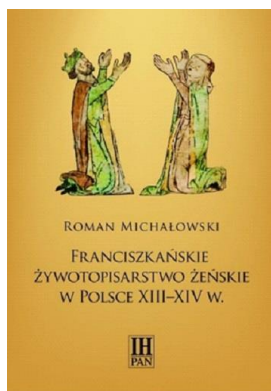


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**Roman Michałowski, Franciszkańskie żywotopisarstwo
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Anna, Salomea, and Kinga are three holy women, all in some way connected to the Piast dynasty. Salomea was the daughter of Duke Leszek the White and Duchess Grzymiśława, and the wife of King Coloman of Galicia. Anna came from the Přemyslid dynasty (Bohemia), but spent a significant portion of her life in Silesia – first as the ward of another saint, Duchess Hedwig of Silesia, later as the wife of Henry the Pious, and finally as regent for her sons. The third, Kinga, was the daughter of King Béla IV of Hungary, Duchess of Cracow and Sandomierz, and wife of Duke Bolesław, whom history remembers under the nickname “the Chaste.” These three women belonged to the royal-princely sphere, three women who, after their husbands’ deaths, adopted the habit of a nun (Salomea, Kinga) or became a tertiary (Anna), and three women who died with a reputation for holiness. And they all lived to see their lives – works describing their lives and the miracles they performed both during their lifetime and after their death.

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M. does not re-present the lives of St. Kinga, St. Salomea, and St. Anna. The aim of his work is entirely different. It is to examine the religious and ideological content of the lives of these holy women.

The book begins with an introduction (9–25); M. attempts to familiarize readers with the topic of the dissertation and the meaning of the term “Franciscan life-writing.” He also identifies the texts encompassed by Polish female hagiography from the 13th and 14th centuries: two *Lives of St. Hedwig*, the *Life of Anna*, the *Life of St. Salomea*, the *Life of St. Kinga*, and her *Miracula* – although the Author emphasizes that the latter should be treated as a separate work. For each *Life*, he briefly outlines who commissioned the hagiographic work and who its author might be, though most of them remain anonymous. He then situates Polish female hagiography within the context of European hagiography, referring, among other things, to the work of Antonella Degl’Innocenti.¹

Chapter I is titled “Carolingian and Ottonian Life-Writing.” (27–50) This is not yet the proper subject of a monograph, but it is necessary if we want to properly understand the book’s content. The subject of Chapter I is a comparison of Polish women’s hagiography with early medieval hagiography, a look back. This chapter explores the differences between the life-writing of the High and Late Middle Ages and that which preceded it. To this end, the author introduces us to lives from Germany, written between the 9th and 11th centuries: the *Life of Hatumoda*, the *Life of Adelaide*, and the *Lives of Matilda the Elder*. Like our native saints, Hatumoda, Adelaide, and Matilda came from powerful families. When discussing each of their lives, the author includes a short biography, describing the content of the hagiographic work and how the author portrayed the main female figure. M. primarily notes that women’s lives are accompanied by “family sanctity.” He will discuss this topic in the subsequent chapters of his monograph.

Chapter II, titled “Saint Kinga and Saint Salomea,” (51–139) focuses on the two women mentioned in the chapter’s title. A significant portion of the chapter is devoted to Kinga and is divided into subchapters. First, we have “Introductory Information” (51–53) – a brief introduction, containing information on whose commission the *Life of St. Kinga* was written and why *Miracula* should be considered a separate work from *Vita sanctae Cunegundis*. The next, much longer subchapter is “The Superhuman Status of St. Kinga.” (53–110) In it, M. describes, among other things, the circumstances of the marriage between Kinga and Bolesław (Kinga was superior to her husband in ancestry). He points out that even the hagiographer celebrated Kinga’s illustrious ancestry, praising the magnificence of the Duchess of Cracow’s family – on the one, monarchs belonged to it, and on the other, saints. M. notes that

¹ Degl’Innocenti, 2009.

the hagiographer pointed to her membership in a royal family, which was also a holy family, as an important reason for her sanctity.

The Author then compares the *Life of St. Kinga* with the *Lives of St. Isabella of France*, *Isabella of Aragon*, *Margaret* (who was Kinga's sister in the family), *St. Elizabeth*, and *St. Agnes of Bohemia*. M. compares the *Life of Kinga* to these three stages: the first is a discussion of information concerning the mother's pregnancy, childbirth, infancy, and childhood; the second is adulthood; and the third stage is the interpretation of information about religious foundations, with the author reminding us that here we should be interested only in facts of religious significance.

In the subchapter titled "Virginité," (110–115) M. points out that the hagiographer who wrote the *Life of Kinga* considered the virginity of the Duchess of Cracow a very important virtue and that it is one of the most important themes of the *Vita*. The Author emphasizes that it is important to consider that so-called white marriages were indeed rare, and among royal families, a true rarity. Moreover, in our own dynasty, we have only two such cases. The first is the marriage of Salomea and Coloman, the second, that of Kinga and Bolesław.

