

Eszter Konrád

**THE LEGEND OF ST. ELIZABETH OF HUNGARY OF THE
LEGENDA AUREA AND ITS VERNACULAR ADAPTATIONS**

MA Thesis in Medieval Studies

Central European University

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Eszter Konrád

(Hungary)

Thesis submitted to the Department of Medieval Studies,
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Accepted in conformance with the standards of the CEU

Chair, Examination Committee

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I, the undersigned, **Eszter Konrád**, candidate for the MA degree in Medieval Studies declare herewith that the present thesis is exclusively my own work, based on my research and only such external information as properly credited in notes and bibliography. I declare that no unidentified and illegitimate use was made of the work of others, and no part of the thesis infringes on any person's or institution's copyright. I also declare that no part of the thesis has been submitted in this form to any other institution of higher education for an academic degree.

Budapest, 25 May 2011

Signature

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Figure 1. *Printed editions of the Legenda Aurea in the late medieval and early modern period.*

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BAI: *Biblioteca agiografica italiana: Repertorio di testi e manoscritti, secoli XIII–XV*. Ed. Jacques Dalarun, Lino Leonardi, Maria Teresa Dinale, Beatrice Fedi, Giovanna Frosini. 2 vols. Florence: Società Internazionale per lo Studio del Medioevo Latino (SISMEL): Edizioni del Galluzzo, 2003.

BHL: *Bibliotheca hagiographica latina antiquae et mediae aetatis*. 4 vols. Subsidia hagiographica 6, 12 and 70. Brussels: Société des Bollnadistes, 1898-1986.

INTRODUCTION

“It was a wretched act that he did not write either about Stephen, or Ladislaus, or Emeric, only about Elizabeth” – scolded at the author of the *Legenda Aurea* a sixteenth-century Hungarian user of the legendary. In fact, St. Elizabeth was the only Hungarian saint whose legend was included in the most famous collection of abridged saints’ lives. She was perhaps the most influential representative of the late medieval female saintly ideal whose life served as a model for a number of queens and princesses. Despite the great number of hagiographical accounts written about her life and miracles, it was the *Legenda Aurea* through which her saintly example became known all over Europe.

James of Varazze’s *Legenda Aurea*, composed in the second half of the thirteenth century, was the most famous work among the new genre of the Dominican *legendae novae* that radically transformed the Western hagiographic traditions. Originally these collections of *abbreviationes* were written in Latin and intended primarily for the preachers of the mendicant orders as ancillary source for sermons, but due to the rapidly growing number of laypeople who sought to engage in an active devotional life, these legendaries were soon translated in the vernacular, thus hagiography came into direct contact with people from all social groups. The same happened to James of Varazze’s legendary, too. Roughly 150 years after its compilation, there were translations and adaptations of the *Legenda Aurea* in almost all the major European languages.

Despite the rich literature on the formation of the *Legenda Aurea* and on its Latin manuscript tradition, only in the past few decades have scholars started the systematic research into its various vernacular branches. Due to the high number of the saints’ lives contained in the legendary, considerably less attention has been paid to the individual legends. The aim of my thesis is to examine how James of Varazze’s legend on St. Elizabeth

was adapted into the Italian, English, Czech and Hungarian vernaculars in order to find answers for the following questions: In what environment and for what audience were these adaptations made? What are the most significant changes in the vernacular versions compared to the original and what are their possible motifs?

I started to deal with the *vita* of Elizabeth from the *Legenda Aurea* a few years ago. I wrote my MA thesis at Eötvös Loránd University about its two Italian *volgarizzamenti* and this aroused my interest in examining the adaptations of her legend in other languages as well. The choice of the texts I intend to examine was motivated primarily by my knowledge of the source languages.

For the analysis of the two Italian *volgarizzamenti* of the *vita* of Elizabeth, I rely on my own transcription of the manuscripts. The so called “old Tuscan” legend is dated to the first half of the fourteenth century, and kept in the Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale of Florence. The other version is from the fifteenth century and today kept in the Biblioteca Ambrosiana of Milan. The reason why I rely on manuscripts is that at the time when I made the transcription of the Ambrosian manuscript, I did not know that its exemplar had already been published in Vicenza at the end of the fifteenth century. As to the “old Tuscan” legend, it was published in 1848 by Marc’Antonio Parenti, who annotated and completed the text on the basis of the Latin original. Since I wanted to make my analysis on the basis of what is written in the manuscript, I transcribed this version, too. During a research trip to Italy I had the chance to correct my previous transcriptions of the two *vitae* and also to have a closer look at the other writings in the codices where they are preserved. The detailed description of the manuscripts and the transcriptions of text are provided in the appendix.

The Middle-English life of the saint was composed by Osbern Bokenham on the basis of the *Legenda Aurea* between 1443 and 1447. The only extant manuscript contains thirteen female saints’ lives written in verse form. The life of St. Elizabeth is dedicated to its

commissioner, Lady Elizabeth de Vere. The critical edition of Bokenham's collection, entitled *Legendys of Hooly Wummen* by the editor Mary S. Serjeantson, was made in 1938. The work was also translated into modern English by Sheila Delany in 1992. Although for my analysis I use the Middle English text, in the case of longer quotations I always provide the modern English translations.

The Old Czech version of the James of Varazze's legendary, the *Pasional*, was made around 1357. Although its original manuscript has not come down to us, all the later copies contain the life of Elizabeth. The analysis of Elizabeth's life here is based on Helga Susanne Schmidtberger's transcription of the earliest extant manuscript of the *Pasional* and on her German translation of the text.

The last source I treat in this thesis is a Hungarian sermon on the saint, preserved in the *Érdy Codex*. This collection of sermons compiled by an anonymous Carthusian preacher consists of a *De tempore* and a *De sanctis* part. This is one of the earliest books written entirely in the vernacular (except for its prologue) and its author is regarded as the first real Hungarian prose writer. Nevertheless, the transcription of the original text published by György Volf in 1876 is quite difficult to read, as is reproducing some of the special characters. Therefore, I rely on the slightly modernized version of his selected works, edited by Edit Madas in 1985.

I intend to use a philological methodology based on the textual and comparative analysis of primary sources such as manuscripts, critical editions, and translations of the original texts and my scrutiny will be supported by the extensive use of the scholarly literature. This paper will contribute to getting a clearer picture of the vernacular texts that entered direct contact with a broad non-Latin-speaking audience through which they could form a notion of Elizabeth's sanctity.

CHAPTER ONE: ST. ELIZABETH OF HUNGARY AND HER EARLY HAGIOGRAPHY

The hagiographic dossier of St. Elizabeth of Hungary is vast. In order to understand the crucial importance of the *Legenda Aurea* in the diffusion of her cult, I provide a concise overview about her biography and the earliest *vitae*, written, with a very few exceptions, in Latin. Since I discuss James of Varazze's legendary in a separate subchapter together with the other Dominican collections of *abbreviationes*, I cannot present all her *vitae* in a strict chronological order: the lives written by the two Franciscans that are roughly coeval and the legend of Theodoric of Apolda, composed some decades later than the Dominican *legendae novae*, will be treated before them. Next, I introduce the new genre that had a huge impact on the Western hagiography: the collections of abridged saint's lives. Then I turn to my main topic, to the *Legenda Aurea* and its Elizabeth-Vita. In the last section, I treat the diffusion of the legendary, concentrating on their vernacular translations and adaptations. By reason of dealing exhaustively with the Italian, English, Czech and Hungarian traditions in the subsequent chapters of the thesis, in this section I give a short outline of those vernacular branches that I do not treat in depth in my paper.

1.1 The Short Biography of St. Elizabeth of Hungary

The daughter of King Andrew of Hungary and Gertrude of Andechs-Merania was born in 1207.¹ At the age of four, she was promised to the landgrave of Thuringia and was sent to Wartburg. She was brought up and educated here, and in 1221 married to Ludwig, with whom she lived in a happy marriage and had three children: Hermann was born in 1222,

¹ For the scholarly biographies of Elizabeth of Hungary/Thuringia, see Elisabeth Busse-Wilson, *Das Leben der heiligen Elisabeth von Thüringen: Das Abbild einer mittelalterlichen Seele*, (Munich: 1931); Jeanne Ancelet-Hustache, *Saint Élisabeth de Hongrie*, (Paris: Éditions franciscaines, 1947); Ilona Sz. Jónás, *Árpád-házi Szent Erzsébet* [Saint Elizabeth of Hungary], (Budapest: Akadémiai kiadó, 1986).

Sophie in 1224, and Gertrude in 1227. The Hungarian princess perfectly fulfilled the role of a landgravine: she attended the court-feast, entertained the illustrious guests and frequently accompanied her husband on his travels. The couple was in agreement also in religious matters and in beneficence and they founded together a hospital in Gotha. The spirituality of Elizabeth became closely connected to the recently founded mendicant orders, especially to the Franciscans. During the years of marriage, the landgravine lived a profoundly religious life and sought a direct contact with the sick and the poor. Her humble lifestyle was in sharp contrast with the splendour of the court: she spun wool with her handmaids to make dresses for the needy and the friars minor; she opened the grain stores during the famine of 1226 in the absence of Ludwig and distributed the food among the subjects of Thuringia. In the same year in she made an official vow to her confessor, Conrad of Marburg, an ascetic preacher of the crusade with papal authorization, in the chapel of Eisenach, promising him absolute obedience except for her husband's conjugal rights and promised perpetual continence in case of the death of Ludwig. In 1227 the landgrave went on crusade with Frederick II and died on the way to the Holy Land, in Otranto, Italy. After his death, Ludwig's relatives did not support the excessive charity activities of Elizabeth, and Ludwig's brother, Henry Raspe refused to pay her dowry, thus she left the court of Wartburg and finally she could fulfil her desire to live among the poor. Her maternal relative, the abbess of Kitzingen soon intervened and sent her to her uncle, the bishop of Bamberg, whose attempt to remarry her against her will, failed. With the intercession of Conrad of Marburg, who had been Elizabeth's protector by papal appointment, she was given 2000 mark as a dowry and a residence at Marburg. Conrad separated her from her two most faithful handmaids, Guda and Isentrude and tried to control the radical ways of her charity. Elizabeth not only wanted to go beyond the institutional forms in order to be in the closest possible connection with the most miserable people but she herself wanted to live in poverty. When Conrad prohibited her to live from

begging, she made a second pledge and renounced of her children, relations and free will and assumed the grey tunic of the penitents. From her dowry she had a hospital built in Marburg dedicated to St. Francis, where she spent the rest of her life taking care of the sick with her two maidservants, Irmengard and Elisabeth. She died on 17 November in 1231 in the fame of sanctity. In the following year Conrad of Marburg, sending a list of sixty miracles accompanied by a letter and a short biography of Elizabeth, proposed her canonization to Pope Gregory IX, who began the official inquisition in October 1232 and asked Conrad to take part in the nominated commission that was formed by three papal nuncios. They interrogated more than 600 witnesses and registered 105 miracles, but when Conrad was assassinated by a nobleman against whom he had conducted investigations in matters of heresy, the procedure stopped for a while. In 1234 a new committee was nominated which registered 24 new miracles, reorganizing the protocol under the title *Miracula felicitis Elyzabeth*. These testimonies were examined were examined by Gregory IX and on 27 May in 1235 in the Church of St. Dominic in Perugia, Elizabeth was inscribed in the catalogue of saints with the bull *Glorius in maestate*.²

² On the canonization process of Elizabeth, see Josef Leinweber, “Das kirchliche Heiligsprechungsverfahren bis zum Jahre 1234. Der Kanonizationprozess der hl. Elisabeth von Thüringen,” in *Sankt Elisabeth Fürstin, Dienerin, Heilige*, Aufsätze, Dokumentation, Katalog [Ausstellung zum 750. Todestag der hl. Elisabeth. Marburg, Landgrafenschloß und Elisabethkirche, 19. Nov. 1981 – 6. Jan. 1982]. Sigmaringen, 1981. 128-136; Gábor Klaniczay, “Proving Sanctity in the Canonization Process,” in *Procès de canonization au Moyen Âge. Aspects juridiques et religieux – Medieval Canonization Processes. Legal and Religious Aspects*, ed. Gábor Klaniczay, (= *Collection de l'École française de Rome*, 340), (Rome: 2004), 117-148; and ID. “Il processo di canonizzazione di Santa Elisabetta. Le prime testimonianze sulla vita e sui miracoli,” in *Annuario 2002-2004. Conferenze e convegni*, ed. László Csorba and Gyöngyi Komlóssy (Rome: Accademia d'Ungheria in Roma. Istituto storico “Fraknói”, 2005), 220-232. On her miracles, see Gábor Klaniczay, “I miracoli e i loro testimoni. La prova del soprannaturale,” in *Il pubblico dei santi. Forme e livelli di ricezione dei messaggi agiografici*, ed. Paolo Golinelli. (Atti del III Convegno di studio dell' ASSICA, Verona 22-24 ottobre 1988), (Rome: Viella, 2000), 367-386.

1.2 The Thirteenth-Century *Vitae*³

The first brief biographical account of St. Elizabeth's life was the *Summa vitae* (or *Narratio brevis de vita*) was written by her confessor, Conrad of Marburg, and sent to Pope Gregory to Rome soon after 11 August 1232, together with the first testimonies of healing miracles attributed to her intercession.⁴ In this first biography of the saint, Conrad narrates the life of Elisabeth in a chronological order, from the moment of having become her confessor. This *vita* is as much about Elisabeth as about her spiritual director: Conrad reports several interactions with her and his responses to her and in general about himself in relation to her. Little attention is paid to her conjugal period, although it is mentioned that he consented Elisabeth's extensive charity. The major part of the life is about the widowhood of Elisabeth, who - according to her confessor - regretted that she had been married and could not be able to die as a virgin. Conrad records in detail Elisabeth's renouncement of her children and relatives after the death of her husband on Holy Friday in 1228 in the Franciscan chapel of Eisenach founded by her. The inquisitor-confessor depicts Elisabeth's life as a combination of *vita activa* and *vita contemplativa*: the former manifested by her taking care of the poor and the sick, the distribution of alms, the foundation of a hospital; the latter by the frequency and intensity of her prayers, her recurrent ecstasies and her prophetic capacities, such as in the case when she foretold her death to her confessor or when, on her deathbed, she wished to

³ The thirteenth-century biographical accounts have been discussed thoroughly by Ottó Gecser in his "Lives of St. Elizabeth: Their Rewritings and Diffusion in the Thirteenth Century." *Analecta Bollandiana* 127. (2009): 49-108; Gábor Klaniczay also provided a concise overview on her legends in *Holy Rulers and Blessed Princesses: Dynastic Cults in Medieval Central Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 419-423. In this section, I rely mainly on their works.

⁴ The text (BHL 2490) was edited by Albert Huyskens, *Quellenstudien zur Geschichte der hl. Elisabeth, Landgräfin von Thüringen* (Marburg: Elwert, 1908), 155-160. The first series sent to Pope Gregory (BHL 2489) was edited in *Hessisches Urkundenbuch*. Abt. 1: *Urkunderbuch der Deutschordens-Ballei Hessen*, ed. Arthur Wyss (= *Publikationen aus den K. Preussischen Staatsarchiven*, 3), vol. 1, (Leipzig: Hirzel, 1879), [repr. Osnabrück, 1965]), 25-29. An extended list of 106 miracles (BHL 2491a-b), including the first series as well, was sent to Rome in 1233, followed by a third list of 24 miracles in 1235 (BHL 2491d-e). Both were edited by Huyskens in *Quellenstudien*, 161-239, 243-266. The early sources of the saint's life are also summarized by Paul Gerhard Schmidt, "Die zeitgenössische Überlieferung zum Leben und zur Heiligsprechung der heiligen Elisabeth," in *Sankt Elisabeth Fürstin, Dienerin, Heilige*.

meditate about death, the Last Judgement and the Omnipotent Judge.⁵ Although the *Summa vitae* is not a complete biography, it is extremely significant from the point of view that it was written by a person who knew well the saint's thoughts, plans and feelings. Conrad narrates how he prohibited Elisabeth her greatest wish, to wander as a beggar.⁶ He does not remain silent about other conflicts between them, either, although he emphasizes that he intervened only in cases where her charity beyond limits would have risked her health. He also adds that he separated her from her family and two of her dearest handmaids, substituting them with three other unpleasant women, increasing this way Elisabeth's humility and patience.⁷ There are eight extant manuscripts of the *Summa vitae*⁸; one of them was copied in the fourteenth century and two in the fifteenth, which attest that it was also used for later compilations.⁹

The most important collection of first-hand information of the life of St. Elizabeth is the *Dicta quatuor ancillarum*¹⁰ based on the testimonies of her four maidens, registered during the canonization process between 1232 and 1235. The *Dicta* was transformed between 1236 and 1241 into a more biography-like work by the addition of a prologue and a conclusion, and by insertions and chronological reordering of the original records. This version is known as *Libellus de dictis quatuor ancillarum S. Elisabeth confectus*.¹¹ It refines and amplifies the schematic portrait made by Conrad of Marburg. The childhood and of the saint is based on the testimony of Guda, Isentrude narrates the conjugal phase, Irmengard and Elizabeth recount her widowhood and the last years of her life that she spent in the hospice of

⁵ Huyskens, *Quellenstudien*, 159-160.

⁶ Ibid., 157.

⁷ Ibid., 158.

⁸ Ortrud Reber, *Die Gestaltung des Kultes weiblicher Heiliger im Spätmittelalter. Die Verehrung der Heiligen Elisabeth, Klara, Hedwig und Brigitta*, (Hersbruck: 1963), 28-30.

⁹ Helga Susanne Schmidtberger, *Die Verehrung der Heiligen Elisabeth in Böhmen und Mähren bis zum Ende des Mittelalters*, (Marburg: N.G. Elwert Verlag, 1992), 91-92.

¹⁰ The *Dicta* (BHL 2490) was edited by Huyskens in *Quellenstudien*, 110-140.

¹¹ The *Libellus* (BHL 2493d-g) was edited by Huyskens in *Der sogenannte Libellus de dictis quatuor ancillarum s. Elisabeth confectus* (Kempten: Kösel, 1911), 9-80. For the textual transmission of both versions, cf. Huyskens, *Quellenstudien*, 15-20 and ID., *Libellus*, XI-LXXIV; for their importance as a source of Elisabeth's life, see André Vauchez, "Carità e povertà in Santa Elisabetta di Turingia in base agli atti del processo di canonizzazione," in *Esperienze religiose nel Medioevo*, ed. ID. (Rome: Viella, 2003), 125-133; Raoul Manselli,

Marburg. Guda and Isentrude do not mention Elizabeth's regret about having been married but portray their marriage as particularly affectionate. There are two motifs in the last section of their testimony which resulted to be quite influential from the point of view of the later developments of her image. One of them is the visionary aspect of her life, to which the maidens add the episode of her spiritual engagement with Christ.¹² The other motif is her confessor's extreme severity with her: the frequent corporal punishments, the strict control of her behaviour, as a result of which she became intimidated.¹³

Although the above mentioned sources are the earliest biographic accounts on the saint, none of them can be regarded as a proper *Vita*. The first "real" biography of the saint was referred to in the anonymous text *Processus et ordo canonizationis beate Elyzabet*, a record on the investigations in Marburg and of the successive celebrations in Perugia, when the saint was registered in the catalogue of the saints.¹⁴ Leonhard Lemmens, who has found a complementary passage in the biography of Pope Gregory IX and edited also a short anonymous Life of St. Elizabeth, written probably before the end of 1239, with the same incipit as the sermon the pope reported after having delivered a sermon on the occasion of the canonization of St. Elizabeth, suggested that it might be identical with the Life referred to in the *Processus*, thus he located the short anonymous Life the papal Curia. Owing to this, the text is often referred to as *Curial Vita*. The most remarkable new theme in the text that has not been present in the earlier accounts is the representation of the saint as the bride of Christ. This motif appears already in her childhood, and goes through her all life, preparing her

"Santità principesca e vita quotidiana in Elisabetta d'Ungheria. Le testimonianze delle ancelle", in *Analecta Tertii Ordinis Regularis sancti Francisci*, 18 (1985), 23-45.

¹² Huyskens, *Libellus*, 36-37: *Si Tu vis esse mecum, ego ero Tecum – Ita Domine Tu vis esse mecum et ego volo esse Tecum et nuquam volo a Te separari.*

¹³ See for instance, Huyskens, *Libellus*, 49, 69 and 70.

¹⁴ The *Processus et ordo canonizationis beate Elyzabeth propter quorundam detractioes et calumpnias* was edited by Huyskens in *Quellenstudien*, 140-146, and he attributed it to Raymond of Peñafort. The reference to the *Vita* is on 145: *Letis itaque et expositis populo tam de vita quam de miraculis omnibus ad rem facientibus, prout oportuit a dyacono cardinal... sollempniter canonizata est illa benedicta inter mulieres...* However, the curial origin of the *vita* has been questioned by Otfried Krafft, *Papsturkunde und Heiligsprechung: Die*

vision of Christ after her husband's death, in which Christ tells Elizabeth the words known from the *Libellus*.¹⁵ The *sponsa Christi* motif of the *Curial Vita* shows similarity to the bull of canonization.¹⁶ The other novelty of this biography that it reports 14 of the 130 miracle accounts, mostly resurrections. It has come down to us at least in 14 manuscripts (all of them are later than the thirteenth century) and was often used in the form of breviary lessons.¹⁷

The next *vita* of the saint was composed by the renowned Cistercian writer, Caesar of Heisterbach in 1236-1237 on the request of the Marburg Commandery of the Teutonic Order to transform the testimonies of the four maidens *in hystoriam*.¹⁸ Although he quoted long passages from the *Dicta*, by rearranging the events into a logical chronology of the events and by adding numerous scriptural quotations, he emphasized more the *Vita*'s ideological content. He laid special stress on Elizabeth's royal descent, creating a contrast between her origins and her humble way of life. Another new addition in this legend, according to Klaniczay due to the interest in her royal family, that it refers to the murder of Elizabeth's mother, Gertrude of Meran, as a martyr death.¹⁹ The text was not widely diffused; it is extant in two short extracts and one manuscript.

The third *vita* based partly on the *Dicta* was made in 1236/39 was the *Zwettl Vita* known after its place of the discovery of its earliest known exemplar.²⁰ The author of the legend presents himself as an eyewitness of Elisabeth's *translatio*, and describes in details the death of the saint and the subsequent events until the translation. While its editor, Diodor

päpstlichen Kanonisationen vom Mittelalter bis zur Reformation - Ein Handbuch. (= *Archiv für Diplomatik. Schriftgeschichte Siegel- und Wappenkunde. Beiheft*, 9, Cologne: 2005), 385-416, on 392.

¹⁵ Lemmens, "Zur Biografie der heiligen Elisabeth," 9: *si tu vis esse mecum, ego ero tecum et a te nullatenus separabor*.

¹⁶ For the significance of the *sponsa Christi* theme in the bull of canonization, see Klaniczay, *Holy Rulers*, 272.

¹⁷ For the list of the manuscripts, cf. Gecser, "Lives of St. Elizabeth," 61.

¹⁸ The *Life* was edited by Huyskens in *Die Wundergeschichten des Caesarius von Heisterbach*, 3 vols., ed. Alfons Hilka, Publikationen der Gesellschaft für Rheinische Geschichtskunde 43 (Bonn: Hannstein, 1933-1937), vol. 3, 344-381. The fifteenth-century *codex unicus* of the text belonged to the Dukes of Arenberg; then it was kept in the Royal Library of Brussels as MS lat. 75, but since the First World War, its location is unknown. Huyskens made his edition on the basis of photographs.

¹⁹ Klaniczay, *Holy Rulers*, 421.

²⁰ The text (BHL 2495b) was edited by Diodor Henniges, *Vitae sanctae Elisabeth, Landgraviae Thuringiae auctore anonymo nunc primum in luce edita*, in *Archivum Franciscanum Historicum*, 2 (1909), 250-268.

Henniges regarded the *vita* as autograph and identified its author with an anonymous Cistercian monk,²¹ Helmut Beumann has convincingly argued that the solemn translation is depicted quite similarly to the letter written by Emperor Frederick II to Elias of Cortona, the minister general of the Franciscans on 1 May in 1236, thus the unnamed author was someone from the emperor's court, and not a Cistercian monk from Zwettl.²² The major goal of Frederick's letter, in which he stressed his family relations with Elizabeth as well as her affection for the Franciscan lifestyle, was to attain from Elias of Cortona the insertion of his name among those for whom the Franciscans pray regularly. It is also possible that with this letter the Emperor tried to establish a good relationship with the rapidly growing international order.²³

Elizabeth's life inspired also the mendicant orders. Roughly at the same time when the Dominican collections of *abbreviationes* appeared (which I will treat in the next section), anonymous Franciscan authors also composed several legends about her, often embellishing her hagiography with new miraculous elements. The legend beginning *Beata Elisabeth filia Regis Ungarorum in purpura et deliciis nobiliter educata* (also called the *Tuscan Vita*), probably written by a Franciscan friar from Tuscany and dated between the second half of the thirteenth and the first decades of the fourteenth century, contains the earliest extant version of the miracle of the roses.²⁴ It gives a concise description of the miracle: "Whatever she could, she distributed to the poor. Once when she was stealing some food out of the kitchen, it was changed, by divine intervention, into flowers in full bloom as she clutched it to her

²¹ Ibid., 241-242.

²² Helmut Beumann, "Friedrich II und die heilige Elisabeth. Zum Besuch des Kaisers in Marburg am 1. Mai 1236," in *Sankt Elisabeth Fürstin, Dienerin, Heilige*, 151-166, on 156-162.

²³ Gecser, "Lives of St. Elizabeth," 63-64.

²⁴ The legend was found by Leonhard Lemmens in 1901 in the Biblioteca Laurenziana, Plut. 35 sin. 9, ff. 32v-34r; BHL no. 2510b and is edited in the *Speculum maius*, 4 vols. (Douai: 1624), vol. 4, 1279. The dating of the manuscript is rather complicated and debated. For a brief summary, see Gecser, "Il miracolo delle rose," *Il miracolo delle rose*, *Annuario dell'Accademia d'Ungheria in Roma* (Rome: Accademia d'Ungheria in Roma – Istituto Storico "Fraknoi," 2005), 240-247, on 241-242, and his "Lives of St. Elizabeth," 75.

breast.”²⁵ The other new miracle the *Tuscan Vita* narrates is the miracle of the dress, in which Elizabeth, not having a proper dress, refuses to meet a noble guest, but an angel brings her a gown and a crown sent by her Heavenly Spouse.²⁶

Another version of the miracle of the roses is to be found in a Franciscan *Vita*, composed in the last decades of the thirteenth century.²⁷ According to this version, Elizabeth regularly took food from the kitchen of the palace to give to the poor, but one winter day the king, hearing the lament of the cooks, stopped his daughter, who is carrying food, and asked her what was in her lap. Elizabeth, inspired by the Holy Spirit responded that they were roses. And indeed, when she showed the king what she was carrying, there were roses instead of the food. Thus her father, understanding what the miracle meant, proclaimed that Elizabeth might dedicate herself to charity without any restrictions.²⁸ This account of the miracle cannot derive from the rather brief *Tuscan Vita*, but seems to be based on a more ancient tradition that originated in the German territories.²⁹ The Franciscan *Vita* also narrates the miracle of the dress with the addition that Elizabeth was afraid to put her husband in an embarrassing situation because of her plain dress.³⁰

Simultaneously with the Latin *vitae*, as early as the second half of the thirteenth century, the first vernacular life of Elizabeth appeared in France. The more than 2000 line-long poem, *La vie de sainte Elysabel, fille du roi de Hongrie*,³¹ based on the *Libellus*, was composed between 1258 and 1270 by Rutebeuf, one of the most famous poets of the age. The

²⁵ Lemmens, “Zur Biographie,” 15: *Pauperibus quodcumque poterat impendebat. In cujus gremio, dum cibos ablatus de coquina deferret, inventi sunt flores vernantes divinitus commutati.*

²⁶ Ibid., 16.

²⁷ BHL 2509d. The legend was edited by Lori Pieper “A New Life of St. Elizabeth of Hungary,” *Archivum Franciscanum Historicum* 93 (2000), 29-78.

²⁸ Pieper “A New Life of St. Elizabeth of Hungary,” on 51-52: *Cum autem ab infantia secum cresceret miseratio, regii palatii coquinas frequentare consueverat, non ut sibi sed pauperibus in delicatas provideret. Suciis hominis, clare ridendis duorum oculorum luminibus adornata. Quod intuentes astabant, in excelsis Dei magnolia laudaverunt, qui per beatam Elisabeth dignatus est tantum coram eis miraculum operari.*

²⁹ Gecser, “Il miracolo delle rose,” 242.

³⁰ Pieper “A New Life of St. Elizabeth of Hungary,” 53.

³¹ Rutebeuf, *La vie saint Elysabel*, in *Oeuvres complètes de Rutebeuf*, ed. Edmond Faral and Julia Bastin (Paris: Picard, 1959-60), II, 60-66. Some parts of the poem were translated into English by Brigitte Cazelles, in her *The*

life, or rather the hagiographic romance of Elizabeth, was dedicated to Isabelle of Champagne, Queen of Navarre (1242-1271), who was the daughter of King Louis IX and was acquainted with the cult of the saint already through her grandmother, Blanche of Castile.³² The lives of St. Elizabeth and Isabella share a number of things in common. When Isabella's husband, Thibaut of Champagne died in the Tunisian Crusade in 1270, she took, just like Elizabeth, a solemn vow of chastity. Together with the French verse legend of Nicolas de Bozon, a Nottingham Franciscan who wrote the *Life* for the Anglo-Norman speaking nobility, three rhymed legends and three prose versions were composed on the saint until the first quarter of the fourteenth century.³³

The most elaborated version of Elizabeth's life was the *Vita S. Elisabethae, viduae landgravii Thuringiae*, composed by the Dominican Theodoric of Apolda between 1289 and 1297.³⁴ Apart from the *De sancta Elizabeth* of the *Legenda Auera*, this was her most popular and widespread *vita*. Since Theodoric was not an eyewitness of the life of Elizabeth and he also knew about the numerous legends that were circulating already at that time, he needed

Lady as Saint: A Collection of French Hagiographic Romances of the Thirteenth Century, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1991), 152-169.

³² Blanche of Castile (1188-1252) was the daughter of the Spanish king, Alfonso VIII. She ruled together with her son Louis (the future saint) until 1252. She had close ties with the Cistercians as well as the mendicant orders and was influenced by the saintly example of Elizabeth. As the French chronicler narrates, when in 1241 Blanche met her son, Hermann II she "devoutly kissed him on the forehead, for she understood that his mother, too, had often kissed him there." Joinville, *Vie de saint Louis*, ed. Jacques Monfrin (Paris: Classiques Garnier, 1995), ch. 96, 48, quoted in Klaniczay, *Holy Rulers*, 236.

³³ Nicolas Bozon's legend and another by an anonymous author were edited in Louis Karl, "Vie de sainte Elisabeth de Hongrie par Nicolas Bozon" and "Vie de sainte Elisabeth de Hongrie," in *Zeitschrift für romanische Philologie* 34 (1910), 295-314; 708-33. The third one by Robert de Cambigneul, was edited together with the works of Rutebeuf in the volume of Achille Jubinal, *Oeuvres complètes de Rutebeuf*, vol.2, (Paris: 1839), 360-411. For the three prose versions, see Ilona Balázs, *Magyarországi Szent Erzsébet a XIII. század francia irodalmában* [Saint Elizabeth of Hungary in the thirteenth-century French literature], (Budapest: Dunántúl Könyvkiadó, 1930), 11.

³⁴ *BHL* 2510b, its most recent edition was made by Monika Renner, *Die Vita der heiligen Elisabeth des Dietrich von Apolda* (Marburg: Elwert, 1993), (Veröffentlichungen der historischen Kommission für Hessen 53). For a more comprehensive treatment of the work, see Matthias Werner, "Die Elisabeth-Vita des Dietrich von Apolda als Beispiel spätmittelalterlicher Hagiographie," in *Geschichtsschreibung und Geschichtsbewußtsein im späten Mittelalter*, ed. Hans Patze, Vorträge und Forschungen 31 (Sigmaringen: Thorbecke, 1987), 523-541. On the sources and the formation of the *vita*, see Monika Renner, "La formazione della leggenda di Dietrich von Apolda," in *Annuario dell'Accademia d'Ungheria in Roma* (Rome: Accademia d'Ungheria in Roma – Istituto Storico "Fraknoi," 2005): 233-247. For a good synthesis in Hungarian, see the introduction of Ottó Gecser for the Hungarian edition of Dietrich's Elisabeth-Vita in *Legendák és csodák (13-16. század). Szentek a magyar középkorból II.* [Legends and miracles from the thirteenth to sixteenth centuries. Saints from the Hungarian Middle Ages II.], ed. Gábor Klaniczay and Edit Madas (Budapest: Osiris, 2001), 7-12.

another needed another justification to compose another *vita* of the saint.³⁵ In addition, he was also motivated by the dissatisfaction with the previous biographic accounts of Elizabeth because they primarily served the promotion of her canonization process and did not provide an exhaustive and vivid portrayal of the saint.³⁶ Thus the aim of Theodoric was to compose a new one on the basis of the sources he had access to, reorganizing and amplifying her biography with the addition of personal and geographical names, ranks and dates. Factuality played an essential role in his biography: in the prologue, he lists all his sources: the *Summa vitae* with the series of miracles sent to Rome in 1232, the *Libellus*, and a sermon composed by the Dominican friar Odo. Besides, he mentions to have relied on various chronicles and oral sources as well, but he omits from his list the *Gesta Ludowici*³⁷ written by a court cleric called Bertholdus capellanus, which was clearly used for the portrayal of the landgrave who had always assisted Elizabeth in her pious activities. Theodoric divided the *vita* in eight *libelli*: one is dedicated to her childhood, two and a half to her marriage, thee and a half to her widowhood, and another one to her canonization and translation. Apart from giving an account of three miracles that were not reported in the earlier sources, (the miraculously caught fish, Elizabeth's visionary dream of her mother, and the miracle of the dress), Theodoric's most substantial novelty is that he pays particular attention to the relationship between Elizabeth and Ludwig. While in the earlier biographical accounts we find that she married to the landgrave by the order of her father and regretted that she had not remained virgin, Theodoric narrates, on the basis of the testimony of Guda, that they have been close friends from their childhood on and they had to surmount numerous difficulties before their

³⁵ Rener, "La formazione," 235.

³⁶ Ibid., 236.

³⁷ Only parts of the *Gesta Ludowici* survived, incorporated in the *Chronica Reinhardsbrunnensis*, ed. Oswald Holder Egger in MGH SS (=Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Scriptores) (Hannover, Hahn, 1896), vol. 30, 491-656, first completed in 1340/49; and a later composition from 1314/23 in Friedrich Köditz's *Das Leben des Heiligen Ludwig, Landgrafen in Thüringen, Gemahls der Heiligen Elisabeth*, ed. Heinrich Rückert (Leipzig: Weigel, 1851).

marriage.³⁸ The hagiographer elaborated a moving scene at the farewell before the landgrave's leaving for the Holy Land. The great success of this *vita*, as Monika Renner pointed out, was due to Theodoric's recognition that only through the inclusion of Elizabeth's courtly life, her love for Ludwig and for their children her sacrifice when renouncing of her family relations and social privileges can be fully represented.³⁹

After this chronological digression, in the next section, going back some 50 years in time, I proceed with the presentation of the Dominican "invention" of a new type of legendary that reached a much wider audience than her previous legends. The *legendae novae* contributed greatly to the standardization of Elizabeth's cult since her life was included in three collections of *abbreviationes*, among them the *Legenda Aurea*.

1.3 The Dominican *Abbreviationes* and the *Legenda Aurea*

Although the first abbreviated legendaries, also called *legendae novae*, began to spread as early as the second half of the twelfth century, the voluminous *abbreviationes* of the Dominicans appeared only in the third decade of the thirteenth century. It is not by chance that the heyday of these legendaries coincided with the rapid diffusion of the mendicant orders that used the saints' lives as manuals for preaching in order to provide models for the lay audience to follow. The reason why only a few contemporary saints figured in the *legendae novae* may be that most authors preferred to write about saints not strongly connected to one time and place.⁴⁰ However, the users of the legendaries frequently completed them with the *vitae* of local or patron saints. The first Dominican author of this genre was John of Mailly, who compiled his *Abbreviatio in gestis et miraculis sanctorum* between 1225 and 1230. The large number of manuscripts and the effect it had on the works

³⁸ Gecser, "Aspects of the Cult of St. Elizabeth," 39-40.

³⁹ Renner, "La formazione," 238.

of Vincent of Beauvais and James of Varazze both show that his collection was quite successful.⁴¹

The first author of this new genre who included the life of Elizabeth in his collection, entitled *Liber epilogorum in gestis sanctorum*, was Bartholomew of Trent.⁴² The 355 short texts are arranged in the order of the ecclesiastical calendar. Although the legend of Elizabeth is only two pages long, it contains some remarkable novelties. In addition to narrating the apparition of Gertrude in Elizabeth's dream, the episode of the miraculously caught fish from a spring in which there was no fish before, the sounding of the *Regnum mundi* at the moment of the saint's death, and the emanation of oil from the tomb, Bartholomew is the first who, instead of narrating the spiritual engagement of Christ and Elizabeth as in the *Dicta* or the *Libellus*, moved Christ's appearance to right before her death. It is not possible to say with certainty what his main source was, but as he was an important diplomat moving between Pope Gregory IX and Frederick II he must have had access to oral accounts as well as written sources from which he could compile her *vita*.⁴³

The other Dominican who engaged in composing a legendary was Vincent of Beauvais, the tutor at the French court of the children of Louis VIII and Blanche of Castile. Around 1244 he compiled the *Speculum historiale*, which is quite different from the other abbreviated legendaries.⁴⁴ Nearly 900 of its 3800 chapters are dedicated to saints' lives. In addition to St. Elizabeth, he also included the lives of contemporary saints like St. Dominic,

⁴⁰ Viktória Hedvig Deák, *Árpád-házi Szent Margit és a domonkos hagiográfia: Garinus legendája nyomában* [St. Margaret of the Arpadian dynasty and the Dominican hagiography: tracing the legend of Garinus] (Budapest: Kairosz, 2005), 79-80.

⁴¹ *Lo spazio letterario del Medioevo*, 2. *Il Medioevo volgare: La circolazione del testo*, ed. Pietro Boitani, et al., (Rome: Salerno Editrice, 2002), 639-642.

⁴² Bartolomeo da Trento, *Liber epilogorum in gesta sanctorum*, ed. Emore Paoli (Edizione nazionale dei testi mediolatini, 2) (Florence: SISMEL, 2001). On Bartholomew of Trent and his influence on the formation of Dominican *abbreviationes*, see Alain Boureau, "Barthélémy de Trente et l'invention de la 'Legenda nova,'" in *Raccolte di vite di santi dal XIII al XVIII secolo. Strutture, messaggi, fruizioni*, ed. Sofia Boesch Gajano (Fasano di Brindisi: Schena editore), 23-40.

⁴³ Gecser, "Lives of St. Elizabeth," 69.

⁴⁴ BHL 2510, edited in his *Speculum maius*, vol. 4 (Douai, 1624), 1279. For a more detailed treatment of Vincent de Beauvais, see *Vincent de Beauvais, frère prêcheur. Un intellectuel et son milieu au XIII^e siècle*, ed. Serge Lusignan and Monique Paulmier-Foucart (Paris: Grâne, 1997).

St. Francis, and St. Anthony of Padua, Marie d'Oignies, and other saintly beguines. Most of the carefully compiled *vita* is about the widowhood of Elizabeth, drawing attention to her contemplative rather than her active life.

These *abbreviationes*, were, however, pushed into the background by the most famous and widespread legendary, James of Varazze's *Legenda Aurea*.⁴⁵ Despite its great popularity, there were attempts in the next generations of Dominicans to produce a better collection of the same kind. Around 1320, the master general of the order, Berengar of Landorra, commissioned Bernard Gui to compose a new legendary. However, the four-part legendary he compiled, entitled *Speculum sanctorale*, was soon forgotten. The other works that might have been designed to compete with James of Varazze's legendary, such as the huge collection compiled by Peter Calo of Clugia or Peter Natalibus's *Catalogus sanctorum et gestorum eorum*,⁴⁶ never reached the *Legenda Aurea*'s enormous popularity.⁴⁷

1.4 The Composition of the *Legenda Aurea*

James of Varazze (Jacobus de Voragine) left several volumes of sermons and a *Chronicle of Genoa* as well as his major work, the *Legenda aurea*,⁴⁸ which he started to write around 1260 and kept on revising and adding new legends to until his death in 1298.⁴⁹ It was known under various titles, such as *Liber passionalis*, *Vitae* or *Flores* or *Speculum sanctorum*

⁴⁵ On the tradition and the methodology of the composition of the *legendae novae*, see Giovanni Paolo Maggioni, "Parole taciute, parole ritrovate. I racconti agiografici di Giovanni da Mailly, Bartolomeo da Trento e Iacopo da Varazze," *Hagioraphica* 10, (2003): 183-200.

⁴⁶ Petrus de Natalibus, *Catalogus sanctorum et gestorum eorum*, ed. Antonius Verlus (Vicenza: Henricus de Sancto Ursio, Zenus, 1493).

⁴⁷ Sherry L. Reames, *The "Legenda aurea." A Reexamination of its Paradoxical History* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985), 40-41.

⁴⁸ The author was born in the town of Varazze on the Genoese Riviera around 1230 and entered the Dominican Order in 1244. He became the archbishop of Genoa in 1292. He died six years later and was beatified by Pope Pious VII in 1816 and is venerated as a saint by the Dominican Order, the city, and the province of Genoa. For further information on James of Varazze, see Ernest Cushing Richardson, *Materials for a Life of Jacopo da Varagine* (New York: The H. W. Wilson Company, 1935).

