints on account of belonging to the Fourteen Holy Helpers group. These patrons were indeed very popular in the Late Middle Ages, also in Central Europe,¹⁷ which is why an analysis of the functioning of their cult in such a peripheral region of Western civilization seems to be valuable. However, it is regrettable that the author has not examined the possible presence of the relics of St Ursula's Eleven Thousand Companions in Transylvania. After all, these remains were among the most common in Europe,¹⁸ and thus they may have found their way into Transylvania as well.

Ottó Gecser presents the history of the reception in Hungary in the Late Middle Ages of two other universal cults: of St Sebastian and St Roch, interces-

¹⁶ Maria Starnawska, 'Dominikanie, św. Jacek i elewacja szczątków św. Stanisława przez biskupa Prandotę', in *Mendykanci w średniowiecznym Krakowie*, ed. Krzysztof Ożóg, Tomasz Gałuszka and Anna Zajchowska, Cracow, 2008, pp. 407–24 (pp. 407–08, 413–24).

¹⁷ Cf. for example Patrycja Pieńkowska-Wiederkehr, 'Kult św. Katarzyny Aleksandryjskiej w Polsce do końca średniowiecza w świetle wezwań kościołów i kaplic publicznych', in *Kult świętych i ideał świętości w średniowieczu*, ed. Roman Michałowski, Warsaw, 2011, pp. 149–374 (pp. 161–350), *Fasciculi Historici Novi*, vol. 11.

¹⁸ Arnold Angenendt, *Heilige und Reliquien: Die Geschichte ihres Kultes vom frühen Christentum bis zur Gegenwart*, Munich, 1997, pp. 37–38.

sors during an epidemic of plague. The research is strongly documented by an analysis of dedications, baptismal names or dating of documents issued on the feast days of both patrons. The author examines the reception of the cult of St Sebastian after the Black Death and then the take-over of the role by St Roch. Enikő Csukovits discusses a very interesting question of the Hungarians — who in the late fifteenth century were captured by the Turks — invoking various patron saints. Such prayers were usually addressed to St John of Capistrano and St Paul the Hermit. The former was obviously associated with the idea of fighting the infidels, while the latter was one of the most venerable saints whose remains had been brought to Buda by Louis the Great. The topic seems to be very interesting and perhaps should be explored more broadly with reference to other countries and armed conflicts. We know a case of a nobleman, Mikołaj of Wyrozęby, captured by the Tatars probably during the capture of Kyiv in 1482. He spent twelve years in captivity, asking St Peter and St Paul to intercede for him.¹⁹ References to the topic, from Central Europe for example, could be the subject of a separate monograph.

The five studies making up the most coherent and the clearest part of the publication, which deals with the role of mendicants in the dissemination of cults of saints, share a desire to demonstrate a universal, European dimension of the subject matter in question. Christian-Frederik Felskau discusses the efforts to bring about the canonization of Agnes of Bohemia, a Poor Clare nun, and the European repercussions of her cult. Felskau examines manuscripts of her *vitae* preserved in European libraries as well as letters of St Clare to the Franciscan nun from Bohemia. Eszter Konrád explores the reception of the tradition of St Francis' stigmatization in late medieval Hungarian manuscripts. Anna Zajchowska presents the development of the hagiographic legend of St Hyacinth, beginning with the miracles written down by the 'miracle office' in the late thirteenth century, through the *vita* written down by a lector named Stanisław, and a collection of miracles from the late fifteenth century to works by sixteenth-century authors. She also demonstrates that thanks to monastic contacts information from hagiographic works originating in Poland found its way into Italian historiography of the order. Anne Reltgen-Tallon discusses the reception of the tradition, present in the Dominican historiography, relating to the Hungarian Dominicans martyred during the Mongolian invasion of 1241 and the fight against the Cumans. It is a pity that the analysed collection of articles does not feature an analogous, modern tradition concerning the 1260 martyrdom by the Tatars of Blessed Sadok and 48 Dominicans in Sandomierz, especially given the fact that some historiographers identify Sadok with a Hungarian martyr.²⁰ Although Olivier Marin does in-

¹⁹ Maria Starnawska, 'Mikołaj z Wyrozębów — obrońca Kijowa przed Tatarami i jego suplika do papieża o przekazanie relikwii z 1496 roku', in *Między Polską a Rusią*, ed. eadem, Siedlce, 2004, p. 51.