M. devotes the next subchapter to Kinga's exercise of power and her asceticism. The hagiographer believed that Kinga governed the duchy, though he does not specify whether he meant the Duchy of Cracow or the Nowy Sącz dominion, which was the endowment of the local Poor Clare monastery. He also describes the role the duchy is said to have played during the celebrations following the canonization of St. Stanislaus. However, M. considers this description unreliable, pointing out that women were simply not permitted to participate in such liturgical acts. This is purely the hagiographer's creation. M. then attempts to determine the categories in which the author of the life interpreted the duchess's ascetic practices; to this end, he again draws on the *Lives of other female saints*: *Isabella of France*, *Elizabeth*, *Isabella of Aragon*, and even goes back to the *Life of St. Radekund*, written in the 6th-7th century. M. also refers to *quasi-stigmata*,² a concept introduced into Polish hagiography by Maciej Michalski, who asks whether this term can be applied to Kinga. Here, too, he refers to other *Lives* – those of St. Elizabeth and St. Hedwig.

The final section is devoted to Salomea (133–139). It's a short section, containing a biographical note and a description of the *Life* – a short work, though, as M. emphasizes, very well-conceived. The Author highlights two noteworthy facts from the *Life of Salomea*: explanation of holiness and its nature by referring to the essence of God; and strong emphasis on the virginity of the married ruler.

As the Author of the monograph himself emphasizes in "the Explanation" (51–53) – he devoted much less space to the *Life of St. Salomea* for two reasons: firstly,

² A person affected by quasi-stigmata feels intense pain and suffering in the places of Christ's wounds, but no open, bleeding wounds appear on his or her body.

the hagiographic work is very short, and secondly, M. published a separate article devoted to the *Life of Salomea*.³

Chapter III is devoted to Saint Anna and bears the same title (140–231). Like Chapter II, this one is also divided into several subchapters. The first is “Anna as a Member of Hedwig’s Family” (140–151) – M. examines the *Life of Anna* from the perspective of the hagiography dedicated to her mother-in-law, Saint Hedwig. He discusses three works about Jadwiga, authored by Odo (Eudes) of Chateauroux. In this subchapter, M. focuses less on Anna herself and more on Hedwig, presenting a genetic analysis of the Silesian duchess. The Author’s analysis of the material indicates that one of the sources of Hedwig’s sanctity is her noble ancestry (a point also discussed in previous chapters regarding other female saints).

The next subchapter is devoted to Anna; it is titled “The Life of Anna, Duchess of Silesia.” (151–167) Anna was not named a saint (perhaps due to the misdeeds of her son, Bolesław, known as the Rogatka), although M. believes that the very existence of the *Life* is evidence that Anna could have been considered a saint, and efforts were made to promote this. The Author of the monograph further attempts to determine the date of the hagiography of Anna (no earlier than 1265 and no later than the mid-14th century), but he explicitly states that the author of the work cannot be identified. M. then analyzes the content of the *Life of Anna*.

In the next subchapter, titled “Anna’s Conversion,” (167–180) M. points out that the author of Anna’s *Life* did not provide her lineage; the reader learns that Anna was a princess only by accident. He wonders why the hagiographer chose not to include this information – and answers it himself: Anna’s holiness lay in the person of Hedwig, with whom Anna associated and imitated in everything. The Author of the monograph notes that the hagiographer writes nothing about Anna’s religiosity before she came to Silesia to marry Hedwig’s son.

In the next subchapter, “The Ascetic Duchess,” (180–185) the Author points out that, unlike Kinga and Salomea or Hedwig, Anna and her husband did not give up sexual intercourse, and the Silesian duchess continued to bear children until her husband’s death. The Author then discusses flogging as another aspect of Anna’s asceticism, her visits to leprosariums and giving gifts to the sick, and her visits to churches. He notes that, however, there is no mention of injuring one’s feet, scratching one’s face, etc., as described by the hagiographers of other duchesses. M. states that Anna’s mortifications were severe, but at the same time, Anna harmonized her asceticism with her role as ruler.

“Anna in her social environment” (185–193) is a subsection in which the Author establishes the role played by the characters introduced by the hagiographer into his heroine’s *Life*. M. notes that besides Anna and her mother-in-law, Hedwig, there are

³ Michałowski, 2024.

few other people in the work, and when they do appear, they are flat, lacking in visuality, and anonymous. The protagonist's husband, Hedwig's son, Henry the Pious, occupies a separate place in the *Life*. However, there is no mention of children or grandchildren. The author of Anna's hagiography devotes considerable space to the foundations made by the Silesian duchess

The title of the next subsection, "Martyrdom," (193–198) may come as a bit of a surprise to the reader. We associate the term with someone who died for their faith, though over time it was broadened to include those who led lives of self-denial. M. notes here that hagiographers of the 13th and 14th centuries used the concept of martyrdom quite liberally.

The final section is "Anna's Illness." (198–231) M. raises the question of the place that illness – especially the one leading to death – occupied in the lives of holy women. The author again draws on descriptions of illness by other hagiographers, analyzing how they write about the illnesses of their heroines. He cites, among others, the *Life of St. Matilda of Andechs*, the *Life of Hatumonda*, the *Life of Adelaide*, the *Life of Margaret*, and the *Life of Alice of Schaerbeek*. Based on the analysis of the illness described in these hagiographies, M. draws the most important conclusion: in some lives, illness holds a significant place; the authors saw it as one of the sources of sanctification and holiness.

The summary is the Author's final conclusions from his work (232–254). He also highlights the differences between the *Lives* of Kinga, Salome, and Anna. He highlights, among other things, the princesses' origins – in Kinga's *Life*, the Árpád dynasty is an important theme, while Anna's hagiographer completely ignores her royal origins. In Salomea, however, the central theme of the work is her spiritual life, virginity, and mysticism.

The Author also addresses the claim that Polish Franciscan women's lives were similar to each other – a claim M. believes is unjustified. According to him, they differ significantly in terms of religious and ideological content.

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