⁴⁹ As an editor Giovanni Paolo Maggioni provides a concise informative overview of the history of James of Varazze's collection of legends in the introduction to the recently published *Legenda Aurea: con le miniature del codice Ambrosiano C 240 inf.*, 2 vols. (Florence: SISMEL, 2008), vol. 1, xvii. Among the scholarly works

or *Historia Lombardica/ Longobardica*. This collection of saints' legends belongs to the genre of the *legendae novae*. It is written in Latin, based on the compilation of other hagiographic works, and intended primarily for Dominican preachers with the aim of elaborating and abridging the immense hagiographic material that had accumulated by that time.⁵⁰ The work contains 178 legends and feasts organized according to the liturgical calendar. Even though most of the saints presented in the *Legenda aurea* are from the first centuries of Christianity, some "modern" saints were included, two from the twelfth century, Bernard of Clairvaux (d. 1153) and Thomas Becket (d.1170), and four from the thirteenth century: St. Dominic (d. 1221), St. Francis of Assisi (d. 1226), St. Peter of Verona (d. 1252), and St. Elizabeth of Hungary (d. 1231).⁵¹ James of Varazze compiled their legends on the basis of official texts like canonization processes or bulls, as well as their *vitae* written by members of the mendicant orders.⁵² The reason why these saints figure in this *legendarium*, besides being illustrious representatives of the recently founded mendicant orders, is that their lives could serve as examples for the lay public. In the course of the time, the author's attention shifted from the edifying examples to the more enthralling ones and he inserted some legends in his collection from the apocryphal literature.⁵³ The main sources of the *Legenda Aurea*, apart from the Bible, the Church Fathers, and various historical sources, were the works of other Dominican friars: the *Abbreuatio in gestis sanctorum* by John of Mailly and the *Liber epilogorum in gestis sanctorum* by Bartholomew of Trent. However, James of Varazze was not always satisfied with what they had written, so now and then he rewrote or made substitutions in the parts he did not like. Due to this complication in the sources, four different types of texts can be distinguished in his collection: parts that are copied word for

on the *Legenda Aurea* one must also mention Alain Boureau, *Le legend dorée: Le système narratif de Jacques de Voragine* (+1298) (Paris: Cerf, 1984).

⁵⁰ Giovanni Paolo Maggioni, *Ricerche sulla composizione e sulla trasmissione della 'Legenda aurea.'* Biblioteca di "Medioevo latino" 8 (Spoleto: Centro italiano di studi sull'alto Medioevo, 1995), 65.

⁵¹ Maggioni, *Legenda Aurea: con le miniature del codice Ambrosiano C 240 inf.*, vol. 1, xvii.

word from one source; parts that are based on one main source despite being large interpolations; parts compiled from various original *vitae* and *passionales*; and parts that can be attributed exclusively to James.⁵⁴ He also added etymologies to most of the legends of the saints, and dissolving the compound name into its component elements, he demonstrated what the name meant when, by the providence of God, it was conferred on the future saint.⁵⁵

1.5 *De sancta Elizabeth*

Since the chapter dedicated to St. Elizabeth, the *De sancta Elizabeth*, is missing from most of the collated witness manuscripts, not only the date of its compilation but also its authenticity has been questioned.⁵⁶ Nevertheless, the research of Giovanni Maggioni, who made the first critical edition of the *Legenda Aurea*, has shown the presence of her legend in a manuscript written between 1272 and 1276 in the Dominican convent of Bologna exactly from the same period when James of Varazze was the provincial prior of Lombardy in the same city.⁵⁷ The manuscript contains Elizabeth's *Vita* in both the table of contents and the

⁵² André Vauchez, "Jacques de Voragine et les saints du XIII^e siècle dans la *Légende Dorée*," in *Legenda aurea: Sept siècles de diffusion*, ed. Brenda Dunn-Lardeau (Montréal: Bellarmin, 1986), 27-56, on 48.

⁵³ Maggioni, *Legenda Aurea: con le miniature del codice Ambrosiano C 240 inf.*, vol. 1, xviii.

⁵⁴ Maggioni, *Ricerche*, 65-74.

⁵⁵ William Granger Ryan, in the preface to his English translation, *The Golden Legend. Readings on the Saints*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), vol. 1, xvii.

⁵⁶ Teodor Wyzewa in his introduction to the French translation of the legendary argued that the legends of St. Francis and St. Elizabeth were later additions to the *corpus* since due to the tensions between the two mendicant orders the Dominican author would not have included two saints from the rival order. He supported his assumption by saying that these biographies were not included in the oldest manuscript of the *Legenda Aurea* (on the basis of earlier research, it was MS Paris, BNF, Nouv. Acq. Lat, 1800, written in 1283); see *Le Bienheureux Jacques de Voragine, La Légende dorée* (Paris: Librairie Académique Perrin, 1909), 561. André Vauchez, in turn, pointed out in his article "Jacques de Voragine et les saints du XIII^e siècle dans la *Légende Dorée*," 29, that ms Munich, Staatsbibl., Clm 13029, written in 1282, reported St. Elizabeth's legend in the appendix. In addition, he also highlighted the essential role of the four modern saints in the legendary.

⁵⁷ In order to establish a *stemma* of the different Latin versions, Maggioni took into consideration only the 70 oldest manuscripts from the thirteenth century, when James of Varazze was still alive. He established two phases of compilation and he identified two manuscripts that can be considered authentic, since they come from Bologna and Genoa and date to the periods when James of Varazze lived there. One of them is a manuscript from Bologna, copied between between about 1272 and 1276, when James was the prior of Lombardy, Italy, which had its seat in the same town. The other manuscript is from Genoa, written between 1292 and 1298, in the period when the author was the archbishop of that city. These two privileged manuscripts today are kept in the Biblioteca Ambrosiana of Milan: the Bolognese manuscript is MS C 240 inf, the Genovese manuscript is MS M 76 supplementum. Maggioni, *Ricerche*, 96.

body,⁵⁸ which means that it was composed before 1276. The anomalies related to its spread show that the chapter *De sancta Elizabeth* was probably one of the last sections to be inserted in this collection of legends.⁵⁹ In addition to its frequent absence from the collection, there are several other points of interest regarding the chapter dedicated to St. Elizabeth. For instance, in one of the manuscripts her legend can be found at the beginning of the *Legenda aurea*, although normally the chapters added later were placed at the end of a manuscript. In contrast, another manuscript reports the original *vita* of St. Elizabeth in her “canonical” position, between the legends of St. Brice and St. Cecily. This type of substitution was quite usual at that time if it concerned a saint who was especially respected. The copyist, instead of using James of Varazze’s version, copied the original *vita* of St. Elizabeth into the manuscript.⁶⁰

The most important source of the legend of St. Elizabeth was the *Dicta quatuor ancillarum* (the earlier, shorter version of the *Libellus*). As for the miracles listed in the *Legenda Aurea*, James of Varazze in all likelihood used the first series of the miraculous cures that Conrad of Marburg sent, together with his short biographical account, to Pope Gregory IX in 1232 and the two other lists of miracles which were compiled and sent to Rome by the two pontifical commissioners, Conrad of Hildesheim and Hermann of Georgenthal. Relating to the other sources, opinions are divided. On the one hand, Vauchez maintains that James of Varazze disregarded two widespread hagiographical texts in German territory; that is, the *Vita sanctae Elyzabeth* by Ceasar of Heisterbach (1237/38) and the *Zwettl Vita*.⁶¹ On the other hand, Maggioni argues that the legend of St. Elizabeth in the *Legenda Aurea* contains some references to the *Vita* written by Caesar of Heisterbach; among

⁵⁸ Ibid., 550.

⁵⁹ Maggioni, *Ricerche*, 136-137.

⁶⁰ Maggioni, *Ricerche*, 136. Nevertheless, it is not clear to which Elizabeth *vita* Maggioni refers.

⁶¹ Vauchez, “Jacques de Voragine et les saints du XIII^e siècle dans la *Légende Dorée*,” 41.

others, the etymological introduction of the saint's name.⁶² Of the two thirteenth-century Dominican authors of collections of saints' legends, only Bartholomew of Trent provided a shortened version of the *Vita sanctae Elyzabeth* by Ceasar of Heisterbach; John of Mailly did not mention St. Elizabeth in his collection of *abbreviationes*.

In the *Legenda aurea* the chapter dedicated to St. Elizabeth begins – as do almost all the chapters – with the etymology of the name of the saint, followed by the narration of her life based on the *Dicta*⁶³ (not always in the same chronological order), and ends with a collection of *post mortem* miracles. The Dominican hagiographer elaborated the biblical example of the seed in the three states of her life (the married, the widowed, and the religious), which will yield thirtyfold, sixtyfold, and hundredfold rewards in heaven.⁶⁴ He portrays the saint as a loving wife and mother who is particularly fond of children, and Ludwig as a patient and supporting husband. While the earlier hagiographers usually emphasized either her *vita activa* or her *vita contemplativa*, in James of Varazze both aspects are present. Her mystical side is presented not only in her frequent visions and ecstasies, but also in her conversations with Christ.⁶⁵ Although all these episodes are based on the testimonies of the four maids, according to Ottó Gecser some of the differences between the versions can be attributed to the influence of Bartholomew of Trent. Like his predecessor, the author of the *Legenda Aurea* reports the apparition of Christ before the death of Elizabeth, but

⁶² Maggioni, *Legenda Aurea con le miniature del codice Ambrosiano C 240 inf.*, vol. 2, 1695.

⁶³ Ottó Gecser has convincingly argued in his “Lives of St. Elizabeth,” 72, n.107 that the main source of St. Elizabeth's *vita* was not the *Libellus de dictis quatuor ancillarum*, but the *Dicta*, since James of Varazze did not use any of the additions to the testimonies of the handmaids, and regarding the events narrated in the conclusion of the *Libellus*, he only reports the oil miracle, which he could have known from other sources, too; see Monika Reber, *Die Gestaltung des Cultes*, 38. His opinion is not shared, however, by André Vauchez, “Jacques de Voragine et les saints du XIII^e siècle dans la *Légende Dorée*”, or Maggioni, in the “*Legenda Aurea: con le miniature del codice Ambrosiano C 240 inf.*”, vol. 2, 1695, who both maintain that its main source was the *Libellus*.

⁶⁴ The idea that virgin women could expect to receive a hundredfold, widows sixty-fold and spouses thirty-fold rewards in heaven was formulated around the fifth century and had a great impact both on religious practices and on the social order. Its biblical basis lies in the Synoptic Gospels (Matt. 13:3-8; Mark 4:8; Luke 8:5-8), Jesus describes how portions of the seed cast by the sower fall into places where they cannot yield grain, but the fourth portion, which falls in good soil, is divided into three categories, yielding a hundredfold, sixtyfold and thirtyfold.

that is the second appearance after the scene of the spiritual engagement taken from the *Dicta*. James of Varazze also writes about the *Regnum mundi*, but he adds that this melody was heard *quod in laudibus uirginum canitur audiretur*.⁶⁶ Furthermore, he gives an account of the oil that emanated from the saint's body in her tomb. His most remarkable original addition is that it was St. Elizabeth who convinced her husband to go on a crusade in order to deliver the Holy Land from the enemies of the Christian faith.⁶⁷

1.6 The Diffusion of the Legendary: The Vernacular Translations and Adaptations

The *Legenda Aurea* has survived in more than 900 Latin manuscripts.⁶⁸ The manuscripts of the Latin text are still so common that 55 of them are preserved in the public libraries of Paris, 46 in the Staatsbibliothek at Munich, 27 in Oxford, and so on.⁶⁹ It was so popular that the first vernacular versions appeared as early as the beginning of the fourteenth century and 150 years later translations or adaptations of James of Varazze's work had been made in all the major European languages: French, Spanish, Italian, Provençal, English, High and Low German and Bohemian, sometimes in more than one version per language.

The *Legenda Aurea* has ten different German and Dutch full translations, not to mention the multitudinous translations of the single legends.⁷⁰ The earliest rhymed legendary based on the *Legenda Aurea* that diffused widely in the first half of the fourteenth century was the *Passional* (also known as *Verspassional*).⁷¹ It was made by an anonymous author

⁶⁵ In Vauchez' opinion, with this bridal imagery, used by the béginages and the Flemish and German recluses, James of Varazze showed his ability to understand and transmit the most important new religious current of his time. Vauchez, "Jacques de Voragine et les saints du XIII^e siècle dans la *Légende Dorée*," 53.

⁶⁶ Iacopo da Varazze, *Legenda Aurea*, 1171.

⁶⁷ Gecser, "Aspects of the Cult of St. Elizabeth," 26.

⁶⁸ Since the Latin manuscript tradition of the legendary is huge and complicated, I do not treat it here. For a more comprehensive treatment, see Barbara Fleith, *Studien zur Überlieferungsgeschichte der lateinischer Legenda aurea*, (Brussels: Société des Bollandistes, 1991) and Maggioni, *Ricerche*.

⁶⁹ All the dates and figures are from Reames, *The Legenda aurea*, 4-5.

⁷⁰ I sum up the German tradition on the basis of the study of Werner Williams-Krapp, "German and Dutch Translations of the *Legenda Aurea*," in *Legenda aurea: Sept siècles de diffusion*, ed. Brenda Dunn-Lardeau, (Montréal: Bellarmin, 1986), 227-232.

⁷¹ While Williams Krapp maintains that there was a similarly widespread collection based on the *Legenda Aurea*, the *Märterbuch*, see his "German and Dutch Translations of the *Legenda Aurea*" on 227-228, according

associated with the Teutonic Order, probably for common readings in the refectory for the members not well-versed in Latin.⁷² It was composed in Central Germany as early as the turn of the thirteenth century, so it is possible that the collection was already completed in James of Varazze's lifetime. The popularity of the vernacular *abbreviationes* is attested by the fact that it was transmitted in more than 90 manuscripts. From the structural point of view, the *Passional* is different from the *Legenda Aurea*; it is divided into three books -- the first book containing the feasts of the Virgin, the second the lives of the apostles, the third 75 saints' lives arranged in the order of the liturgical year -- which were usually transmitted separately. The large number of different translations (three Bavarian/East Franconian, two Alemannic, two Central German, two Dutch, and one Low German) is due to the dialect boundaries in the huge territory of the German- and Dutch-speaking area. The first Dutch translation was presumably made by a Carthusian in the Herne Charterhouse in Belgium around 1358. It was transmitted in over 100 manuscripts and had thirteen printed editions. In the course of the time, the original *corpus* of the Latin legendary was expanded. According to Williams-Krapp, the additions were also motivated by the needs of monastic communities; since they used these collections in daily communal readings, the 170 legends were not enough for an entire year. The most widespread collection of legends was the *Der Heiligen Leben*, compiled at the turn of the fourteenth century by a Dominican friar who reworked the *Legenda Aurea*, correcting its major weaknesses in content and structure, including more than 100 lives of Central European saints. The nearly 200 extant manuscripts and 41 printed

to Barbara Baert the source of the *Märterbuch* was not the *Legenda Aurea*, but an older, twelfth-century Latin compilation of *vitae*. The text was made for the Countess of Rosenberg, originally around 1300 in the area of eastern Franconia, southern Bohemia or Austria. Baert, *A Heritage of Holy Wood. The Legend of the True Cross in Text and Image*, (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 205, n. 37.

⁷² The Middle German *Passional* was edited by Friedrich Karl Köpke, *Das Passional. Eine Legenden-Slg. Des 13. Jh.* (Quedlinburg: 1852), 618-629. Whereas in most cases, his saints' lives are translations from those of the *Legenda Aurea*, in the case of St. Elizabeth he relied mostly on the *Libellus* and the *Summa vitae*, but presumably also on the *Reinhardsbrunnen Bearbeitung*, see Monica Reber, *Die Gestaltung des Kultes*, 39-40.

editions show that it reached an extremely wide audience.⁷³ This legendary, together with the *Alsatian* (or *Elsässische*) *Legenda Aurea*⁷⁴ and the *Southern Netherlandish Legenda Aurea* basically dominated all the German and Dutch-speaking areas.⁷⁵ The prologues, the etymologies, and the *de tempore* parts are frequently omitted in the vernacular versions and only one manuscript reports the name of James of Varazze.

As to the French translations, Paul Meyer has identified seven different medieval versions.⁷⁶ The most well-known was made by Jean de Vignay at the request of Jeanne de Bourgogne, queen of Philippe VI de Valois, in 1333-34.⁷⁷ The text is a close translation of the original Latin version, targeting a royal and aristocratic audience. Jean de Vignay was a clergyman who specialised in making translations for the court.⁷⁸ His translation served as a basis for the two English translations of the *Legenda Aurea*, the *Gilte Legende* and Caxton's *Golden Legend*. It was modified twice during the fifteenth century: first around 1402 when 42 new feasts were added to it, and then around the last decades of the century when the traditional order of the legends was changed and several more saints were included. Out of the thirty-four manuscripts, twenty-nine are illuminated.⁷⁹ The *Légende dorée* was printed in Lyon by Barthélemy Buyer for Guillaume Le Roy in 1476. This was the first incunabulum printed in the French language in France. For this occasion, Jean de Vignay's translation was

⁷³ *Der Heiligen Leben*, 2 vol., ed. Margit Brand, Bettina Jung, Werner William Krapp, (=Texte und Textgeschichte), (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 2004). For the Elizabeth-vita, see vol. 2: *Der Winterteil*, 154-178.

⁷⁴ *Das "Elsässische Legenda aurea,"* vol.1: *Das Normalcorpus*, ed. Ulla Williams and Werner Williams Krapp (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1980), 809-814. This version is not based on James of Varazze's *De sancta Elizabeth*, but on the *Libellus* and on the *Der Heiligen Leben*. Cf. Gecser, "Lives of St. Elizabeth," 99.

⁷⁵ For this southern Netherlandish translation, see Werner Williams-Krapp, *Die deutschen und niederländischen Legendäre des Mittelalters. Studien zu ihrer überlieferungs-, Text-, und Wirkungsgeschichte*, (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1986), 53-56.

⁷⁶ These translations are discussed in Paul Meyer, "Notice du MS. Med.-Pal.141 de la Laurentienne," in *Romania* 33 (1904): 1-7.

⁷⁷ There is only a partial modern edition of de Vignay's French translation by Richard Hamer and Vida Russell, "A Critical Edition of the Four Chapters from the *Légende Dorée*," *Medieval Studies* 51 (1989): 130-204. On Jean de Vignay, see Christine Knowles, "Jean de Vignay, un traducteur du XIV^e siècle," *Romania* 75 (1954): 353-383.

⁷⁸ Hilary Maddocks, "Pictures for Aristocrats: The Manuscripts of the *Légende dorée*," in *Medieval Texts and Images: Studies of Manuscripts from the Middle Ages*, ed. Margaret M. Manion and Bernard J. Muir (Chur: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1991), 1-24.

revised by Jean Batallier, a Dominican theologian of Paris. This edition was the model for more than forty editions until 1557.⁸⁰ James of Varazze's legendary also had three Occitan translations.⁸¹

Concerning the number of printed editions of the *Legenda Aurea* between the fifteenth and the seventeenth centuries, Sherry L. Reames has calculated⁸² that 87 Latin and 69 vernacular editions were published between 1470 and 1500: 17 High German, 17 French, 11 Dutch, 10 Italian, 7 Low German, 4 English and 3 Bohemian. During the Reformation and the Enlightenment it gradually lost its popularity.⁸³ In the next thirty-year period, fewer editions are attested: 21 Latin and 28 vernacular ones. Then followed a rapid decline: between 1531 and 1560 one finds only 7 Latin, 4 French and 2 Italian editions. Finally, in the next 45 years, the legendary was printed only 5 times in Italy. The *Legenda Aurea* was not republished until the end of the nineteenth century.⁸⁴

⁷⁹ Hilary Maddocks, "Illumination in Jean de Vignay's *Légende dorée*, in *Legenda aurea: Sept siècles de diffusion* (Montréal: Bellarmin, 1986), 155-169, on 155.

⁸⁰ On the translation method of Jean de Vignay and on J. Batallier's revision of his translation, see Brenda Dunn-Lardeau, "La contribution de J. Batallier à la traduction française de Jean de Vignay de la *Legenda aurea*," in *Legenda aurea: Sept siècles de diffusion*, 183-196.

⁸¹ The manuscripts are described by Paul Meyer, "La traduction provençale de la *Légende dorée*," *Romania* 27 (1898): 92-137.

⁸² The calculations of the early printed editions of the legendary are based on the finding list of Robert Francis Seybolt, "Fifteenth-Century Editions of the *Legenda Aurea*," *Speculum* 21 (1946): 327-338.

⁸³ See Josef Schmidt, "Golden Legends during the Reformation Controversy: Polemical Trivialization in the German Vernacular," in *Legenda aurea: Sept siècles de diffusion*, 267-276.

⁸⁴ Reames, *The Legenda aurea*, 5.

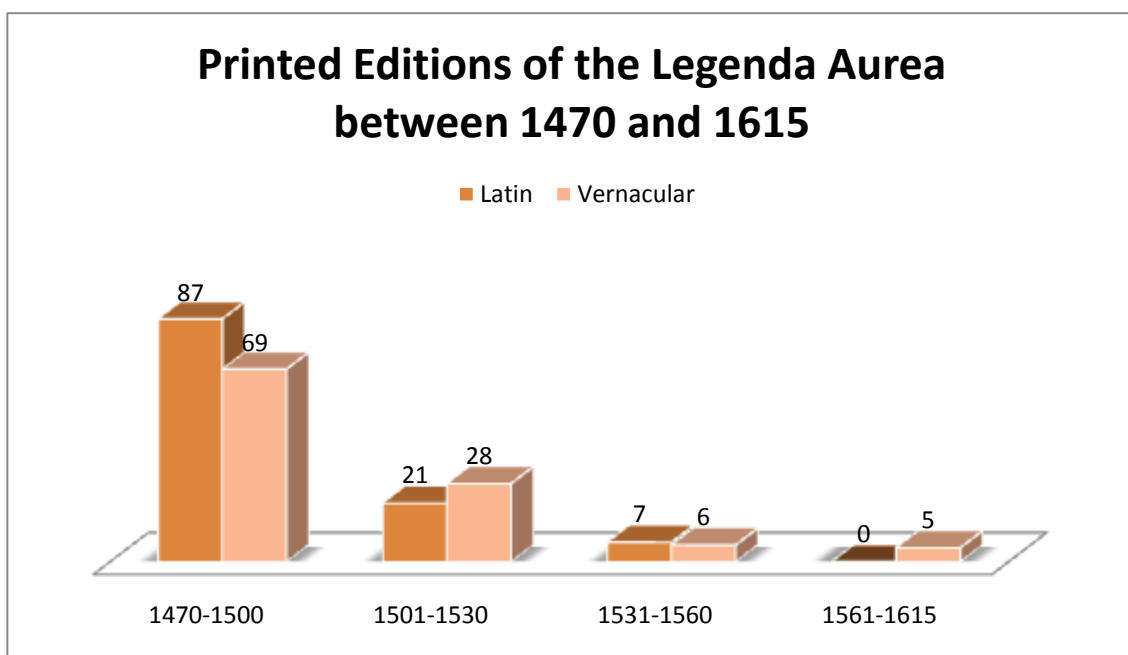
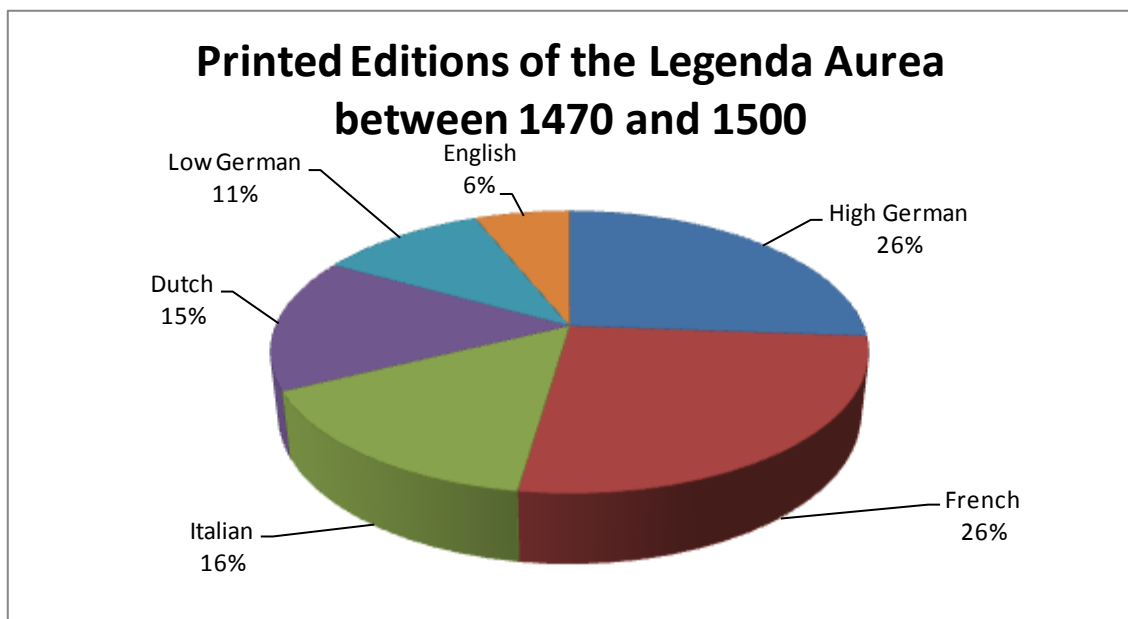


Figure 1. *Printed Editions of the Legenda Aurea in the late medieval and early modern period.*

CHAPTER TWO: THE ITALIAN TRADITION

In this chapter I present the tradition of the *Legenda Aurea* in the Italian vernacular and then I proceed with a philological comparison of the original Latin text of the *De sancta Elizabeth* in its two vernacular versions, which were transmitted independently from James of Varazze's legendary. As both Italian versions I deal with are *volgarizzamenti*, no spectacular results are expected from their collation. However, they do contain some remarkable details and display several characteristics of late medieval translations. Since I worked not on the basis of printed editions but the original manuscripts, I also had the opportunity to examine the contents and the design of the codices in which Elizabeth's two *Vitae* are preserved.

2.1 The Diffusion and the Use of the *Legenda Aurea* in Italy

The Italian tradition of James of Varazze's legendary has been thoroughly examined by Paolo Mariani, who has come to some noteworthy, sometimes rather surprising, conclusions on the basis of 143 Latin and 10 Italian codices.⁸⁵ Thus, I consider it instructive to sum up his results briefly, concentrating mainly on the vernacular tradition. By the end of the thirteenth century, the Latin *Legenda Aurea* had diffused mostly in the northern and central regions of Italy. In contrast, the three extant Latin copies originating from Southern Italy show that in this area the legendary was not so popular. After a while, the *Legenda Aurea* "entered the market" and took on new significance, depending on what the users, that is, the commissioners and the audience, attributed to it. The collection circulated mainly in the religious environment, propagated particularly by those orders who evangelized through preaching: the Franciscans, the Dominicans, and the Austin friars. The lay nobility and the

⁸⁵ Paolo Mariani, "I codici italiani della *Legenda Aurea*: committenza e fruizione di una raccolta agiografica," PhD dissertation, University of Florence, 1998, 2 vols.

ecclesiastical leaders, in turn, played a lesser role in promoting it.⁸⁶ In addition, while in France the universities had an essential role in the diffusion of the *Legenda Aurea*,⁸⁷ in Italy there is no trace of this phenomenon. Although in most cases James of Varazze's book was employed as a basis for sermons, it cannot be excluded that some of the copies were used for private reading or were read in monasteries during meals. Contrary to what one may assume, it seems that the *Legenda Aurea* in Italy, independently from its language, was quite far from the devotional environment and was rather used as a kind of encyclopaedia or a manual for sermons; it was used principally in the religious orders interested in preaching.

Concerning the Italian translations of the *Legenda Aurea*, Mariani has come to the conclusion that the Italian *corpus* attests very few general characteristics and it is not possible to establish any kind of typology among the vernacular manuscripts. The ten Italian versions he examined are dated between the end of the fourteenth and the end of the fifteenth century. None of the codices contain exactly the same collection of *vitae*, and the life of St. Elizabeth of Hungary is only present in two of them.⁸⁸ The ten manuscripts attest seven different translations, but three of them go back to the same *volgarizzamento*. Eight codices originated from Toscana, the other two presumably from the regions of Abruzzo and Veneto.⁸⁹ It is not by chance that 80% of the manuscripts come from Tuscany, the centre of vernacular literature

⁸⁶ On the basis of the manuscripts that have come down to us, it seems that there were only two noblemen, a duke of the Este family and Count Simone Guidi, who commissioned the production of copies of the *Legenda Aurea*, the latter, presumably, as a present for the Franciscan convent of Certomundo. Mariani, "I codici italiani della *Legenda Aurea*," 802.

⁸⁷ In the opinion of Barbara Fleith, the *pecia* system played a crucial role in the relatively quick textual stabilization of the *Legenda Aurea*. Barbara Fleith, "Legenda Aurea: destination, utilisateurs, propagation. L'histoire de la diffusion de légendier au XIII^e et au début du XIV^e siècle," in *Raccolte di vite di santi dal XII al XVIII secolo: strutture, messaggi, fruizione*, ed. Sofia Boesch Gajano (Fasano di Brindisi: Schena, 1990), 41-49, on 46.

⁸⁸ For the list of the manuscripts written in Italian, see Appendix II. The two codices that contain the legend of St. Elizabeth are Florence, Biblioteca Riccardiana, Riccardiano, 1254 and Giaccherino, Biblioteca del convento di S. Francesco, I.F.2. The former is dated to 1396 and was copied in Florence by "Tadeus" for the soap trader Antonio di Guido Berti; the latter was produced in the third quarter of the fifteenth century, presumably by and for the Franciscan friars of Giaccherino. Mariani, "I codici italiani della *Legenda Aurea*," 750 and 764.

⁸⁹ The three manuscripts based on the same translation are Florence, MS Biblioteca Riccardiana, Riccardiano, 1254; Florence, MS Biblioteca Riccardiana, Riccardiano, 1388; Giaccherino, MS Biblioteca del convento di S. Francesco, I.F.2. The manuscripts from Abruzzo and the one from Veneto are in Naples, MS Biblioteca Nazionale, VIII.B.33 and Venice, MS Biblioteca Nazionale di S. Marco, It. Cl. I.72 (5054), respectively.

in the fourteenth century. By this time, a large number of the population was literate and the Tuscan dialect had already been stabilized.⁹⁰

It is quite unexpected that there are only three (strictly speaking, two) manuscripts that contain the full Italian translation of the *Legenda Aurea* and all the others are *florilegia* of different lengths. The richest *corpus* is that of MS Riccardiano 1245, published by Arrigo Levasti, containing all together 177 *vitae* to which two Florentine saints, Zenobio and Miniato, were added. The other manuscript from the same family is the one preserved in the Franciscan monastery of Giaccherino, which, compared to the former, omits five legends. The third quite comprehensive translation is preserved in Venice and was translated into Venetian dialect by the Dominican Filippo Strada. The other seven manuscripts, in contrast, preserve only selected legends from the legendary of James of Varazze, so they should be regarded as independent *florilegia*.

The overwhelming majority of scholars maintain that the vernacular versions of the *Legenda Aurea* were made for a lay audience for practical reasons. Mariani, in contrast, has argued that the translation of the legendary in its entirety implies a process and a motivation different from that of the *florilegia*. It seems that in Italy only a few people, even the laity, felt the need to translate the whole *Legenda Aurea*. Most of the vernacular versions of the various *vitae* compiled by James of Varazze are reported in miscellaneous codices and in *florilegia* which belong to a different category; they are shorter, more specific and economic than the full legendary. These compilations of excerpts would be used by lay people and the members of the Third Orders.⁹¹ In accordance with this, on the basis of the *Biblioteca agiografica italiana* (BAI), in addition to the two *Legenda Aurea* translations that contain the life of St.

⁹⁰ For further information on the relationship between culture and literature in the medieval Tuscany, see Franco Cardini, *Cultura e società nella Toscana medievale: Firenze e Prato*, (Florence: Loggia de' Lanzi, 1996).

⁹¹ Mariani, "I codici italiani della *Legenda Aurea*," 794.

Elizabeth, there are at least two other types of vernacular adaptation of her legend.⁹² Her *vita* was also published as part of the *Legenda Aurea*, which, according to the finding list of Anne Jacobson Schutte, had 25 different vernacular editions in Italy between 1465 and 1550.⁹³ In addition to Elizabeth's life in the *Legenda Aurea*, some of the miracles collected during the canonization process as well as the testimonies of the four handmaids were also translated in the fourteenth century. Of the latter, only the beginning has survived, preceded by a short introduction: "E imperciò, carissimi, 'scoltando state cheti e queste parole salutifere udite con quiete.'" This indicates that the text was intended for public reading either for a community of male tertiaries or for the lay members (both male and female) of a religious order.⁹⁴ There are two other vernacular *vitae* of St. Elizabeth, partly based on the Italian translation of the testimonies, recount the miracle of the mantle and some of her revelations. The shorter *Life* also narrates the miracle of the roses.⁹⁵

2.2 A Comparison of the Three Versions of the Legend of St. Elizabeth

As I mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, the two Italian versions of the *De sancta Elizabeth* are *volgarizzamenti*. Whereas until the thirteenth century the Latin language prevailed in written communication, the *volgarizzamenti*, which were translations or the

⁹² Only one *volgarizzamento* of the *Life* in the *Legenda Aurea* is reported in the book (Florence: Biblioteca Riccardiana, 1254), ff.273v-278v, which was probably the exemplar of Florence, Biblioteca Riccardiana 1986, ff. 49v-55v. Jacques Dalarun, Lino Leonardi et al., ed., *Biblioteca agiografica italiana* [BAI], Repertorio di testi e manoscritti, secoli XIII–XV (Florence: SISMEL, Edizioni del Galluzzo, 2003), vol.2., 217-218.

⁹³ Anne Jacobson Schutte, *Printed Italian Vernacular Religious Books 1465-1550: A Finding List* (Geneva: Droz, 1983).

⁹⁴ The series of miracles is preserved in Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, II. IV.147. The fragment of the testimonies was edited from Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Chig. M. VII. 154, ff. 101-103 in *Scrittori di religione del trecento: Volgarizzamenti*, ed. Giuseppe De Luca, 2nd ed., (Turin: Einaudi, 1977), vol. 4, 723-726; the quotation is on 723.

⁹⁵ The shorter *Life* was published as *Vita di S. Elisabetta d'Ungheria*, in *Delle vite de' santi*, ed. Domenico Maria Manni, vol. 4, (Florence: 1735), 357-370. It was reprinted in *Scrittori di religione del trecento* (see the footnote above), vol. 4, 705-726. For the manuscripts on which Manni's edition was based, see Dávid Falvay, "Due versioni italiane trecentesche della Vita di santa Elisabetta d'Ungheria," in *Annuario: Studi e documenti italo-ungheresi. Numero speciale: Tra magiaristica e italianistica: cultura e istituzioni* (Rome: Accademia d'Ungheria di Roma; Szeged: The Department of Italian Studies of the University of Szeged, 2005), 13-25. The longer one was edited by Florio Banfi in his *Santa Elisabetta di Ungheria, Landgravia di Turingia* (Assisi:

adaptations of Latin works, played an essential role in the stabilization of the vernacular. The medieval *volgarizzamento* is not the equivalent of translation in the modern sense: the translator (*volgarizzatore*) used the text quite freely, adding or omitting parts of the original work in order to make the text more suitable to his aims and to the expectations of the intended audience.⁹⁶ In the following section, my intention is present how the translators/scribes of the life of St. Elizabeth modified the original Latin version from the point of view of content and style in the two vernacular adaptations. Given the limited framework of this thesis, I will concentrate only on her *vita*, without entering into an analysis of the quite long lists of *post mortem* miracles.⁹⁷

One of the vernacular versions of the life of St. Elizabeth in the *Legenda Aurea* is preserved in the fifteenth-century composite paper codex, MS Ambrosiana I. 115 Inf., ff. 22v-35r in two columns.⁹⁸ The content of the manuscript shows that it was made and used in a Franciscan environment. Since it contains mostly the vernacular legends of the saints and blessed who belonged, at least according to tradition, to the Third Order of the Franciscans, one can assume that it was intended for public reading in a community of tertiaries. Of the twenty writings in the codex, seven are *vitae*: St. Elizabeth of Hungary (d.1231), St. Louis of Toulouse (d.1297), St. Yves of Brittany (d.1303), Blessed Angela of Foligno (d.1309), St. Elzéar of Sabran (d.1323), Blessed Tommasuccio of Nocera (d.1377), and Blessed Roberto Galeotto Malatesta of Rimini (d.1432). With the exception of Tommasuccio, who was a Franciscan preacher in Tuscany, all the other saints and blessed were of noble birth, and three of them, St. Louis, St. Yves and St. Elzéar, were French. Apart from the saints' lives, the

Tipografia Porziuncola, 1932). I will return to the more detailed discussion of the tradition of the miracle of the mantle/dress in chapter 4.5.

⁹⁶ Although “author,” “translator,” and “*volgarizzatore*” do not have exactly the same meaning, for stylistic reasons I will use them here as synonyms.

⁹⁷ This comparison is a shortened version of my MA thesis at the Italian Studies Department of ELTE, in which I also treat the miracles: “La *vita* di santa Elisabetta d’Ungheria nella *Legenda Aurea* ed i suoi *volgarizzamenti*,” MA Thesis, Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest, 2009.

manuscript contains hymns, prayers, papal bulls, and fragments of the Rule of the Third Order.⁹⁹ The legend of Elizabeth is completed by the date of her feast and ends with a Latin prayer: *Tuorum corda fidelibus deus miserator illustra / et beate helisabeth / precibus gloriosis fac nos / prospera mundi despicere et celesti semper / consolatione gaudere per Christum.*

The other version is the so-called “old Tuscan” *volgarizzamento*. The *Legenda di Santa Elisabet*, like the Ambrosian legend, is a vernacular adaptation of James of Varazze’s *De sancta Elizabeth*.¹⁰⁰ It is preserved in a composite codex, MS Magliabechiano XXXVIII. 74, ff. 9r-26v in one column, dated to the fourteenth century. All the texts of this miscellaneous codex are in Italian. In addition to several catechetical and devotional pieces, it contains two pseudo-Bernardine meditations on the Passion, a Bernardine lament on the sinful soul, a treatise of St. Caesarius of Arles on the human soul, and two legends of St. Elizabeth and Barlaam and Josaphat. The contents of the manuscript show that it was probably used for private reading or meditation.¹⁰¹ A possible reason for the inclusion of the life of Elizabeth may be that it contains an elaborated account of her contemplations and heavenly visions.

Both *volgarizzamenti* of the legend of St. Elizabeth follow by and large the same scheme as the *Legenda Aurea*: the texts begin with the genealogy of the saint, followed by her childhood, which already prefigures her future sanctity, then her marriage, her humility and

⁹⁸ Its terminus *post quem* is 1432, the death of Blessed Roberto Galeotto of Malatesta of Rimini. The flower watermark of the last pages of the manuscript shows close similarity with the ones used around 1430-1440 in the area of Bergamo and Milan, but I have not found any information concerning its provenance.

⁹⁹ For the detailed description of the manuscript Ambrosiana I. 115 Inf., its contents and the transcription of the legend, see Appendix Two.

¹⁰⁰ This version of the life of Elizabeth was edited by Marc’Antonio Parenti in 1848, who dedicated it to the Count of Montalambert. In 1836 he composed a synthetic biography of St. Elizabeth, entitled *La vie de sainte Élisabeth de Hongrie, duchesse de Thuringe*, which contributed a great deal to the revival of her cult in the nineteenth century. It was Parenti, who named this version “antico toscano” (old Tuscan). For its edition, see *Volgarizzamento della vita di S. Elisabetta di Ungheria, Langravia di Turingia. Testo antico toscano, ora per la prima volta stampato*. (Modena: Per gli eredi Soliani Tipografi, 1848).

¹⁰¹ For a detailed description of the manuscript Magliabechiano XXXVIII. 74, its contents, and the transcription of the legend, see Appendix Three. Concerning its provenance, see *Bibliografia Agiografica Italiana*, 89-90:

continence, her charity towards the poor and children, the construction of the hospital, the death of her husband, her solemn vow in the church, the severity of Master Conrad, her celestial visions, the conversion of a young man, the nursing of the sick, the conversion of Ildegund, the vision of Christ and the singing of birds before her death, her passing, the funeral, the first signs of her sanctity manifested on her body, the five reasons for her venerability are narrated and her legend is concluded by the *post mortem* miracles. Nevertheless, two episodes are omitted in the Magliabechian version: the one that narrates how Elizabeth fell into the mud because of an old woman to whom the saint had been kind previously¹⁰² and another one which relates how an ungrateful couple ran away, leaving their baby with Elizabeth.¹⁰³ Of the two *volgarizzamenti*, the fifteenth-century Ambrosian version is more faithful to the original Latin text, to such a degree that it is more of a translation than an adaptation. It has, however, some particular details that I consider worthy of highlighting and commenting upon them.

One of the points of interest is at the beginning of the legend, which reads as follows: “Questa è la legenda de Santa Elisabeth del terzo ordine.”¹⁰⁴ The legend ends in a similar way: “Finisce la legenda di sancta Helisabeth del terzo ordine.”¹⁰⁵ Although James of Varazze’s Latin original also says that Elizabeth, after the death of her husband “put on religious dress, namely, robes of plain gray, low-quality material. She observed voluntary poverty, and would have begged from door to door had not Master Conrad forbidden her,”¹⁰⁶ but there is no reference that she would have been the member of the Third Order of the Franciscans. Especially as it did not yet exist in Elizabeth’s lifetime but was officially

“Alberto di Luigi Duccio degli Alberti del popolo di Sant’Iacopo tra le Fosse (n.p.); monna Mea d’Antonio di Luca da Filicaia.”

¹⁰² Iacopo da Varazze, *Legenda Aurea*, 1164.

¹⁰³ Ibid., 1170.

¹⁰⁴ Ambrosiana I 115 Inf., ff 22v-35r, line 1 (hereafter: Ambr., l.1).

¹⁰⁵ Ambr., l. 585.

¹⁰⁶ Iacopo da Varazze, *Legenda Aurea*, ed. Giovanni Paolo Maggioni, (Florence: SISMEL – Edizione del Galluzzo, 1998), 1165: *religiosum habitum induit, uestes scilicet griseas humiles et abiectas, continentiam post mortem uiri sui perpetuam seuans, obedientiam perfectam custodiens et voluntariam paupertatem amplectens.*

founded only in 1289, with the submission of various communities of penitents under Franciscan control.¹⁰⁷ All the same, St Elizabeth was regarded as its patron for nearly five centuries.¹⁰⁸ However, in past decades scholars have come up with various ideas concerning the religious community to which she could have belonged. The contrasting opinions were synthesized by Lori Pieper in the introduction of her paper about another *vita* of St. Elisabeth written by the Franciscan Anonymous.¹⁰⁹ According to her, the main reason for the “Franciscan controversy” is that although the earliest biographical sources do mention that she was in a close relationship with the Franciscans, these pieces of information are rather vague. For instance, the *Libellus* narrates that the saint wore grey clothes from the time on she started to work in the hospital of Marburg and how she spun wool for the Franciscans.¹¹⁰ In the *Summa vitae* Conrad recounts that Elizabeth renounced earthly things *in quadam capella sui opidi ubi Minores fratres locauerant, presentibus quibusdam fratribus*, that is, the Franciscan chapel in Eisenach, and she also founded a hospital dedicated to St. Francis north of the Alps.¹¹¹ The first account to state that Elizabeth entered the Franciscan Order was the *Zwettl Vita*. It reports the solemn vow of Elizabeth as follows: “by taking the grey habit of the friars minor in Marburg, on the order of the aforementioned brother Conrad, she totally and publicly renounced all enticements of secular life.”¹¹² The aim of Frederick II with this account was to strengthen the relationship between him and the Franciscan Order through

¹⁰⁷ The first saintly woman who belonged to the community of penitents under the direction of the Franciscan was Umiliana dei Cerchi (d.1246). The other saintly model of the Franciscan Third Order, apart from Elizabeth, was Margaret of Cortona (d.1297). On Umiliana, see Anna Benvenuti, “Una santa vedova,” in *“In castro poenitentiae”: Santità e società femminile nell’Italia medievale*. Italia Sacra: Studi e documenti di storia ecclesiastica 45 (Rome: Herder, 1990), 59-98. For a comparison of the sanctity of Elizabeth and Umiliana, cf. Gábor Klaniczay, “I modelli di santità femminile tra I secoli XIII e XIV in Europa centrale e in Italia,” in *Spiritualità e lettere nella cultura italiana e ungherese del basso medioevo*, ed. Sante Graciotti and Cesare Vasoli (Florence: Olschi, 1995), 75-109, esp. 95-101.