²⁰ Ireneusz Wysokiński, 'Błogosławiony Sadok w tradycji polskiej i węgierskiej', in *Święty Jacek i dziedzictwo dominikańskie*, ed. Erwin Mateja, Anna Pobóg-Lenartowicz and Maria Rowińska-Szczepaniak, Opole, 2008, pp. 379–88.

clude the Sandomierz martyrs — but without the name of their supposed prior — in a table presenting mendicant saints, it is a pity that this mysterious historiographical topic has not been analysed. This is to blame the author of the article devoted to the Hungarian tradition, but the lack of an analogous study dealing with the legend of the Sandomierz martyrs is disappointing.

The mendicant part of the publication closes with Ludovic Viallet's article devoted to the cult in Central Europe of St Bernardine of Siena and St John of Capistrano as well as the activity of the latter. The virtue of the article lies in the fact that its analysis encompasses the entire territory of Central Europe and at the same time demonstrates its connection to the Italian centre of Christianity.

The third part, dealing with 'national' saints opens with Geneviève Bührrer-Thierry's reflection on whether St Adalbert was a European or national (Polish or Bohemian) patron. Drawing mainly on quite random selection of studies published in international conference languages, the author presents well-known facts from the saint's biography, stressing the multiplicity of the places where he stayed and worked, and his presence both in the centre and peripheries of Christianity. She then points to the fact that Otto III had Adalbert's relics placed in many important locations in Europe, in accordance with the emperor's universalist programme. She uncritically summarizes Johannes Fried's suggestion that the emperor intended to take St Adalbert's whole body to Rome, without providing any detailed arguments ('il ne faut pas de doute' — p. 256) and quoting only the so-called Minor Legend of St Adalbert, a late medieval work once described erroneously by Mathilde Uhlirz as having been written down almost immediately after the Gniezno Summit. In any case, Bührrer-Thierry herself defines the source as 'plus tardif', without attempting to criticize it in any way.²¹ The author has failed to use Roman Michałowski's very important publications showing the role of St Adalbert's relics in Otto's political programme,²² as well as studies — published in English — by Masza Sitek on the relics of St Adalbert's head²³ and by the present reviewer on the role of relics, including those of St Adalbert, as an ideological foundation of the Polish state.²⁴ It is hard to

²¹ Stanisław Trawkowski, 'Wokół początków arcybiskupstwa gnieźnieńskiego', in *Ludzie, Kościół, wierzenia: Studia z dziejów kultury i społeczeństwa Europy Środkowej (średniowiecze — wczesna epoka nowożytna)*, ed. Wojciech Iwańczak and Stefan K. Kuczyński, Warsaw, 2001, pp. 109–23 (pp. 117–20). Without much explanation Rostislav Nový, Jiří Sláma, *Slavníkovci ve středověkém písemnictví*, Prague, 1987, pp. 233–34, date the text to the second half of the twelfth century.

²² Roman Michałowski, *Zjazd gnieźnieński: Religijne przesłanki powstania arcybiskupstwa gnieźnieńskiego*, Wrocław, 2005, Chapters 2 and 3 and articles; the English version, *The Gniezno Summit: The Religious Premises of the Founding of the Archbishopric of Gniezno*, transl. Anna Kijak, Leiden and Boston, MA, 2016. I would like to thank Dr Grzegorz Pac for drawing my attention to the English version of the book.

²³ Masza Sitek [sic! instead of Sitek], 'The Threefold Movement of St. Adalbert's Head', *Mediaevistik*, 29, 2016, pp. 143–74.

²⁴ Maria Starnawska, 'Relics as the Basis of Order in the Life of a Community', in *Przestrzeń religijna Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej w średniowieczu: Materiały Konferencji*

describe a compilation based on a random selection of the literature on the subject and not taking into account the current state of research as well done.

In a much more thorough study Stanislava Kuzmová discusses the emergence of a group of saints venerated in medieval Cracow. The title of the chapter mentions only St Stanislaus, but the author presents a panorama of Cracow patrons, beginning with St Florian and St Stanislaus — who came to be venerated in Cracow many years after their death — and then the beginnings, from the late thirteenth century, of the cults of other saintly persons living in the city, who, however, were not canonized in the Middle Ages. Kuzmová's article demonstrates that there was readiness in Cracow to venerate more and more people; from the mid-thirteenth century these were people well-known to the residents of the city.