¹⁰⁸ See Gabriele Andreozzi, “Elisabetta e Lodovico i santi patroni del Terzo Ordine di san Francesco,” *Analecta Tor* 26 (1995): 307-379.

¹⁰⁹ Lori Pieper, *A New Life of St. Elizabeth of Hungary*, 33-36.

¹¹⁰ Huyskens, *Libellus*, 51, 61, 55.

¹¹¹ Huyskens, *Quellenstudien*, 157.

¹¹² Diodor Henniges, *Vita sanctae Elisabeth, Landgraviae Thuringiae auctore anonymo nunc primum in luce edita*, in *Archivum Franciscanum Historicum* 2 (1909): 256: *ad mandatum fratris Conradi prefati fratrum minorum habitum griseum induens apud Marpurch in totum et publice se vite secularis illecebris abdicauit*.

Elizabeth, stressing this relationship more than had already been written in the *Libellus* and in the *Summa vitae*.¹¹³ Roughly from the same period, in another life of Elizabeth, written by a French Franciscan the following simile can be read: *Ille* [St. Francis] *fratrum pater erat, ista* [St. Elizabeth] *mater eorum, ut dicebat. Ille custodiebat eos ut pater, ista nutrieat eos ut mater*.¹¹⁴ However, not all Franciscan sources mention that Elizabeth would have belonged to their Third Order. For instance, around 1330 the Assisi Franciscan, Brother Elemosina, wrote explicitly in the second redaction of his chronicle that “she took on the clothes of penitence dyed a grey colour and, out of reverence for Saint Francis, girdled herself with a cord, and while she did not know the rule of continence, always preserved true continence in soul and body.”¹¹⁵ Forty years later, however, the first official history of the Franciscan Order, the *Chronica Generalium Ordinis Minorum*, proclaimed that Elizabeth entered the order of the penitents under the third rule of St. Francis after the death of her husband.¹¹⁶ Today, Matthias Werner’s opinion, that Elizabeth took the habit of a hospital sister, is the most widely accepted one among scholars.¹¹⁷ The increasingly accepted statement of Elizabeth’s having been a Franciscan tertiary between the end of the thirteenth and the end of the fifteenth century was also due to the fact that the two other “candidates” for the model figure of the tertiaries, Umilina de’ Cerchi and Margaret of Cortona, were not canonized and their cults did not diffuse beyond Tuscany. Elizabeth was also included in the most popular Franciscan compendium of indulgences, the *Privilegia et indulgentie Fratrum Minorum* dated to 1428, in

¹¹³ Gecser, “Lives of St. Elizabeth,” 63-64.

¹¹⁴ Huyskens, *Quellenstudien*, 70, n.3.

¹¹⁵ Servus von St. Anthonis, “Bruder Elemosinas Doppelbericht zum Leben der hl. Elisabeth von Thüringen,” in *Collectanea Franciscana*, 35 (1965): 166-176, on 175: *Et ipsa pannis penitencie, griseis tinctis coloribus, induta et ad reverentiam beati Francisci corta precinta, licet continentium regulam non habuit, veram tamen continentiam in anima et in corpora eimper servavit*. Recently Ottó Gecser has examined the development of the perception of the Hungarian princess as a Franciscan tertiary and a Franciscan saint in his “Aspects of the Cult of St. Elizabeth,” 58-63, 97-103, 141-145, 159-172, 184-186, 190-197 and in the “Lives of St. Elizabeth,” 63-66.

¹¹⁶ *Chronica XXIV Generalium Ordinis Minorum*, *Analecta Franciscana* 3 (Quaracchi: Collegium S. Bonaventurae, 1897), 222: *post mortem viri sui religionem intrans Poenitentium sub tertia regula beati Francisci, portans chordulam et mantellum, faciebat poenitentie dignos fructos*.

¹¹⁷ Matthias Werner, “Die heilige Elisabeth und die Anfänge des Deutschen Ordens in Marburg,” in *Marburger Geschichte. Rückblick auf die Stadtgeschichte in Einzelbeiträgen*, ed. Erhart Dettmering and Rudolf Grenz, (Marburg: Magistrat, 1980), 121-166, on 132.

which the author refers to Pope Gregory IX as the one “who inscribed Blessed Francis, Anthony and Elizabeth of the Third Order in the Catalogue of the saints.”¹¹⁸

Returning after this digression to the Ambrosian manuscript, one can see that Elizabeth of Hungary is the only canonized woman saint in the codex; apart from her, the only other saintly woman whose legend is reported is Blessed Angela of Foligno. The inclusion of Elizabeth’s legend in a collection of the lives of Franciscan tertiaries confirms that by the fifteenth century she had become perhaps the most important icon of the Third Order.

The other characteristic of this *volgarizzamento* is that although the translation follows the Latin text closely, the translator or the scribe – one cannot know for sure – had some difficulty with the personal and geographical names. Rather than writing them in erroneous form, the scribe decided to leave lacunae in the text. Surprisingly, from the list of the miracles at the end of the legend, which contains a great number of such names, only two are missing.

In contrast to the version contained in the Ambrosian codex, that of the Magliabechian manuscript is a *volgarizzamento* par excellence. Since the text is full of omissions, explanatory additions and rewritings, I present only some of them. Despite the fact that the major differences occur in the Magliabechian version, I also cite the Ambrosian variant in the comparison of the texts, chiefly to demonstrate how diverse the different *volgarizzamenti* of the same source can be.

One of the noteworthy omissions of the Magliabechian version is what happened after Elizabeth had put on grey dress.

¹¹⁸ *Privilegia et indulgentiae Fratrum Minorum* (Milan, 1490), quoted in Michael Bihl, “Die heilige Elisabeth von Thüringen als Terziarin,” *Franziskanische Studien* 18 (1931): 259-293, on 292: *qui beatum Franciscum, Antonium, et Elizabeth de Tertio Ordine adscripsit catalogo Sanctorum*. Most of the bulls compendium were forgeries, see Nikolaus Paulus, “Die Ablässe des Franziskanerordens,” *Franziskanische Studien* 10 (1923): 53-60, on 56-57. Quoted in Gecser, “Aspects of the Cult of St. Elizabeth,” 103, n. 165. Gecser points out that one of

Legenda Aurea	Magl.	Amb.
... religiosum habitum induit, uestes scilicet griseas humiles et abiectas, continentiam post mortem uiri sui perpetuam seruans, obedientiam perfectam custodiens et uoluntariam paupertatem amplectens. Mendicando quoque ostiatim ire uoluit, sed magister Conradus non permisit. Fuit autem eius habitus tam despectus ut deferret pallium griseum panno coloris alterius prolongatum, manicas etiam tunice ruptas alterius coloris panno habuit emendatas. ¹¹⁹	... si prese habito religioso di panni bigi et despeca fuando continentia et perfecta obedientia et povertade voluntaria giamai non lascioe. ¹²⁰	Si vestite di habito religioso, cioe veste griso, humile et habiate, observando perpetua continentia dopo la morte del marito ... et volse andare mendicare di casa in casa ma maestro Conrado non volse. Lo suo habito fu cossi dispecto, che la portava uno palio griso, il quale era rapezzato di pano di altro colore, le maniche etiamdio dela tunica rote similmente rapezzate de pano de altro colore. ¹²¹

From Conrad of Marburg's *Summa vitae* it is known that after the death of the landgrave of Thuringia in 1228, Elizabeth asked him how she could live in the most merciful way: as an anchoress or as a recluse in a cloister. Conrad also adds that, in reality, the saint would have liked to go around begging.¹²² In the interpretation of Edith Pasztor, the new thirteenth-century female spirituality is manifested in Elizabeth's intention:

Elizabeth -- unlike other women who also wanted to resort to begging for their livelihood or that of the community to which they belonged, but also carry out other works, including the collection of alms was merely the culmination of penance and humiliation - puts the begging in the centre of her religious choice.

these forgeries is quoted by Andreozzi in "Elisabetta e Lodovico santi patroni," 321, to prove that Elizabeth belonged to the order of the Franciscan penitents.

¹¹⁹ Iacopo da Varazze, *Legenda Aurea*, 1165.

¹²⁰ Magliabechiano XXXVIII. 74, ff.9r-26v, line 240-242 (hereafter: Magl., l. 240-242).

¹²¹ Ambr, l. 240-242.

¹²² The *Epistula magistri Cunradi de Marpurch ad papam de vita beate Elyzabeth* was edited by Albert Huyskens, in the *Quellenstudien zur Geschichte der hl. Elisabeth, Landgräfin von Thüringen* (Marburg: Elwert, 1908), 157.

In this way, it really indicates a status - and not just a practice of piety, wanting to move from being a landgravine to a beggar.¹²³

Conrad refused his consent to the request of Elizabeth, who then made a pledge on Good Friday in the presence of all the brothers, renounced of her children, relatives and free will and assumed a grey habit.¹²⁴

The additional pieces of information in the vernacular adaptations, in most cases, are arbitrary. However, sometimes they are correct:

Legenda Aurea	Magl.	Amb.
Fuit igitur lantgrauio Turingie sociata coniugio, prout regalis exigebat magnificentia et dispositio ordinavit diuina ... ¹²⁵	Fue adunque Elisabet maritata a uno grande et nobile uomo, signore d'una provincia, la qual era chiamata Turingia; e'l nome suo Lottovingia . Et cio era sicome si richiedeva alla magnificentia regale, pienamente et la dispositione divina avea ordinato. ¹²⁶	Fu maritata aduncha in lo [...] como richedeva la regale magnificentia et com la divina dispositione havea ordinato. ¹²⁷

While in the Ambrosian *volgarizzamento* there is a lacuna in the place of the province, the Magliabechian text also provides the name of the landgrave of Thuringia (although in a distorted form), which is not present at all in James of Varazze's original. Thus, it is quite probable that the translator had at his disposal either a chronicle that contained some information regarding Elizabeth or another *vita*. In my opinion, it is more likely that he used a chronicle rather than another legend; otherwise the scribe of the Magliabechian version would have borrowed further details from it.

As I said earlier, medieval translators occasionally modified the original text arbitrarily if they had another idea in mind that better suited the purpose of the writing. So did

¹²³ Edith Pasztor, "Sant'Elisabetta d'Ungheria nella religiosità femminile del secolo XIII," 166; translation mine.

¹²⁴ Huyskens, *Quellenstudien*, 157.

¹²⁵ Iacopo da Varazze, *Legenda Aurea*, 1159.

¹²⁶ Magl., l. 81-84. Emphasis mine.

the *volgarizzatore* of the old Tuscan legend of Elizabeth when he substituted the Latin noun *gramen* for “la vertu” in the Italian translation. In this way, he transformed the original simile into rather impressive metonymy.

Legenda Aurea	Magl.	Amb.
Dicebat autem suis ancillis se et illas consolans: ‘Sicut gramen fluuio inundante deprimitur et decrescente erigitur, sic nos aliqua afflictione adueniente debemus per humilitatem submitti, cessante uero ad deum per spiritualem letitiam eleuari’. ¹²⁸	Diceva adunqua consolandosi colle sue ancelle: ‘Si come la vertu, crescendo lo fiume delle tribulationi, si ristregne et fortifica dentro cosi scemando, si spande et indebolisce de fuori. Così noi, vegnendo la tribulatione, ci dobbiamo per humilitate sottoporre addio; ma cessandosi per spirituale letitia ci dobbiamo levare a Dio’. ¹²⁹	Et dicea ale sue ancille ‘si et loro consolando: ‘Si como la gramegna ributando lo fluivo si abassata et discredendo si levata, cossi noi per alchuna afflictione per humilitade dovemo esser abassate, ma ella cessando dovemo levarsi a Dio per spirituale letitia.’ ¹³⁰

The episode about Ildegund (in other versions Radegund) deserves attention because for some reason the translator omitted a few lines from the Latin text and his version reads as follows:

Legenda Aurea	Magl.	Amb.
Cum uero a pauperum uacabat officio, filabat lanam de quodam monasterio sibi missam et pretium quod inde accipiebat pauperibus diuidebat. Cum autem post multam paupertatem quingentas marchas pro sua dote receptas pauperibus diuideret et omnibus ordinate locatis ipsa succincta transiens ministraret, posita est lex ut si quis in aliorum	Et quand’ella vacava dall’officio de poveri si filava lana, chelli era mandata da uno monestero, e’l prezzo dava a poveri. Et ricevuta ancora in quantita di cinquecento livre per compimento delle sue dote infra pochi di tutte l’ebbe distribuite a poveri orfani, et vedove, et poveri religiosi et cosi rimase in tutto ispacciata di quelli.	Ma cessando da servire ali infirmi, filava lana; et alcuno monestero alei mandata et lo pretio che ella riceveva dividea ali poveri. Ma dopo molta povertade dividendo a poveri cinquecento marche, che ella riceve de la dote sua. Essendo tutti ordinatamente alloggiati et lei, ministrando gli fu posta questa lege, che se alcuno in preinditio

¹²⁷ Ambr., l. 70-71.

¹²⁸ Iacopo da Varazze, *Legenda Aurea*, 1166-1167. Emphasis mine.

¹²⁹ Magl., l. 271-275. Emphasis mine.

¹³⁰ Ambr., l. 276-278.

pauperum preiudicium locum mutaret ut iterum acciperet, capillorum suorum detruncationem aliquam sustineret. Et ecce, quedam puella nomine Ildegundis que mira capillorum pulchritudine pollebat inde transitura aduenit non ut elemosinam acciperet, sed ut quandam sororem suam infirmam uisitaret. Que cum tamquam legis preuaricatrix ad beatam Elizabeth adducta fuisset, eius capillos protinus detruncari mandauit, ipsa flente et plurimum reluctante. Cum uero quidam de astantibus eam innocentem esse assererent, illa ait: 'Saltem de cetero non poterit cum tanta capillorum abitione ad choreas accedere nec cum illis uanitates aliquas exercere.'¹³¹	Adivenne che una fanciulla molto bella del corpo et maravigliosa bellezza avea di capelli, quindi passato entro nell'ospedale, non per ricevere limosina, ma per visitare alcuna sua serocchia inferma. Quella fue menata a Santa Elisabet et veggendola cosi curiosa del capo et con tanta bellezza di capelli, comando che incontanente le fossero tagliati i capelli, acio che non fossero cagione di sua dannatione et delli altri. Et disse allei contastante et piagnete: "Oggi mai non potrai tu andare adorna a balli ne adoperare alcuna vanitate con quelli."¹³²	de li altri poveri mutasse lo suo loco, acio che ricevesse ultra la parte sua, gli fusse tagliata alcuna parte deli capelli. Et eco una puta che avea nome [...] la qualle havea troppo bella capilatura, vena passando per li, non per ricevere elemosina, ma per visitare una sua sorella inferma. La quale come essendo menata innanzi alla beata Elisabeth comando che al tuto fussero tagliati li capelli, piangendo lei di cio non era colpevole. Rispose che almeno da qua innanzi non potea andare alli balli cum tanta ambitione de suoi capelli, ne cum esse vanita alcuna adoperare.¹³³
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The crucial difference is that in the old Tuscan version the second half of the sentence "having made a rule that if anyone changed place in the line in order to receive a second time, that person's hair would be cut off"¹³⁴ is missing. Without this part of the sentence, there is no connection between the money Elisabeth distributed and cutting off the hair of Ildegund, since originally this was meant to be the punishment for those who tried to cheat. Not knowing that Ildegund only wanted to visit her ill sister in the hospital, the saint ordered her hair to be cut off because of fraud. Then, after she got to know from other people around them that the girl was innocent, she said that at least from that time on the girl would not indulge in earthly vanities

¹³¹ Iacopo da Varazze, *Legenda Aurea*, 1169-1170. Emphasis mine.

¹³² Magl., l. 338-347. Emphasis mine.

¹³³ Ambr., l. 347-357.

¹³⁴ I use the English translation of William Granger Ryan, *The Legenda Aurea* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 312.

and asked Ildegund whether she had ever thought of entering religious life. In the end, Ildegund took the religious habit and remained with Elizabeth, leading a commendable life. Thus, it is perfectly understandable that not seeing the connection between the two (in reality, only one) episodes, why the copyist left out the phrase *cum uero quidam de astantibus eam innocentem esse assererent* from the old Tuscan legend; nevertheless, the reason for its omission from the Magliabechian *volgarizzamento* was unjustified.

The major differences between the original Latin text and the two vernacular adaptations occur in the narration of the saint's death and her funeral. First, the three texts each give an account of the last hours of Elizabeth.

Legenda Aurea	Magl.	Amb.
Deinde dixit: “Ecce, appropinquat media nox in qua Christus nasci uoluit et in presepio requieuit.” Appropinquante uero hora sui transitus ait: “Iam tempus instat in quo omnipotens deus eos qui amici eius sunt ad celestes nuptias euocabat.” Post paululum uero anno domini MCCXXXI ad extremam horam ueniens dormiuit in pace. ¹³⁵	Poi disse: Ecco serocchie mie, io sono oggi mai sicura, et lo tempo del mio passare e presente. Ecco che Dio onnipotente mi chiama alle nozze celestiali, alle quali tutta la corte di cielo m'aspetta. Et cosi confortandole, et ricevuti prima tutti i sacramenti della santa chiesa, con grande reverenza et devotione, vegnendo allora extrema quella santissima anima si parti dal corpo et dorma in pace, nel MCCXXXI a di XVIII di novembre. ¹³⁶	Da poi disse: “Ecco che se approssima la mezanotte nela quale Cristo volse nascere et fu reclinato nel presepio.” Ma approssimandosi l'ora del suo transito, disse: “Gia è pronte il tempo nel quale lo onnipotente Signore ha provocato ale nozze celestiale quelli che sono suoi amici.” Da li breve hora nel anno del Signore MCCXXXI venendo l'ora estrema ripose in pace. ¹³⁷

In the Magliabechian version, the evocation of the birth of Christ is replaced by a more intimate farewell to the handmaids, but in this way, quoting Edith Pasztor, the “very tender continuity between her own death, the beginning of a new life in the divine dimension, and the descent of the Son of God, his embodiment in the human dimension,”¹³⁸ present in the

¹³⁵ Iacopo da Varazze, *Legenda Aurea*, 1171.

¹³⁶ Magl., l. 364-369. Emphasis mine.

¹³⁷ Ambr., l. 383-385.

¹³⁸ Edith Pasztor, “Sant’Elisabetta d’Ungheria nella religiosità femminile del secolo XIII,” 163; translation mine.

Latin original, is lost. Not missing, however, from the Magliabechian version is the other momentous sentence of the dying saint, which recalls the convocation of the souls at the Last Judgement: “Ecco che Dio onnipotente mi chiama alle nozze celestiali alle quali tutta la corte di cielo m’aspetta.” Interestingly enough, the *volgarizzatore* of the old Tuscan legend underlines that Elizabeth died only after having received all the sacraments and gives the precise date of her death, not only the year, as James of Varazze did in the *Legenda Aurea*.

The sainthood of Elizabeth was manifested immediately after her death. Miraculous events basically followed the traditional scheme described by Vauchez: since saints die in obscurity, their death is revealed to the population by the tolling of the bells, usually accompanied by celestial music and a luminous phenomena, the sign of their entry into eternity.¹³⁹

Legenda Aurea	Magl.	Amb.
Tunc autem uise sunt multe auicule super cacumen ecclesie congregate, quas numquam aliquis prius uidit. Que tam suauis modulatione cantabant et tanta uarietate modos cantandi formabant ut cunctos in admirationem adducerent eo quod eius exequias quodammodo agere uiderentur. Tunc etiam in aere audita et suauissima melodia ac si responsorium ‘Regnum mundi’ quod in laudibus uirginum canitur audiretur . Multus autem ibi fuit clamor pauperum, multa deuotio populorum ita ut alii capillos capitis detruncarent, alii particulas pannorum inciderent et hoc pro summis reliquiis reseruarent. ¹⁴⁰	Et allora furono veduti molti uccelli bianchissimi sopra la somita della chiesa dove s’apparecchiava di riporre; li quali uccelli cantavano di soave dolcezza et variata melodia di canto, la quale gia mai non fue uditata et quelli modi variati et formati di cantare a tutti davano grande ammiratione. Et cio era quasi come si rappresentassero alle sue exequie. Quivi fue grande pianto di poveri, et grande deuotione di populi, et grande moltitudine di chierici et religiosi da presso et da lunge li quali erano venuti ispirati da Dio. Et le particole di suoi panni chi ne poteo avere furono tenute per grande reliquie. ¹⁴¹	Alora furono veduti molti uccelli sul colmo dela chiesa congregati, li quali niuno giamai havea veduto innanzi; li qualli cum cusse suave melodia cantavano et suonavino tanti varii modi di canti che mirevano ogni homo in admiratione perche pareva che facessero le essequie di quella. Alora etiam in aeere fu audita suauissima melodia, como se cantasse quello risposo <i>Regnum mundi</i> , lo quale si canta nel officio de la Vergine. Li fu molto credo di poveri. Li fu molta deuotione deli popoli; in tanto che alcuni gli tagliaveno de li capilli, alcuni de le vestimente qualche partiale

¹³⁹ André Vauchez, *Sainthood in the Later Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 513.

¹⁴⁰ Iacopo da Varazze, *Legenda Aurea*, 1171-1172. Emphasis mine.

¹⁴¹ Magl., l. 372-378.

		et queste riservano per grande reliquie. ¹⁴²
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Indeed, all these phenomena are present in the *Legenda Aurea* as well as in the other two Italian versions. Nevertheless, the *volgarizzatore* of the Magliabechian says nothing about the *Regnum mundi*; instead, he adds that a large crowd of clerics and religious people, inspired by God, came to her funeral from near and far.

All in all, the ten extant codices that contain full or partial *Legenda Aurea* materials in the vernacular indicate that a full Italian translation of the legendary was not much in demand. The general tendency was rather that only the lives of the legendary were translated which were important for a particular religious community for some reason; thus, they had an independent transmission from the *Legenda Aurea*. Based on the comparison of the Latin text of the legend of St. Elizabeth with its two vernacular adaptations, one can conclude that the Magliabechian (or old Tuscan) version, despite being composed roughly a hundred years earlier, has a style that flows more easily than the Ambrosian variant. The two translations are absolutely independent of each other. The old Tuscan version is basically the same as the Latin original, but contains several additions, omissions, and some mistranslations, of which I have only presented a few. The additions are primarily for the sake of a better understanding, but at times they report correct information that was not included in James of Varazze's original, like the name of the landgrave of Thuringia. Most of the personal names and place names are correct, although occasionally written in a distorted form. In the case of the Ambrosian *volgarizzamento*, the translator aimed at the closest possible translation of the Latin text; thus, the style is rather halting and some of the sentences are difficult to understand. In numerous cases, lacunae are left in place of proper names and geographical names. This version is noteworthy in that it explicitly refers to St. Elizabeth as a Franciscan

¹⁴² Ambr., l. 388-394.

tertiary and it is a part of a codex that reports the *vitae* of those saints and blessed who were associated with the Third Order of St. Francis.

CHAPTER THREE: THE LIFE OF ST. ELIZABETH IN MIDDLE ENGLISH

In England, the cult of St. Elizabeth of Hungary was not as widespread as on the continent. About three Middle English versions of her life are known; all of them are based on James of Varazze's *Legenda aurea*. The two manuscript collections of saints' lives are the *Gilte Legende*¹⁴³ and Osbern Bokenham's *Legendys of Hooly Wummen*.¹⁴⁴ The third version of her life is contained in the *Golden Legend*, the first printed English translation of the *Legenda aurea* by William Caxton in 1483.¹⁴⁵ She became more famous as a mystic, when her alleged visions, the *Revelations of St. Elizabeth of Hungary*, were translated into Middle English. They were known in East Anglia by the 1430s.¹⁴⁶ Around 1493, Wynkyn de Worde published the *Revelations* together with the life of St. Catherine of Siena as texts which could be associated with the *Golden Legend*.¹⁴⁷ In addition, her alleged revelations had a great influence on Margery Kempe and her *Book*¹⁴⁸ and through numerous translations and adaptations of the *Meditationes vitae Christi* they circulated in other spiritual works as well.¹⁴⁹ The first part of this chapter is dedicated to the contextualization of these legends

¹⁴³ A critical edition of the *Gilte Legende* has recently been published by Richard Harmer and Vida Russel: *Gilte Legende*, 2 vols. Early English Text Society (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007). This edition is based on MS Egerton 876 of the British Library, London.

¹⁴⁴ Osbern Bokenham, *Legendys of Hooly Wummen*, ed. by Mary S. Serjeantson, Early English Text Society, OS 206 (London: 1938).

¹⁴⁵ William Caxton, *The Golden Legend, or Lives of the Saints*, ed. Frederick Startridge Ellis, 7 vols. (London: J. M. Dent, 1900; reprint, New York: AMS Press, 1973).

¹⁴⁶ Alexandra Barratt, "The Revelations of Saint Elizabeth of Hungary: Problems of Attribution," *The Library* 6th ser. 14 (1992): 1-11, on 4. The attribution of the *Revelations* is an extremely complicated problem that is peripheral to my interests, thus I do not treat it in my chapter. For the Middle English versions, see Sarah McNamer, *The Two Middle English Translations of the Revelations of St. Elizabeth of Hungary. Ed. from Cambridge University Library MS Hh.i.11 and Wynkyn de Worde's Printed text of ?1493 (=Middle English Texts, 28, Heidelberg, 1996)*. The most recent and exhaustive discussion of these revelations is Dávid Falvay's "A Szent Erzsébetnek tulajdonított Mária-revelációk és itáliai kontextusuk" [The Mary-revelations Attributed to St. Elizabeth and Their Italian Context], PhD dissertation, Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest, 2005.

¹⁴⁷ Norman Francis Blake, *William Caxton and English Literary Culture* (London: The Hambledon Press, 1991), 115.

¹⁴⁸ *The Book of Margery Kempe*, ed. by Barry Windeatt, (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2004).

¹⁴⁹ Alexandra Barratt, "Margery Kempe and the King's Daughter in Hungary," in *Margery Kempe: A Book of Essays*, ed. Sandra J. McEntire, (New York: 1992), 189-201; McNamer, *The Two Middle English Translations*, 40-48.

in Middle English hagiography with a particular attention to the two full translations of the *Legenda Aurea*, the *Gilte Legende* and Caxton's *Golden Legend*. In the second part I will discuss in detail Bokenham's adaptation of the life of St. Elizabeth.

3.1 Middle English Hagiography and the *Legenda Aurea*

The *Legenda Aurea* became widely popular in England, as in other European countries soon after it was completed. Its earliest dated Latin manuscript is from 1299 and it seems that no single collection of saints' legends was copied as frequently as James of Varazze's legendary. Although other collections did exist before the *Legenda Aurea*, and continued to be written later, none of them achieved a similar distribution.¹⁵⁰

As to the vernacular hagiographies, the considerable amount of Middle English writing that has come down to us shows that they were written for a number of different audiences and include a wide range of literary forms, purposes, and levels of sophistication.¹⁵¹ One of the most widespread legendaries was the *South English Legendary*, a collection of versified legends in the style of colourful secular romances and other material for church festivals that was supposedly composed for oral delivery to unlettered members of the laity. It circulated roughly between 1300 and 1500, especially in the southwestern part of England. Although the exact contents of this collection vary from manuscript to manuscript, about 20% of the lives are dedicated to female saints. Women saints, interestingly, are more often represented among the verse legends that were transmitted separately. The other popular style of Middle English legendary is what Sherry L. Reames has called "utilitarian-looking

¹⁵⁰ Manfred Görlach, "The *Legenda Aurea* and the Early History of *The South English Legendary*," in *Legenda aurea: sept siècles de diffusion. Actes du colloque international sur la Legenda aurea: Texte latin et branches vernaculaires*, ed. Brenda Dunn-Lardeau (Montréal: Bellarmin, 1986): 301-317, on 32. The earliest dated *Legenda Aurea* manuscript is MS C.U.L. Ff.v.31, copied at Christ Church, Canterbury.

¹⁵¹ Sherry L. Reames, ed., *Middle English Legends of Women Saints: Introduction* (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 2003), available at: <http://www.lib.rochester.edu/camelot/teams/01sr.htm> (Last accessed: 26/01/2011).

collections.”¹⁵² The so-called “Vernon Golden Legend,” belongs here, a group of nine legends rarely seen in other English sources and two larger collections of verse legends, the *Scottish Legendary* and the *Northern Homily Cycle*. A more widely known collection was John Mirk’s *Festial*, which contains 30 short prose accounts of saints, homilies, and narratives for church festivals. Mirk’s collection was primarily destined for parish priests, and it remained so popular that a few decades later it had gone through nearly 20 early printed editions. The two massive collections of the fifteenth century were two translations of the *Legenda aurea*, the *Gilte Legende* and William Caxton’s *Golden Legend*.¹⁵³

The anonymous *Gilte Legende* of ca. 1438 contains up to 178 legends and survives in at least seven complete manuscripts and some fragments. The literary importance of the *Gilte Legende* is significant since it was one of Caxton’s principal sources, especially for the *vitae* of native English saints that are not present in the *Legenda Aurea*, nor in the *Légende dorée*.¹⁵⁴ The *Gilte Legende* is a close translation, except for a few additions and omissions, of Jean de Vignay’s *Légende Dorée*, which is ultimately the translation of James of Varazze’s *Legenda aurea*.¹⁵⁵ The *Gilte Legende* is a product of translation and compilation depending on the scribe who copied it, thus it results in a certain amount of variance in the contents of the single manuscripts as well as the text. Most of its *vitae* in are taken from James of Varazze’s *Legenda aurea* and the legends are organized according to the liturgical calendar.

¹⁵² Ibid.

¹⁵³ Sherry L. Reames, *The Legenda Aurea*, 4 and n. 4. On the influence of the *Legenda Aurea* the major expert is Manfred Görlach, see his discussion of establishing the sources of the *South English Legendary*, in *The Textual Tradition of the South English Legenda* (Leeds:University of Leeds, 1974), 21-63; or his *South English Legendary, Gilte Legende, and Golden Legend* (Braunschweig: Institut für Anglistik und Amerikanistik, 1972). Besides, it was also the source of Chaucer’s “Tale of the Second Nun” (on St. Cecilia).

¹⁵⁴ For a summary of research on the *Gilte Legende* and its relation to the two legendaries mentioned above up to 1972, see Manfred Görlach, *The South English Legendary*, 9-13. See also Charlotte d’Evelyn and Frances A. Foster, “Saints’ Legends,” in *A Manual of the Writings in Middle English 1050-1500*, ed. Jonathan Burke Severs (Hamden, CT: The Shoestring Press, 1970), 432-439; 559-561.

¹⁵⁵ Many of the *Gilte Legende* manuscripts refer to the Latin source from which the legendary was translated, or as is written in British Library MS Harley 630, “drawen into englissh bi wothe clerkes and doctours of Diuinite suengly after þe tenure of þe Latin”. In contrast, a colophon to MS Douce 372 says that the *Gilte Legende* is the English version of the Latin *Legenda aurea*, “which was drawen out of Frensshe into Englissh the yere of oure lorde, a MCCCC and xxxviiij bi a synfulle wrecche.” Larissa Tracy, *Women of the Gilte Legende: A Selection of Middle English Saints’ Lives* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2003), 21.

The collection contains altogether 179 saints' lives, of which more than twenty are dedicated to female saints. The legend of St. Elizabeth is reported in seven manuscripts.¹⁵⁶

William Caxton's famous translation of the *Legenda Aurea* was made nearly forty-five years later, designed for private reading by wealthy and educated people, in which he expanded the original *corpus* to some 250 legends. It was a best-seller from its first publication in 1483 until the 1520s.¹⁵⁷ Caxton's edition of the *Legenda aurea* was perhaps his most challenging enterprise as translator, editor and printer. It was one of the largest books Caxton ever printed, a folio volume of roughly 900 pages.¹⁵⁸ The book is richly illustrated with woodcuts that are the same in both editions, though the headings of the saints' lives are in different type in each. The illustrations were meant to play not only a decorative but also a practical role in helping the readers navigate through the long work, providing standard iconographic representations by which the stories of the saints could be easily and quickly identified. Scholars' opinions about the authorship of the *Golden Legend* vary; some of them maintain that the work is simply James of Varazze's *Legenda Aurea* translated into English with the addition of chapters from intermediary translations, French and English,¹⁵⁹ while others consider Caxton's *Legend* as an original work, since it contains so much of his own creation.¹⁶⁰ In the English printer's versions of the individual lives tend to be shorter, and contain little or no direct intervention unless in a form of appendix or when he speaks in the distinct voice of a narrator relating an individual narrative. Although he includes miraculous elements and some details of torture, he is far less interested in these areas than James of

¹⁵⁶ London, MS British Library Additional 11565; London, MS British Library Additional 35298; London, MS British Library Egerton 876; London, MS British Library, Harley 630; London, MS British Library Harley 4775; Oxford, MS Bodleian Library Douce 372; London, MS Lambeth Palace Library 72.

¹⁵⁷ Reames, *Middle English Legends of Women Saints: Introduction*, n.p.

¹⁵⁸ <http://special.lib.gla.ac.uk/exhibns/month/jan2007.html> (Last accessed 11/01/2010).

¹⁵⁹ While the Latin text has not been identified, his French version must have been Jean de Vignay's translation, and his English text was a copy of the *Gilte Legende*. The French version is represented in MS British Museum Stowe 50-51 and two printed books; for the English, of the extant manuscripts of the *Gilte Legende*, MS British Museum Additional 35,298 is the closest to Caxton's text. Norman Francis Blake, *William Caxton and English Literary Culture* (London: The Hambledon Press, 1991), 115.

Varazze was.¹⁶¹ According to Gail Ashton, Caxton's intention was simply "to allow wider access to these popular tales of Christian edification, to compile a series of devotional, and yet entertaining, texts in the role of translator and compiler rather than preacher."¹⁶²

The third group of Middle English legends was composed for an elite readership and shows remarkable literary ambition. A quite reasonable proportion of these *vitae* are dedicated to female saints. The three most significant fifteenth-century authors of such legends were all members of the clergy in East Anglia. The Austin friar, Osbern Bokenham, compiled a collection of female saints' lives, today known as the *Legendys of Hooly Wummen*; John Lydgate, a monk of the Benedictine monastery of St. Edmund's, composed highly rhetorical hagiographical poems, among them the *Life of Our Lady* and the adaptation of the life of St. Margaret; another Austin friar, John Capgrave, was the author of the courtly-epic version of the life of St. Katherine and other hagiographical works.¹⁶³

In contrast to the traditional view that considered saints' lives as examples of devotion and the incarnation of virtues, critics realized that hagiography is as much about politics, sociology, economics, gender, and social control as about the saints themselves. Composing hagiographical accounts allowed their authors to express their opinions about contemporary issues in a subtle way, embedded in the lives of saints. All these aspects, of course, are strongly connected with the target audience of the given work. With the passing of time, the adaptation of saints' lives became necessary in order to be topical for the changed political, religious, and social situation. Some of the earliest Middle English female saints' lives, such as the early thirteenth-century *vitae* of Margaret, Juliana, and Katherine, were primarily exemplary; they were part of the devotional literature written for religious women and for

¹⁶⁰ Mary Jeremy, "Caxton's *Golden Legend* and Varagine's *Legenda Aurea*," *Speculum* 21 (1946): 212-221, on 212.

¹⁶¹ Gail Ashton, *The Generation of Identity in Late Medieval Hagiography: Speaking the Saint* (New York: Routledge, 2000), 41.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*

anchoresses in particular.¹⁶⁴ The fifteenth-century Middle English hagiography, however, was rather innovative in comparison to that of the previous centuries. Many of these changes were already anticipated in the saints' lives written in Anglo-Norman French.¹⁶⁵ Anglo-Norman hagiography included saints and martyrs whose comportment served as normative behaviour for contemporary people. It also concentrated more on history and character and offered a wider variety of saintly models, especially for women. For instance, the early fourteenth-century Franciscan, Nicholas Bozon, was the first English hagiographer to compose a vernacular (Anglo-Norman) life of St. Elizabeth of Hungary, Martha, and Mary Magdalen, together with the lives of six virgin martyrs.¹⁶⁶ The hagiographic writings of Nicolas Bozon and Osbern Bokenham share several common characteristics: both composed lives of mostly female saints, both wrote lives of Mary Magdalen and Elizabeth of Hungary, and both revised James of Varazze's *Legenda aurea* to underline imitable virtues rather than inimitable deeds. Although no Middle English saints' lives are known to have been composed by women, plenty of them were written for women, read by women, and commissioned by women.¹⁶⁷ Late medieval hagiography pays a great deal of attention to female holiness, particularly the promotion of new ideals of holiness for women. In addition to the representation of the virgin martyrs in new ways, the lives of holy wives and mothers were frequently included in the collections of saints.¹⁶⁸ The other important trend in contemporary hagiography was the production of the first Middle English lives of "modern" female saints.

¹⁶³ See John Capgrave, *The Life of Saint Katherine*, ed. Karen A. Winstead (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 1999).

¹⁶⁴ Karen A. Winstead, "Saintly Exemplarity," in *Twenty-First Century Approaches to Literature: Middle English*, ed. Paul Strohm (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 335-351, on 336-337.

¹⁶⁵ Jocelyn Wogan-Browne has shown in her *Saints' Lives and Women's Literary Culture* how French-language lives composed between 1150 and 1300 differ from contemporaneous English lives. Jocelyn Wogan-Browne, *Saints' Lives and Women's Literary Culture, c. 1150-1300: Virginity and its Authorizations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).

¹⁶⁶ Winstead, "Saintly Exemplarity," 342-343. For Nicolas Bozon, see footnote 33.

¹⁶⁷ Winstead, 343-344.

¹⁶⁸ The following lives of mothers were composed in Middle English in the fifteenth-century: Monica, Helen, Marie d'Oignies, Elizabeth of Hungary, and Bridget of Sweden.

As Winstead has pointed out, Osbern Bokenham's collection of saints' lives is an excellent example of how even relatively conservative translations achieved new meanings when one considers the *milieu* in which they were written and read. Contemporary saints' lives were shaped by their authors' awareness that they were addressing an educated audience that included laypeople with a keen interest in moral and in spiritual matters.¹⁶⁹ In order to understand how and why the original life of St. Elizabeth compiled by James of Varazze was adapted by Bokenham, it is necessary to examine not only the two texts, but also the reading habits of the provincial gentry and the confluence of spiritual and political interest of the ecclesiastical and secular elite in the fifteenth century.

3.2 Osbern Bokenham and the *Legendys of Hooly Wummen*

Between 1443 and 1447, Elisabeth's legend was translated into Middle English by Osbern Bokenham.¹⁷⁰ This first hagiographical collection dedicated exclusively to female saints was written in verse form, mainly in rhyme royal or couplets, and in *Monk's Tale* stanza,¹⁷¹ and it comprises thirteen lives: Margaret, Anne, Christine, Ursula and the Eleven Thousand Virgins, Faith, Agnes, Dorothy, Mary Magdalene, Katherine of Alexandria, Cecilia, Agatha, Lucy and Elisabeth of Hungary. Three of the lives were inspired or commissioned by noble patrons and an unnamed friend, and another four name women dedicatees.¹⁷² The commissioner of the life of Elizabeth of Hungary was Elizabeth de Vere,

¹⁶⁹ Winstead, 16 and 120.

¹⁷⁰ Originally the manuscript has no title, but it is generally referred as *Legendys of Hooly Wummen*, which Mary S. Serjeantson, the first editor of the text extrapolated from the author's description of his work as "dyvers legendys...Of hooly wummen" (lines 5038-40). All references to Bokenham's text are to the edition by Mary S. Serjeantson, see footnote 145.

¹⁷¹ A. S. G. Edwards, "The Transmission and Audience of Osbern Bokenham's *Legendys of Hooly Wummen*," in *Late-Medieval Religious Texts and their Transmission*, ed. Alistair J. Minnis (Cambridge, D. S. Brewer, 1991), 157-167, on 157. The *Monk's Tale* stanza is a stanza of eight five-stress lines with the rhyme scheme ababbcbc. This type was established in "the Monk's Tale" from Geoffrey Chaucer *The Canterbury Tales*.

¹⁷² Diane Watt, *Medieval Women's Writing: Works by and for Women in England, 1100-1500* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2007), 83.

countess of Oxford.¹⁷³ Bokenham was a fairly prolific writer; in addition to the *Legendys*, he composed the *Mappula Angliae*, a geographical text intended to supplement his lives of saints, and probably three other works as well: a translation of Claudianus's fifth-century *De Consulatu Stilichonis*, a genealogy of Joan of Acre,¹⁷⁴ known as Clare Roll or "Dialogue at the Grave," and a large collection of saint's lives, which has only been recently discovered in the library of Sir Walter Scott.¹⁷⁵

Although Bokenham's collection has been much studied and it is univocally maintained that he composed the vernacular saints' lives, there is no consensus among scholars whether he really intended it as an organized set. There are two major hypotheses concerning the person who arranged the single lives into an all-female hagiographic collection. Several scholars have based their interpretations of the legendary on the assumption that Bokenham himself arranged the lives; for instance, Delany has argued for the hypothesis that the Austin friar's choice and order of texts are modelled on Chaucer's *Legend of Good Women* (1386).¹⁷⁶ Others, in turn, have argued that it was not Bokenham, but his scribe, Thomas Burgh, who arranged the author's single pieces into a collection. On the basis of textual evidence the only certainty is that Bokenham translated the lives of Margaret,

¹⁷³ The *vita* of Mary Magdalen was composed at the request of Isabel Bouchier, countess of Eu, sister of Richard, duke of York; the life of Katherine of Alexandria was written for Katherine Howard (the first wife of John Howard, future duke of Norfolk who was also a cousin of Elizabeth de Vere) and Katherine Denston, whose husband was a local coroner and Justice of the Peace. The legend of St. Dorothy concludes with a prayer for its commissioners, John Hunt and his wife Isabel. The life of St. Agatha intercedes on behalf of Agnes Flegge, the wife of a man of business and administrator for Richard of York. The "unnamed friend" is generally identified with Thomas Burgh.

¹⁷⁴ Joan of Acre (1272-1307) was the daughter of King Edward I of England and Eleanor of Castille. According to the tradition, several miracles took place at her grave.

¹⁷⁵ It was discovered in the library of the Faculty of Advocates in Abbotsford, Scotland in 2004 and identified by Simon Horobin as the "englische boke" that Bokenham mentions in his *Mappula Angliae* to have "compiled of legenda aurea and of other famous legends". The folio-sized manuscript, even in its fragmentary condition, contains more than 170 prose and verse lives of saints translated or adapted by Bokenham. Highlights include seventeen verse lives (nine of them present in the *Legendys of Hooly Wummen*), sixteen lives of insular saints, and a long, greatly original *Life of Thomas Becket*. Most likely the book was presented to Cecily Neville, mother of the Yorkist kings of England. For further information, see <http://cynthiacamp.english.uga.edu/index.php/research/ongoing-research-interests/81-the-legenda-aurea-of-osborn-bokenham> (accessed 20/01/2011) and <http://capgrave.com/Bokenham.html> (Last accessed: 19/12/2010) and <http://www.augnet.org/default.asp?ipageid=1406> (Last accessed 19/12/2010).

Anne, Dorothy, Faith, Christine, Agnes, Ursula and the Eleven Thousand Virgins and also began a life of Elizabeth but he does not indicate any intention of compiling a collection dedicated entirely to female saints. Without excluding the plausibility of the former theory, on the basis of the layout of the single surviving manuscript, the latter hypothesis appears more well-founded.¹⁷⁷

The manuscript is preserved in the British Library, MS Arundel 327. It is written on parchment and contains one hundred and ninety-six leaves. The codex provides a great deal of information about its origins, purpose, and use. It is small enough to be apt for private reading and it is designed with care: each margin and line is ruled, and the compiler's instructions are still complete. The decoration suggests its status as a presentation copy; the similarity of the design and the colours to other monastic manuscripts imply that its designer wanted this convent book to conform to monastic standards. The collection is untitled and the endnote and table of contents indicate that it is a copy meant to stand alone.¹⁷⁸ According to the colophon, the unique extant manuscript of the *Legendys* was copied, thus doubtlessly completed, by a certain "ffrere Thomas Burgh" in Cambridge in 1447, for presentation to a "holy place of nunnys that þei shulde haue mynd on hym & of hys systyr Dame Beatrice Burgh."¹⁷⁹ This date and the author's name are reported in a note and a table of contents that are appended to the manuscript which contains the work of three different scribes. The different hands, the separate units, the swiftly abandoned decoration, and many other data suggest that the planning of the manuscript had not been fully thought out before its

¹⁷⁶ Delany, *A Legend of Holy Women*, xxi-xxvi. A similar collection, the *De mulieribus claris*, containing exclusively the biographies of historical and mythological women, was compiled by Giovanni Boccaccio around 1374.

¹⁷⁷ Despite the uncertainties regarding the person who organized the lives into a set, for the sake of simplicity I will keep on referring to the collection as Bokenham's *Legendys*.

¹⁷⁸ Mary Beth Long, "Corpora and Manuscripts, Authors and Audiences," in *A Companion to Middle English Hagiography*, ed. Sarah Salih (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2006), 47-69, on 66.

¹⁷⁹ Edwards, "The Transmission and Audience," 157. Ian Doyle has suggested that the "holy place of nunnys" may refer to the Franciscan nuns of Aldgate and Denny. A. I. Doyle, "Books Connected with the Vere Family and Barking Abbey," *Transactions of the Essex Archeological Society*, NS. 25, part 11 (1958): 222-243, on 236, note 8.

execution.¹⁸⁰ The legends of the collection seem to have been reordered during its composition as a result of external inducement as well as an elaborated internal logic.¹⁸¹ On the basis of the colophon, Mary Beth Long shares the idea of Edwards that it was the compiler Burgh who organised the order of the saints' lives in the manuscript, not Bokenham. She argues that it is most likely not a coincidence that the collection begins with the life Bokenham wrote for Burgh, and suggests that "Burgh was putting together the manuscript for his sister's convent, perhaps at her request, and would have had in mind the general needs of conventual readers as well as the specific needs of his sister."¹⁸² The Arundel manuscript thus had influences from various sources; apart from the primary contribution of Bokenham and the influence of his commissioners and patrons, Burgh's relationships with him and with the nuns of the convent would have affected the arrangement and emphases of the manuscript.¹⁸³

For the audience and circulation of the lives contained in the *Legendys of Hooly Wummen* the sources of information are the personality and social status of its author and the work itself, which contains numerous hints about the production of the texts and its public. Osbern Bokenham was an Augustinian friar and a doctor of divinity at Stoke Clare, East Anglia, which was an extremely rich area in the high and late Middle Ages owing to its wool and textile industry. It had a distinguished patronage whose social life and aspirations the Austin Order shared.¹⁸⁴ Bokenham presumably led an active social life since in his *Legendys* he names various patrons among the local gentry and nobility. His situation was typical of

¹⁸⁰ For the detailed description of the manuscript, see Edwards "The Transmission and Audience", 157-159. Concerning the different layout of the lives in the collection, Edwards maintains that what Burgh had before him when he planned the transcription of MS British Library Arundel 327, was not a single collection of saints' lives, but a series of separate quires or booklets containing Bokenham's copies. Thus the existence of individual exemplars can be the answer for the variations. The circulation of such pious booklets seems consistent with other indications of circulation of devotional and other works in East Anglia and elsewhere in the mid-fifteenth century. Edwards further evidence to support the hypothesis of the booklet method of the transmission and compilation for Bokenham's *Legendys* is the fact that London, MS British Library Addit. 36983, a large, mid-fifteenth century compilation of various religious and lay works, contains the beginning of Bokenham's *Legend of Dorothy*, but only this one of the complete collection.

¹⁸¹ Wogan-Browne, *The Idea of the Vernacular*, 65

¹⁸² Long, "Corpora and Manuscripts, Authors and Audiences," 66.

¹⁸³ Ibid.

¹⁸⁴ Delany, *A Legend of Holy Women*, xii-xiii.

medieval writers, who often knew their intended readers personally and were not dependent on sales to strangers but on commissions of patrons. In the fifteenth century, writers usually directed their works primarily to people they knew,¹⁸⁵ and in a certain sense the patron might be seen as a collaborator in the artistic process: “The patron who commissioned the work and the author who wrote ... were linked in a common effort to demonstrate divine purpose and thus human deviation from or adherence to that plan.”¹⁸⁶ So it was in the case of Bokenham.

The project of composing a hagiographical verse in English was very much on the agenda since in the thirteenth century the notion of *devotio moderna* and the new tradition of affective piety were developed among the laity and the religious; thus a personal, passionate attachment to Christ and the saints came into the foreground.¹⁸⁷ The growing participation of women could be experienced not only in religion but also in politics. Sheila Delany has pointed out that Bokenham’s activity coincided with the War of the Roses, in which the problem of women’s role in usurpation was a latent but important issue in the debate between rival claims. While the Lancastrian right to the English throne was claimed through a male hereditary line, the Yorkist line descended at several points through women. The ability of women to succeed as rulers or to transmit the right to rule thus became a crucial question in public debate.¹⁸⁸ Delany maintains that Bokenham – who was, as most of the Austins, a Yorkist sympathizer – compiled his all-female collection of powerful women who were worthy and capable of accomplishing the will of God. I do not share Delany’s theory that it

¹⁸⁵ Wogan-Browne, *The Idea of the Vernacular*, 13.

¹⁸⁶ June Hall McCash, ed. *The Cultural Patronage of Medieval Women* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1996), xiii.

¹⁸⁷ Stoke on Clare (Suffolk) where Bokenham lived is about 60 kms from Norwich, the town which had at that time more hermits and anchorites of both sexes than any other town in England, and was the only English town to have had communities of pious laywomen similar to the continental *béguinages*. Besides, Lollardy, a movement which was considered to be heretic, was also strong in East Anglia and attracted a lot of people. Delany, *A Legend of Holy Women*, xxvii-xxviii. The composition of collections of saints’ lives in the vernacular may have been an important weapon against them, since the saints were part of a traditional Catholicism that most Lollards despised and their legends were said to be derived from authoritative sources whose authority the Lollards denied. Karen A. Winstead, “Saintly Exemplarity”, 341.

¹⁸⁸ For further information on succession problems and on the treatises written against the right of women to succeed or to transmit the right to succession, see Delany, *A Legend of Holy Women*, xxviii-xxx.

was Bokenham who arranged the single lives into an all-female collection, nor should it be forgotten that one of the commissioner's family, the de Veres, supported the Lancastrians, and so, presumably, did Bokenham's other addressee, Katherine Howard, a relative of Elizabeth de Vere, but Delany is certainly right in the sense that noble women's increasing participation in politics was strongly connected to their growing contribution to literary activities as patrons and commissioners of mostly (but not exclusively) devotional works.

The *Legendys* is a not simple transcription or translation of Bokenham's main source, the *Legenda auera*, nor the imitation of other English collections of saints' lives, but a rather a free adaptation of the material for his own goals. Although the life of St. Elizabeth, who was from royal lineage and was a wife and mother, may seem to be perfect material to present "mirrors of wives" to Bokenham's lay female patrons, he had to make some adroit changes to blunt some radical differences between the *Legenda aurea*'s saints and the ways of life of his privileged secular audience. In the *Life of St. Elizabeth of Hungary* the Austin friar elaborates the theme of "splendid contradiction" between her commitment to poverty and the sumptuous life of the Thuringian court. Her ascetic lifestyle and unlimited charity towards the poor and the sick stood in perpetual conflict with the social expectations of her entourage. In her study of several thirteenth-century lives of St. Elizabeth, Anja Petrakopoulos has shown how the saint's portrait was transformed into a "mirror" for lay women who sought to reconcile their devotional lives and their expected social roles:

While Elizabeth's many virtues were held up for imitation to a wide variety of medieval orders of people, Elizabeth's example of chastity and humility was specifically deployed in her function as an ideal for women, especially aristocratic and later rich urban women.¹⁸⁹

¹⁸⁹ Anja Petrakopoulos, "Sanctity and Motherhood: Elizabeth of Thuringia," in *Sanctity and Motherhood: Essays on Holy Mothers in the Middle Ages*, ed. Anneke B. Mulder-Bakker (New York: Garland, 1995), 259-296, on 285. I owe this quotation to the dissertation of Christopher Edward Manion, who dealt exhaustively with Bokenham's version of the legend of St. Elizabeth in the third chapter of his PhD dissertation: "Writers in

Bokenham himself declares in the prologue to the *Prolocutorye to Marye Mawdelyns Lyf*, another life in the legendary, that he will write the life of Elizebeth at the de Vere's request so that the saint "to alle wyvys a merour be / Of uery perfeccoun in sundry degre" (5047-8).¹⁹⁰ However, several aspects of Elizabeth's lifestyle could have been rather risky for secular people. On the one hand, members of households committed to a life of poverty risked disrupting the economy of their home and family. On the other hand, married people seeking a life of celibacy threatened to upset the sexual order of the family, whose propagation depended on the birth of heirs who could inherit the family's wealth and prestige.¹⁹¹ Although both in James of Varazze's life of St. Elizabeth and in that by Bokenham the antagonism between her desire for a chaste, ascetic life and the reality of being hindered by the courtly expectations that she be a landgravine, wife, and mother is present, the Austin hagiographer tries to shift the focus from religious to secular concerns.¹⁹² Elizabeth, like almost all women of the age of this patriarchal society, was subjected to male authorities at each stage of her life: her father, her husband, Ludwig, her uncle and other male relatives from her husband's family, but above all her confessor, Conrad of Marburg.

Other than the versification of his prose source, Bokenham does not make conspicuous changes in the earlier hagiographer's text. Still, in a remarkably subtle manner he manages to reshape the original legend by adding, omitting or changing details to highlight even more the saint's transition from virgin to widow in order to make it suitable for fifteenth-century laypersons. As Manion has indicated, "[t]he Elizabeth of Voragine is able to

Religious Orders and their Lay Patrons in Late Medieval England." Ohio: The Ohio State University, 2005, 142. For further information on this topic, see Dyan Elliott, *Spiritual Marriage: Sexual Abstinence in Medieval Wedlock* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993).

¹⁹⁰ Elizabeth is described as a mirror on two other occasions as well: "þis Elyzabeth, of continence / The uery myrour" (9690-91) and "þis myrour of uery obedience / Thys blyssyd Elyzabeth" (9857-58).

¹⁹¹ Manion, "Writers in Religious Orders," 151.

¹⁹² Ibid., 153.

balance both secular and religious worlds, but in Bokenham, many of her religious desires seem impractical in the face of secular duties.”¹⁹³

The Austin friar uses three different verse forms in his collection and also in the legend of St. Elizabeth: her prologue was partly written in rhymed couplets, partly in a seven-line stanza rhymed ABABBCC; and her life in an eight-line stanza rhymed ABABBCBC.¹⁹⁴ Although *The proloug into seynt Elyzabeth Lyf* Bokenham roughly follows James of Varazze’s preface, the English hagiographer made some noteworthy changes to the Latin text. In the first place, he extended his predecessor’s etymology of Elizabeth’s name, and provides information regarding both the source and the biographical data of the saint’s life:

The yere of grace, who lyst attende,
As seyth Ianuence in hys golden legende,
A thousand and two hundryd also
Yf thretty & oon be addyd ther-to,
The nyntende day euyn of nouembre,
Whych ys þe threttende kalende of decembre,
By the uertybyl cours of fatal deth
Owt of thys werd passyd seynt Elyzabeth,
Wy[c]h the kyngys doughtyr was vngarye,
& wyf to Langraue, pryince of turyngye;
Whos lyf my wyl ys to declare
In englyssh tongue, al-be-yt but bare (9455-9466).¹⁹⁵

Bokenham’s prologue follows a typical hagiographic style. He calls the author “Ianuence” (i.e., James of Varazze or, in Latin, Iacopo de Voragine) and the title of his source the “golden legende.”¹⁹⁶ Unlike the *Legenda aurea*, which reports Elisabeth’s date of death only towards the end of her legend, Bokenham initiates the prologue by reporting the precise

¹⁹³ Ibid, 155.

¹⁹⁴ Delany, *A Legend of Holy Women*, xviii.

¹⁹⁵ In case of long or difficult-to-understand quotations in Middle English I provide the modern English prose translation by Sheila Delany. All translations are from the edition by Sheila Delany, *A Legend of Holy Women: A Translation of Osbern Bokenham's Legends of Holy Women* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1992). [In the year of grace 1231 (as Voragine says in his *Golden Legend*), on November 19th, which is the thirteenth calend of December, by the twisting course of fate-dealing death there passed out of this world Saint Elizabeth, Daughter to the king of Hungary and wife to Landgrave, prince of Thuringia. Her life is my wish to declare in English, however barren my speech.] Delany, *A Legend of Holy Women* 175.

¹⁹⁶ There are two more references to the author and his famous legendary in Bokenham’s version: “Here to tellyn, as doth deuyse / Ianuence in hys golden legende” (10391-92); “In Ianueneis legend, wych ys kouth & knowe;” (10524).

day of her death, her origin, and her social status, taking the rank of her husband Ludwig (landgrave) for his name. The Austin friar also apologises for the “bare” English he uses, which can either be a rhetorical topos or a sign of the instability of the English dialect he uses, “the language of Suthfolk speche” (4064). He takes over the fanciful etymology of his predecessor, inserting his ideas. Bokenham’s addition to Elizabeth’s legend, that God approved her works and made her known “and throgh-out þe werde hyr fame be blowe” (9480), may refer to his visits to Spain and Italy,¹⁹⁷ where he could have seen how widespread her cult was on the continent.

The English hagiographer extended James of Varazze’s etymology further, inserting the notion of the three theological virtues “Feyth, Hope, Cheryte, / Wych Elyzabeth had in excellent degree” (9484-85). These virtues were traditionally considered a gift from the Holy Spirit. Late medieval thought about virtue owed a great deal to the teachings of Thomas of Aquinas, who regarded charity as the main virtue from which all the other virtues derive. A life spent virtuously would not earn salvation, according to Aquinas, if it lacked charity. In turn, a single outstanding act of charity could wipe out all sin. Charity, although generally interpreted as love of God, also meant love of others for the sake of God that could take various forms – giving alms to the poor or helping the needy – but its underlying aim was to perfect the charitable individual’s relationship with God, not merely to benefit the poor materially.¹⁹⁸ Bokenham elaborates the theological virtues in Elizabeth’s life, in which faith was manifested in her refusal of worldly vanity, hope in her meek suffering of tribulation, and charity in her “loue & eke pyte, / of god & our neyours both hy & lowe” (9503-4). The practice of these virtues was also absolutely relevant and feasible for Bokenham’s lay

¹⁹⁷ Bokenham mentions a pilgrimage in Santiago de Compostela, Venice, Florence, Montefiascone and Rome. Delany, *A Legend of Holy Women*, x-xi.

¹⁹⁸ For an English translation of his *De caritate*, see Saint Thomas Aquinas, *On Charity (De caritate)*, tr. by Lottie H. Kendzierski, Medieval Philosophical Texts in Translation 10, (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1960).

audience, for whom the hagiographer highlights, already in the prologue to Elizabeth's life, the qualities of the saint that matched the best with late medieval pious virtues.

The depiction of Elizabeth's childhood, with its devotion to God, the Virgin, and the St. John the Apostle, was a recurring motif in her early *vitae*, among them the *Legenda aurea* as well. It recounts how Elizabeth, as a maid, chose the Virgin as her patron and St. John as the protector of her virginity. In Bokenham, the following can be read:

For wyche entent, on seynt valentynys day,
Whan of sundry apostlys, aftyr vse of þat cuntre,
Up-on sundry taprys, wych on þe auter lay,
Wrytyn sundry namys vsyd were to be,
And yehe mayde tooke oon aftyr þe casuelte (9609-13).¹⁹⁹

Apart from the difference that, according to James of Varazze, the apostles' names were written on slips and not on the altar candles, Bokenham's association of this tradition with St. Valentine's Day is remarkable. It appears to be a surviving custom from pagan traditions; in ancient Rome the festival of Lupercus (also known as Lupercia or Lupercalia) began on 15 February and the previous day was a feast to celebrate Juno, the goddess of women and marriage.²⁰⁰ Although the account of drawing the name of St. John is present in almost all the thirteenth-century *vitae* of St. Elizabeth,²⁰¹ only Bokenham seems to have known about the connection between St. Valentine's Day and the drawing of a patron saint; nevertheless, he refers to it as a characteristic "vse of þat cuntre". The other -- apparently

¹⁹⁹ [Therefore, on Saint Valentine's day, when, according to the custom of that country, the names of various apostles were written at random on altar candles and each girl took whichever one fell to her, three times Elizabeth got the candle inscribed to Saint John.] Delany, *A Legend of Holy Women*, 178. Cfr. with the Latin original, 1157: *Nam beatam uirginem dei genitricem in sui patronam et aduocatam et beatum Iohannem euangelistam in sue castitatis custodem elegit. Cum enim singule cedula singulorum apostolorum nominibus inscripte altari supponerentur et quelibet aliarum puellarum casu sibi cedulam contingentem acciperet, ista oratione fusa tribus uicibus cedulam ubi nomen sancti Iohannis erat inscriptum ut desiderabat accepit.*

²⁰⁰ On this day, according to a pagan tradition, young men drew maidens' names out of a jar, and the girls would then be their partners during the festival. Other accounts say that men could keep the women as sexual companions for an entire year. With the spread of Christianity this custom became rather problematic and around 496 CE Pope Gelasius I recast this pagan festival as the Christian feast day of St. Valentine. He also "Christianized" the pagan lottery to have young men and women draw the names of saints whom they would then emulate for the year. On the basis of http://www.allsaintsbrookline.org/celtic_saints/valentine.html (Last accessed: 16/01/2011)

²⁰¹ Apart from the *Legenda aurea*, this episode is present in the *Libellus*, in Caesar of Heisterbach's *Vita Sancte Elyzabeth Lantgrauie* and in Dietrich of Apolda's *Vita Sancte Elyzabeth*.

minor but in fact significant – change the Austin friar made was the addition that Elizabeth picked St. John’s name “aftyр the desire in hyr hert secre.” As Cristopher Marion has succinctly pointed out, Bokenham had Elizabeth’s virginity become a *secret*, an inner desire that is a recurring theme in his version.²⁰² Although Elizabeth submitted to marriage under the pressure of her father, at heart she preserved her devotion to the ideals of virginity.²⁰³ Bokenham follows James of Varazze’s narration in pointing out that the saint married only “by law” at the Hungarian king’s command and the because of the Ten Commandments, but “neythyr for lust nere lykyng of hir body” (9675). This commitment to her duty as a royal wife as well as to God’s commandments shows her exemplarity as a saint.²⁰⁴ A further confirmation of the saint’s inner desire for continence is the vow she made before her marriage to observe perpetual chastity in case of the death of her husband.

In the various lives of St. Elizabeth, her husband, Ludwig of Thuringia, is depicted as a pious figure who patiently supports the religious practices of his wife and her often provocative behaviour concerning courtly customs, especially her refusal of “unjustly obtained” food. While Bokenham underlines that her ascetic habits at the royal table, he approves of Elizabeth’s manners as a landgravine; she often accompanied Ludwig on his travels, served and prepared food and distributed it plentifully throughout the hall and attended court feasts, where “with curteysy / alle gestys coming she glad shuld moun” (9903-9904). Here, in the *Legenda aurea*, James of Varazze adds that Ludwig himself would have followed his wife’s example if he were not afraid of throwing his household into disorder. Bokenham, on the other hand, highlights the contrast between the outward practice demanded

²⁰² Another similar reference to Elizabeth’s inner desire can be read in the passage that narrates how Elizabeth passed from virginity to matrimony: “Wherfore, althow hyr estate dede change / Thys blyssyd Elyzabeth, by hyr fadrys decree, / To swych as to hyre was ful straunge, / I mene to matrimony from virgynyte, / Yet not for þan in hyr hert secre / Hyr affeccyouн with-owtyn changablynesse / Was more leef a maydyn to haue be / Than princesse or queen or emperesse” (9697-9704). [So that although this blessed Elizabeth changed her condition, by her father’s decree, to one quite strange to her – I mean from virginity to matrimony – yet in her secret heart her unchangeable desire would have preferrd to remain a maid than to be a princess, queen, or empress.] Delany, *A Legend of Holy Women*, 179.

²⁰³ Manion, “Writers in Religious Orders,” 156.

by courtly expectations and his “thought preuy” (9924) to live a more modest lifestyle;²⁰⁵ and had it not been “for the wardys shame / and for the trowble also for hys meny” (9926-9927), he would have gladly done the same. Similarly to Elizabeth, the devout Ludwig had to face the irreconcilability of social expectations and contempt for earthly vanities.

One of Bokenham’s two major additions to the Latin text is the scene in which Elizabeth uses persuasive rhetoric to convince Ludwig to go on Crusade to the Holy Land. Contrary to the Italian hagiographer, who dedicates a short paragraph to the landgrave’s crusade during which he eventually died,²⁰⁶ Bokenham elaborates Elizabeth’s arguments in great detail and how she said farewell to her husband. It should be noted, however, that James of Varazze was the first hagiographer who wrote in his legendary that it was due to Elizabeth’s persuasion and not to the landgrave’s personal conviction that he left for the holy war. In Bokenham’s version, Elizabeth, after reassuring Ludwig, “whom next god most tendyrly / I loue & euere haue done treuly” (10076-77), advises him to leave worldly occupations and exercise his courage by going to the Holy Land,

In wych cryst made hys bodily pilgrimage,
An for oure sake þer deyid on a tre,
Betrayid by þe iewys cruel outrage;
Wych now hethyn men kepyn in seruage. (10081-85)

...
For who be þe cours of þe fatal whele
In þat holy iourne happe for to deye,
If he be clene he goth a sykys weye
To heuenewarde, for he may not fayle (10091-94).²⁰⁷

²⁰⁴ Ibid., 157.

²⁰⁵ Idem, 160.

²⁰⁶ Iacopo da Varazze, *Legenda Aurea*, 1163: *Inter hec laudanda est deuotio uiri sui, qui licet negotiis multis esset implicitus, in dei tamen obsequio erat deuotus et quia ipse talibus personaliter intendere non ualebat, uxori sue potestatem concesserat agendi omnia que dei honorem respicerent et anime sue salutem afferrent. Cupiens uero Elizabeth ut uir suus in fidei defensionem potentie sue arma conuerteret, ipsum salubri exhortatione induxit ut ad terram sanctam pergeret uisitandam. Vbi dum esset ipse lantgravius princeps fidelis, inclitus et deuotus fide integra et deuotione sincera deo reddidit spiritum, suorum operum fructum recipiens gloriosum.*

²⁰⁷ [where Jesus made his bodily pilgrimage and died for our sake on a tree, betrayed by the Jews’ cruel violence. That country heathens now hold in slavery. ... For he who by the turn of fate’s wheel happens to die on that holy journey, if he is confessed, is assured of going to heaven.] Delany, *A Legend of Holy Women*, 186.

The unromantic truth is that the Crusade was an immediate political issue at that time and Conrad of Marburg had more to do with it than the saint herself. In 1215, long before becoming Elizabeth's confessor, Conrad was appointed by Pope Innocent III to advertise the fifth Crusade and Ludwig probably took the Crusaders' Cross from his hand in 1224. Conrad came to the court of Thuringia in 1226 as counsellor in religious matters and became Elizabeth's confessor. He got into such a confident relationship with the landgrave's family that when Ludwig left for the crusade with Frederick II in 1227, Conrad was entrusted with the administration of his ecclesiastical estates and the spiritual leadership of Ludwig's brother, Conrad of Thuringia.²⁰⁸ Apart from the "defence of the faith," the landgrave's commitment to the crusade also guaranteed the consolidation of the territorial *status quo* to his benefit, placing his possessions under the protection of the papacy. Thus, in all likelihood, it was not only religious conviction and his wife's rhetoric that impelled Ludwig of Thuringia to go on a crusade, but strong political and financial motivations as well.

After relating the landgravine's successful enterprise in convincing Ludwig, Bokenham, probably for the sake of a mainly female audience, inserts a romantic and moving valediction of the couple, standing on the shore, surrounded by weeping lords, ladies, and commoners. Though the scene is rather similar to contemporary romances, Elizabeth expresses her affection for her spouse in spiritual terms:²⁰⁹

Wyth what affeccoun & how entirely
 I þe loue, dere spouse, & euyr haue do,
 No man knowyth but god & þou & I,
 Wych not oonly in fleshe bodily, lo,
 By þe knot of spousayle ioynyd hath us two,
 But in spyryth eek thorgh hys cheryte
 So to-gedyr confedryd hath so
 That impossyble ys undo þe knot to be.
 But why y now shuld wepe in ony wyse
 Reasonable cause kan I noon se,
 Syth I se þe goon to doon hym seruyse
 Whom I loue in most souereyn degree.

²⁰⁸ Ilona Sz. Jónás, *Árpád-házi Szent Erzsébet*, 119.

²⁰⁹ Manion, "Writers in Religious Orders," 162.

Sumtyme I sorwyd whan thow wentyst fro me,
 But now neythyr sorwyn ne wepyn I may,
 Be so þat cryst through hys benygnyte
 The grace yiue to seruyn hym to hys pay.²¹⁰ (10113-10125)

In contrast to James of Varazze, Bokenham dedicates more attention to the heroism of the landgrave, “crystys owyn knyht / armyd in vertu and in cheryte” goes to Jerusalem and “in goddys cause quyt him ful manly” and passes away. With this extension, in the Middle English version Ludwig appears as a companion for Elizabeth in their struggle between spiritual satisfaction and meeting the demands of secular life, who, in the end, choose the “better” part.

After the landgrave’s death, according to the *Legenda aurea*, Elizabeth was chased away from the court by her husband’s vassals, as a *dissipatrix et prodiga*.²¹¹ She left the court with her children - in Bokenham “& hir maydyns also” (10162) - and wandered, penniless, until her uncle, the bishop of Bamberg, took her under his protection and wanted her to remarry. Elizabeth’s love for her husband is emphasized once more, after that Ludwig’s bones had been brought from beyond the sea and was buried with due ceremony, saying to her uncle plainly: “Syr, syth my lord ys now comyn home to me, / Othyr husbonde wyl I neuere haue noon, certeyn” (10255-56). Staying true to her words, Elizabeth took soon the religious habit.²¹² As Manion has noted, the Austin friar makes a remarkable amendment to this episode in order to show more sympathy for the situation of widows in fifteenth-century England, recognizing the difficulty widows could have in achieving independence.²¹³ In his adaptation, Ludwig’s brother “by very tyraunte, / fro her dowarye hyr drof ful unpystouslye /

²¹⁰ [“With what affection and how entirely I love you, dear spouse, and always have, no one knows but God and you and me. He has joined us not only physically by the knot of marriage, but through his charity has united us spiritually so that the knot is impossible to undo. But I see no reasonable cause to weep now, since I see you going to serve him whom I love the best. In the past I have sorrowed when you went away from me, but now I may neither sorrow nor weep, as long as Christ through his kindness grant you the grace to serve him to his liking.”] Delany, 186-187.

²¹¹ Iacopo da Varazze, *Legenda Aurea*, 1164.

²¹² Iacopo da Varazze, *Legenda Aurea*, 1165.

²¹³ Manion, “Writers in Religious Orders,” 164-65.

And from alle that she hadde in ony degree” (10149-51). Barbara Hanawalt has demonstrated that in contemporary London, to become independent a widow necessarily had to gain control over her dowry after her spouse’s death. In some extreme cases, widows were compelled to sue their family members. In addition, the amount of pressure to remarry was still great, just as in the saint’s time.²¹⁴

For Elisabeth, reaching the state of widowhood did not mean liberation from male authority. She passed under the protection of her ascetic confessor, Conrad of Marburg, who played a significant role in Elizabeth’s life and whose character was recorded in almost all the *vitae* of the saintly princess. Following their examples, Bokenham introduces him as a poor and learned man, “of doctrine ful excellent was he, / And ful perfyth eke was of good lyuyng” (9815-16). The confessor’s personality was in sharp contrast with a courtly lifestyle and he expected absolute obedience from the landgravine, even when his orders went against her secular obligations. On one occasion, when the “Markesesse of Me[n]ence” (Markgravine of Meissen) was received at the Ludowinger court, Elizabeth ignored Conrad of Marburg’s call for her presence at a sermon. As a consequence, the saint was strongly beaten, together with some of her maids, at the command of the confessor.²¹⁵ The character of Conrad also plays a central role in Elizabeth’s life in Bokenham’s version, yet he softens some of the episodes relating to him, conceivably because the Austin friar was aware of the danger that his audience would not digest such an extent of the saint’s obedience. In the words of Christopher Marion, “Elizabeth’s obedience to Conrad is not allowed to extend beyond norms acceptable to lay people.”²¹⁶ He omits that Conrad would have been the priest to whom

²¹⁴ Barbara Hanawalt, “The Widow’s Mite: Provisions for Medieval London Widows,” *Upon My Husband’s Death: Widows in the Literature and Histories of Medieval Europe*, ed. Louise Mirrer (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1992), 21-45.

²¹⁵ Iacopo da Varazze, *Legenda Aurea*, 1160: *Quadam igitur uice ad quandam predicationem ab ipso uocata, superueniente marchionissa Mesenensi impedita non uenit. Quod ille egre ferenstantam eius inobedientiam relaxare noluit donec usque ad camisiam expoliata cum quibusdam ancillis suis que culpabiles fuerant fortiter uerberari fecit.*

²¹⁶ Marion, “Writers in Religious Orders,” 167.

Elizabeth promised a vow of continence in widowhood; instead, it is an anonymous “maystrys” (9685).

The *Legenda Aurea* also reports that after her husband’s death Elizabeth took the grey habit and wanted to live as a beggar, but Conrad did not allow her to do so.²¹⁷ Presumably, Bokenham did not even mean to hint at such a dangerous idea for his female readers, since there were strict regulations concerning women’s access to the greater public space. Women who left their designated space, that is, the home, the castle, the nunnery, the village or the city quarter, might be victim to sexual assault because they were neither under the protection of a responsible male nor in their accustomed space. Without a proper escort, women risked humiliation or even rape, and the same applied to travelling alone.²¹⁸ The moralists persistently warned that if women went out alone they would lose their honour.

Even though Bokenham omits the name of Conrad of Marburg twice, he does not conceal the trials the saint suffered at the hands of her confessor; he reports in detail the episode when Conrad separated her from the maidens whom she loved the best in order “[t]hat hyr dygnytes & hyr first glory / They shulde not reducyn o[n]t[o] hyr mynde” (10311-12).

Returning to the infamous incident of the visit of the markgravine of Messen and Elizabeth’s subsequent scourging, Bokenham makes perhaps his most noteworthy interjection into the original Latin version, crying out:

O uery mekeness! O blyssyd obedience!
 What wumman koude now obeyin to
 Swych a comaundement wythoute offence
 As dede þis myroure of pacyence, lo!
 Vnneth ony nunne yt meekly wold do;

²¹⁷ Conrad of Marburg himself writes in the *Summa vitae* that Elizabeth’s desire was to live *hostiatim mendicare*. His confessor, however, certainly knew that only in exceptional cases did the Church authorize a woman to ask for alms. In case of extreme necessity women in pairs could go begging, but it never became a regular practice. André Vauchez, “Carità e povertà in santa Elisabetta di Turingia in base agli atti del processo di canonizzazione,” in idem *Esperienze religiose nel Medioevo* (Rome: Viella, 2003), 131.

²¹⁸ Barbara A. Hanawalt, “At the Margin of Women’s Space in Medieval Europe,” in *Matrons and Marginal Women in Medieval Society*, ed. Robert Edwards and Vickie L. Ziegler, (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 1995), 16-17.

And, to seyn pleyn treuthe, I trowte yt nolde here
 Wyth-owtyn murmur & grucchyng also
 Neythyr prest ner munk, chanoun ner frère.
 For both of men & wummen also
 The molde þese dayis so sore alayde
 Wyth forward wyl, that for to do
 Swyche obedyencys yf þey were asayide,
 They wolde compleyin & ben euyl apayid.
 And this ys greth cause as I dar wele saye,
 That relygyous governaunce ys so sore affrayid,
 For dew correchyons ben al put awaye (9833-48).²¹⁹

But at this point the friar stops and apologetically recalls his audience and returns to his material:

For perauentur, yf I dyde treuly talke,
 Sum folk wolde haue greth indygnacyoun (9850-51).

Although scholars have interpreted this outburst in rather different ways, there is no doubt that it was strange for a writer so concerned with pleasing his audience. Gail Ashton has argued that Bokenham's "plaintive cry" concerning contemporary religious obedience expresses regret for a loss of control previously enjoyed by the Church. She maintains that the Augustinian friar is expressing his views about "heresies", including the Lollard movement or even, somewhat ironically considering his patrons, an upsurge in lay piety which, at its most extreme, surely threatened to fragment traditional clerical roles. "It is masculine clerical power which is privileged in Elizabeth's meek submission to her confessor, a power which was also afforded to the author, who has an opportunity to instruct his largely female, lay audience.... His texts laud the female saint yet diminish the woman."²²⁰ Apart from her rather harsh conclusion, Ashton's interpretation is noteworthy; but the fact that Bokenham's fundamental aim was to please his commissioners rather than reproaching them should not be

²¹⁹ [O true meekness! O blessed obedience! What woman could now obey such a commandment without offense as did this mirror of patience: Behold! Scarcely any nun would do it meekly; and, to tell the whole truth, I believe that neither priest nor monk, nor canon nor friar would hear it without murmur and grudging, too. For these days the clay of both men and women is so badly alloyed with stubborn will that if they were assayed with such obediences, they would complain and be ill pleased. And this is one important reason, I dare say, why religious discipline is so deeply disturbed, for due corrections are all put away.] Delany, *A Legend of Holy Women*, 182.

²²⁰ Ashton, *The Generation of Identity*, 36.

overlooked. With regard to this, Cristopher Manion has pointed out the duplicity of Bokenham's position; his identity as a religious man is at stake, but while he wants to consolidate his authority he also realizes that he is dependent on his lay readership to sustain this authority.²²¹ He felt empathy with his lay audience, constrained by their demanding social obligations, since his own situation was similar; he depended on the generosity of his patrons, thus, his attention was distracted from spiritual matters. This interjection has another aspect as well; it seems quite apposite placed just before the dedication, assuming that it was the compiler, Thomas Burgh, who organized the layout of the *Legendys* for "this holy place of nunnys," concluding with the life of St. Elizabeth, in which there is such an explicit allusion to nuns, priests, and monks.

The life of St. Elizabeth is often associated with those of St. Clare, St. Genevieve, Mary of Oignies, and Christina Mirabilis, the best-known models for late medieval piety and spirituality, whose holiness was centred on corporeality and the practice of *imitatio Christi*. What is emphasised in their lives is the devotion to the Passion and Christ's humanity, reflected in both voluntary and involuntary imitations of His sufferings. These legends also generally preserve the accounts of the saints' early childhoods, with their devotion to Christ and the Holy Family and the dialogues with Him.²²² The most characteristic features of the *imitatio Christi* are present in St. Elizabeth's Middle English legend, too. The asceticism "blal brede & hard also, / in hote watyr moystyd ful pacyently, / Wyth hyr maydyns she eet & content was so" (9910-12), the fleshly mortification "with vygylys & dyscyplynys hir body dede peyn" (9860), miracles centred on food "þei alle had dronkyn suffycyently / Yet of beere in þe cuppe was neuyr þe lesse" (9991-2), and heavenly visions "She had many an heuenely vysytacyoun" (10367). While all of Elizabeth's visions in the *Legenda Aurea* are described by Bokenham as well, he remains silent about what James of Varazze reports in his

²²¹ Manion, "Writers in Religious Orders," 169-170.

²²² Ashton, *The Generation of Identity*, 249.

collection: “When her husband was away she passed the whole night in prayer with her heavenly spouse.”²²³ This bridal imagery was fairly popular in Western Europe between the twelfth and the fourteenth century in diverse literary genres such as devotional writings, saints’ lives, *Schwesternbücher*, and canonization process testimonies and was accompanied by a series of similar visions from Hadewijch of Brabant to Catherine of Siena.²²⁴ Although many of these female mystics were married women (Bridget of Sweden, Angela of Foligno, and Dorothea of Montau), it is significant that they only became the brides of Christ after the death of their husbands. Since virgins were traditionally the primary candidates for Brides of Christ, it is conceivable that Bokenham, in contrast to James of Varazze, considered one earthly husband, Ludwig of Thuringia, sufficient for Elizabeth. Even if in Bokenham Christ does not figure explicitly as the Bridegroom of the saint, perhaps it was not by chance that the hagiographer reports the first vision with an obviously bridal imagery only after Elizabeth has reached the state of widowhood. The Austin friar disregards the second apparition of Christ, this time on Elizabeth’s deathbed, who, according to the *Legenda Aurea*, addresses her: “Come my beloved, to the eternal dwelling prepared for you!”²²⁵

Except for the eventual additions and omissions, Osbern Bokenham follows almost all the events present in the *Legenda Aurea* faithfully, until the episode in which Elizabeth converts a worldly young man with a help of a miracle, who then enters the Franciscan Order. At this point the English hagiographer interrupts the legend abruptly, saying that those wish to know more about the saint, “he redyly may han / In Ianuencis legend, wych ys kouth & knowe; / Two or thre stondyn euene by rowe / Next þis wych last I of made mende” (10523-26), but he wants to finish the legend soon in order to avoid “prolyxite” (10528). Instead, he turns to the theme of poetic inadequacy that he also raises in other saints’ lives:

²²³ Iacopo da Varazze, *Legenda Aurea*, 1160.

²²⁴ Klaniczay Gábor, “Learned Systems and Popular Narratives of Vision and Bewitchment,” in *Witchcraft Mythologies and Persecutions*, ed. Éva Pócs and Gábor Klaniczay (Budapest: Central University Press, 2008), 50-82, on 53.

For þow I had kunnyng for the ryme
 And eek to edyten as copiously
 As had Gower and chaunce[r]s in þer tyme,
 Or as now hath þe munk of bery,
 Ioon Lytgate, yet coud not I
 Thys blyssyd wumman Elyzabeth commende
 Aftyr hyr mertys suffycyently,
 And þerfore to secyn I now intende²²⁶ (10529-10536).

Here, Bokenham admits that he is incapable of praising Elizabeth “suffycyently,” as his audience is incapable of fully imitating her piety. Nevertheless, he hopes that the saint’s benediction will help him through the seemingly impossible enterprise.²²⁷ The hagiographer swiftly arrives at the discussion of Elizabeth’s death, omitting numerous significant episodes of her life such as using her dowry for the construction of a hospital in Marburg dedicated to St. Francis, the conversion of a maid called Ildegund by cutting her hair in order to keep her away from worldly vanities, or the story about the irresponsible parents who run away leaving their daughter for Elizabeth, who, finally, with the power of her prayer, makes them return for their baby. His recounting of the passing away of the landgravine, despite being a shortened version of James of Varazze’s narration, describes all the well-known hagiographic *topoi* related to the death of a holy person: the appearance of birds who teach her to sing a sweet melody on her deathbed, her vision of the devil that she chases away, the “odour of solace” (10589) her body gives, despite being unburied for four days, and the choir of birds that sings so marvellously “þat alle men wundryd þat yt dede here, / For, as yt sempt, þei seydyn a dyryge / In her maner wyt ful glad chere” (10597-10600). Yet, Bokenham remains silent about the detailed description in the *Legenda Auera* about Elizabeth’s exceptional veneration immediately after her death: “Loud was the mourning of the poor, deep the devotion of all the people. Some cut off wisps of her hair; others clipped shreds from her grave clothes, to be

²²⁵ Iacopo da Varazze, *Legenda Aurea*, 1171.

²²⁶ [For even if I were able to rhyme and compose as copiously as Gower or Chaucer did in their time, or as John Lydgate the monk of Bury does now, yet I could not sufficiently commend this blessed woman Elizabeth according to her merits.] Delany, *A Legend of Holy Women*, 193.