The next two articles are devoted to the sources for the study of the cult of Hungarian saints in Hungary. Edit Madas provides a useful compilation of liturgical codices and legendaries containing texts devoted to St Stephen, St Ladislaus and St Emeric. The compilation suggests that these patrons were venerated not only in Hungary, but also in Bohemia, Poland or Austria. From the thirteenth century onwards texts devoted to them were usually part of the *Golden Legend*. Ivan Gerát analyses pictorial legends of saints from medieval Hungary: in the illuminated Angevin Legendary and in altar retables, especially representations of miraculous events. The last article, by Hana Pátková, is an analysis of the cult of saints in confraternities in Bohemian cities. The author analyses dedications of confraternity altars and chapels. Particularly interesting is a comparison between Catholic and Utraquist confraternities, which also practised the cult of saints.

The studies collected in the volume undoubtedly show that Central Europe may not have been as 'cold' when it came to initiating new cults as it is sometimes believed. And if we take into account cults not included in the publication, the 'output' of the region seems even greater. In addition, given the fact that these are areas with a tradition of Christianity younger than in Western Europe, the opinion that Central Europe was 'religiously cold' is considerably undermined. Raising awareness of this and, in general, presenting phenomena from the 'Younger Europe', neglected by European historiography, in international conference languages are unquestionable merits of the analysed volume.

Nevertheless, several aspects of the book are a source of dissatisfaction. Apart from one article devoted to St John of Capistrano, all other studies focus solely on specific countries, lacking a comparative background that would make it possible to analyse the phenomena in question in a Central European context and to establish some patterns characteristic of the region. Not all aspects of the cult of

Międzynarodowej Komisji Historii i Studiów nad Chrześcijaństwem (CIHEC), Lublin-Lwów, 6-10 września 2007 / Religious Space of East-Central Europe in the Middle Ages: Proceedings of the Conference of the Commission Internationale d'Histoire et d'Étude du Christianisme (CIHEC), Lublin-Lviv, 6-10 September 2007, ed. Krzysztof Bracha and Paweł Kras, Warsaw, 2010, pp. 31-45 (pp. 32, 39-40), Przestrzeń Religijna Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej Otwarta na Wschód i Zachód, ed. Jerzy Kłoczowski, vol. 2.

saints have been examined. For example, there is no comparative analysis of saintly rulers from the beginning of Christianity (it would require the inclusion of St Helena, St Vladimir as well as SS Boris and Gleb) or the phenomenon of the cult of several Piast duchesses (Hedwig, Kinga, Salome, Yolanda and Anna), who were related to St Elizabeth of Hungary and St Agnes of Bohemia. In any case, there is no analysis of the male and female models of sainthood, which is rather surprising in an era when the need to study gender is so strongly emphasized.

However, the publication under review as well its various component studies, albeit of uneven quality, constitute an important point of departure for further discussion.

(Translated by Anna Kijak)

Summary

André Vauchez, an eminent expert on the cult of saints, concluded that Central Europe was a 'cold' region when it came to creating new cults, few of which originated here in the Middle Ages. Two French scholars, Marie-Madeleine de Cevins and Olivier Marin, decided to check the validity of this view. The initiative has produced a publication featuring fifteen articles devoted to various aspects of the cult of saints in Central Europe in the Middle Ages. The articles are divided into three parts concerning the mutual impact of old cults and those originating in the Middle Ages, the role of mendicants in the initiation of new cults, and the emergence of national cults.

The author of the article discusses the merits and shortcomings of the publication. Its unquestionable merits include highlighting the substantial number of cults of saints initiated in Central Europe in the Middle Ages, which undermines somewhat the view that Central Europe was a 'cold' region in this respect. The role of mendicants in the creation of cults of saintly individual shortly after their death has been emphasized. Often these saints were members of mendicant orders.

The shortcomings of the publication include an almost complete lack of articles examining various phenomena across the entire region, as a result of which the picture presented in the book is fragmentary. The exclusion of Kyivan Rus' from the research has made it impossible to compare dynastic cults in Rus' with the dynastic cults in Bohemia and Hungary. In addition, there is no analysis of the cult of saintly duchesses in the thirteenth century. Yet despite these shortcomings the publication under review can be a starting point for further reflection on the cult of saints in Central Europe.

(Translated by Anna Kijak)

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Biography: Dr hab. Maria Starnawska — professor at the Institute of History, Siedlce University of Natural Sciences and Humanities, studies religious culture in medieval Poland, focusing in particular on the history of chivalric orders and the cult of saints.