²²⁷ Manion, “Writers in Religious Orders,” 160.

kept as precious relics.”²²⁸ The reason for the omission of obtaining the saint’s relics is rather dubious. It may reflect the late medieval anxieties on the part of the clerical elites about the cult and, in particular, about the authenticity of relics. Geoffrey Chaucer, who was greatly admired by Bokenham, had already written a highly satirical portrait of a pardoner with his pig’s bones masquerading as relics of the saints in the *Canterbury Tales* a century before.²²⁹ On the other hand, however, Bokenham’s travels in Europe attest that he visited several famous pilgrimage sites, such as Rome, Venice, and Santiago de Compostela where relics were extensively venerated.

While the reasons for Bokenham’s omission of several noteworthy episodes from the life of Elizabeth are similarly vague, it is more understandable why he left out all nineteen miracles reported in the *Legenda Aurea*. In all likelihood, the English hagiographer wanted to present the saintly princess as a human being in flesh and blood rather than a superhuman miracle-worker who became a saint primarily because of the pious deeds she had done in her lifetime, not because of her *post mortem* miracles.

The Middle English verse legend of St. Elizabeth ends with the hagiographer’s request to God to accept the intent of his prayer and be the mediator for him and Elizabeth Vere, who commissioned the saint’s life:

For my synnys to þe heuenly leche
Be medyatryce, & a mene me teche
How with-owtyn ony empechement

²²⁸ Iacopo da Varazze, *Legenda Aurea*, 1171-72: *Multus autem ibi fuit clamor pauperum, multa devotione populorum ita ut alii capillos capitis detruncarent, alii particulas pannorum inciderent et hoc pro summis reliquiis reseruarent.*

²²⁹ Canon 62 of the Fourth Lateral Council (1215) made clear that pilgrims were not to be deceived by lying stories of false documents, as has commonly happened in many places. *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, ed. N. P. Tunner (2 vols, London: Sheed and Ward 1990), i. 263. Critics of the medieval church tended to see two religions rather than one: a philosophical, rational religion of the intelligence, and a set of popular superstitions. The first book of the treatise on *De sanctis et eorum pignoribus* written ca. 1120 by Guibert, abbot of Nogent contains useful information about popular practices, among them the rapid extension of the cult of the relics. Guibert did not object in principle their veneration but rather some of the features of the development, such as veneration of pseudo-saints, the authenticity of relics, or their commercialization. See Colin Morris, “A Critique of Popular Religion: Guibert of Nogent on *The Relics of the Saints*,” in *Popular Belief and Practice*, ed. G.J. Cumming and Derek Baker (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972), 55-60. For the English translation of the *De sanctis et eorum pignoribus*, see *Medieval Hagiography: An Anthology*, ed. Thomas Head (New York: Garland Press, 1998), 399-428.

Askapyn I may þe cruel wreche,
 The day of þe last iugement.
 And finally, lady, to þe trew entent
 Of hyr attende wych specially
 Thy lyf to make me yaf comaundement,
 And þe in hert louyth ful affacteuosly,
 I mene dame Elyzabeth ver, sothly.
 A chartyr hyr purchase here of pardoun,
 And whan she shal passyn from þis owtlaury,
 Of god hyr brynge to þe contemplacyoun.
 Amen mercy ihesu & gramercy²³⁰ (10604-17).

The somewhat hasty ending of the *Seynt Elyzabeth Lyf* is counterbalanced by Bokenham's commendable prayer for the saint's intercession. The Austin friar's request also shows that the reason for composing a verse legend of St. Elizabeth in the vernacular was the noble lady's own devotion to her namesake rather than wide veneration of the Hungarian saint's cult.

All in all, in this chapter we could see that in the fifteenth-century England, the life of St. Elizabeth, was transmitted in three different translations or adaptations, as a part of the *Gilte Legende*, Bokenham's *Legendys* and Caxton's *Golden Legend*. Since the first two works only circulated in manuscript form and were available only a limited number of people, Caxton's translation reached a considerably wider audience. Whereas the *Gilte Legende* and the *Golden Legend* can be regarded as the translations of the *Legenda Aurea*, Bokenham's collection is a quite free adaptation of some of James of Varazze's legends. In the fifteenth-century Middle English hagiography the life of St. Elizabeth, similarly to the *vitae* of other female saints, was adapted to the needs of the contemporary audience in order to provide them an example to follow in moral and spiritual matters. Since the life of Elizabeth was commissioned by a noblewoman, Bokenham reshaped the original legend bearing in mind the

²³⁰ [Now, blessed Elizabeth, with whole heart and humble will I beg you to accept the intent of my prayer: be mediator to the heavenly doctor for my sins, and teach me the means how without punishment I may escape cruel revenge on the day of the last judgement. Finally, lady, attend to the true intent of her who particularly commanded me to compose your legend and who loves you affectionately in her heart. I mean Dame Elizabeth

interests of his lay audience. The Austin friar highlighted the “splendid contradiction” of her life, providing an ideal for lay women who wanted to reconcile their devotional lives and their expected social role. That Bokenham paid particular attention to the depiction of the affectionate relationship between Elizabeth and Ludwig, is best illustrated by the farewell speech delivered by the saint. The other remarkable interjection he made is the indignant outburst at the contemporary religious disobedience. The curiosity of Bokenham’s collection is that although the single legends were all commissioned by noble laypeople, the only extant copy of his work was made for a nunnery.

Vere. Purchase her a charter of pardon, and when she shall pass from this outlawry, bring her to the contemplation of God. Amen and thank you Jesus.] Delany, *A Legend of Holy Women*, 194-195.

CHAPTER FOUR: THE CENTRAL EUROPEAN TRADITION

This chapter is dedicated to discussing the diffusion of the *Legenda Aurea* and its legend of St. Elizabeth in the Bohemian and the Hungarian vernacular. The idea of comparing these two traditions comes from Edit Madas, who has suggested that since almost all the Hungarian codices have been destroyed, it would be illuminating to juxtapose the few extant Hungarian *Legenda Aurea* manuscripts and the Czech tradition, which is not only the closest to the Hungarian but much richer in codices and well-researched.²³¹ In this chapter, however, less attention is paid to the Latin versions; my primary aim is to examine the vernacular adaptations, concentrating particularly on a fourteenth-century abridged life of Elizabeth in the Old Czech *Pasional* and on a sixteenth-century Hungarian sermon composed for her feast, preserved in the *Érdy Codex*.

4.1 The Czech Tradition

The Latin *Legenda Aurea* arrived in Bohemia and Moravia quite soon after its composition. Its two early abridged versions, destined for preachers as manuals, written before the fourteenth century, are preserved in Prague and in Olomouc.²³² The first full copy of the *Legenda Aurea* is dated around 1300 and was probably composed at the Cistercian monastery of Wilhering, Austria. The earliest Czech verse legends based on the legendary were composed in 1306. Altogether almost 50 copies of the *Legenda Aurea* have survived, primarily from the environs of Olomouc and south Bohemia, where the low activity of the

²³¹ Edit Madas, “A *Legenda aurea* a középkori Magyarországon” [The *Legenda Aurea* in Medieval Hungary], *Magyar Könyvszemle* 2 (1992): 93-99, on 93. She discusses the same topic also in French, see “La Légende dorée – Historia Lombardica – en Hongrie,” in *Spiritualità e lettere nella cultura italiana e ungherese nel basso medioevo*, ed. Sante Graciotti and Cesare Vasoli, (Florence: Olschi, 1995), 53-61.

²³² For a comprehensive study on the *Legenda Aurea* in Bohemia, see Anežka Vidmanová’s introductory chapter to the modern Czech translation: A. Vidmanová, *Legenda Aurea. Jakub de Voragine* (Prague: Vyšehrad, 1984), 11-33. For a summary, see Anežka Vidmanová, “La branche tchèque de la Légende dorée,” in *Legenda aurea: sept siècles de diffusion. Actes du colloque international sur la Legenda aurea: Texte latin et branches vernaculaires*, ed. Brenda Dunn-Lardeau (Montréal: Bellarmin, 1986), 291-298.

Hussite movement resulted in the preservation of more manuscripts. Beside the few full copies of the *Legenda Aurea* there are several codices that contain selected *vitae* from James of Varazze's collection, often organized in a different order. Most of the legendaries are, however, copies to which the legends of the saints who were particularly venerated in Bohemia were added: Wenceslas, Adalbert, Ludmila, Prokop, the Five Brothers, Cyril and Methodius, and Sigismund. First they were only read in the monasteries, than from the second half of the fourteenth century also at Charles University, and finally they arrived in the provincial parishes as well. The vernacular lives of saints were circulating especially in the territory of the archbishopric of Prague, Olomouc, and in south Bohemia.²³³

4.2 The Old Czech *Pasional*

During the reign of Charles IV, Czech literature began to flourish. Not only was the first full translation of the Bible made around 1360, but also secular works written originally in Latin were translated into the vernacular. The first Czech version of the *Legenda Aurea* was the *Pasional*, a collection of 166 saints' lives. The *Pasional* was made around 1357 at the request of Charles IV, who, being the son of Henry of Luxemburg, struggled with the problem of being from a new non-indigenous dynasty. He had to accentuate his kinship to native ancestral saints as well as emphasize the dynastic prestige he had acquired from abroad.²³⁴ Accordingly, the Czech translation of the *Legenda Aurea* served political purposes: Charles wanted to demonstrate that there were numerous saints among his ancestors. Some local and lesser-known saints, such as St. Arnold, were added to the original corpus of the *Legenda Aurea*. There were several other legendaries associated with his court, such as the

²³³ Helga Susanne Schmidtberger, *Die Verehrung der Heiligen Elisabeth in Böhmen und Mähren bis zum Ende des Mittelalters*, (Marburg: N.G. Elwert Verlag, 1992), 231.

²³⁴ The Angevins of Hungary struggled with the same dilemma as the Luxemburgs did in the first half of the fourteenth century; Klaniczay, *Holy Rulers*, 327.

Hedwig Codex and the *Krumauer Bildercodex*.²³⁵ The latter contained altogether thirty-eight picture cycles representing the legends of various Czech and Hungarian saints, including St. Wenceslas, St. Ludmila, St. Vitus, St. Prokop, and a detailed life of Elizabeth of Hungary based on the *Legenda Aurea*. The Bohemian king fostered the cults of dynastic saints in other ways, too: in 1358, the Angevins of Hungary and the Luxemburgs of Bohemia made a joint royal pilgrimage and visited first the shrine of St. Elizabeth in Marburg. Then the pilgrims went Cologne to the shrine of the Magi. On the way back, the royal couple took with them some of the relics of the saint. Their last stop was Aachen, where the Hungarian queen mother, Elizabeth²³⁶ Piast, founded a Hungarian chapel near Muenster. Another sign of their attachment to the Hungarian princess was that they named their daughter Elizabeth in 1358.²³⁷ Besides, Charles IV also built several places of private meditation; one of them was the Holy Rood chapel in the Karlstein (Karlštejn) Castle, where he had a large relic collection and which was adorned with 130 tableaux portraying martyrs, sacred churchmen, knights, kings, and holy women from St. Ludmila to St. Elizabeth.²³⁸ The cult of St. Elizabeth in Bohemia reached its peak between the last quarter of the fourteenth century and the first half of the fifteenth century, owing primarily to royal and ecclesiastical initiatives. In addition to the acquisition of some of her relics, churches and hospitals were dedicated to her. Moreover, a Czech *vita* of Elizabeth was composed by Thomas of Štitné, based primarily on Theodoric of Apolda, the *Libellus* and the *Legenda Aurea*.²³⁹

The name of the translator of the *Pasional* is unknown, but in all likelihood he belonged to Charles IV's entourage. He knew Latin and Czech perfectly and was presumably

²³⁵ Gerhard Schmidt and Franz Unterkircher, ed., *Krumauer Bildercodex: Österreichische Nationalbibliothek Codex 370*. (Codices selecti phototypice impressi 13) (Graz: Akademische Druck- und Verlagsanstalt, 1967), ff. 85v-93r.

²³⁶ On this pilgrimage, see Antal Pór, "Erzsébet királyné Aacheni zarándoklása 1357-ben" [The pilgrimage of Queen Elizabeth to Aachen]. *Századok* 3, (1901): 1-14.

²³⁷ Klaniczay, *Holy Rulers*, 342.

²³⁸ For Charles IV's role as a patron of art and on Karlštejn Castle, see Iva Rosario, *Art and Propaganda: Charles IV of Bohemia, 1346-1378*, (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2000), 1-27.

a Dominican friar who lived in Prague.²⁴⁰ According to Vidmanová, he was one of the nine canons of the monastery of St. George and could also have been entrusted with the leadership of the nunnery.²⁴¹ The high number of surviving manuscripts attests that from the second half of the fourteenth century on, not only the clergy but also the lay public became more and more interested in Czech literature. It was also printed twice: for the first time either in Prague or in Pilsen under the title *Passional čili Knihy o životech svatých* [Passionale or books about the lives of saints] around 1476,²⁴² for the second time (probably) by Johann Kamp in Prague in 1495.²⁴³ The latter incunabulum, a slightly revised edition of the *Pasional* to which fourteen lives were added, appeared in two versions: one of them destined for Catholics, the other, which contained the lives of John Hus and Jerome of Prague, was intended for the Utraquists, the moderate faction of the Hussites.²⁴⁴ Contrary to the *Legenda Aurea*, the Czech *Pasional* was allowed to be read and used during the Counter-Reformation.

The *Pasional* is more of an adaptation than a close translation of the *Legenda Aurea*. It was primarily intended for the edification of those who were ignorant of Latin, especially the nuns of the monastery of St. George.²⁴⁵ Taking into account of writing to a not highly educated audience, the Czech Dominican concentrated on the narratives of the legends and omitted all the etymologies of the saints' names, the theological commentaries, the religious reflections, the names of foreign countries and cities, and in most cases, the miracles as well. At the same time, he inserted some chapters and citations from his previous translations, like

²³⁹ Schmidtberger, *Die Verehrung der Heiligen Elisabeth*, 205-207. On Thomas of Štitné and his works, see Arne Novák, *Czech Literature* (Ann Arbor, MI: Slavic Publications, 1976), 42-44.

²⁴⁰ This assumption is based on the fact that in the *Life of St. Dominic*, the translator, besides referring to the Holy Spirit as the founder of the Dominican Order who manifests Himself through miracles, reminds his readers to venerate St. Dominic. Schmidtberger, *Die Verehrung der Heiligen Elisabeth*, 195.

²⁴¹ Anežka Vidmanová, "Die Belletrisierung der Goldenen Legende im altschechischen Passional," in *Raccolte di vite di santi dal XIII al XVIII secolo: Strutture, messaggi, fruizione*, ed. Sofia Boesch Gajano (Fasano da Brindisi: Schena, 1990), 49-64, on 54-55.

²⁴² Iacobus de Voragine, *Legenda aurea sanctorum: Pasionál (neilustrovaný) cili Knihy o životech svatých*, (Pilsen?: Printer of "Statuta synodalia"?, around 1476).

²⁴³ Iacobus de Voragine, *Legenda aurea sanctorum: Pasionál (neilustrovaný) cili Knihy o životech svatých*, (Prague: Printer of the 1488 Bible, 1495).

²⁴⁴ Vidmanová, "La branche tchèque de la Légende dorée," 297.

²⁴⁵ Vidmanová, "Die Belletrisierung," 54.

the *Meditationes vitae Christi* (*Život Krista Pána*) and Acts of the Apostles into his Czech legendary.²⁴⁶ He also supplemented the *Pasional* with additional lives of saints who were particularly venerated in Bohemia and the sequence of the *vitae* does not always follow that of the *Legenda Aurea*. Some of the changes he made at the request of his patrons, Charles IV and bishop John of Neumarkt.

The original manuscript of the *Pasional* is not extant, but all the later copies contain the life of St. Elizabeth.²⁴⁷ However, it is remarkable that while almost all the legends of the Old Czech *Pasional* are based on the *Legenda Aurea*, in Elizabeth's case the author relied on the *Libellus de dictis quatuor ancillarum* and on Conrad of Marburg's *Summa vitae*. There are two possible reasons why James of Varazze's *vita* of Elizabeth was replaced by a new legend. It is conceivable that in the *Legenda Aurea* exemplar the Bohemian author used as his source, the original Elizabeth text had already been replaced by this new version, thus he only translated the Latin text he had in hand. The other possibility is that the life of St. Elizabeth was missing from the exemplar and it was the anonymous Bohemian translator-composer who supplied the missing *vita*, compiling a new one from two sources that were available. Schmidtberger claimed that neither of these two possibilities contradicts the assumption that the exemplar the Czech translator used must have been composed before the legend of St. Elizabeth was inserted in the *corpus* of the *Legenda Aurea*, prior to 1281.²⁴⁸

Although James of Varazze himself, too, relied primarily on the *Libellus* and the *Summa vitae*, it is intriguing to observe how different the Latin and the Czech versions are.²⁴⁹

²⁴⁶ Vidmanová, "La branche tchèque de la Légende dorée," 295.

²⁴⁷ The manuscripts of the *Pasional* are the following: Prague, KNM (Knihovna Národního Muzea) Hs. (Handschrift) III D 44; Prague, KNM Hs. III D 45; Prague, SKČSR (Státní knihovna ČSR), Hs. XVII C 52 (Cim C 117); Prague, SKČSR, Hs. XVII D 8 (Cim J 227); Prague SKČSR, Hs. Břevnov I Nr. 6 (Cim C 85); Brno, University Library, Hs. MK 32; Prague, SKČSR, Hs. XVII F 6 (Cim K 245), Brno, University Library, Hs. A 53. Schmidtberger, *Die Verehrung der Heiligen Elisabeth*, 8.

²⁴⁸ Schmidtberger, *Die Verehrung der Heiligen Elisabeth*, 196.

²⁴⁹ My summary is based on the transcription of MS Prague KNM, Hs. III; s. S. 72, fol.625a-630a, reported in Old Czech and in German translation in Schmidtberger, *Die Verehrung der Heiligen Elisabeth*, 196-200. This is the earliest surviving exemplar, entitled *Vitae Sanctorum Czesky*, and dated to the fourteenth century. The *vita* of

The Elizabeth-*vita* in the *Pasional* is narrated in a rather short, fairytale-like fashion. The author recounts only the most important information about Elizabeth's childhood, although this period is usually reported in a detailed way in her various legends: she was the daughter of the Hungarian king, she renounced worldly pleasures, married the landgrave of Thuringia with whom she lived together loving God, each encouraging the other to serve Him.²⁵⁰ After the birth of their children, the landgrave decided to visit the Holy Sepulchre. While only a few sentences are dedicated to the saint's childhood and marriage, her legend becomes quite detailed after becoming a widow, when the years of tribulations started. The Czech Dominican accentuates the motif of the exiled woman, narrating in detail how Elizabeth was chased away from the castle by the vassals of the landgrave and spent a night in a pigsty with her maidservants, that she had no other choice in the cold winter but to take shelter in a church with her children, with whom, in the end, she had to part company because she had nothing to feed them. Next, it is narrated how she was ill-treated by the vassals, who, despite the promise they had made earlier, did not give her dowry back, neither did they recognize her as the widow of the landgrave of Thuringia. Thus, she had to live in poverty, suffering numerous torments, but Pope Gregory IX consoled and encouraged her with his letters. Then the Bohemian author sums up her saintly life, adding that it had already been written many times: how she founded a hospital and cared for the sick; how humble and generous she was; in what ways she mortified her flesh, how obedient she was to Conrad of Marburg (although their conflicts are not mentioned), and how she wished to live in absolute poverty. Contrary to the fairly concise presentation of Elizabeth's life, much attention (almost one third of the whole text) is paid to her dying, when the saint had prophetic visions and contemplated the

Elizabeth is identical with all of the later copies of the *Pasional* except that this is the only version that does not say that her confessor, Conrad of Marburg, would have belonged to the Order of Preachers.

²⁵⁰ Schmidtberger, *Die Verehrung der Heiligen Elisabeth*, 196: "V němžto stavě bydlíce, oba sěu Bouzě milujíc k boužiej službě ponúciesta." Cf. Huyskens, *Libellus*, 32: *et se invicem ad dei laudem et servitium dulciter invitantes et confortantes*.

birth of Christ and the Last Judgement.²⁵¹ It seems that only this part of the Czech version of Elizabeth's *Vita* indicates that the author also used Conrad's *Summa vitae*, because it is not mentioned in the *Libellus* that the confessor would have been present at the Elisabeth's deathbed. A short yet surprising addition in the Czech version is when Elizabeth calls her confessor by a diminutive name, saying "Otčíku,²⁵² prepare yourself to say a funeral mass for me, for Jesus Christ appeared to me in this hour and told me: 'Come, my chosen one, come with me to the Eternity.'"²⁵³ This sentence is based neither on the *Libellus* nor on the *Summa vitae*. In turn, there is a similar episode in Bartholomew of Trent's Elizabeth *Vita*, in which he situated Christ's appearance at her deathbed, invoking the vocabulary of the Song of Songs.²⁵⁴ "He appeared in her sight, saying: 'Come, my chosen, enter the tent prepared for you.'"²⁵⁵ On the basis of all this, it can be assumed that Bohemian author knew this episode from the *vita* of St. Elizabeth of Bartholomew's *Liber epilogorum* and not from the *Legenda Aurea*, since in this case he would have used James of Varazze's version, as he did with the other saints' lives in the *Pasional*. Another, although less likely, possibility is that the Czech author's exemplar did contain the *vita* of Elizabeth, but he found it either too long or too intricate, so he compiled a simpler and shorter version on the basis of the *Libellus* and the *Summa vitae*, and he borrowed only this episode from the *Legenda Aurea*. The Old Czech legend of Elizabeth is unique from the point of view that only this version presents an intimate and affectionate relationship between the saint and her confessor. The reason for this

²⁵¹ Schmidtberger, *Die Verehrung der Heiligen Elisabeth*, 199: "A potom jědné [!] noci již nemocna ležiec, těm, ješto okolo nie seděchu, večě: 'Co bychom by [!] učinili, by sě nám tuto d'ábel ukázal?' A to řekši, počě velikým hlasem volati a řkúc: 'Utec, utec!' A potom pop o malej hodině večě: 'Nuž, již mluvmě o milém dietiti [!] Ježíšovi, neb sě již puol noci blíži. V nižto hodinu sě ráčil naroditi a v jeslech položen.'" Cfr. Huyskens, *Libellus*, 78, *Item cum sederemus circa beatam Elysabeth ultimo decumbentem dixit nobis: 'Quid faceremus, si diabolus se nobis ostenderet.'* Post paululum alta voce, quasi demonem repellens, dixit: 'Fuge, fuge, fuge,' et intulit: 'Modo loquamur de deo et puero Jesu, quia instat media nox, quando natus est Jusus et in presepio quievit....'"

²⁵² It seems that this unusual form of address, the diminutive of "father," was a typical Czech phenomenon. Schmidtberger, *Die Verehrung der Heiligen Elisabeth*, 200.

²⁵³ Schmidtberger, *Die Verehrung der Heiligen Elisabeth*, 199: "Otčíku, měj sě hotov, aby nade mnú svatý průvod odpěl, nebt' mi sě jest v tuto hodinu Jezus Kristus zjevil, a takto ke mně řka: Pod,'má zvolená, pod' ke mně do věčného přiebytká."

²⁵⁴ Gecser, "Lives of St. Elizabeth," 68-69.

may be that in this version Conrad of Marburg is referred to as a Dominican²⁵⁶ (which, in reality, he was not) by the Bohemian author was a Dominican, too; thus he wanted to present the confessor in a favourable way so as not to defame the Order of the Preachers. As to the miracles, the Bohemian author laconically says only that God, with the mediation of Elizabeth, performed numerous miracles, resurrecting some dead and healing some ill people. Helga Susanne Schmidtberger has argued that the Bohemian author's stressing that it is God who makes the miracle shows a pre-Hussite influence.²⁵⁷

4.3 The Hungarian Tradition

Since most of the medieval codices have been destroyed in Hungary, only a few Latin copies of the *Legenda Aurea* and some fragments attest to its one-time popularity. It was one of the primary sources for sermons and many of the Latin lives were translated into Hungarian in the sixteenth century. Altogether, 77 legends can be traced back to the *Legenda Aurea*. The fact that no full Hungarian translation of the *Legenda Aurea* has come down to us does not necessarily mean that there was none. Edit Madas has pointed out, however, that the variety of different translations of the same legends suggests that James of Varazze's legendary did not have an early and widespread Hungarian translation.²⁵⁸ The text I intend to examine in this section is the sixteenth-century vernacular sermon on St. Elizabeth preserved in the Érdy Codex, of which the ultimate source was the *Legenda Aurea*. Before starting the

²⁵⁵ Bartolomeo da Trento, *Liber epilogorum in gesta sanctorum*, 345.

²⁵⁶ Although it is not reported in the text that I used as my source, Schmidtberger's research on the Elizabeth *vita* in the *Pasional* manuscripts shows that all the later versions report that Conrad of Marburg was a Dominican. Schmidtberger, *Die Verehrung der Heiligen Elisabeth*, 196. Conrad did not belong to any religious order but was a priest in the diocese of Mainz; however, he had strong connections with the Premonstratensian, Cistercian and later the Franciscan Orders. See Ilona Sz. Jónás, *Árpád-házi Szent Erzsébet*, 114.

²⁵⁷ Schmidtberger, *Die Verehrung der Heiligen Elisabeth*, 200.

²⁵⁸ Madas, "A Legenda aurea a középkori Magyarországon," 98.

analysis of the sermon, I will briefly sum up the tradition of the *Legenda Aurea* and the sermons and legends of St. Elizabeth in the Hungarian literature.²⁵⁹

The earliest surviving codex of the *Legenda Aurea* in Hungary is dated to the first half of the fifteenth century and contains not only the additional legends of the three Hungarian royal saints, but also that of St. Adalbert.²⁶⁰ Usually, the three Hungarian royal saints, Stephen the wise old man, Ladislaus the warrior, and Emeric the pious young man figured together primarily for dynastic purposes.²⁶¹ The compiler of this selection was a Dominican friar who selected only the most important feasts of the *Legenda Aurea*, among them, of course, those saints that were particularly venerated by his order, that is, St. Dominic and St. Peter of Verona. The mutilated codex was presumably made as a manual for preachers, since it does not contain any of the etymologies of the saints' names. It is noteworthy that even those lives which did not belong to the original *corpus* of the *Legenda Aurea* are inserted into the correct place of the liturgical year. Nonetheless, it was more general to place the local saints at the end of the legendary, as was the case of the other two fifteenth-century codices and an early printed edition of the *Legenda Aurea*, which report in their appendices the legends of those saints whose cult was diffused in Hungary. In all these three books, the user himself has added his supplements to the original legendary.²⁶²

²⁵⁹ This subchapter is largely based on the paper of Edit Madas, see footnote 1. For the *Legenda Aurea* materials in Hungarian literature, see Cyrill Horváth, *Középkori legendáink és a Legenda aurea* [Medieval Hungarian legends and the *Legenda aurea*], (Budapest: 1911). On the Hungarian sources related to St. Elizabeth, cfr. Antal Lábán, "Az Árpád-házi Szent Erzsébet-legendák irodalmunkban," [Legends of Saint Elizabeth of the Arpadian dynasty in Hungarian literature], (Budapest: 1907).

²⁶⁰ Vienna, ÖNB Cod. Lat. 14 600. Cfr. Csapodi Csaba and Csapodiné Gárdonyi Klára, *Bibliotheca Hungarica: Kódexek és nyomtatott könyvek Magyarországon 1526 előtt* [Bibliotheca Hungarica. Codices and printed books in Hungary before 1526] (Budapest: A Magyar Tudományos Akadémia Könyvtára, 1988), 219.

²⁶¹ Madas, "A Legenda aurea a középkori Magyarországon," 95.

²⁶² The two codices are Budapest, University Library Cod. Lat. 44 and Alba Iulia, Batthyány Library R.I. 76. The *incunabulum* is Alba Iulia, Batthyány Library Inc. VIII.38. In addition, a fifth codex should be mentioned as well, the Vienna, ÖNB Cod. Lat. 326, which was presumably copied from a Hungarian exemplar. For further details see Madas, "A Legenda aurea a középkori Magyarországon," 96.

The most beautifully executed codex based on the *Legenda aurea* is the *Hungarian Angevin Legendary*.²⁶³ It is dated to the second quarter of the fourteenth century and contains the legends of 59 saints on 140 folios. The commissioner must have been Hungarian, since the manuscript reports the lives of St. Ladislás, St. Emeric, St. Gerard, and St. Louis of Toulouse. The presence of the latter suggests that it was ordered by a Hungarian Angevin family. In all likelihood, it was made in Bologna. It is curious that the original liturgical order of the *Legenda aurea* was replaced by a hierarchical one: the legends about Christ, Mary, and St. John are followed by those of the apostles and the evangelists, and then come the martyrs, the saints of religious orders, the confessor saints, and the codex ends with the women saints. According to Ferenc Levárdy it is plausible that the original full codex contained also the legends of several other women saints, among them also Elizabeth of Hungary, but they were lost,²⁶⁴ but in Béla Zsolt Szakács's view this assumption cannot be proved.²⁶⁵ Not every copyist was so diligent as to complete the *legendarium* with Hungarian saints; instead, in three sixteenth-century manuscripts one can read how they criticized James of Varazze for leaving out Hungarian saints (except St. Elizabeth).²⁶⁶ The *Legenda Aurea* was the primary source of the *Sermones Pomerii de sanctis* of the Franciscan Observant, Pelbárt of Temesvár (Pelbartus de Themeswar) who composed four sermons for the feasts of the more significant

²⁶³ Ferenc Levárdy, *Magyar Anjou Legendárium* [The Hungarian Angevin Legendary] (Budapest: Magyar Helikon, 1973), was the first to attempt at reconstructing the dispersed fragments of the codex in a facsimile. Most recently, Béla Zsolt Szakács, *A Magyar Anjou legendárium képi rendszerei* [The iconographic systems of the Hungarian Angevin Legendary] (Budapest: Balassi, 2006) has analysed the visual programme of the codex.

²⁶⁴ Levárdy, 170.

²⁶⁵ Béla Zsolt Szakács, *A Magyar Anjou Legendárium képi rendszerei*, 45.

²⁶⁶ Three copyists from the sixteenth century complained about the omission of the Hungarian royal saints from James of Varazze's legendary: "Igen köszönöm neki, hogy az magyarországi szenteket kihagyta belőle. Ezt olyá tartom, mintha eccal[?] sem bírna," said one of them. The other was even more critical: "Ebül cselekedte, se Istvánról, se Lászlóról, se Imréről nem írt, hanem az egy Örsébet asszonyról." The third "commentator" made a pun, referring to the meaning of *virago* and wrote: "Nem hiába Jacobus de Voragine, mert az magyarországi szenteket mind megette." A later user, however, rebuked him, saying "Ha eszetek lőtt volna, ezeket nem írtátok vona. Ha magyarok vattok, keressétek másutt az magyarországi szentek életeit. Azt is köszönjétek, hogy az idegen országok szenteinek életét oktatásotokra megírta." OSzK [Országos Széchényi Könyvtár] Inc. 428.

saints and one for the less important.²⁶⁷ He modified considerably James of Varazze's *vitae*, often abridging or dividing them in scholastic divisions. The followers of Pelbárt were already writing in Hungarian, thus their works can be regarded as the earliest Hungarian adaptations of the Latin legendary. The two most illustrious codices that are the combination of *legendarium* and *sermonium*, are the *Debreceni Codex* from 1519 and the *Érdy codex* from 1526. The former is a mutilated manuscript which ends with 4 April and contains the feasts of 44 saints; the latter will be discussed in the following subchapter.

The tradition of saints' lives in Hungarian literature goes back to the thirteenth century.²⁶⁸ The propagation of the legends was strongly related to the formation of the feudal system and changes in the ecclesiastical hierarchy. On the one hand, the cults of national saints were promoted by the Hungarian nobility; on the other, their written tradition could not have spread without the activity of the middle-class intellectuals of the clergy. By the end of the fifteenth century and into the sixteenth, the Hungarian church calendar was not only enriched by several new saints, but also old ones gained new "interpretations."²⁶⁹ It is remarkable that the feast of St. Elizabeth, despite having spent almost her whole life in Thuringia, was commemorated as early as 1243 by the Chapter of Szepesség (Spiš region) in a charter *Datum in festo Sancte Elisabethe regine*. Her veneration in Hungary was spread principally by German Franciscans who settled down in German-speaking towns. Despite of

²⁶⁷ On Pelbárt of Temesvár, see Cyrill Horváth, *Temesvári Pelbárt és codexeink* [Pelbárt of Temesvár and the Hungarian codices], (Budapest: Franklin Nyomda, 1891); Áron Szilády, *Temesvári Pelbárt élete és munkái* [The life and works of Pelbárt of Temesvár] (Budapest: Franklin Nyomda, 1880); Lajos Katona, *Temesvári Pelbárt példái* [The *exempla* of Pelbárt of Temesvár], (Budapest: Franklin Nyomda, 1902); *Emlékkönyv Temesvári Pelbárt halálának 500. Évfordulója alkalmából: 1504-2004* [Essays in honour of 500th anniversary of the death of Pelbárt of Temesvár: 1504-2004], ed. by Piusz Berhidai and Ilona Kedves (Esztergom: Temesvári Pelbárt Ferences Gimnázium, Kollégium és Szakközépiskola, 2006). The Hungarian translations of his selected works were edited by Sándor V. Kovács in *Temesvári Pelbárt válogatott írásai* [The selected works of Pelbárt of Temesvár] (Budapest: Helikon kiadó, 1982). Currently the *Sermones compilati* research group works on the digital edition of the works of Pelbárt of Temesvár and Oswald of Lasko: <http://sermones.elte.hu/?az=index> (last accessed: 20/05/2011).

²⁶⁸ On the *ars praedicandi* in and on the formation of the Hungarian literary culture in general, cf. Andor Tarnai, "A magyar nyelvet írni kezdik." *Irodalmi gondolkodás a középkori Magyarországon* ["The Hungarian language starts to be written." Literary thought in medieval Hungary] (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1984).

²⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 81.

the early formation of her cult, no legend of Elizabeth of Hungarian origin is known.²⁷⁰ Another characteristic of the spread of the saints' lives in Hungarian written culture is that presumably many more additional episodes or miracles were transmitted orally than one might assume on the basis of what was written down. The heyday of those legendary stories which had absolutely no historical basis was in the late Middle Ages, when, in addition to the *sermones dominicales*, the *sermones de sanctis* appeared, which the preachers enriched with new episodes in order to make them more effective.²⁷¹

Four Hungarian codices contain texts relating to St. Elizabeth of Hungary; all of them are sermons, composed in either Latin or in the vernacular. Pelbárt of Temesvár dedicated three sermons to Elizabeth in the *Pomerii sermonum de sanctis pars aestivalis*.²⁷² He relates her legend in the first *sermo*, including the miracles of the rose, of the *leprosus*, and of the dress. The sources he used for the Elizabeth legend were the *Legenda Aurea*, the *Thesaurus novus* of Petrus Paludanus,²⁷³ and the *Sermones discipuli de tempore de sanctis* of Johannes Herolt,²⁷⁴ which contains the miracle of the leper.²⁷⁵ The two other miracles, which share the common characteristic of being absent from both the documents of the canonization process and the earliest thirteenth-century legends, are not reported in any of the abovementioned three sources. The other Franciscan Observant preacher who composed two Latin sermons on the Hungarian princess was Osvárt of Laska (Osvaldus de Lasko) in his *Biga salutis*.²⁷⁶ He

²⁷⁰ Her cult began to diffuse rapidly from the second half of the thirteenth century on. Apart from the numerous churches, hospitals and villages that preserve the name of St. Elizabeth, a vast number of iconographic representations attest the saint's veneration. For a more comprehensive treatment on the topic, see József Pap, *Árpád-házi Szent Erzsébet tiszteletének története Magyarországon* [The history of the veneration of St. Elizabeth in Hungary], (Eger: Érseki Lyceumi Könyvnyomda, 1910), and Ilona Sz. Jónás, *Árpád-házi Szent Erzsébet*, 181-186.

²⁷¹ Tarnai, "A magyar nyelvet írni kezdik," 82.

²⁷² Pelbartus de Themeswar, *Sermones Pomerii de Sanctis* (Hagenau: Heinrich Gran, pro Johanne Rynmann, 1499), *Sermo* XCVI, XCVII, XCVIII. He also compiled sermons on the other four Hungarian saints, Stephen, Emeric, Ladislaus, and Gerard.

²⁷³ Petrus Paludanus, *Thesaurus novus sermonum de sanctis* (Nürnberg, 1487).

²⁷⁴ Johannes Herolt, *Sermones discipuli de tempore et sanctis cum Promptuario exemplorum* (Strasbourg, 1492).

²⁷⁵ Lábán, "Az Árpád-házi Szent Erzsébet-legendák irodalmunkban," 46-47.

²⁷⁶ Osvaldus de Lasko, *Sermones de sanctis Biga salutis intitulati*, (Hagenau, 1499), *Sermo* CVIII, CIX. On his sermons and the method of working, see Ildikó Bárczi, *Ars compilandi: A késő középkori prédikációs*

reports the same miracles as Pelbárt. As to sermons written in Hungarian, they are preserved in the *Tihanyi Codex* and the *Érdy Codex*. Whereas the former only gives an account of the miracle of the leper in order to illustrate compassion towards our fellow-beings, the latter dedicates a whole sermon to Elizabeth.

4.4 The Anonymous Carthusian and the *Érdy Codex*

Although most of the devotional literature written in Hungarian consists of translations, the author of the *Érdy Codex*, the Anonymous Carthusian, can be considered the first real Hungarian prose writer.²⁷⁷ In the Latin *Prologue* to his work, the author reveals several pieces of essential information concerning he himself, his motivation and his intended audience. Apart from Christ and the Virgin Mary, he offers his work also to St. Bruno, the founding father of his order, so he was surely a Carthusian. Moreover, he dedicates a long chapter to the history of the Carthusian Order and to the life of Bruno. In all likelihood, the Anonymous Carthusian lived in a monastery in Lövöld, (Veszprém County) which had connections with several Transdanubian cloisters of different religious orders. He says that he was urged to write in the vernacular by the just claim of lay brothers and nuns from various religious orders, including her sister, so he wishes serve their interests.²⁷⁸ His primary aim was provide pious reading for uneducated nuns and friars and for young people who had

segédkönyvek forráshasználata [Ars compilandi: the handling of sources in late medieval preaching manuals], (Budapest: Universitas, 2007).

²⁷⁷ The *Érdy Codex* consists of 338 folios and was found in Trnava (Nagyszombat) in present-day Slovakia. During the Turkish Occupation and the Reformation Trnava and Bratislava were the two centres where codices, brought by fugitive nuns from the central territory of Hungary, were collected. The codex got its name from János Érdy, who was the first to deal with it. Today the codex is kept in the National Széchényi Library. The only full edition, in two volumes, was made by György Volf in 1876, *Nyelveléktár IV-V* (Hungarian Linguistic Records Store IV-V), (Budapest: MTA, 1876), vol. 2, 476-487. For a more recent but selected edition with an epilogue on the Anonymous Carthusian and his work, see Edit Madas, *A néma barát megszólal* [The mute friar starts to speak], (Budapest: Magvető, 1985), 528-542.

²⁷⁸ Madas, *A néma barát megszólal*, 9: “Az Úr nevében. Amen. Az örök és mindenekfölött áldott Szentháromság s a Krisztus-szülő legédesebb Szűzés isteni gyermeke dicséretére, a dicsőséges Brúnónak, a szent karthauzi rendünk megalapítójának, és minden mennyei erőnek örök tiszteletére, valamint az egész küzdő anyaszentegyház üdvösséges épülésére *népnyelven* való alkotással új lelki táplálékot kívánok [nyújtani]. Erre több laikus testvér és különböző rendbeli apácák jogos igénye és kegyes biztatása ösztönzött. Köztük küzd az

not yet been well-versed in the Latin language.²⁷⁹ Accordingly, he returns from time to time to talk about the value, the use, and the rewards of monastic life.²⁸⁰ The Anonymous Carthusian was the first who consciously wrote in the vernacular. He writes that the Lutheran “heresy” can be only stopped by means of writing, preaching, and teaching. Therefore, he intends to use the weapons of the Protestants, that is, a return to the Scripture and the use of the vernacular, realizing that the vernacular is not only an essential aid for transmitting religious ideas, but the future language of literature. He sets the examples of other (German, Czech, French, and an unspecified Slavic) Bible translations against the laziness and the negligence of the Hungarians. Not knowing the Hussite translation, he complains about the lack of a Bible and its commentaries in Hungarian.²⁸¹ Thus, he undertakes the “vernacularization” of the epistles, gospels, explanations, and examples for Sundays and the feasts of saints. The author shows an unbiased attitude towards the different religious orders, aiming at composing a generally usable collection. He calls all the founding fathers of religious orders “our father,” be it St. Francis, St. Dominic or St. Augustine.²⁸²

The *Érdy Codex* was composed in the turbulent years of 1526 to 1527 and strongly reflects contemporary religious and historical issues. Concerning its genre, it is a collection of saints’ lives and sermons. The codex could have been used private reading as well as public reading for smaller communities or as a source for sermons.²⁸³ The Anonymous Carthusian intended to urge his ecclesiastical audience to save the Catholic Church of Hungary, which was threatened by Ottoman troops as well as the Lutheran Reformation. He considers both the Turks and Luther as the incarnation of the Antichrist, and describes in an apocalyptic vision,

én édestestvérem maga is, Krisztusnak szentelve, a szent fátyol alatt. Az ő szükségükön megkönyörülve, az ő érdekeiket kívánom szolgálni.” (The Hungarian translation of the Latin *Prologue* was made by Edit Madas.)

²⁷⁹ Madas, *A néma barát megszólal*, 9-12.

²⁸⁰ Imre Bán, *A Karthausi Névtelen műveltsége* [The erudition of the Anonymous Carthusian] (Budapest: Akadémiai, 1976), 30.

²⁸¹ The first, almost full Hungarian Bible translation was made around 1430 by two South Hungarian Hussite preachers, Tamás and Bálint.

²⁸² Madas, *A néma barát megszólal*, 550.

²⁸³ *Ibid.*, 553.

based on the Book of Revelations, the approaching end of the world when Christ will come down to execute the Last Judgment.

The *De tempore* part of the *Érdy Codex* contains 104 sermons based on those of Pelbárt of Temesvár, arranged according to the liturgical year, but it stops at the Sunday of Carnival. In contrast, the *De sanctis* part is complete. Containing 90 legends and a song about St. Stephen, the codex is the richest hagiographic collection of saints' lives written in Hungarian. The Anonymous Carthusian's main sources were the *Legenda Aurea* and the *Catalogus Sanctorum* but he made use of the sources of various religious orders. In addition, in the case of the Hungarian saints, he also relied on a collection entitled *Legendae sanctorum regni Hungariae in Lombardica Historia non contentae*.²⁸⁴ According to Edit Madas, the reason why the collections of sermons were enriched by legends was to illustrate that whereas the Antichrist and his followers will be damned for their heresy, those who merit it (like the saints) will have eternal life in the new world.²⁸⁵ Although some of the legends are highly readable and rich in adventurous episodes, the Anonymous Carthusian usually emphasizes the hagiographic elements in the lives of saints in order to contrast them with the corrupted Christianity of his age. The *Érdy Codex* is also unique from the point of view that it is the first book in which the legends of the two holy Hungarian kings are reported in the vernacular. Through the lives of Stephen and Ladislaus, the author also provides social and historical portraits of their ages.

²⁸⁴ It was first published in 1486-87 in Strasbourg, then in 1498 and 1512 in Venice at the expense of the Hungarian book trader János Paep. Tarnai, "*A magyar nyelvet írni kezdik*," 80.

²⁸⁵ Madas, *A néma barát megszólal*, 550.

4.5 “Dicsőséges Szent Erzsébet Asszonnak Inneperől” – On the Feast of the Glorious Lady Saint Elizabeth

Since St. Elizabeth was the only Hungarian saint whose *vita* was in the *Legenda Aurea*, in her case the Anonymous Carthusian made use of directly the legendary as well as the sermons of Pelbárt of Temesvár. Moreover, Anonymous himself added some details to her legend that cannot be traced back in any other known sources, so they can be regarded as his inventions. His speech on the feast of St. Elizabeth deserves particular attention because it is the first time that her three best-known miracles, based on Pelbárt, are reported in Hungarian. The fact that the first vernacular writing on the saint appears only in the sixteenth century is not due to the lack of observance of her feast, but that the Hungarian *ars praedicandi* started to be written down rather late, only after it had become consolidated in the oral tradition.²⁸⁶

There are three major changes in the Hungarian version of the legend on St. Elizabeth compared to that of the *Legenda Aurea* to meet the demands of a Hungarian audience mostly of nuns and friars. First, the stress is placed on Elizabeth’s moral virtues, especially on her continence. Second, three of her most well-known miracles are inserted in the sermon in order to arouse the interest of the listeners. Third, her Hungarian royal origin is more accentuated than in any other vernacular adaptations. Since they are often inseparable, I present them in the order as they appear in the text and I will summarize them at the end of this subchapter.

The text is divided into three chapters: the childhood, married life and widowhood of the princess, but the Carthusian focuses on the first and the third states of her life, praising her humility, obedience, and ascetic practices. That he intended his writings primarily for

²⁸⁶ Tarnai, “*A magyar nyelvet írni kezdik*,” 257.

religious communities is also attested because in this sermon he turns twice to those who want to live in continence, exhorting his listeners to follow the example of Elizabeth.²⁸⁷ The Carthusian's speech is a *sermones de sanctis*, which, according to the fifteenth-century Johannes Herolt, has a tripartite role: to stress the moral qualities of the saint's life; to provide simple folk with advice on how to mend their ways by following the saint's example; and to summarize the saint's most important miracles, all of which would serve as illustrations of the message of penance²⁸⁸ in which he stresses the moral virtues of the saint as an example to believers rather than an account of his or her miracles.²⁸⁹ This may seem to contradict the fact that the three most popular miracles of Elizabeth are narrated in the sermon, but these are not about her supernatural powers but about how God protects His beloved one when she is in difficulty. None of the miracles is performed by her or through her, but for her.

In the first chapter of the sermon there are two remarkable additions to the version reported in the *Legenda Aurea*. The Anonymous Carthusian provides information on the saint's royal lineage, saying that she was born around 1210 and her parents were King Andrew of Hungary and Gertrude, the daughter of a Meranian prince.²⁹⁰ The other novelty is the famous miracle of the rose, based on the account of Pelbárt of Temesvár.²⁹¹ The legend says that one cold day the child Elizabeth was secretly taking leftovers to the poor when her father, the king, noticed her and asked where she was going and what she was carrying. Elizabeth became frightened and said that she was carrying roses. The king, knowing that it is not the time when roses bloom, calls his daughter to himself and sees that she is really hiding

²⁸⁷ "Kihöz, kéröm, hallgassanak hozzá mind, kik szízeességöt akarnak tartani Krisztus Jézusnak, és vegyenek módot, regulát Szent Erzsébet asszonnak életéből." Madas, *A néma barát megszólal*, 528; "Íme, azért mily nemes példát, módot vehet és regulát minden szízeességtartó ez kisedd keráli magzatnak életéből." Madas, *A néma barát megszólal*, 530-531.

²⁸⁸ Johannes Herolt, *Sermones*, 236r.

²⁸⁹ On the representation and the role of the miracle in thirteenth and fourteenth-century sermons, see Michael Goodich, *Miracles and Wonders. The Development in Contemporary Sermons* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2007), 29-46.

²⁹⁰ "Az időben, mikoron Krisztus Úrfiú sziletetnek utána írának ezerkétszáztíz – avagy közjel hozjá – esztendőben, adaték ez szent mennyei magzat magyarországbeli András királynak, az ő jámborságának érdemes voltáért. Kinek anyja vala Gertrudis, morvai herceg lánya." Madas, *A néma barát megszólal*, 528.

roses in her bosom. The astonished father foresees that Elizabeth will be a great person when she grows up.²⁹² This famous miracle, which is perhaps the most well-known and most often represented symbol of Elizabeth's charity, originated in Tuscany in the thirteenth-century, was diffused in basically two versions: in one of them it is the father who inquires what Elizabeth carries with her, in the other it is the landgrave of Thuringia.²⁹³ Similarly to the *Tuscan Vita* and the Life written by the Anonymous Franciscan, all the Hungarian sources that report the miracle of the roses place the story in her childhood at the Hungarian court and it is the her father who stops her, not her husband.²⁹⁴ The miracle of the roses, in spite of not being present in any of the historically authentic sources, soon became popular, first in Italy, then, in the fourteenth century the first Transalpine version appeared.²⁹⁵ According to the hypothesis of Ottó Gecser, it was a testimony of folkloric hagiographical material transmitted from Germany to Hungary with other testimonies.²⁹⁶ By the sixteenth century, the miracle of the roses became an inseparable attribute of Elizabeth in literature as well as art in the German-speaking territories and in Hungary, as one can see in the sermons of the three late

²⁹¹ Pelbartus de Themeswar, *Sermones* XCVI, fol. [S₆^r].

²⁹² "Történék egy napon, mikorön nagy hideg volna, úgy, hogy senki ne látná, vine apró maradékokat az vár kapuja elébe az szegényeknek. És ime, elől találá az ő atyja, csodálkozván rajta ennenmaga, mit járna és hová sietne. Megszólajtá őtet: 'Fiam Erzsébet, hova mégy, mit vissz?' Az nemes királ leánya, miért felette szemérmes vala, nagyon megszégyennlé magát és megijede, és nem tudá félelmében egyebet felelni: 'Ím, rózsát viszök.' Az ő atyja kedég mint eszös ember meggondolá, hogy nem volna rózsavirágnak ideje, hozzá hívá, és meglátá kebelét, hát mind szép az rózsavirág az aszjú apró portéka. ... Azt látván az ő atyja elcsodálkozék rajta. Ez leánzó, ha élhetend, valami naggyá léssen!" Madas, *A néma barát megszólal*, 529-530.

²⁹³ Such a version was recorded in 1332 in a Franciscan breviary produced in Tuscany and preserved today in Monte Cassino. Gecser, "Lives of St. Elizabeth," 78-79.

²⁹⁴ For the earliest treatments, see Leonhard Lemmens, "Zum Rosenwunder der hl. Elisabeth von Thüringen," *Der Katholik*, 82 (1902), 381-384; Antal Lábán, "Az Árpád-házi Szent Erzsébet-legendák irodalmunkban" [The legends of St. Elizabeth in Hungarian literature], 94-110; Kálmán Timár, "Árpád-házi Szt. Erzsébet legendájához" [Contributions to the legend of St. Elizabeth of Hungary], *Ethnographia* 21 (1910): 193-200 and 262-276; Gábor Klaniczay, *Holy Rulers and Blessed Princesses*, 3669-371; Ortrud Reber, *Die Heilige Elisabeth: Leben und Legende* (St. Ottilien: EOS Verlag Erzabtei, 1982); Jeanne Ancelet-Hustache, *Sainte Elisabeth de Hongrie*, (Paris: 1946), 39-42; Márta Hajabáts, *Árpád-házi Szent Erzsébet hagyománya a német irodalomban* [The tradition of St. Elizabeth of Hungary in the German literature] (Budapest: 1938), 79-83; László Holik-Barabás, "La leggenda sulle rose di Sant'Elisabetta d'Ungheria," *Frate Francesco* 4 (1931). Most recently Ottó Gecser has dealt with the topic, see footnote 24.

²⁹⁵ See Hermann von Fritzlar, *Buch von der heiligen lebene*, in: *Deutsche Mystiker des 14. Jhs.* ed. Franz Pfeiffer (Göttingen, 1907, 2. Aufl.), I, 242-246.

²⁹⁶ Gecser, "Il miracolo delle rose," 242.

medieval Hungarian preachers: Pelbárt of Temesvár, Oswald of Lasko, and the Anonymous Carthusian.

Returning to the sermon on St. Elizabeth in the *Érdy Codex*, the second chapter is about her married life. Here, as he did in the first chapter, the Anonymous Carthusian basically follows the *Legenda aurea*, explaining why God gives spouses a thirty-fold reward in heaven and laying much stressing how reluctantly and desperately Elizabeth resigned to her virginal state. The Carthusian preacher emphasizes the *sancta simplicitas* and ascetic practices of the holy princess. The way he portrays Conrad of Marburg, however, it is a bit different from how James of Varazze did in his legendary. In the Hungarian version it is implied that Elizabeth was obedient to her confessor because she regarded his commands as if they had been given by Christ himself. Thus, any time she disobeyed Conrad, whose main concern was to lead her to salvation, she had to do penance and was beaten either by her maids or was compelled to live on bread and water or was lectured by the confessor.²⁹⁷ Although almost all the biographical accounts record the abstinence of Elizabeth and her ladies-in-waiting from rich meals, only the Anonymous Carthusian's version says that at times neither she nor her maidservants had anything to eat.²⁹⁸

This section includes two additional miracles which are rather long and detailed. The first one is the *leprosus* miracle, which, in the Carthusian preacher's version, is narrated in a story-like fashion: Elizabeth, in the absence of the landgrave, washes a leper and lays him down in her husband's bed. In the meantime, the landgrave arrives home and the envious

²⁹⁷“Hogy kedég mindenstül fogva ellene mondhatna ez világnak, egy szegén pap jámbornak, kinek Conrád vala neve, fogadást [tőn] engedelmesség szerént, hogy valamit Krisztusnak képében öneki megparancsolna, abból ki nem hagyna, és mindenben engedelmes lenne, mint lelki konfesszorának. Az jámbor konfesszor kedég nagy gondot viselt vala az szent asszonnak idveségéről, úgyhogy valamikor történt parancsolatját megmásolni, soha penitenciája nálkil el nem engedte, de avagy az leányokkal igen verette, avagy vízkenyér bejtöt vetött őreája, annak felette nagyon megfedte szóval.” Madas, *A néma barát megszólal*, 533.

²⁹⁸ Although it is reported in the *Libellus* that Conrad forbade Elizabeth to make use of certain people's goods, which could not have been used in good conscience, that is, were not honestly acquired, it is not mentioned that he would have applied the confinement on bread and water. Huyskens, *Libellus*, 20: *Evenit etiam quondam, ut maritum secutura ad magnam dietam, ubi erat, non invenit cibos, quibus uti auderet salva conscientia, nisi tantum grossum nigrum panem et durum, quem in calida aqua simplici mollefactum comdebat.*

(*irégyök*) begin to accuse Elizabeth of being a squanderer and immoral. In order to prove what they have previously said, they tell their lord to go and see that a leper lies in his bed. The outraged husband brandishing his sword and crying aloud enters his bedroom in order to kill both the *leprosus* and Elizabeth, but when he raises the sheet, he sees the crucified Christ in his bed, covered with blood. The landgrave takes fright and begs the pardon of Christ, who suddenly disappears. The husband then apologises to Elizabeth and gives his blessing to her activities. Even though the Anonymous Carthusian's source for this miracle was Pelbárt of Temesvár,²⁹⁹ he enriches the episode with some new details such as the conversation between Ludwig and the envious and Christ vanishing from sight after the apology.³⁰⁰

Like the miracle of the roses, the *leprosus* miracle was especially popular in the iconography of St. Elizabeth. It appeared for the first time in the extended version of Dietrich of Apolda's *vita*, known as the *Reinhardsbrunnen Rezensionen*, at the end of the thirteenth century.³⁰¹ This account is, nevertheless, quite different from the much later variants written in Hungary. Here, it is the mother-in-law who denounces Elisabeth, but the landgrave's inward eyes are opened by God and he sees not the leper but the crucified Christ in the bed. Comforted by this vision, Ludwig asks his spouse to often lay such lepers in his bed for he understands that Jesus is received and nursed in the sick body.³⁰²

²⁹⁹ Pelbartus de Themeswar, *Sermones* XCVI, [S⁷] *Nam fertur quod cum tot et tam ardua pietatis opera faceret, emuli eam prodigam reputantes apud maritum accusarent. Cum ergo ille permotus fuisset animo contra Elyzabeth, accidit quodam vice quod absente marito quondam leprosum Elyzabeth balneavit et super lectum mariti posuit dormiendum. Et ecce marito superveniente, emuli ceperunt murmurare de hoc. Ad quid iratus vir suus irruit in domum et super lectum repentegladio evaginatio accurit, ut occideret illum in lecto iacente. Quo pervento abiiciens linteamen: vidit ecce Christum Jesum in cruce affixum et cruentatum iacere in lecto; et territus venam petiit ac potestatem dedit Elyzabeth ut faceret omnia salutifera.*

³⁰⁰ Lábán, "Az Árpád-házi Szent Erzsébet-legendák irodalmunkban," 119.

³⁰¹ Burchardus Menckenius, *Variae Lectiones et Supplementa ad Theodorici de Thuringia sen de Apoldia Vitam S. Elisabethae. Scriptores rerum Germanicarum praecipue Saxonicarum* (Leipzig, 1729), II, 1987-2006.

³⁰² The *leprosus* motif has a long and rather complicated tradition that I do not intend to treat here. For an extensive summary on the topic, see Gecser, "Lives of St. Elizabeth," 94-97. However, it has to be mentioned that a "combined" miracle exists which contains both the rose and the *leprosus* elements. Thomas of Chartres, a Dominican preacher, was the first to refer to this variant around 1273. He applied an earlier *exemplum* of Thomas of Cantimpré to St. Elizabeth. In this version, the leper (who is, in reality, Christ) is turned into beautiful roses, which fill the entire bed with their scent and convert St. Elizabeth's pagan father. See Thomas Cantipratensis, *Bonum universale de proprietariis apum*, Cologne, 1473, book 2, chapter 24, (unnumbered folios), cited in Gecser, "Lives of St. Elizabeth," 96.

The next wondrous episode in the *Érdu Codex*, which follows the miracle of the *leprosus* without any kind of connecting text, is the miracle of the dress. Here again, the Anonymous Carthusian's source was not the *Legenda Aurea* but Pelbárt, who, in all probability, had used either the *vita* of Dietrich of Apolda or the *Tuscan Vita* or the one written by the Anonymous Franciscan. Although these sources narrate the miracle in slightly different ways, the story is basically the same: noble guests arrive in the court of Thuringia who also want to meet Elizabeth. Not having a proper dress, Elizabeth begins to pray and God sends her a splendid costume. In Dietrich's reading, the dress arrives directly at the saint; in the *Tuscan Vita* and in the *Franciscan Life* on the contrary, it is brought by an angel. In addition, while the former only speaks about a costume, the latter two report that a gown as well as a crown is sent by her Heavenly Spouse.³⁰³ In the Hungarian tradition, however, there is only one guest, a bondsman who wishes to see Elizabeth, who at first stands aloof from the request, but after her husband orders her to appear she goes to her cell and prays to God, who sends her a dress and a crown made of gems delivered by an angel. Thus, Elizabeth appears in the noble company, who are all amazed by her beauty and by her words. Then the princess leaves for her cell and the guests start to praise both God and the holy woman, for she is the beloved daughter of Jesus Christ.³⁰⁴ That the version which diffused in Hungary is closer to

³⁰³ For a more exhaustive analysis of two further versions of the miracle of the dress contained in a fourteenth-century Vatican codex, cf. Dávid Falvay "'Elisabetta, divota della vergine Maria:' Árpád-házi Szent Erzsébet itáliai kultuszának sajátosságai," ['Elisabetta, divota della vergine Maria' The characteristics of the Italian cult of St. Elizabeth of Hungary] in *Serta Jimmyaca: Emlékkönyv Kelemen János 60. születésnapjára* [Serta Jimmyaca: Essays in honour of the 60th birthday of János Kelemen], ed. László Szörényi and József Takács (Budapest: Balassi, 2004), 101-110.

³⁰⁴ "Történék, hogy egy jobbágyfiú Rómába menve tére be az herceghöz, miérthogy útában volna, hogy láthatná az szent asszont, ki[ről] olyan nagy jó hír járna. És az jámbor herceg nagy jó kedvvel fogadá. És mikoron lakozna, kéri az úrfiú, hogy érdemelné láthatni Szent Erzsébetet. Ottan neki izene az ő ura, hogy jöve alá hozjájok. De Szent Erzsébet felesl, hogy nem volna szikség. Oka vala, mert ez világi dicsérötöt nem kíván vala, másod kelég, mert tisztösségre való ruhaötözeti nem vala. Esmeg neki izene az ő ura, hogy egyebet benne ne tenne. Az szent asszonnak nem lén mit tenni, el-beméne hamar imádkozó cellájában, és mikoron imádkozék, íme, Úristennek anyala! Egy szépségő ruhát és nagy drágakevekből fizött koronát hozza öneki, és monda, hogy Úristen kildötte volna. És nagy édes hálaadással és kennyhullatással reá vevé, és leányival el ura elejben nyomoték nagy tisztösséggel. És elálméklodának mind közönséggel színének, személyének, szavának és ötözetinek szépségén és okos voltán. És bulcsuvétellel esmeg cellájába méne. És az vendégök nagyon dicsérék Úristent és az szent asszont, mert bizon Krisztus Jézusnak szerelmes leánya volna." Madas, *A néma barát megszólal*, 535-536.

the ones present in the *Tuscan Vita* and in the *Franciscan Vita* is not a unique phenomenon; while in other late thirteenth- and fourteenth-century Latin variants the motifs of the angel and the crown are also present, it seems that the version of Theodoric of Apolda remained a quite isolated textual variant.³⁰⁵

The last paragraph of Elisabeth's married years in the sermon of the Carthusian relates how her husband died on crusade, but contains an intriguing new detail: "After that, knowing her husband the great merits of this good woman, he asked for her advice what to do in order to be more worthy for salvation."³⁰⁶ In the *Legenda aurea*, in contrast, James of Varazze underlines that it was Elizabeth who convinced her husband to employ the power of his weapons to defend the faith of God, and advised him to go to the Holy Land.³⁰⁷

The last chapter of the Hungarian sermon is about the widowhood of Elizabeth. In this part, the Carthusian preacher speaks with expressive rhetoric, crying out several times to his audience, especially when he describes the afflictions Elizabeth had to suffer after the landgrave's death. The author puts her royal origin into sharp contrast with the miserable pigsty where she was once compelled to sleep after she had been chased away from the castle. Following his main source, Pelbárt of Temesvár, Anonymous narrates that princess entered the Third Order of St. Francis to live in chastity, poverty, and obedience.³⁰⁸

It is noteworthy that the Anonymous Carthusian devotes special attention to the mystical experiences of Elizabeth. Instead of dwelling on the joyful crying of the saint during visions, he puts a great deal of emphasis on the *sponsa Christi* motif. The preacher relates that, after the saint had prayed to Christ to help her despise earthly matters, she encountered

³⁰⁵ Falvay, "“Elisabetta, divota della vergine Maria,””106.

³⁰⁶ "Annak utána tudván az ő ura ez jó asszonnak nagy érdemes voltát, tanácsot kéde őtőle, mit kellene tenni, ki idvességre alkalmasb volna." Translation mine. Madas, *A néma barát megszólal*, 536.

³⁰⁷ Iacopo da Varazze, *Legenda Aurea*, 1163. *Cupiens uero beata Elizabeth ut uir suus in fidei defensionem potentie sue arma conuerteret, ipsum salubri exhortatione induxit ut ad terram sanctam pergeret uisitandum.*

³⁰⁸ There are three references in the sermons of Pelbárt that Elizabeth entered the Franciscan Third Order. In *Sermo XCVI* on [S₇[†]]: *Nam mundum et omnia contempsit et religionem ordinis tertii sancti Francisci intravit ad vivendum in castitate, obedientia et paupertate tam arcta ut griseas vestes ac repeciatas portaret*; and in *Sermo*

numerous heavenly visions and joys, discourses and answers, and she conversed with Christ as well as the angels, who answered all her requests.³⁰⁹ This is a much more elaborate version than the one that appears in the *Legenda Aurea*, but unfortunately the Hungarian writer does not give any particulars of these dialogues, except the ones before her death.

Elizabeth's heavenly visions form the peak of the sermon, that is, the utmost praise of the three stages of life. The Carthusian bursts out three times, exalting the saint's spotless virginity, her virtuous widowhood, and her scorn of this world, supporting the leading idea of his speech. The preacher discourages the hope of salvation for those who fail to comply with these regulations. He uses the saint's life to provide an imitable model for his audience.³¹⁰ The "splendid contradiction" between Elizabeth's royal lineage and her extremely humble way of life is very much present in the sermon. Anonymous frequently refers to the saint both as a royal offspring (*keráli magzat*) as well as the maidservant of Christ (*Krisztus szolgáló leánya*);³¹¹ a duality which was perhaps most characteristic feature of her sanctity. It is worth noting, however, that while in Western Europe, especially in Italy, from the fourteenth century on St. Elizabeth acquired a reputation as a mystic or visionary prophet, it seems that in Hungary her original saintly image was preserved even three centuries later,³¹² even though

XCVIII on [T₁^v]: *Tunc quo paupertatem vivit religiosam et suavit in ordine terti Sancti Francisci vivendo; and: Secundo de observantia regulari quod videa hec pauper religiose vivendo in ordine tertio Francisci.*

³⁰⁹ "És úgy lén, hogy az naptúl fogva sok mennyei jelenetök, édességök, örvendetességek, szózatok és feleletök jöttek hozzá, kiket sok volna mind előve számlálni: miképpen ennenmagával Úr Jézussal és az szent angyalokkal szolt, beszélött, és minden kenyergerésre és kérelmesére megfelelt neki." Madas, *A néma barát megszólal*, 538-539.

³¹⁰ "Dicsőséges Szent Erzsébet asszon mind az három regulásságot tökéletességgel megtartá, annak okáért minden rendbéli népek példát vehetnek az ő szent életéből, ha ki üdvözülni akar, és érdömöt kíván gyűjteni Úristennek kegyelmes irgalmassága miatt." Madas, *A néma barát megszólal*, 540.

³¹¹ Madas, *A néma barát megszólal*, 529: "az nemes királ lánya", "áldott mennyei királ...szerelmes szolgálóleánya, 530: "Krisztus Jézusnak ájtatus szolgálóleánya", "nemes keráli magzat", 531: "kised királi magzat", 537: "nemes királyi magzat", Krisztus szolgáló leányának".

³¹² For instance, the *Revelationes beate Marie virginis facte beate Elisabet filie regis Ungarie* appeared in Italy around 1320, containing a series of thirteen revelations attributed to Elizabeth, of which eight are related to the Virgin Mary. This work was regularly bound together either with the extremely popular Pseudo-Bonaventuran *Meditationes Vitae Christi* or writings of other female mystics such as Angela of Foligno and Margaret of Cortona. Some fragments of her revelations are also present in late medieval Hungarian codices as well. For the Hungarian excerpts, see Kálmán Timár, "Árpád-házi Szent Erzsébet látomásai" [The visions of St. Elizabeth of Hungary], *Religio* (1909): 580, 594, 611 and ID, "Adalékok kódexeink forrásaihoz. 4. Látomások kódexeinkben [Data on the sources of Hungarian codices. 4. Visions in Hungarian codices], *Irodalomtörténeti Közlemények* 36 (1926): 169-77. See also footnote 144.

her hagiography had been embellished by some new elements.³¹³

The sermon on the Hungarian princess ends with her last days and the manifestations of miraculous signs after her death: the heavenly fragrance that filled the house where her body was laid out for four days, the birds who sang a sweet melody, and that the *Regnum mundi* was heard on the day of her funeral. For these episodes, the Anonymous preacher closely follows the *Legenda aurea*. Similarly to many other adaptations of James of Varazze's *De sancta Elizabeth*, the long list of miracles is also omitted by the Anonymous Carthusian, but this is a general characteristic of sermons adapted from saints' lives. Besides, the legend of Elizabeth was a means to stimulate the audience to concentrate on the exemplary quality of her life, not on her *post mortem* miracles.

Going back to the three major areas where the Hungarian monk modified James of Varazze's text, or at least made shifts in emphasis, in the sermon Elizabeth is presented as a model to follow for those who chose celibacy. Although this parable is also present in James of Varazze's *De sancta Elizabeth*, there are some slight differences between the Latin and the Hungarian version. Whereas the former simply says that she lived out her state of virginity but was compelled to enter the state of marriage in obedience to her father's will, the Anonymous Carthusian underlines that if Elizabeth could have done what she wanted to, she would have remained virgin; and she fulfilled her father's order with a heavy heart. While the *Legenda Aurea* narrates several episodes that depict a loving relationship between the saint and the landgrave of Thuringia, in the Hungarian version it is pushed into the background; whereas there is not a single word about her grief upon the landgrave's death, it is reported how she resisted when her relatives wanted her to get her married again and that finally she entered the Third Order of the Franciscans. These subtle modifications were probably made to better suit the needs of people who living in religious communities.

³¹³ Tímár has shown that the writings of Pelbárt of Temesvár, Oswald of Lasko, and the Anonymous Carthusian all included some parts or at least referred to revelations attributed to St. Elizabeth. Nevertheless, her image as a

The three miracles in the Hungarian sermon have a double role; on the one hand, to make more lively and captivating Elizabeth's life with these legendary episodes; on the other, to illustrate that God never let her down when she was threatened with embarrassment as a result of her charity or humble lifestyle. On the top of that, by the sixteenth century these miracles became such widespread attributes in the iconography of Elizabeth that it was quasi-obligatory to include them into her legend.

The third characteristic of the Anonymous Carthusian's version is that since he wrote the legend of a national saint, he makes numerous references to her Hungarian royal origin. He provides additional data on Elizabeth's parents;³¹⁴ he situates the miracle of the roses to the Hungarian court and it is her father, it is the King Andrew who stops her;³¹⁵ he refers to Elizabeth from time to time as royal offspring, accentuating both her descent from the Hungarian royal family and the contradictions between her rank and chosen lifestyle.

Summing up the Central European tradition of the *Legenda Aurea*, the earliest Latin *Legenda Aurea* manuscript in Bohemia is more than 100 years older than the extant Hungarian one. While the full Czech translation (or rather adaptation), the *Pasional*, was made by a Dominican friar as early as the middle of the fourteenth century, the first writings in Hungarian based on James of Varazze's legendary, the sermons of the Anonymous Carthusian, come from the third decade of the sixteenth century. Both works contain the legend of St. Elizabeth. The Old Czech *Pasional* is a collection of abbreviated saints' lives; the *Érdy Codex*, in turn, is a collection of sermons; but both of them are based ultimately on the *Legenda Aurea*. The former was originally compiled for the nuns of the monastery of St. George on the request of Charles IV, the latter for various religious communities, but especially for nuns and priests.

visionary prophet did not diffuse widely in Hungary.

³¹⁴ Madas, *A néma barát megszólal*, 528.

³¹⁵ Ibid., 529.

Concerning the life of St. Elizabeth, the version preserved in the *Pasional* is peculiar from the point of view that it is based not on James of Varazze's *De sancta Elizabeth*, but the *Summa vitae*, the *Libellus*, and a third source that cannot be identified with certainty. The quite short and simple legend focuses on the widowhood of the saint, emphasizing the afflictions she suffered with patience and her great charity towards the poor and the sick. That Conrad of Marburg is presented in a favourable way and as a Dominican may be due to the fact that the Czech author belonged to the same order, too. With an eye on writing for Hungarian religious communities, the Anonymous Carthusian's adaptation of the legend of St. Elizabeth differs from that of the *Legenda Aurea* in three aspects: stressing her moral virtues, chiefly her continence, the addition of her three most popular miracles, which had already become widely diffused in her iconography by that time, and emphasizing the sharp contrast between her royal lineage and her extremely humble way of life.

CONCLUSION

The medieval cult of Elizabeth of Hungary became widespread all over Europe. Her earliest *vitae*, based primarily on the documents of her canonization process and her translation and on other witness accounts, were the *Libellus*, the *Curial Vita* and the *Zwettl Vita*. Her legend was included in the Dominican collections of abbreviated saints' lives, the *legendae novae*. These Latin legendaries were intended especially for mendicant preachers as ancillary sources for sermons. The two Dominicans who reported the *vitae* of St. Elizabeth before James of Varazze were Bartholomew of Trent and Vincent of Beauvais, the authors of the *Liber epilorum* and the *Speculum historiale*, respectively.

The composition of the *Legenda Aurea* started in the 1260s but James of Varazze kept on revising and adding new lives to his legendary until his death in 1298. The authenticity of the chapter dedicated to Elizabeth was debated for quite a long time, but recently Maggioni's research has shown that it was probably one of the last sections that was inserted into the legendary, written between 1272 and 1276. Apart from Elizabeth, three other modern saints, the most illustrious members of the mendicant orders, Francis, Dominic and Peter of Verona figure in the collection. For the life of Elizabeth, the author relied mostly on the *Summa vitae*, the testimonies of the four maids, and the two lists of miracles collected for the canonization process, but in all probability he also used the *vitae* written by Ceasar of Heisterbach and Bartholomew of Trent. The most remarkable original addition of James of Varazze was that it was St. Elizabeth who convinced her husband to go on a crusade. James tried to represent all the characteristics of Elizabeth's saintly image: she was the daughter of the Hungarian king but led a humble life in the Thuringian court; she was a wife and mother but after the death of her husband made a vow of continence; she was active in charity but frequently engaged in contemplation and had several celestial visions. There are also a number of references to her close connection with Franciscan order. The vernacular adaptations I examined show that

depending on the audience for whom her legend was intended, different aspects of her life were emphasized.

While in Italy, England and Bohemia the earliest extant Latin manuscripts of the *Legenda Aurea* are dated as early as the beginning of the fourteenth century, in Hungary the earliest surviving codex of the legendary is from the first half of the fifteenth century. Regarding its transmission in the vernacular, while the first full translations in Italy and Bohemia were made in the middle of the fourteenth century, the Middle English *Gilte Legende* is dated to 1438. The reason for this belatedness may be that in the fourteenth century the Latin, the French and the English languages were used simultaneously in the country and de Vignay's French translation was available from 1344 for those who did not understand Latin, so there was no particular demand for the English translation in that period. As to Hungary, it seems that the *Legenda Aurea* did not have a widespread translation in the Middle Ages.

The authors/translators of the texts are anonymous, with the exception of Osbern Bokenham, but it is known that the translator of the *Pasional* and the composer of a sermon on Elizabeth were Dominican and Carthusian friars, respectively. It is remarkable that only the Austin friar mentions the author and the title of his source. Out of the five adaptations, only Bokenham's version was commissioned by a noble laywoman, all the others were made for religious communities. Ironically, the only extant copy of the collection of the female saints' lives was made for a nunnery.

As to the two Italian *volgarizzamenti*, they are typical examples of the independent transmission of her legend. The old Tuscan *vita* of Elizabeth is preserved in an early fourteenth-century manuscript that on the basis of its size and content was presumably used for private reading or meditation, so the inclusion of her life might have been her mystical contemplations and heavenly visions. Most of the translator's interpolations are motivated by

making it easier to understand and he probably used another source as well, since he inserted correct information in the *vita* that was not included in the *Legenda Aurea*. The fifteenth-century codex contains the life of Elisabeth together with other six saints and blessed who were, according to the tradition, members of the Third Order of the Franciscans; thus, it can be assumed that it was intended for public reading in a community of tertiaries. The information that she was a tertiary was added both at the beginning at the end of her legend. The issue of Elisabeth's supposedly having been a tertiary also turns up in the sermon of the Anonymous Carthusian, who took this information from the fifteenth-century Franciscan Observant Pelbárt of Temesvár. These examples attest that by that time she had become one of the most important symbolic figures of the Third Order.

Apart from this detail, the Anonymous Carthusian enriched his sermon with the three most best-known miracles, which were not reported in the earliest hagiographic writings: the miracle of the roses, the miracle of the dress, and the miracle of the *leprosus*. The source of these miracles was, again, the Latin sermons of Pelbárt. The Carthusian writer adapted James of Varazze's text in order to suit better the needs of his intended audience, that is, the nuns, friars and lay members who were not well-versed in Latin. The sermon is centred around Elisabeth's moral virtues, especially on her continence. Since the Anonymous Carthusian composed the sermon on a national saint, he referred to Elisabeth time after time as royal offspring, highlighting in this way the sharp contrast between her social status and her exceptionally modest way of life. With regard to royal birth, all the versions I examined mention that Elisabeth was the Hungarian king's daughter which may be related to the widespread hagiographic *topos* of her Hungarian dynastic origin.

Among the five *vitae*, it is Bokenham's verse legend that contains the most subtle and significant changes he made compared to the original text; he made them in order to be topical for the fifteenth-century aristocratic female audience. Through the life of Elisabeth,

the Austin friar presented a new ideal of female holiness that could also be followed by those who did not live in religious communities but as noble laywomen and wished to reconcile their spiritual life with their expected social roles. Bokenham's legend is more of a hagiographic romance than a traditional *vita*. The way he depicts the loving relationship between the saint and her husband is slightly reminiscent of Theodoric of Apolda's *Vita*.

The odd-one-out among the adaptations examined is Elizabeth's *vita* of the *Pasional*, since it is not based on the *De sancta Elisabeth* of the *Legenda Aurea* but on the *Summa Vitae* and on the *Libellus* and on a third unidentified source which reports Christ's appearance at Elizabeth's death bed, which is reported in a similar form only in the legends written by Bartholomew of Trent and James of Varazze. The second option is highly hypothetical, since the most obvious reason why another legend was translated into Czech and not the *De sancta Elisabeth* could have been that it was not included in the Latin manuscript the translator used as an exemplar. The life of Elizabeth, due to its rather late date of composition, was missing from almost half of the earliest manuscripts of the *Legenda Aurea*.

The scrutiny of a few vernacular adaptations of the same *vita* is only the first step. In order to be able to draw general conclusions concerning her vernacular hagiography, or of the currently "hot topic" of late medieval vernacular hagiography in general, many more adaptations should be thoroughly examined, compared, and put in the context of their reception, which, hopefully will happen in the near future.

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Appendix One: The Italian Translations of the *Legenda Aurea* Based on the Research of Paolo Mariani³¹⁶

- 1.) Vatican City, MS Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Chigi, L. V. 175
- 2.) Florence, MS Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, Palatino, 97
- 3.) Florence, MS Biblioteca Riccardiana, Riccardiano, 1254
- 4.) Florence, MS Biblioteca Riccardiana, Riccardiano, 1388
- 5.) Florence, MS Biblioteca Riccardiana, Riccardiano, 1390
- 6.) Giaccherino, MS Biblioteca del convento di S. Francesco, I.F.2
- 7.) Naples, MS Biblioteca Nazionale, VIII.B.33
- 8.) Rome, MS Biblioteca Casanatense, B.V.30; 586
- 9.) Venice, MS Biblioteca Nazionale di S. Marco, It. Cl. I.72 (5054)
- 10.) Venice, MS Biblioteca Nazionale di S. Marco, It. Cl. V.22 (5855)

³¹⁶ Mariani, “I codici italiani della *Legenda Aurea*,” 738.

Appendix Two: The Description of MS Milan, Biblioteca Ambrosiana I. 115 Inf. and the Transcription of “La legenda de santa Elisabeth” ff.22v-35r

Description of MS Milan, Biblioteca Ambrosiana I. 115 Inf.

Origin: North or Central Italy.

Date: fifteenth century (*terminus post quem* 1432, the death of Galeotto Roberto Malatesta of Rimini).

Language: Italian and Latin.

Physical description: 91ff. The codex is in good condition but mutilated at the end. The dimensions of the codex are 290 x 210 mm. The texts were written by two scribes: the first scribe is responsible for fols. 2r-54v, the second for fols. 55r-91v in humanistic cursive. While hymns, prayers, papal bulls, and other fragments do not always follow a unified pattern, the seven legends of saints have the same layout: the texts are written in 2 columns, 37-38 lines. Double-framed rectangles are left empty, probably for the portraits of the saints. The bodies of picture spaces are covered with a transparent undercoat. Each paragraph begins with a red or blue initial. There are inhabited initials embedded in floral border decoration in green, blue, red, rose and white colours on ff. 9r, 16r, 22v, 35v. The majuscule initials are in red and blue, rubrum is used. Each legend is followed by the date of the saint's feast and an additional prayer in golden ink, presumably written by a later hand.

Material: paper codex with 2 types of watermark: bullhead until f53; flower from f57 on. The latter watermark can be found on papers produced in the province of Lombardy around 1430 (Calcinato 1432; Bergamo 1441; Milan 1445) (Biquet: *Les filigranes* 3, p. 304)

Provenance: no information.

Bibliography: In the catalogue description that I had at my disposal in the Biblioteca Ambrosiana of Milan, the following note could be read: “Per questa leggenda v. Hain 9999, nell'esemplare dell'incunabolo contenuto nella Bertoliana a Vicenza, dove si dice che tale incunabolo è derivato da questo codice Ambrosiano.” (For this legend cf. Hain 9999, in the exemplar of the incunabulum kept in the Bertoliana [Library] of Vicenza which says that this incunabulum derives from this Ambrosian codex.)

According to the *Biblioteca Agiografica Italiana* (BAI) this incunabulum was printed in Vicenza in 1499, on the basis of IGI 5721; Heine 9999, Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana of Venice, Rari 557.

Lino Temperini, Anonimo del'400, *Legenda de' beati del terzo ordine de sancto Francisco*, Rome, Franciscanum, 1996. Facsimile edition of the Vicenza incunabula, published by Enrico di Sant'Orso, after 1479.

Contents:³¹⁷

I. Fragmentum Statutorum burgi Legnani circa annum 1268 latorum

Fol.: 1r-1v.

³¹⁷ The description contains the incipits and the explicits only of the saints' lives.

Physical description: 205 mm x 280mm, parchment, gothic script. Decorated initials and date in red, written in two columns, 22 lines. The dimensions of the folio are smaller than the rest of the codex and it contains holes, pen trials and a later written upside down note on it. The text contains the precise date of the statute of Legnano: *In domine domini m.cc.lxviii. die veneris novembris sextodeamo die mensis novembris indictione duodecima*. This folio may indicate that the codex comes from the region of Lombardy. The following folio was cut out.

II. Fragment of the Rule of the Members of the Franciscan Third Order

Fols. 2r-5v.

Physical description 290mm x 210 mm, paper with watermark. Decorated initials in red and blue, rubrum is used. The text is written in 2 columns, 37-38 lines/column. Corrections were made by a later hand.

III. Ordo ad inducendum fratres et sorores tertii ordinis beati Francisci

Fols. 5v-8r.

IV. Hymnus in die Pentecostes

Fol. 8v.

V. An Extracted Chapter from a Chronicle about some of the Illustrious Franciscan Tertiaries

Fol.:8v.

VI. The Legend of St. Louis of the Third Order

Fols. 9r-15v.

Inc.: Bonifacio episcopo servo de li servi di dio

Expl.: di agosto pontificato nostro nel terzio anno cio a dij d'agothea deo gratias amen. Ed di XXVI de agosto si fa la festa.

Notes: from fol. 9r, the quires are marked but put together in a changed order: a1, a2, a3, a4, a9, a6; the rest is not marked. There are interlinear glosses by the same hand on fol. 9r.

VII. The Legend of St. Elzéar from the Third Order

Fols. 16r-19v.

Inc.: Elzeario homo maraveglioso de le contrate de Provenza

Expl.: di genaro nel primo anno del nostro pontificario amen.

VIII. The Vernacular Translations of the Documents of the Canonization of Elzéar, Issued by Pope Gregory XI and Urban V

Fols. 19v-22r.

IX. The Legend of St. Elizabeth from the Third Order of the Franciscans

Fols. 22v-35r.

Inc.: Questa e la legenda de santa Elisabeth del terzo ordine. Elisabeth e interpretata

Expl.: et ringratiandola torno a casa sua aliegro.

Notes: from fol.19r the quire is marked: b1 b2 b3 b4. There is a catchword on fol. 28v “et edificazione”.

X. The Legend of St. Yves from the Third Order

Fols. 35v-37r.

Inc.: Segnando l'inclita recordatione overo memoria di regi Philipppo di cognomine bello in Francia et in Navarra

Expl.: Adunque per questo po si dito meritamente quello che in nel psalmo si dico. Hoc mutatio dextre excelsi. E a di XXVII se fa la festa.

Notes: two folios are cut out between St. Yves's and Blessed Roberto Galeotto's legends.

XII. The Legend of Blessed Roberto Galeotto from the Third Order

Fols. 38v-48v.

Inc.: El glorioso deo per molti modi conforta nuy soe creature ingratissimi

Expl.: adintorio ad esso beato per li meriti del quale fu mondata et sanata. Et de 5 de otober se fa la festa

Notes: one folio is cut out between Blessed Roberto Galeotto's legend and the Ten Commandments.

XIII. The Ten Commandments

Fol. 49r.

Notes: no decoration apart from the initials in red and blue

XIV: The Twelve Articles of Faith of the Apostles

Fols. 49v-50v.

Notes: no decoration apart from the red-blue initials.

XV: The Seven Deadly Sins

Fols. 51r-52v.

Notes: no decoration apart from the initials in red and blue.

XVI: Bulla papalis Eugenii IV episcopi in favorem beati fratii Bernardii de Senis

Fols. 53r- 54r.

Inc.: Ingenius operibus suus

Expl.: in favorem et honorem fratris bernardoni de senis ordinis minori.

Notes: fol. 53 is damaged and the binding was mended with a page from an early printed book.

XVII: The Prayer of St. Thomas Aquinas and the Communion

Fol: 54v

XVIII: The Legend of St. Tommasuccio, the Prophet of God

Fol.: 55r-76r

Inc.: In prima diremo del suo nascimento e poi diremo del suo conversione

Expl.: della maiestate divina di dio padre con quella anima e li habitare per infinita secula in seculorum. Amen.

Description: written by a second hand, but the layout is similar to that of the other legends and the picture of the saint is missing, too. There are no decorated initials and only red colour was used for the larger initials at the beginning of the paragraphs. From f. 57 on, there is a different type of watermark, a flower with five petals. Fol. 62r. is mended with the help of the same printed book as fol. 53. Ff. 76v-77v are ruled but left empty between the legends of Tommasuccio and Angela of Foligno.

XIX: The Legend of Angela of Foligno

Fol.: 78 r-91v

Inc.: La quale morite nell'anno currente mille trecento desnove a di quatro di genaro.

Expl.: e dopo le dite parole mi fo fata con tale risposta: quell che te stato (the end is missing)

Description: the last folios are damaged, badly repaired, and quite soiled. The legend is written in two columns, 36 lines in each. The text is written by the same hand as the legend of Tommasuccio.

Note to the transcription

The text of the “Legenda de Santa Elisabetta” of MS Milan, Biblioteca Ambrosiana I. 115 Inf. was transcribed writing out the abbreviations in full, but not transforming the orthography according to the present-day Italian. Neither are the most evident mistakes corrected in order to present the text in its original form. Nevertheless, some stylistic changes are inevitable:

- 1) majuscles are used in *Dio*, *Iddio*, and all the other denominations concerning God, Christ, Mary and all the other personal names
- 2) the introduction of punctuation and paragraphing in order to a better understanding of the text
- 3) the parentheses [] indicate the lacunae
- 4) the parentheses () indicate the superfluous words
- 5) the question marks in parentheses (?) indicate the illegible words.

Questa e la legenda de santa Elisabeth del terzo ordine. Elisabeth e interpretata ‘Dio mio conosciuto’, o vero ‘del mio septima’, o vero ‘del Dio mio saturitate’. Et adonchi primamente interpretata ‘Dio mio conosciuto’ pero che Dio la cognobbe, cioe che la accepto nel suo beneplacito, o vero pero che li diede il lume et la cognitione sua, o vero pero che a tuto il mondo la fece cognoscere. Secundariamente e interpretata del ‘Dio mio septima pero che veramente [fu settima] di Dio, o vero perche si exercitoe nele septe opere et la misericordia, overo pero che al preferite e nela septima etade de li quiescenti da pervenire poy ala octava de la resurrretione, o per li septi stati neli quali fuccione. Primo nel stato virginal. Secondo stato coniugale. Terzo vidovile. Quarto activo. Quinto contemplativo. Sexto religioso. Septio nel presente stato, che e stato glorioso.

Questi septi stati manifestamente si contengono nella legenda sua. ‘Sì che si puo dire di lei quello che si lege in Daniel propheta di Nabuchadenaroz: ‘Septe tempi si accostarono sopra quella.’ Tertiamente puo essere interpretata ‘del mio saturitate’, pero che veramente Dio l’amo sanata, et rimpara di splendore di veritate, et dolcezza di suavitate, et de vigore di eternitate. Unde Augustino in el libro de civitate si trattando dela citade celestiale dice cossi: ‘Nella eternitate di Dio vigorezza, nella veritate di Dio luce, nella bontade di Dio gode.’

Elisabeth fu figliola del nobilissimo re di Ungaria. Nobile veramente per generatione, ma piu nobile per fede et religione. Questa cossi nobile sua pregere ha nobilitato cum exempli illustrato cum miraculi et adornato de grati de santitate. Le quale l’Auctore nostro in alchuno modo ha magnificato sopra natura. Avendo che una fanciula notrita nele delicie regale, disprezzasse tute le cosse puerile et lei deputasse a li obsequio divino.

Acio che chiaramente appara quanto la sua tenera infantia fusse vigorosa di simplice innocentia et con questa dolce devotione incomincio da loro innanzi, cioe da picolezza a usarsi a studii di buone opere, et disprezare li guoghi di vanitate. Po’ acressimento de la prosperitate del mondo fugire et sempre proficere, o vero crescere in reverenza di Dio. Essendo questa di cinque anni stava nella chiesa tanto longamente per orare che le sue compagne o le sue ancille a pena la potevano rimuovere. Et essendosi che era tenuta a mente dale compagne seguitava alcuna di loro quando zugaveno insieme verso la capella, acio che per questo modo havesse piu habilitate de intrare in essa la qualle imitava che era si ingenuchiava o altuto se estendeva per terra. Et pomario che non sapesse letera, niente di meno spese fiate apriva lo psalterio dinanzi ali suoy ochij, che quasi pareva che legesse, acio che vedendola occupata non fuosse da altri da li ritracta. Et stando con le altre fanciule in terra stava col capo chinato, como se in quello modo zugasse acio che cossi facesse reventia a Dio in lo zuogho Dio di li. Et d’altri zuoghi meteva tuto il suo desiderio in Dio. Et di quelle cosse che questa pizola fanzuleria guadagnava, o vero per altro modo possidea, dava la decima parte ale poverelle fanciula, inducendole a dir presto al’spesso il *Pater nostro* e spesso salutare la virgine Madre di Dio.

Et crescendo per etate di tempo et crescendo mazormente per affecto di divotione, haveassi electa la beata Virgine, madre di Idio, et lo beato Giovanni evangelista in custodia de la sua castitate. Et ponendo questa fanciula alcune cedulae suso l’altare, nele quale erano scripti li nomi de li apostoli. Et pigliandone ciascaduna dele sue compagne giovenete, quella che a caso gli verrà a mano gli vene a questa facta in prima la oratione tre fiate, quella cedula [che] continiva il nome di santo Giovanni, como desiderava. Al quale tanta devotione havea, che niente denegava a chi domandava per lo suo nome, o ver amore. Et acio che la prosperita del mondo non le piacesse troppo, ogni dì subtraheva alcuna cossa deli suoi dilette, o vero folazi. Et quando in alcuno zogo se vedea crescere il piacere, facendo fine dicea: ‘Non voglio zugare piu, ma per lo amore di Dio lascio l’avanzo.’ Et essendo chiamata a li balli da le altre fanciule, facto pur uno circuito ballando dicea: ‘Lasciamo hora per amore di Dio ballar piu.’ Et cossi per tal modo temperava le altre da le vanitate. Li lascivi usi de le vestimente sempre hebe in abominatione et amo in esse ogni honestade. Havea ordinato et disponuo intra se

medesima ogni di uno certo numero di oratione, il quale 'si per alcuna occupatione non
 avesse potuto compire, o fusse constreta dale ancille che andasse in lecto, le satisfacea
 55 vigilantemente veghiando cum lo Sposo celestiale. Et li di solenni la nobile giovineta con
 tanta devotione celebrava, che etiamdio pur le maniche non si lasciava cosire per nullo modo
 in anzi che fuossero compiuto, le messe. E guardanase etiamdio da usare guanti nelli dí de le
 dominiche et cominzando in anzi il mezo dí. Et questo facea parte per reverentia de la festa,
 parte per sua devotione, per la quale cossa si soleva obligare per voto a le sopra dicte cosse,
 60 acio che alcuno non lo potesse revocare dal suo proponimento. Lo officio ecclesiastico cum
 tanta venerantia odiva, che legendosi li santi evangelii et facendo consacrata la ostia sanita,
 discussiva le maniche, se erano cusite, metea gionso li gioielli et li altri ornamenti del capo in
 uno luoco.

Et poy che prudentemente lo grado dela sua virginitate haveretto et passato
 inocentemente, fu costrecta di intrare nel coniugale, como costreta per comandamento del
 65 padre. Et questo nel quale dovea ricevere lo fructo trigesimo, la quale servo la fede dela
 Trinitade cum lo decimo numero de li comandimenti. Consentite adoncha avegna che mal
 volentiera a la copula maritale, non per intendere al dilecto carnale, ma per non disprezare il
 comandamento del padre, et acio che avesse figlioli da nutrire al serviziodi Idio. Et avegna
 che fusse legata al matrimonio, non fu pero maye subiecta ad alcuna dilectatione colpevole.
 70 La qual per questo manifestamente appare che nelle mane di magistro Conrado fece voto, che
 selo marito morisse anzi che ley, osservarebe perpetua continentia. Fu maritata aduncha in lo
 [...] como richedeva la regale magnificentia et com la divina dispositione havea ordinato, cioe
 acio che li molti ne rivochasse a l'amor di Dio et li homini disordinati amaystrasse. Avegna
 che mutasse stato non muto pero lo affecto de la mente.

De quanta devotione sia stata e humilita verso di Idio, de quanta austerita et
 abstinencia a se medesima di questa larghezza. Et misericordia a li poveri per quelle cosse che
 sono scripture di sotto apertamente si deschiara. Pero che in oratione fue di tanto fervore, che
 etiamdio le ancille perveniva andando ala chiesa con presto passo, quasi como volesse con
 80 abscose oratione, o vero secrete impetrare qualche gratia. Di nocte ala oratione spesso levava
 e pregandola lo marito che perdonasse uno pocho a se medesima dando al suo corpo qualche
 riposo. Ordino che alchuna donzela piu familiare intra le altre, se, per aventura non levasse
 retenuta dal sonno, che com lo piede tochandola la disvegliasse. Una volta acadde che volende
 tohare il piede de la madona, tochoe il pede del marito, cioe suo messere, il quale presto
 disvegliato domando e sepe la casone et patientemente supportando non monstro, che se na
 85 avedesse di questo facto. Et acio che ella rendesse grasso la sacrificio a Dio de le oratione,
 bagnava di habundantia di lacrime; la quale lacrime spendea cum letitia et senza alcuna
 indecente mutatione di volto, 'si che sempre cum dolore piangea et del dolore godea, et questa
 cossa la rendea gratiosa et adorata cum alcuna letitia di volto.

Cum tanta humilita se sottomisse che per amore di Idio non refudava le cosse ville et
 90 abiecte, ma facea le con grande devotione. Unde che ad uno infermo difforme nel volto et
 orribile a vedere per grande fertore che usiva da la testa apozato a lo stomaco, o vero a lo
 pecto suo, gli tonsoe gli capilli orribili et lavogli il capo, ridendosene le ancile. Nelle letanie
 seguia la processione a piedi nudi, vestita di vestimenti di lino. Quando in esse si predicava,
 como povera et vile, stava intra le povere.

Nela purificatione dopo il parto non si ornava como le altre; m[ai] si copriva di
 vestimenti dorati, ma ad exemplo de la Inmaculata pagholada, portando il proprio figlolo nele
 brachie sue, lo offeriva con uno agnelo et una candella al'altare humilmente, acio che per
 queste cosse mostrasse como e da disprezzare la pompa del mondo et se conformasse ala
 100 Intacta Madre; poy, tornando a casa, quelle vestimente con le quale era andata ala chiesa dava
 ad una qualche poverella.

Accadete anche a laude de la sua humilitade, che avanzano le altre de libertade et essendo piu alta per dignitade, si sottomisse ala obedientia di uno homo povero et mendico ma di serentia et religione percipuo, cioe magistro Conrado tanto stutamente che tuto quello che luy gli comandava, ley con molto gaudio et riverentia adimpleiva, salva la lege del matrimonio et lo consentimento del marito. Acio che cossi facendo havesse lo merito de la obedientia et seguitasse lo exemplo del Signore et Salvatore nostro Gesu Cristo, lo quale fu obediante fino ala morte. Accadete una volta che, essendo da questo suo confessore chiamata ala predica, sopravvenendo la anarxessana fu impedita che non gli puote andare; la qual cossa quello portando con amaro cuore non gli volse perdonare tanta inobedientia, per fin che non la fece spoliare fino ala camisa, et disciplinarla da alcune de le sue ancile in questo colpevole.

Imponea fortemente ancora a se medesima tanta asprezza et abstinencia, che lo corpo suo con viglie e discipline et digiunii et abstinencie macerava. Pero che, spesso abstinendosi da giacere col marito, veggiava tuta la nocte per puotere intendre ala orazione et pregare il Padre celestiale in secreto. Quando era costrecta per necessitate del somno dormiva sopra alcuni lecti de tapedi, o vero materazi. Et quando il marito non era a casa, veggiava con lo suo sposo Cristo in orazione. Etiamdio spesso per mano dele fantaselle si fece battere nella camera, accio che cossi ricompensasse lo Salvatore flagellato et la carne restringesse da ogni lascivia.

Et tanta temperanza in mangiare et bere usava, che essendo ala tavola col marito intra molti et diversi cibi alcuna volta si contentava del pane puro. Maestro Conrado gli avea comandato che non tochasse de li cibi del marito de li quali non havesse bona conscentia; la qual cossa ley con tanta diligentia observava, che habundando li altri di diverse delicie, ley con le ancille sue usava cibi grossi. Ma nientedimeno sedendo la mensa ponea la mano ali cibi et divideveli, acio che per questo desse ad intendre che mangasse di quello che mangava li altri per non incorrere in suspicione alchunii et per tenere li altri in piacere per la sua compagnia. Una volta, essendo ley afatigata per longo camino, et alo marito et a se fussero portati diversi cibi che non pareano di iusto acquisto, al tuto se ne abstenente et mango pane duro et negro, mogliandolo nell'acqua con le sue ancille patientemente per questo.

Lo suo marito gli assegno alcunii iusti renditi de li quali cum alcune de le sue ancille che a questo gli aderivano niuena. Et spese fiata rifudava li cibi d'la corte et cercava cibi de alchuni boni homini. Tutte queste cosse lo suo marito compatientia supportava, affermando che anche luy farebbe cossi sel non temesse la turbatione dela famiglia sua. Lo stato etiamdio dela povertade, essendo ley in grande gloria posta, grandemente desiderava, acio che rendesse cambio a Cristo et acio chel mondo non havesse in lei alchuna cossa di proprio. Et copiando lo capo fino di uno nello dispecto dicea: 'Cossi andaro quando saro venuta a stato di povertade.'

Et avegna che e se medesima fusse temperata con tanta liberalitate, se dava ali poveri che non pativa che alchuno fusse premuto di alcuna necessitate; ma a tuti tanto largissimamente soveniva che tuti li chiamavao 'madre de li poveri'. Elle septe opere de la misericordia intenta era con ogni vigilantia, acio che rivenesse lo regno perpetuo perpetualmente niuendo et la paterna benedictione cum li benedicti ala dextra sua possidesse.

Essa certo vestiva li nudi dandogli li vestimenti et ali poveri peregrini et molti da se sepoliti et ali fanciulini da se baptizati li quali fanciuli spese fiade levava del sacro fonte et con le proprie mane le loro vestimente cosiva, acio che per la compaternitate contracta piu liberalmente gli sovvenisse. Accadere pur che ad alcuna poverella fu dato uno assay bono vestimento; la quale, vedendo cossi magnifico dono, ebbe tanta letitia che uscendo fuora de se medesima, cadendo in terra. Se credeano che fusse morta; la qual cossa la beata Helisabeth vedendo se dolce d'avere dato quello cossi grande presente, temendo che non fusse casone di morte a quella povera; ma nientedimeno per ley orando, quela levo suso sana. Spesse fiata ley con le sue ancille filava con le sue proprie mane lana et di quella filate si facea fare de le

vestimente, acio che per questo ricevesse lo glorioso fructo de le bone opere et dicesse exemplo de vera humilitate et de le fatighe del proprio corpo di se elimosina a Dio.

155 Ley pasceva li affamati et ali poveri dava li alimenti. In tanto che essendo lo suo marito Langravio andato ala corte di Fedricho Imperatore, il quale era allora a Cremona, e la ricolse tuta la biana de li suoy granari et congregati da ogni parte li poveri ogni di gli dava la sua necessitate, pero che allora era carestia et fame grande. Et quantunque pocho desse ad alchuno di loro, nientedimeno per divina virtu quello cossi pocho gli bastava per tuto il di. Molte fiате mandandogli la perrunia vendeva li ornamenti per podere aloro sovenire. Havea infanza di sotrahere a se et ale ancille molti cosse et reseruarle ali poveri.

160 Essa portando sete dava bere alli assetiti. Ma pur una volta distribuendo ali poveri cervosa et habiandone dato ad ogni uno sufficientemente, fu trovato che lo vasello non era pero manchato o vero minuito, ma era gli dentro la cervosa in quella quantitate che era innanzi.

165 Essa albergava li poveri peregrini: havea facto una grandissima casa sotto lo altissimo castello, in lo quale nutriva grande moltitudine; li quali ogni dí visitava non obstrandola fatica de lo ascendere et discendere, dando aloro le sue necessitate et cum parole di exortatione inducea loro a patientia. Et avegna che avesse portato sempre ogni corruptione di l'ayre, nientemeno la corruptione de li infirmi; d'estade non ebbe a schiffo per lo amore di Dio, ma dava a loro gli remedii et li furbiva cum lo vello del proprio capo et con le proprie mane gli manegava, avegna che le ancille sue havessero questo a grave. In quella medesima casa fatica notrire li fanciulini de le povere persone cum summa diligentia ali quali cossi humile a dolce se rendeva che tuti la dimandavano madre. Et intrando lei in casa tutti gli andavano dricto, come se fusse sua madre; et innazi a ley inschiera cum summo studio si collocaveno. Et ley gli faceva a comprare aneleti et altre cosse di vitro per farle zugare a 175 prendre [con]solatio como soleva fare li fanciulini le quale cosse da zugare, caudrano essa in lo proprio vestimento portandole in lo castello, gli cadetteno in una grande profunditate sopra saxi, ma per questo non se ne guastarono niente.

Andava questa sancta visitando gli infermi; tanta compassione predea lo suo cuore circa le persone miserabile, o vero necessitose, che diligentemente cerchando li hospitii, gli visitava sollicitamente et le loro camerete devotamente et familiarmente intrando benignissimamente gli consulava, non lasciando per pagura de la grevezza de la via, ne per stanchezza de la longezza; ali quali subveniva nelle loro necessitate et dicea parole di conforto. Per la qual cossa acio che per la consideratione de cinque meriti singolari: cioe per dignatione de la visitatione, per la fatigha del caminare, per lo affecto de la compassione, per 185 lo affecto de la consulatione, et per lo fare li presenti, o vero doni ricevesse la renumeratione.

Essa visitava frequentemente le sepulture de li poveri; cum la mente divota correa ale exequie de li poveri. Et le vestimente le quale cum le proprie mane havea facte le aconciava a li loro corpi, in tanto che una fiata lo suo vello grandio di lino taglio in peze et lo involse nel corpo di uno poverello. Etiamdio le lore sepulture cum le proprie mane contraectava et nele 190 loro exequie stava devotamente.

In queste cosse è da laudare la devotione del suo marito, il quale avegna che in grande facende fusse occupato nientemeno in li servitii divini era devoto. Et pero che non podea dare se medesimo a queste cosse, concedete ala dona sua che ella facesse tute quelle cose che fussero honore di Dio a salute de l'anima sua. Ma desiderando la beata Elisabeth, sua dona, 195 chello convertisse le arme de la potentia sua in difensione della fede lo indusse ad andare a visitare la Terra Santa; nella quale essendo esso langravio, suo marito magnifico et fidele principe, con fede intiera et devotione rendete lo spirito a Dio, ricevendo lo glorioso facto de le sue bone opere.

Et quella beata dona con devotione abraçio lo stato veduilo, a cio che non fusse privata
 200 de la continentia viduile ma havesse lo fructo sexagesimo, como persona obsuatrice de lo
 decalogo et li comandamenti et de li septi opere de la misericordia.

Ma essendo la morte del suo marito già divulgata per tuta [...] questa como desipatrice
 et prodiga d'alchuni vassali del suo marito fu defraciata brutalmente et totalmente, acio che
 per questo fusse cognosciuta la sua patientia et lo longo concepto desiderio di povertate
 205 obtenesse. Avendo aduncha nocte questa beata in casa di uno tabernaro se puose in uno
 luocho dove erano già suti li porci, rendendo molte grazie a Dio. Ma allora del matino ando a
 casa deli frati minori et pregogli che rendessero gratie a Dio per questa sua turbulatione et
 cantassero *Te Deum laudamus*. El seguente di fu veduta intrave in casa di uno suo
 malvogliente con li suoi fanciulini, essendogli assignato uno stretto logariolo; et essendo molto
 210 aggravata dalo albergatore et albergatrice prese coniato dale [...] dicendo: 'Volentieri
 prenderebe connato(?) dali homini, se io lo trovasse benefactori et benivoli.' Essendo adoncha
 constrecta ritorno al luogo di prima e li suoy fanciulini in diversi luochi mando a nutrire.
 Ma trovano per una bona via strete piena di fango grande et passando sopra alcune piede [...] et una vegia,
 ala quale già molti beneficii havea facti, passando per quella medesima via supra
 215 quelle piede non gli volse dare luogho et quella humilissima cade nel profundo fango. Et
 levandosi dal fango ridendo et allegriandosse forbite le sue vestimente.

Fato questo la sua madregha molto condlendossi dela sua povertade al vescovo
 bambergnese, suo anunculo la meno, lo quale honestamente ritenendola la retenete
 cautamente, intendendo di dargli uno altro marito. La qual cossa conmo(?) le ancille, le quale
 220 cum ley haueano votato continentia, sepeno et per questo si affligeano con molte lacrime lo
 feceno a sapere a la beata Elisabetha cum pianto, la quale confortandole disse: 'Io credo nel
 Signore, per amore del quale io ho votato perpetua continentia, chel guardara il mio firmo
 proponimento et rompara ogni violentia et diffaza lo humano consiglio. Et se pur per ventura
 lo mio barba me uora(?) copulare cum alcuno, io non consentiro cum lo cuore et con le parole
 225 gli contradico. Et possia che altro rimedio non trovasse al mancho mi tagliarebe il naso, acio
 che ciaschaduno me havesse in horrore fata cossi difforme.'

Essendo adoncha di commandamento di quello suo barba contra sua voluntate ad
 alchuno castello menata per stare li fino a tanto che fusse maritata; et ley avendo ricomendata
 cum lacrime la sua castitade al Signore. Ecco disponendo il Signore, le osse del suo marito
 230 furono portate dale parte di oltramare. Unde chel vescovo che fusse ritornata, acio che
 andasse incontra alle osse del marito devotamente et le dite osse dal dicto vescovo et da ley
 cum molta devotione et effusione di lacrime furono ricevute. Levando la mente al Signore et
 dicendo: 'Gratia ti rendo Signore, che nella receptione de le osse del dolce sposo mio dilecto
 tuo; tu sei dignato di consolare me misera. Tu say Signore, che ben che io molto amasse
 235 questo tuo amatore, nientemeno per tuo amore volentiera me sono voluta provare de la sua
 [...] et si labo mandato in susidio de la tua Sancta Terra. Et aben che me fusse dolorabile
 ancora vivere cum luy etiamdio con questa conditione che con esso povero, io poverela per
 tuto il mondo mendicasse, nientemeno tu fay che come tua volonta non lo redimerebe pur
 cum uno capillo di capo ne lo revocarebbe a vita mortale. Ma lui et me ricomando ala tua
 240 gratia.'

Et acio etiam chella non perdesse lo fructo centesimo, lo quale fu dato a quelli
 observaneo la perfetione evangelica, li quali da la sinistra parte, o vero mandano de la miseria
 ala dextra de la gloria sono transferiti, si vestite di habito religioso, cioe veste griso, humile et
 habiate, observando perpetua continentia dopo la morte del marito [...] et volse andare
 245 mendicare di casa in casa ma maestro Conrado non volse. Lo suo habito fu cossi dispecto, che
 la portava uno palio griso, il quale era rapezato di pano di altro colore, le maniche etiamdio
 dela tunica rote similmente rapezzate de pano de altro colore.

Ma po' suo padre Regi di Ungaria, odendo la sua figlola di tale miseria esser divenuta, gli mando uno conte che procurasse di menarla a casa sua, cioe del padre, lo quale vedendo
 250 quella in tale habito. Et vedendola humilmente sedie et filare, per confusione et admiratione vedendo disse: 'Si maye e apparito di cosse ville habito vestita, ne etiamdio e stata veduta filare lana figlola di Re.' Et havendo grandemente sollicitato di ridurla per nullo modo aconsentite, volendo piu tosto con le povere vivere in povertate, che cum li Richi di molte ricchezze habundare.

255 Et aciochel suo amore tuto mettesse in Dio et la sua intenta devotione nullo impedimento havesse, pregho lo Signore che gli infundesse lo dispresio di tute le cosse temporale, et gli cavasse dal cuore suo la dilectione deli figlioli, et che li cavasse di avere per mente le contumelie et fortezza. Facta la oratione audite lo Signore che gli disse: 'Exaudita è la tua oratione'. Et questa incontinente disse ale ancille: 'Il Signore ha exaudito la mia
 260 oratione'. In tanto che le cosse temporale riputo como sterco et de li mei figlioli non me curo piu como de li altri mei prossimi, et lo mio dispretio ho per mente et non me pare che senta amare altro che Dio.'

Etiamdio magistro Conrado gli imponea spesse volte cosse moleste e contrarie ala sua volonta. Et quelli che pareva che ley piu amasse gli separava dala sua compagnia. Intanto che
 265 due sue ancille fidelle et dilecte nutrite cum ley da la sua infantia, le rimosse da ley; piange multo l'una parte et l'altra. Et questo facea quello homo sancto acio che anichilasse la sua voluntade et la sua affectione et amore levasse a Dio, et acio che alchune de le ancille gli revocasse a memoria la gloria che havensolea. In tute queste cosse ella facea trovata presta ala obedientia et constante a patientia, acio che per patientia possedesse l'anima sua et per la
 270 obedientia fusse ornata di vittoria. Dicea etiamdio: 'Se per Dio tuto temo l'omo mortale, quanto debo temere lo Giudice celestiale! Per questa ratione ho voluto sotto ponere me ala obedientia di maestro Conrado, povero et mendico, piu tosto che ad alcuno richo vescovo, acio che ogni oratione di consolatione temporale da me al tuto disperasse.'

Una volta essendo intrata in lo inchiostro di alquante monace, non havendo domandata
 275 la licentia dal suo maestro; luy fece cossi gravamente disciplinare che fino a tre septimane gli apparsero li segni dele batature.

Et dicea ale sue ancille 'sì et loro consolando: 'Si como la gramegna ributando lo fluivo si abassata et discescendo si levata, cossi noy per alchuna afflictione per humilitade dovemo esser abassate, ma ella cessando dovemo levarsi a Dio per spirituale letitia.' In tanta
 280 humilitate si sonniegea, che non pativa per alcuno modo che le sue ancelle la chiamassero madona, o vero vuy; a le sola parlando como se dice a le persone de alcuna singulare preminetia, ma sola nel modo che fediale inferiore, cioe 'te'. Piu volte le scudelle et li altri osadelli de la cucina lavava, et acio che le ancille non la impedissero se non quando le voleva lavare, le mandava via. Et dicea: 'Se altra vita piu ville havesse trovato, piu tosto haverebe
 285 electa.'

Ma acio che con Maria possedesse la optima parte vacava in continua contemplatione; speciale gratie havea di lacrimo et di spesse celestiale visione vedere et a lo amore di Dio li altri radiare et inflamare. Et quando pareva piu iocunda, o vero alliegra, allora mandava fuori lacrime di iocunda devotione, 'sì che le lacrime usiveno del giocundo volto; pareva che
 290 usissero di uno feverissimo fonte per tal modo, che pareva piangere et gaudire non mutandosi mai indeformitate. Et dicea che quelli che difformano il suo volto in oratione pare che mutano pagui al Signore dava al Signore quella [...] con allegrezza et iocunditate. In essa sua contemplatione vedea visione celestiale.

Uno di in lo sacro tempo quarismale essendo in chiesa cossi stava intenta alo altare
 295 cum li ochii fissii, come se vedesse la presentia di Dio; sulo quello nella quale per longo spatio consolata fu reficiata per divina revellatione. Poy che tornata fu a casa per debilitade inchinoe inscosso alla sua ancilla. Et levando li ochij a ciello per una fenestra fixamente tanto

aliegra donento la sua faccia, che etiam rise mirabilmente; la quale quando per uno pezo per
 300 tale visione giocunda fu cossi letificata, subito si mutoe in pianto. Et levando ancho' li ochii
 fu cossi allegra como di prima. Et sarrando gli ochii di novo, comincio ad piangere, et cossi
 per fino a compiuta state in talle divine consolatione. Ma poy, tacendo per bono spatio che
 non dicea nulla, finalmente parlaoe et disse: 'Signore, tu voy esser meco, et io voglio esser
 teco, et mai non me voglio da te separare.' Dopo questo fu pregata dale ancille che ad honore
 305 di Dio et confirmatione loro gl'indicasse quello che avea veduto quella veduto per la loro
 importunitade, disse: 'Io ho veduto lo celo aperto et Gesu, che benignamente si inclinoe a me,
 et lo volto suo benissimo me monstreo. Et me de la sua visione risplendea di ineffabile
 iocunditade. Rimanete al rimanea afflicta di molta melanconia per lo suo partimento, il quale
 havendomi compassione letificandomi per la demonstratione del suo volto, me disse: „Se tu
 voy esser meco io saro teco.”

310 Al quale io rispose, como voy avete oduto. Essendo pregata che manifesta la visione
 chela vide suto l'altare, rispose: „Quelle cosse le quale vidi non conviene narrare.”
 Nientemeno sapiate che io fui un in grande gaudio et vidi cosse maravegliose di Dio.'

Etiamdio spese volte stando in oratione. La sua faccia maravegliosamente risplendea
 et da li ochi suoy uscivano radii, como di sole et spese fiate la sua oratione ficeva trovata di
 315 tanto fervore, che etiam li altri infiamava. Chiamo a se una volta uno giovene secularmente
 vestito et disse: 'Paremi che vivi troppo dissolutamente cumciosia cossa che debi servire al tuo
 Creatore. Saresti contento che io pregasse per tu il Signore?' Rispuose quello giouene: 'Sono
 molto contento madona, e grandemente vene prego.' Dandossi adoncha ala oratione questa
 beata dona et amonendo che etiamdio lui per se medesimo orasse. Lo giouene incontiente al
 320 alta voce crido dicendo: 'Cessate madona, cessate da la oratione!' Et quella pur piu
 attentamente pregando, il giouene piu forte cridoe et disse: 'Cessate madona, pero che io
 vengo meno et bruso tuto quanto!' Era tanto pieno di calore, che tutto sudando, et fumando lo
 corpo et le braccia voltava in qua e in la, como matto. In tanto che correndo parecchie persone
 et tenendo trovarono le sue vestimente bagnate per lo grande sudore; et lo calore suo non
 325 poteano parire a le mane. Cridando lui et dicendo: 'Io ardo tuto et si consumo.' Et como la
 beata Elisabeth haue finita la oratione, lo giouene cesso di ardore, il quale tornando a se
 medesimo illuminato dala divina gratia, intro nell'ordine di frati minori. Et quella in quella
 fiamma monstrata nel giouene dimostreo lo affogato fervore de le sue oratione, il qual fu cossi
 caldo che etiamdio in fiamo quello freddo pero che quello giouene usato pur ale cosse carnale.
 330 Non essendo anchora ydoneo ale spirituale di queste tale cosse non era capace.

Avendo lei ala sumita de la perfectione non lassoe l'ocio di Maria per la fatigola
 ministracione di Martha, como di sopra nelle septe opere de la pietade. Havendo ricevuto per
 la dota sua dua miliaria de marche, cioe una tal moneta, parte ne diede ali poveri; del'altra ne
 335 construsse uno grande hospitale in uno loco chiamato Marupuch, per la quale cossa tuti la
 reputavano dissipatrice et prodiga, et tutti l'apellavano matta. Et pero che tutte le ingiurie
 favea gaudentemente sopportare l'impro peraueno(?) che troppo tosto hauea getato dal suo
 cuor la memoria del suo marito pero che si allegrava.

Et poscia che l'ebbe construito l'ospitale, se diedde alo servitio de li poveri, como
 ville fantesella. Certamente era cossi felicitata a ministrare ali poveri che li bagnava, cioe li
 340 bambolini, et ponendoli in lecto gli corpriva; in tanto chella dicta ale ancille: 'O como va be'
 per noy che bagnamo cossi lo Signore et copriamo!' In esso servitio che facea a poveri 'si
 humilmente, si portava che uno fanciullo, il quale havea solamente uno ochio et era tuto
 rogiroso; pur in una nocte sei volte cum le sue braccia porto alo luoco necessario et li pagni
 suoi imbracati volentieri lavava. Etiamdio una femina orribilmente leprosa spesso lavando
 345 puose nel leto, le piaghe marcenetava et ligava medicandola et le unge tagliando ali piedi de la
 quale ingenochiandosi li dislaciava i calciamento. Essi infirmi ala confessione et communione
 inducendo. Et una vegia via resistendo pur la indusse castigandola cum batuture.

Ma cessando da servire ali infirmi, filava lana; et alcuno monestero alei mandata et lo pretio che ella riceveva dividea ali poveri. Ma dopo molta povertade dividendo a poveri
 350 cinquecento marche, che ella ricevette de la dote sua. Essendo tutti ordinatamente alloggiati et ley, ministrando gli fu posta questa lege, che se alcuno in preinditio de li altri poveri mutasse lo suo loco, acio che ricevesse ultra la parte sua, gli fusse tagliata alcuna parte deli capilli. Et eco una puta che avea nome [...] la qualle havea troppo bella capilatura, vena passando per li, non per ricevere elemosina, ma per visitare una sua sorella inferma. La quale come essendo
 355 menata innanzi alla beata Elisabeth comando che al tuto fussero tagliati li capilli, piangendo ley di cio non era colpevole. Rispose che almeno da qua innanzi non potea andare alli balli cum tanta ambitione de suoi capilli, ne cum esse vanita alcuna adoperare. Domandando la beata Elisabeth quella giovane se l'avea mai concepito nel cuore alcuno bono proponimento di vita salute. Et elle rispose que che gia longo tempo haverebbe tolto habito di religione, se
 360 non havesse havuta tanta dilectione nelli capilli. Elley disse: 'El me ancora piu caro per questo che tu habi perduti li capilli, che sel mio filiolo fusse sublimato alla dignitade imperiale.' Unde che in continente la giovane si vesti di habito di religione et vivendo nel hospitale con beata Helisabeth meno laudabile vita.

Havendo parturito una poverella una fanciulina, la beata Elisabeth la lavo del sacro
 365 fonte et se gli puose il suo nome, et ala madre diede le cosse che gli erano necessarie. Intanto che tolse le maniche de la pelica dela fanticella e dieda a quella povera per involtare dentro la sua fanciullina et le sue proprie calze etiam gli dono. Ma passate le tre septimane quella povera femmina occultamente fuggiti col suo marito. La qualcosa essendo anunziata ala beata Helixabeth, si misse incontenente in oratione. Unde che non potendo la dicta povera, ne
 370 ley ne'l marito andare piu oltra ritornarono indietro al suo malgrato ala beata Helisabeth, domandogli perdonanza. Quali riprendendoli dela sua ingratitude, como era convenevole, gli diede la sua fiola a nutrire et si gli provedere dele cosse necessarie.

Aproximandosse lo tempo nel quale lo Signore havea disposto di trare dela misera carcere di questo mondo questa sua dilecta, acio che quella che avea disprezato lo reamo de li
 375 Re del mondo, havesse quello del celo. Cristo gli aparve dicendo: 'Viene dilecta mia et intra nelli tabernaculi a ti preparati.' Infermandosi adoncha et stando suso lo lecto et voltando la faccia ala parete, fu audita dali circumstanti cantare dolcissimamente; la quale essendo domandata da una de le ancille per quale casione facesse questo, rispose: 'Una uceleta ponendosi tra me et la parete cossi suavemente ha cantato che ha etiam provocato mi a cantare.' In quella sua infirmitade sempre fu alegra et mai non cesso di orare. Ma nel ultimo
 380 dí innanzi lo suo transito disse a loro: 'Che facesti sel diavolo venisse a voy?' Da li a uno pocho quasi caciando lo diavolo crido tre volte ad alta voce: 'Fuge, fuge, fuge!' Da poy disse: 'Ecco che se approssima la mezanocce nela quale Cristo volse nascere et fu reclinato nel presepio.' Ma approssimandosi l'ora del suo transito, disse: 'Gia è pronte il tempo nel quale lo
 385 onnipotente Signore ha provocato ale nozze celestialle quelli che sono suoi amici.' Da li breve hora nel anno del Signore MCXXXI venendo l'ora estrema ripose in pace.

Et avegna chel suo corpo stessee quatro di sopra la terra nientemeno alcuno fetore uscite di quello. Anzi, ne usciva uno aromatico odore, che confortava quelli che gli erano.

Alora furono veduti molti uccelli sul colmo dela chiesa congregati, li quali niuno
 390 giamay havea veduto innanzi; li qualli cum cussi suave melodia cantavano et suonavino tanti varij modi di canti che mirevano ogni homo in admiratione perche pareva che facessero le exeque di quella. Alora etiam in aere fu audita suavissima melodia, como se cantasse quello risposo *Regnum mundi*, lo quale si canta nel officio de la Vergine. Li fu molto crido di poveri. Li fu molta devotione deli popoli; in tanto che alcuni gli tagliaveno de li capilli, alcuni de le
 395 vestimente qualche partiale et queste reservano per grande reliquie. Il suo corpo fu posto nel monumento, il quale poi fu trovato vedolere, cio vendere odore.

Manifestato e adoncha nel suo transito essa beata Elisabeth: de quanta fusse
 sanctade, et questo quanta alla melodia deli ucelli, et alla expulsion deli deminii. Quella
 ucellata che cantava tra ley e lo muro cossi dolcemente, credono che fusse lo angello suo; il
 400 quale la indusse a cantare, lo quale fu alla sua custodia deputato che li annuntio lo eterno
 gaudio. Como ali reprobi alcune fiade e stato rivellato la eterna damnatione a sua magiore
 confusione, cossi ali electi alcuna volta fu rivellata la eterna loro salute a sua magiore
 consolatione. Et quello canto che ley fece sulo exmensurato gaudio che concepite per quella
 rivellatione, il quale fu cossi ex misurato, che non lo potete ritenere nel cuore ma uscite
 405 fuora per voce de suavitade. Lo diavolo 'si ha alcuna ratione in quelli che moreno, el 'si pronta
 ala morte ma perche non havea del suo in questa beata Elisabeth pero confusamente ferito
 fugire. Per questo adoncha si da ad intendere di quanta sanctitade ella fusse, dala quale lo
 diavolo impaurito fugitte e l'angello lo eterno gaudio nuntioe. Manifesto e secundariamente di
 quanta purita et munditia fusse. Et questo e quanto ala exaltatione de lo odore, pero che
 410 veramente il suo corpo di castitade et mundicia resplendite per questo rendere suave odore
 nella morte.

Manifestato e etiam terzamente di quanta eccellentia et dignitate fusse; et questo e
 quanto ala iubilatione deli angeli et ucelli. Che certo quelli ucelli che iubilando cantaveno
 appaiando sopra la cima dela chiesa. Credemo che fussero gli angeli li quali furono mandati
 415 da Dio, acio che portassero l'anima sua in cielo et lo corpo suo honorassero di celestiale
 iubilatione. 'Si como ali reprobij che morono conviene, o vero si aduna grande moltitudine di
 dimonii per cruciarli cum [...] et le divine loco portano all'onferno, cossi ali electi che
 morono conviene moltitudine di angeli per confortarli, acio che le loro anime portino allo
 regno celestiale.

420 Quarto e manifestato di quanta misericordia fusse et pietade; et questo perche uscite
 olio del corpo suo, che essendo lei ripiena de tuti le opere de la misericordia pero uscite olio
 del corpo suo.

Quinto e manifestato di quinto merito et possanza sia appo Dio et questo e per la
 operatione di molti miracoli, che veramente poi ch'ella uscite di questa carcere, Dio si la
 425 magnificata di gloriosa diversitate di miracoli, de li quali alcuni ne sono posti qui di sotto,
 lassandone molti per brevitade.

Nelle parte di Sansonia in uno monastero del vescovato histense, uno monico
 dell'ordine deli cistercensi che havea nome Henrico fu aggravato di tanto infirmitade et cossi
 circondato di dolori, che inducea ogni homo a compassione et conturbava per lo suo cridare.
 430 Una nocte gli apparve una venerabile donna, vestita gloriosamente, la quale le amonite che se
 ello desiderava sanitade si votasse ala beata Elisabeth. Et quello infermo, non essendo in casa
 lo abbate et lo priore di consiglio di quello che era rimaso superiore, fece voto. Venendo
 adoncha quella et apparendo gli fecegli lo segno dela croce sopra di luy e luy presto ricevette
 sanitate. Tornato lo abbate et lo priore odendo questo 'se maraveglioso veramente dela
 435 sanitate di quello monaco, ma dubitarono molto del voto che si dovesse adimpire cum cio sia
 cossa che a niuno monaco sia liceto fare voto, ne obligarsi a quelli. Cognobe etiamdio lo
 priore spese fiade li monaci essere induti a cosse non licite soto specie di bene inganate
 apparatione dil demonio. Et pero delibero di consigliare quello monaco che firmasse la mente
 sua instabile con la confesione. La sequente nocte quella medesima persona la quale in prima
 440 gli apparse, apparendogli disse: 'Sempre saray infermo per fino che compii quello che ay
 votato.' Presto adoncha quella medesima infiamitate lo prese et con gli dolori de comincio a
 languire, la quale cossa como lo abbate hebe udito lo licentio et comando che gli fusse data la
 cera da fare la ymagini che avea votato lo quale incontinente ricevuta la sanitate si scudio di
 adimpire lo voto suo et di quella infirmitade piu niente sentite.

445 Una gioveneta che avea nome Benigna del vescoato di [...] havendo domandato da
 bere ala fanticella et quella commossa ad ira dicendogli tale: 'Beve et lo diavolo gli pozete

da bere!’ ’Si che apparse alla giovene che uno ardente tizone gli andasse gioso per la golla, in tanto chella cridando sentiva grande male nel collo et presto lo suo ventre sconfio como uno veneno, per la qual cossa facea gesti miserabili et cridava como mata, ’si che credeano
 450 che fuse indemoniata.

Stete costrey per duy anni in questo stato doppo li qualli fu menata ala sepoltura di questa beata Elisabeth. Et essendogli fato voto per ley, stando como morta sopra la tomba, gli fu dato uno pocho di pane a mangiare et acqua benedicta a bere sopra la tomba, et incontinente stupendo et meravigliandosi tuti si levo sana.

455 Uno homo del diocesi traiactense che aveva nome Deterico havendo contracta una mano ’si che in tuto havea perduto lusso di quella; et visitando lo sepolcro due volte dela beata Helisabeth et non ricevendo pero sanitate, gli ando la terza volta con la dona sua con multa devotione. Alo quale andando gli apparve in via uno vegio di reverendo asporto, lo quale salutando domando dove li veniva; al quale rispose che veniva di Marurh dove ripossa lo corpo di sancta Elisabeth et li Dio fa molti miracoli per ley. Et quando questo infermo gli
 460 avene dito la sua infirmitade, lui con la mano levata lo benedisce dicendo: ‘Va securamente che riceveray sanitate pur che metti la mane inferma da uno capo del sepulchro in una fossa ivi facta sotto la pedia, la quale giunto piu gioso la meteray, tanto piu tosto sarai fato sano, ma habi alora ticco Nicolao compagno con lei neli miracoli cohoperatore; et dice ancora che sono stolti quelli che fatte le loro offerte presto se partino, concio sia cossa che alli sancti piaccia cheli sussciagij loro com perseverantia se domandino.’ Et incontinente lo vegio disparite da loro ne piu lo puoteno vedere. Et la quale cossa meravigliandosi molto et avendo piena speranza di havere sanitate, questo homo, secondo lo consiglio del vegio, misse la mano sotto la pedia del monumento et presto la ritrasse sana.

470 Uno del vescovato colonese che avea nome Hermano, essendo ritenuto in carcere dal iudice, offerite totalmente se medesimo a Dio et ala beata Elisabeth et con quanta devotione puotea domandava magistro Conrado in suo advitorio. Unde che la sequente nocte tutti duy apparsono con molte lume consolandolo molto. Finalmente data la sententia contra luy fue apicato e fra cossi apicato per spatio di uno miglo tedesco. Et lo giudice con diresse alli
 475 parenti che lo dispicasseno et metesselo nela sepultura. Apparecchiata adoncha la fossa et essendo gia deposto dalla forcha, lo padre et lo barba incominciarono adivuocare lo advitorio et la gratia de la beata Elisabeth. Et ecco che con grande admiratione di tuti stupore, quello che era morto levo tutto sano et vivo.

Uno scolare del vescovato maguntino chiamato Burcardo, essendo intento a pescare
 480 indiscretamente rifigando cadette nello fiume. Dopo molto spatio essendo tracto lo corpo suo cossi sentimento et movimento et rigido, che non trovando in lui niuno segno di vita, ogni homo indicava che fusse morto. Et ricorrendo ali meriti dela beata Elisabeth et vedendo ogni homo, gli fu renduta la vita et salute.

485 Uno fanciolino che havea tre anni et mezzo del diocesi maguntino, che avea nome Necellino, essendo gia uscito lo spirito, o vero l’anima, et lo corpo suo giaciuto morto et rigido per spatio di quatro miglia tedescha. La madre si misse a domandare sancta Elisabeth cum ogni devotione quanto puotea et ricevette lo figliolo suo vivo e sano.

Uno fanciullino di quatro anni, essendo caduto nel pozzo a caso, vene uno giovene a trare acqua et si auedre che uno fanciulo giacea li morto, lo quale puoy che cum fatica l’ebbe
 490 pescato et tracto fuori cognoscete che l’era morto. Per lo molto spatio di tempo che gli era stato et per la rigiditate del corpo et per la orribile apertura de la buocha et de li ogii et per la negrezza dela pelle et per la inflatione del ventre et per la privatione del sentimento et movimento. Et per la resuscitatione sua fu fato voto a sancta Helisabeth et presto fu restaurato ala vita como di prima.

495 Etiamdio una fanciulina somersa nel fiume, essendo puoi cavata fora fu restituita per li meriti di sancta Helisabeth ala vita como prima.

Uno homo nominato Federicho del diocesi maguntino. Molto perito nell'arte del notare, bagnandosi in una aqua, gittava del' aqua disonorelmente nel volto di uno povero, lo quale fu gia illuminato per sancta Helisabeth. Quello adirato disse: 'Ne facea vendeta quella sancta che me illuminoe in tal modo che non esci de li, se non somerso e morto.' Quello havendo per mente la sua biasfema se bagnava pur nell' aqua lascivamente et bagnandole le forze et privato di esse non si puote advitare 'si che cadete et discese nel profundo como una preda. Essendo ritratto dopo molto tempo, fu tirato morto fuora del' aqua. Et facendosi grande pianto sopra quello corpo, alcuni de li suoi parenti fecero voto per luy a sancta Helisabeth e domandato lo suo advitorio devotissimamente. Presto gli ritorno lo spirito, et vivo et sano levo suso.

Uno che avea nome Gohanne del vescovato sopradito, fu preso innocentemente cum uno ladro et cum luy giudocato a morte. Et essendo ala forcha prego tutti che pregassero Dio et la beata Helisabeth, che secondo chel' meritava fuose advucato. Et essendo appicato, udite sopra se una voce che disse: 'Confidati et habi speranza nella beata Elisabeth et saray liberato'. Et luy confidendossi in ella, subitamente la corda si rupe et cadette di alto in terra gravissimamente, non ricevendo pero alcuna lesione a bene che la camisia, la qualle havea indosso, si rupebbe remanendo l'altro impicato, il qualle essendo poy molto alegro, disse: 'Sancta Helisabeth, tu mi hai liberato et si mi hai fatto cadere suto uno molle lecto'. Et dicendo alcuni che si dovesse ancora reimpicare, rispose il giudice: 'Quelo che Dio ha liberato, non permettero che sia piu inspirato.'

Uno converso fue in uno monastero de sopraditto diocesi, che avea nome Valemario; afflisce la carne sua circa vinti anni, portando sempre patientia e gratia pur intra li legni o piede. Et essendo una volta in uno molino, la pidea del molino a caso gli prese la mano et cossi la minucio, che scharpo via tuta la carne da l'una parte e dal'altra et tudo cossi li nervi et le osse che quasi pareano tudate nel mortaro. Et era angosciato detale angoscia dolorosa chel' pregava chela gli fusse tagliata. Domandando adoncha luy la beata Elisabeth, spesso in suo advitorio, la quale etiam nella vita sua gli fu familiare, gli apparse una nocte dicendogli: 'Voi tu esser facto sano?' Il quale rispondendo che voluntiera. Et lei pigliandoli la mano, sano gli nervi, fece le osse et restituite la carne dal'una parte dall'altra rendendogli la prestina sanitatute. Et fata la matina trovandosi perfectamente liberato, mostroea tuto il convento la mano sanata, maravigliandosi tutti di cio.

Uno puto di cinque anni, che avea nome Diatuto, del dito vescovato, essendo nato ciecho, ricevette lo lume per li meriti de la beata Helisabeth. Havea costui la pelle intera et senza pilli dele per pelle et senza alcuna divisione dela pelle sopra posta ali ogi al'ochi, in tal modo che copriva tutti gli ochi e niuno iudicio dela substantia deli ochi puotea aperire, per la qualle cossa il suo maestro lo meno al sepulcro dela beata Helisabeth. Et ecco chela pelle di sopra li ogi si fendete et li ochi suoi apparseno turbulenti et sanguinenti. Et cossi lo puto per li meriti di sancta Helisabeth ricevette lo beneficio de li ochi.

Una puta di quello medesimo diocesi che havea nome Beatrice, essendo stata molestata per longo tempo di grande et diverse infirmitate. Finalmente vegendoli lo gobo dictio et di nanze si rimase curvata in tuto lo corpo che per niuna ragione si potea drizzare, ma metendo le mane su li ginochii sustentava cossi lo suo corpo. Portandola adoncha in una sporta a la madre a la sepultura di sancta Helisabeth, et per deci dí stando li et non potendo trovare alcuno rimedio di sanitate. Irata la madre contra sancta Helisabeth murmuro dicendo: 'A tutti fai beneficii et mi misera non exaudisse.' Tornando a casa et dicendo intra se: 'Certo procurato di ritenere, o vero fare ritrare da la tua visitatione tutti quelli che io potero'. Et partendosi cossi irata et già essendo longi uno migli et mezzo et la figliola crutiata de li dolori piangendo. Finalmente essa puta adormentandose vide una dona bellissima cum la facia relucante, la quale tocandogli lo capo et lo dosso et lo pecto se gli disse: 'Lievati et va via!' Disvegliandosse la puta et trovandosse da ogni deformitate et curvitate sanata. Cunto(?) la

visione ala madre et diedegli gaudio et letitia. Ritornando adoncha ala sepoltura di sancta Helisabetha rendeteno gratie a Dio et a ley et lasciarono li la sporta nella quale quella sua fiola fu portata.

550 Una femina che avea nome Gerunda di quello diocesi, essedo contracta per molti anni di tutte le gambe tute due, o vero cosse et curvata di tuto lo corpo fu amonita. In sogno che a sancto Nicolao andando debia dimandare lo suo adiuto o merito, la quale si fece portare ad una giesia di sancto Nicholao et trovo sanitate di una cossa. Finalmente menata alo sepulchro de santa Elisabeth et posta suso lo suo sepulchro stimolata de granissimi dolori et facta como

555 furea, de si levo suso sana et salva.

Una femina che avea nome Gerunda del sopradicto diocesi, essendo stata ben per uno anno intiero ciecha, 'si che bisognava che altri la guidasse. Si ritorna con tuta la sua devotione a pregare sancta Elisabeth et ricevette lo lume perduto.

560 Uno homo che avea nome Henrico di quello medesimo veschoato, essendo al tuto privato del lume de li ochij. Visitando lo sepulchro dela beata Elisabeth, riporto lo beneficio de la piena curatione, dopo la quale fu infermato di fluxo di sangue, intanto che la famiglia sua credeva chel dovesse morire. Ma pigliando de la terra delo sepulchro di essa sancta et ridandola la misse nell'aqua et cossi bevandola ricevette perfecta sanitate.

565 Una puta che avea nome Methelda del diocesi traiaetese, essendo privata del vedere et del udire et havendo anchora perduta la possanza del parlare et del andare. Lo suo padre et la sua madre la votarono ala beata Elisabeth, et essendo guarita se partirono laudando le maraveglie di Dio et de la beata Elisabeth.

Una femina che havea nome [...] del veschoato traicetese, essendo stata ciecha per uno anno intero; et per ricevere sanitate invoco li meriti de la beata Elisabeth facendosi menare alo

570 sepulchro et ricevette la sanitate di uno ochio. Et essendo tornata a casa sentite grane dolore nell'altro ochio et anchora domandandoli li meriti di quella, esse gli apparve dicendo: 'Al'altare fate fare vento con li corporali suso li toi ochii et cossi ricevea sanitate.' Et ley facendo como ela gli comando, ricevette la sanitate domandata.

575 Uno homo chiamato Theodorico del vescovato maguntino gravemente infermato nelli ginocchi et nelle cosse per longo tempo in tal modo, che non puoteva andare sel non facea portato da altri. Fece voto di visitare lo sepulchro di beata Elisabeth et di offerirle de le sue cosse. Et non essendo di longhi il luocho suo da quello sepulchro se non dieci miglia, a pena gli puote arivare in octo di. Et essendo stato li per quatro septimane et non havendo ricevuto alcuno rimedio di sanitate, ritornava di casa, et ponendosi a riposare in uno luocho apresso

580 uno altro infermo, vidi in sogno uno che veniva a lui et che lo bagna totalmente d'acqua. Et disvegliandossi costui, irato per lo compagno disse: 'Perche me hai tu cossi bagnato di aqua?' Lo qualle compagno rispose: 'Io non te ho bagnato ma credo che quello bagnate te face casone di salute, o vero di sanitata.' Levandosi suto adoncha questo infermo et trovandosi totalmente guarito, puose lo suo bastono in spalla, con lo quale si sostentava, et ritornoe alo

585 sepulcro dela beata Elisabeth et ringratiandola torno a casa sua aliegro.

Finisce la legenda di sancta Helisabeth del terzo ordine. Et la sua festa si fa a XVIII di di Novembre. Deo gratias amen.

Appendix Three: The Description of MS Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale Magliabechiano XXXVIII. 74 and the Transcription of the “Legenda di Santa Elisabet” ff.9r-26v

Description of MS Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale Magliabechiano XXXVIII.

Origin: Tuscany.

Date: 1320-1340 (*Bibliografia Agiografica Italiana*, 219).

Language: Italian (Florentine dialect).

Bibliography: Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale di Firenze, Sala Mss, *Catalogo generale dei manoscritti Magliabechiani, compilato da G. Targoni Tozzetti*, 45. Classe XXVIII-XL. 196-197; *Bibliografia Agiografica Italiana*, vol.2, 89-90 and 218-219; Bertelli, *I manoscritti della letteratura italiana delle origini*, 141.

Physical description: 88 ff. The parchment codex has a wood cover and a leather binding. The size of the folios is 220x155 mm. There are pen trials on the flyleaf. The texts are written in 19-21 long lines (165x105 mm) until fol. 9r, then in 29 lines in Italian rotunda/southern *textualis libraria*. The nicely decorated initials are in red and blue ink on fols. 9r, 9v, 27r, 52r. On the basis of the quality of the parchment and the script, the first eight texts until fol. 8v. were probably written by a first hand earlier than the rest of the manuscript. Only the legend of St. Elisabeth ff.9r-26v contains decorated catchwords. The first is on fol. 16v a girl with curly hair, wearing a huge hat in which the catchword “se a dio” is inserted. The next catchword on fol. 22v “con grande lume” is incorporated in a flame. The catchword “la mostroe” on fol. 24 v is also decorated. The last page of the codex is eaten by worms but still relatively legible.

Provenance : Alberto di Luigi Duccio degli Alberti del popolo di Sant’Iacopo tra le Fosse (n.p.); monna Mea d’Antonio di Luca da Filicaia. (*Bibliografia Agiografica Italiana*, 89-90)

Contents:

I. The Fifteen Articles of the Holy See

Fols. 1r-2r.

Inc.: Qui cominciano et sono posti per ordine li xv articoli della santa sede cristiana. Santo Piero sicome principale et capo di tutti gli apostoli. Comincio et disse.

Expl.: Et io credo et affermo ancora nella vita eterna. Et tutti ripuosero insieme. Amen.

II. The Seven Sacraments of the Church

Fols. 2r-3r.

Inc.: Lo santo battesimo

Expl.: farebbe eretico e non farebbe salvo.

III. The Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit

Fols. 3r-3v.

Inc.: Lo primo sie timore

Expl.: dove mo riempire l'anima delle sette virtudi.

IV: The Seven Virtues

Fols. 3v-4r.

Inc.: E sette virtudi seguitano li sette doni come detto e

Expl.: La giustitia indistribuire le cose come si dee virtuosamente.

V: The Seven Deadly Sins

Fols. 4v-6r.

Inc.: La superbia e lo primo peccato.

Expl.: nascono tutti gli altri viçij.

VI: The Ten Commandments

Fols. 6v-8r.

Inc.: Diece comandamenti della legge furono dati et scritti da Dio in tavole di pietra.

Expl.: li quali osservandogli averai vita eterna.

VII: On the Works of the Earthly Mercy

Fol. 8r.

Inc.: Dovemo sapere che sei sono l'opere della misericordia.

Expl.: Ricomperare et aiutare 'ompreionato.

VIII: On the Works of the Spiritual Mercy

Fol. 8r.

Inc.: Anchora dovemo sapere come sono sei l'opere delle misericordia temporali

Expl.: Nelle quali noi ci dobbiamo continoamente exercitare per amore di Dio et di caritate.

IX: The Legend of Saint Elizabeth

Fols. 9r-26v.

Inc.: Qui comincia la legenda di santa elisabet. Et prima della spositione del nome suo. Helisabet tanto e a dire quanto dio mio cognoscente.

Expl.: Poi a casa con gaudio et molta devotione si ritornoe.

X: (Pseudo-Bernardian) Meditation on the Passion of Christ

Fols. 27r- 35v

Inc.: Qui si comincia una utile meditatione della passione del nostro signore Iesu Christo, secondo le sette hore del di, la quale fece santo Bernardo ad uno suo discepolo.

Expl: Qui uiuit et regnat per omnia secula seculorum. Amen. Chi legge per la sua cortesia per quelli che lo scrisse la vergine Maria.

XI: (Pseudo-Bernardian) The Virgin's Lament on the Passion

Fol. 36r.

Inc: Qui si comincia lo tractato di santo Bernardo et del pianto e lamentazione che fece la vergine nella passione del suo figlio. Chi dava al capo mio acqua et ali occhi miei font

Expl: Tu se benedecta in eterno eoltra con Iesu Christo tuo figliuolo lo quale vive con dio padre et con lo Spirito Sancto et regna in secula seculorum. Amen.

XII: St. Bernard's Lament on the Sinful Soul

Fol. 43v-44v.

Inc.: Lamento di sancto Bernardo dell'anima peccatrice che non fa fructo piacevole a Dio. Increscemi della vita mia che quando lo cerco simmi pare o peccato o poco fructuosa.

Expl.: meco di qui alla morte che dopo la morte vegna misericordia ala securtade. Amen.

XIII: St. Ceasar of Arles: On the human soul

Fol. 44v-52r.

Inc.: Questo el tractato de sancto Cesario sopra la vita humana. Laudaui magis mortuos quam viuentes et feliciorem utroque indicaui cum qui necdum natus est. Potrebbe alcuno pensare et pensando dubitare ...

Expl.: Ad questa beatitudine Dio omnipotente ci faccia pervenire et di questi beni di paradiso avere. Quives benedictus et uiuit et regnat in secula seculorum. Amen.

XIV: The Legend of St. Barlaam and Josaphat

Fol. 52r-88v.

Inc.: Dice questa leggenda che nell'India aveva uno re che si chiamava il Re Avemur. Questo Re Avemur fiera huomo molto crudele contra li cristiani.

Expl.: soppen[...]doli fini furo tutti i vescovi et preti et chierici del [...] contrada faccendo grand[...]officio sissi se[...]liro a grande honore d[...] a tutto il p[...].

For the note to the transcription, see my notes in Appendix Two.

“Legenda di Santa Elisabet” of MS Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale Magliabechiano XXXVIII. 74 on ff.9r-26v

Qui comincia la legenda di Santa Elisabet. Et prime della spositione del nome suo. Helisabet tanto e a dire quanto Dio mio cognoscente. Overo satiata dello Dio mio. Adunque prima e detto Helisabet. Cioe Dio mio cognobbe. Impercio che Dio la cognobbe et nel suo beneplacito la provoe. Overo la cognobbe. Cioe che in lei puose et resplendette la notitia della sua benedictione. Secondariamente e detto questo nome Elisabet, cioe septima dello Dio mio. Ella certo fue septima de Dio, pero che perfectamente adoperoe le sette opere della misericordia. Overo, che aguale e nella septima etade di coloro che si riposano, et alla perfine de' provenire all'octava etade di coloro che risuciteranno. Et ancora detta septima per li sette stati, ne quali ella fue. Fue prima santa Elisabet nello stato della virginita. Secondo fue nello stato matrimoniale, pero ch'ebbe marito. Tertio fue nello stato vedovale. Quarto fue nello stato attivo. Quinto fue nello stato contemplativo. Sesto fue nello stato religioso. Septimo fue nello stato glorioso. Et ora et sempre vive et regna in esso. O manifestamente adonque questi sette stati si contengono nella sua legenda. Et puotesi dire di lei quello che scritto nel Daniele di Nabuchodonodor re: pero che sette tempo ali si mutaro sopra lei. Nella terza parte e detta Elisabet, cioe satiata di Dio mio, percio che Dio la satio et riempiella delo splendore di verita. Onde dice Santo Agostino nel libro della citta di Dio. 'Nella eternita di Dio vive ,nella verita di Dio risplende, et nella bonta di Dio si rallegra et gode per tutti i tempi de secoli et in secula seculor.

Della vita di Santa Elisabet et della sua legenda.

Sancta Elisabet fue figliuola del generilissimo re d'Ungaria. Per generatione fue nobile. Et per fede et religione fue nobilissima. Certo la schiatta reale et cosi nobile ella adorno et nobilito con essempli et allumino con gratia di santita, la quale l'autore della nature Dio onnipotente sopra natura ma alcuno modo la essalto et fece gratiosa et eccellente. Che da fanciulla essendo notricata nelle delicatezze reali, al tutto rifiutava ogni cosa fanciullescha. Et intanto despregiava le cose mondane sicome chiaramente si dimostra che, infino dalla sua tenera infantia vivette et con dolce devotione comincioe et continea perseveranza, di bene in meglio, santamente conpiette. Et infino di fanciulla per certo si comincio ad avezzarsi a santi studij et a despregiare li giochi della vanita et a fuggire gli benaventurosi et prosperevoli casi ch'adivenire potessero; et sempre in nettezza et purita cresceva nela reverenza di Dio. Et essendo ella ancora piccola fanciulla, colle sue compagne di sua eta et colle sue ancelle, spesse volte andava alla chiesa: et intanto in quella si dava all'oratione continuoa che appena o malagrevolmente le sue ancelle la ne poteano rimouere. Et quando alcuna volta le sue compagne o alcuna dell'ancella giuchando col lei et seguicandola sempre ella si dirizzava correndo verso la cappella, accio che cosi giocando avesse cagione d'intrare nella chiesa, nella quale incontanente o ella trovando alcuno libro, tutto ch'ella non sapesse leggere, si l'apriva e mostravasi di leggere in alcuno modo il saltero accio che altri nolla impedisse veggendola occupata. Etiamdio colle fanciulle tale ora giuchando, si gictava in terra, et insignendosi di misurare alcuna cosa; che non paresse che fosse istraniera dal loro; et cosi ispesse fiate facea accio che per tale modo facesse reverenza a Dio. Ne giuochi degli anelli et altri giuochi tucta la sua speranza ponea in Dio. Et di questo cio ch'ella riceueua di guadagno et cio chell'avea inpecunia dava a poveri et nulla cosa si riteneua. Et accio in ondeva le sue compagne. Et spesse fiate facea loro dire lo pater nostro overo l'ave maria e dicevala ella ne' loro trastulli. Ma crescendo ella per etade di tempo, molto maggiormente cresceva per affetto di devozione a Dio. In tutto, la beatissima Vergine Maria, genetrice di Dio, in sua matrona, refugio et avvocata, et lo beato Giovanni evangelista in guardiani della sua castita s'avea

electo. Et conciosia cosa che ella colle sue compagne ponesse ciascuna sotto l'altare la sua
ceddola propria, scritta del suo nome, a riprendendo poi ciascuna la cedola chelle venia.
Elisabet fatta l'oratione a Dio, tre volte ricevette la cedola dov'era scritto lo nome di Santo
Giovanni evangelista, sicom'ella desiderava chelle adivenisse. Al quale tanto amore et
devotione portava che a niuno, chelle adomandasse alcuna cosa per lo suo amore, negava. Et
accio che succedimenti del mondo prosperevoli nolla lusingassero troppo, cisacuno die
ritraeva a se alcuna cosa ch'alcun giocho le succedesse prospero, lasciava il compimento et
diceva: 'Io non voglio piu in questo piacere ma per amore di Dio lo voglio lasciare.' Ancora
essendo ella chiamata dall'altre fanciulle di sua etade alli balli, quando aveano compiuto uno
circuitto, cio uno ballo diceva alle compagne: 'Bastia un circoito gia per Dio lasciamo li altri
per lo suo amore.' Et cosi per tale modo temperava le fanciulle dalle vanita. Sempre avea in
orrore l'usanze lascive et desoneste di vestimenti et sempre amoe in essi ogni onestade et
temperanza. Et anche uno certo novero d'orationi s'avea preso et imposto, la quale se alcuna
volta per occupatione alcuna non potesse compiere et fosse costretta dalle sue ancelle
d'intrare al postutto al lecto per dormire col suo Sposo celestiale le sue vigile sollicitamente
compieva. Etiamdio li di solenni et feste la nobile fanciulla con tanta devotione onorava, che
per ne uno modo pativa chelle fosse pur in uno punto ruscita la manica, anzi chelle sollenita
delle messe fossero compiute. Ancora ne di delle domeniche lusanze di guanti anzi lo meriggi
viato. Volendo in cio honorare la santa sollennita et sadisfare alla sua devotione. Percio era
usata, a quelle cose et simiglianti, d'astenersi per voto, accio che alcuno non potesse, per
alcuno modo overo conforto, da' buoni proponimenti d'animo suo revocare et remuovere.
L'officio della chiesa con tanta reverentia et devotione udiva, quanto si sacrava l'ostia ch'elle
maniche, tutto ch'elle fossero cusette come susava, incontamente le sdrucia; fregiatura o altro
adornamento di capo o di dosso, incontanente lo ponea in terra.

Ma poscia ch'ella ebbe recto saviamente e passato lo grado verginale, lo grado
congiugale fue costretta di prendere et d'intrare, si come quella ch'era ancora sottoposta al
comandamento del padre obedie et servoe la fede della santa trinita; la quale dovea ricevere
fructo trigesimo come promesso nel libro di comandamenti. Adunque consentie non volentieri
nel santo matrimonio, ma costretta; non per piacere alla carne, ma per non dispregiare lo
comandamento del padre, et accio che producesse figliuoli che fossero al servizio di Dio. Et
avegnadio ch'ella fosse alla legge del matrimonio legata, inperanto non fue giammai aneuna
dilectatione colpevole, quantunque minima, per veruno modo fuggetta. La quale cosa
chiaramente se manifesta percio che in mano del maestro Currado, doctore in sacra teologia et
huomo santo et religioso, fece voto et promise che se adivenisse, per volere di Dio, ch'ella
sopravivesse dopo la morte del suo marito, ch'ella osservarebbe perpetuale continentia et
castita. Fue adnque Elisabet maritata auno grande et nobile uomo, signore d'una provincia, la
qual era chiamata Turingia; e'l nome suo Lottovingia. Et cio era sicome si richiedeva alla
magnificentia regale, pienamente et la dispositione divina avea ordinato; accio che all'amore
di Dio fosse per lei menato et li uomini rozzi et duri fossero amaestrati. Ma di quanta
devotione et humilita ella fosse a Dio, di quanta austerita et astinenza a se medesima, et di
quanta larghezza et misericordia a poveri, per la sua vita et legenda apertamente si dimostra.
Ella inpercio nell'oratione fue di tanto fervore, chella mattina prima si levava delle sue
ancelle, et prima alla chiesa pervenia di loro, accio che in quel tanto per alcune private
orationi, alcuna gratia da Dio apparecchiasse al marito, et lo corpo ne ricevesse alcuno
refrigerio. Avea adunque ordinato con una sua donzella della quale piu si confidava che
inveruna dell'altre, et piu era allei familiare, che se alcuna fiata ella fosse dal sonno si
compresa ch'ella non si levasse sollecitamente quando si convenia, ch'ella incontanente le
tocchasse il piede et traendola cosi la svegliasse. Ma una una fiata intervenendo chella detta
donzella, volendo toccare lo piede suo, com'era ordinato, incappoe nel piede del marito et
destato subitamente seppe la cosa com'era ordinata et patientemente elli sofferendo,

saviamente s'infinse. Et accio ch'ella rendesse a Dio uno piacevole sacrificio delle sue orationi, spesse volte lo bagnava coll'abondanza delle sue lacrime, le quali spandeva lietamente senza permutatione alcuna della faccia, in tal modo che sempre era in alcuno dolore, et del dolore mostrava letizia et allegrezza et lacrimando adornava la sua faccia d'alcuna spetiale bellezza.

Et tanta humilitade si sottopuose, che mai non spregiava ne avea a schifo qualunque cose fosse vilissima et abiecta, ma in quelle continuoamente con molta devotione s'essercitava. Adivenne che uno infermo deformato nella faccia et del suo capo usciva uno grande fetore et orribile. Ella lo ricevette lieta et nel suo grembo lo richino el suo capo cosi puzzolente lo tondeo et diligentemente lo lavoe et le sue cameriere et ancelle schifando cio se ne rideano. Quando s'andava a processione, sempre seguitava devotamente, ischalza et vestite vilemente di panno lino. Et nelle prediche, sempre i luoghi vili et bassi, tralle povere, sicome povera et humile resedeva. Nella purificatione dopo il parto suo, giamai come l'altre done non si adornava di gemme ne d'altri pretiosi ornamenti, ma prendendo essempro della giouisa et interne rata Vergine Maria, lo suo proprio figliuolo portava ella nelle sue braccia et ofrevalo all'altare nella chiesa humilmente con uno agnello et candela. Et in cio dimostrava, ogni pompa secolare al tutto da dispregiare; et cosi alla beata Vergine Maria dopo'l suo parto devotamente si conformava. Poi, ritornata a casa, le vestimenti sue, colle quali era intra alla chiesa, incontanente la dava ad alcuna femina povera per Dio. Et pervenuta ella alla fama de profonda humilita, per la qual cosa in libertade agradita et per dignitade non piccola, alla doctrina et obedientia del detto maestro Corrado, pieno di scientia et di santita huomo religioso ma povero, salvo in tutto la ragione del matrimonio consentendo il marito, per obedire a Dio, in tutto si sottopuose et cio chell detto maestro Conrado inponesse allei o comandisse, quella con molta reverentia et allegrezza adempieva, accio che dell'obedienza ricevesse merito, et del nostro signore Gieso Cristo, lo quale fue obediente infino alla morte, seguitasse l'esempio. Essendo adunque una fiata appellata ad una sua predicha et venutam la marchesana de Messenenza, quella impedita non vi venne. La qual cosa quelli non temperatamente sostenendo, nolle volle perdonare la sua disubidentia infino a tanto che, spogliata infino alla camiscia con alquante sue ancelle che furono colpevoli di cio, fortemente volle et comandoe che fossero battute.

Etiamdio nel digiuni et abstinentie inponeva allei, ch'ella macerasse il corpo suo coniugale et discipline et digiuni et abstinentie et impercio spesse volte abstenendosi dal debito matrimoniale tutta quella nocte senza sonno vegghi ando passava, accio che continuoa fosse in oratione e'l Padre celestiale in secreto pregasse. Et concio sia cosa chella necessita del sonno alcuna volta la costringesse, in sullo spazzo, destosuoì suso alcuno panno se ponea a dormire. Spesse fiata ma quando non ui fosse il marito collo Sposo celestiale, con molta letitia, in oratione tutta nocte vegghiava. Spesse volte ancora dalle sue ancelle si facea nella camera battere fortemente, accio che ricordandosi del Salvatore battuto per la salute nostra allui rendesse debite gratie et vicenda, et la propria carne da ogni vana lascivia macerasse. Ancora tanta temperanza et abstinenza nel mangiare et nel bere avea, che essendo ella alla mensa del suo marito, infra molte vivande et delicati cibi, solamente di pane et acqua era contenta spesse fiata. Et certo lo suo confessoro, maestro Corrado, l'avea contradetto che de cibi del marito suo non tocchasse alcuna cosa de quali non avesse bene pura coscienza. La quale cosa con tanta diligentia osservava, che nelli abbondevoli cibi et delicati, ella con alquante sue ancelle solamente grossi cibi usava. Ma inpertanto, sedendo ella alla mensa, spesse volte toccava et divideva lo cibo, accio che paresse che mangiasse, et non potesse essere ripresa, et accio che rallegrasse coloro che mangiavano alla sua mensa. Alcuna altra volta, essendo ella affaticata di molto viaggio, al marito et allei furo presentati inanzi molti et diversi cibi, de' quali non avea buona coscienza che fossero lecitamente acquistati. Al tutto se ne astenne, et uno pane bruno, grosso et duro, bagnato solamente nell'acqua calda, con

alquante sue ancelle mangioe patientemente. Et percio lo suo marito l'avea assegnato et reputato alquante rendite licite et giuste; allei con alquante sue ancelle le quali consentivano allei in virtude et honestade, et di queste cotali rendite si vivevano. Spesse fiate le cenere mescolava, a modo di spezie, sopra li cibi chella mangiava. Tutte queste sose lo suo marito con patientia sopportava, dicendo chelli somigliantemente farebbe volentieri, sella turbatione della sua famiglia non temesse. Lo stato della poverta per certo amava et con grande studio desiderava, accio che Cristo povero seguitasse et in lei nulla cosa lo mondo avesse. Per la qual cosa, essendo ella alcuna volta sola colle sue ancelle, di vili vestimenti si vestiva et con uno velo del petto si copria il capo suo et diceva: 'In cotale modo desidero d'andare quand'io saro pervenuta allo stato di povertade.'

Et avegnadio ch'ella s'avesse posto freno di tanta abstinencia impercio con tanta libertalitate si dava et spandeva a poveri, che non pareva ch'ell'avesse defetto alcuno, ma a tutti largamente sovvenia, intanto che da tutti madre de' poveri era chiamata. E cosi a tutti dava, et per tutti in opere di misericordia s'affaticava, accio ch'ella perpetualmente regnasse nel reame perpetuale, et con benedetti dalla parte diritta, la benedictione del Padre celestiale possedesse. Ella percio vestiva li nudi, li affamati pasceva, li peregrini albergava, le corpora de' poveri sepelliva, et fanciulli de poveri battezzava li quali certo gli levava del santo fonte, et colle sue mani li vestiva et cosciva loro li panni, accio che fatto il comparatico, piu liberamente sovenisse alloro. Adivenne una fiata, abbiento ella dato a una poverella uno molto buono vestimento, et quella vedendo cosi grande dono, ebbe tanta allegrezza et letiza nel cuore, ch'ella cadde in terra et pareva quasi morta. La quale vedendo Santa Elisabet, et temendo ch'ella non fosse allei cagione di morte per lo dono chell'avea dato, incontanente fece oratione a Dio per lei; et subitamente sanata et libera che prima era inferma si leveo. Spesse fiate ella colle sue ancelle filava lana, accio che poi fatto il panno ne revestisse i poveri et di cio ne ricevesse glorioso fructo, et desse exemplo de vera humilita, et della propria fatica dio ne fosse lodato. Ella adunque sobria, pasceva i poveri, et alloro tutto die gli alimenti distribuiva; intanto che lotgriavio, marito suo, essendo ito alla corte de Federigo imperadore, lo quale allora era in Cremona, quella venne raccogliendo ogni annona et victualia delle sua grancie, et raunati da ogni parte li poveri sovenisse. Molte cose asse e alle sue ancelle, per dare a povera, sottraeva. Alcuna fiata, abbienue distribuita ai poveri molta ceraigia, et autone ciascuno a sofficieneta, trovoe che'l vaso non era percio diminuito, ma in quella misura di prima. Al suo albergo ricevea li pelegrini et li poveri. Ancora in uno castello, lo qual era altissimo, non ostante la malagrevolezza del salire et del descendere, quivi grande moltitudine d'infermi sostentava et nutriva, visitandoli et confortandogli, et colle cose necessarie sofficentemente, et con parole salutifere inucendoli ad via di salute. Et avegnadio ch'ella portasse ogne corruptione d'aria degl'infermi per l'amore di Dio, inpertanto non avea a schifo di sostenergli etiamdio nel tempo della state. Ancora in quella chasa et spedale, chell'avea fatto fare in quel castello, li fanciulli de le povere femine tutti li faceva nutrire et governare. Et intanto era a tutti si dolce et benigna, che da tutti era chiamata madre, et lei seguitavano, dovunque andava, come'l figliuolo la madre. Ma abbiendo ella fatto comperare alcuni vasellini di vetro et di terra, accio che i fanciulli deli ospedale con tali cose si trastulassero. Le quali cose portandosi infra alcuna bestia, adivenne che cadero per la costa in uno dirupato, et con tutto che fossero di vetro, di si grande caduta et tante percosse tutti si ritrovarono saldi, senza neuna magagna. Ella visitando l'infermi tanta compassione avea alloro che alle loro case li visitava, et cercava et investigava dove ne fosse alcuno; et non lasciava ne per lunghezza di via, ne per malagevolezza alcuna, et secondo il bisogno, che trovava, soveniva con opere et con parole di molta consolatione. Per la qual cosa riceveva gratia da Dio di quattro confiderationi. Cioe che degnava di visitarli, che non lasciva per malagevolezza et fatica di via, et per l'affecto di compassione. Et per l'amore della consolatione. Et per larghezza del dono. Ella spesse fiate era alle sepulture di poveri, et co' panni ch'ella faceva colle proprie

mani, li acconciava, et loro corpi copriva devotamente. Adivenne che non abbiendo una fiata altro per mano lo suo velo grande, ch'ella portava, divise, et lo corpo d'uno povero si ne involse.

Lo suo marito, etiamdio essendo attento a molte altre cose che al suo reggimento et signoria s'apparteneva tutta, ma era devoto a Dio, et contento di tutto cio chella sua donna, Santa Elisabet, facea; et conceduta l'avea ogni liberta et licenza di fare tutto quello che fosse onore di Dio, et salute dell'anime loro. Et prendendo lotgravio contra l'infedeli, per defensione della fede, arme col seguito ed aiuto di molti altri baroni, et per inducimento de Santa Elisabet, si mosse et ando autare la Terra Santa. Dove essendo elli, principe glorioso, fedele et devoto, con tutta fede et santa devotione, infermato; al suo creatore Idio rendeo lo spirito. Et poi che Santa Elisabet seppe la fine del suo marito, incontanente con devotissimo animo prese lo stato et abito vedovile; et accio ch'ella non fosse frodata nello stato della continentia ma di quello fructo sexagesimo ricevesse, sempre fue ne' santi comandamenti di Dio et nell'opere della misericordia ferventissima. Ma essendo ella dopo la morte del suo marito per tutta la provincia di Turingia, divulgata come dissipatrice et prodiga d'alquanti vasalli et fedeli del suo marito isconciamente et in tutto la cacciaro fuori di tutte le sue tenute et pressioni, accio chella sua patientia si manifestasse chiaramente, ella povertade, lungo tempo desiderata collei s'accompagnasse. Adivenne ch'ella se redusse quella sera in una casa d'uno tavernaio dov'erano state bestie, et qui reddendo gratie a Dio quella nocte si risposoe. Nell'ora del matutino ande al luogo di frati minori, et pregolli ch'egli rendessero a Dio gratie per le sue tribolationi, et Te deum laudamus cantassero percio che Dio l'avea recata a stato di poverta. Ma nel sequente die si redusse per prieghi d'alquante persona in casa d'uno conforto del marito; et ivi le fue assegnata alcuna casetta per se et per li suoi figliuoli, dove ricevendo molta gravezza et ingiuria, quindi si partie, et costrecta al primo luogo si ritornoe. Et li suoi figliuoli piccoli a certi amici raccomandati gli lascioe.

Dopo queste cose, una badessa, la qual era sua congiunta, abbiendo granoe compassione alla sua povertade, al vescovo, ch'era suo zio, la raccomandoe et menoe. Lo quale, ricevutala assai benignamente, volea celatamente intendere a rimaritarla. La qualcosa l'ancelle che stavano collei con lagrime confortandole disse: 'Abbo grande speranza in Dio per lo cui amore ioe perpetua continentia promesso, ch'elli guardera sempre lo mio proponimento et salverammi di ogni consilio humano. Et se remedio a cio non ci potesse avere altro, lo proprio naso mi troncherei, accio che, cosi defformata, da tutti io fossi avilita et spregiata.' Et conciosia cosa ch'ella fosse mandata per comandamento del vescovo ad uno castello, accio ch'ella consentisse al suo volere, overo quivi morisse. Et racomandando ella continuoamente la sua castitade a Dio, ecco l'ossa del suo marito erano rechate d'oltre mare. Adunque lo vescovo, factala rimenare alla citta, con grande processione et ella insieme, con lagrime et devota li andoe incontro et ricevettele con grande honore. Et faccendo oratione a Dio, disse: 'Ecco, Signore, tu sai come fue benigna la sua conversatione, et quanta libertade nel tuo piacere in avea conceduta, et come devoto et per mio conforto era ito in aiuto della Terra Santa, et com'io insieme collui desiderava come povera di mendicare per tutto 'l mondo, per lo tuo amore. Ora t'e piaciuto di chiamarlo a te, et io sono contenta di cio che tu m'ai conceduto, et lo tuo nome santissimo sia sempre benedetto. Ell'anima sua et la mia ti raccomando.'

Et accio ch'ella non perdesse lo fructo centesimo copioso, la quale e conceduto a coloro ch'ella perfectione evangelica fuano diligentemente, si prese habito religioso di panni bigi et despeca fuando continentia et perfecta obedientia, et povertade voluntaria giamai non lascioe. Ma udendo lo suo padre, re d'Ungaria, ch'ella era divenuta a tanta povertade, mando uno suo conte per le, et ch'elli procurasse di rimenarla honorevilmente alla casa del padre. Et tovandola il detto conte in cotale habito et si despecta et vile, et veggiantola sedere humilmente in terra et filare, maravigliandosi per grande confusione disse: 'Giamai non fue

veduta alcuna figliuola di re cosi vilemente stare et filare.' Et narratole com'era venuto per lei, per comandamento del suo padre, et diligentemente soprastando accio, quella in tutto et per
 250 ogni modo contradicendo, non accosentia. Volle adunque maggiormente vivere povera et mendica quivi, che ritornare nella casa reale del padre suo. Et accio che che'l suo animo tutto
 255 passasse in Dio per devotione et amore, e non avesse alcuno impedimento, prego Iddio che le desse dispregiamento delle cose temporali, e l'amore de figliuoli del suo cuore removesse al tutto. Et intra tutte le'ngiurie et aversita le desse fermezza et pazienza. Et incontamente, fatta l'oratione, disse alle sue ancelle: 'Lo nostro Signore Idio ae exaudita la mia oratione, percio
 260 ch'io reputo le cose temporali siccome stercora et fangto, et non curo piu de' figliuoli che degli altri prossimi, et ogni vituperio et vergogna, che mi fosse facta per amore di Cristo oe poco a capitale. Ma il maestro Corrado, ch'iera suo confessoro et padre spirituale, ispesse volte l'imponeva le cose contrarie; et quelle cose, le quali pareva ch'amasse, incontanente
 265 rimuovea dalla sua presenza, in tanto che due ancelle le quali infino da sua fanciullezza erano state seco notrite et allevae, fedeli et dilette in ogni tenerezza d'amore, le spartie dallei et cioe non senza grande spandimento di lagrime dall'una parte et dall'altra. Et tutto questo faceva
 elli a lei, accio chella cosi rompesse le proprie volontade et dirizzasse a Dio lo suo desiderio. Et accio che alcuna delle sue ancelle nolle recasse ad memoria la primitiva gloria. In tutte queste cose era provata et presta et sollecita ad obediencia, et ferma et ostante per pazienza, accio che per pazienza posseggea l'anima sua, et per l'obediencia sia adornata di victoria. Et in
 270 verita diceva: 'S'io cotanto temo uno uomo mortale, quanto debbo temere lo giudice celestiale! Et impercio solamente al maestro Corrado, povero et mendico, et non al vescovo ricco, volli fare obediencia, accio chio ogni cagione di consolatione et temporale dilungasse da me.'

Et essendo ella intrata una fiata nel chiostro d'uno monastero di donne per loro
 275 prieghi, senza licenza del detto maestro Currado, elli la fece si fortemente battere, che per tre septimane li segni delle battiture duraro. Diceva adunqua consolandosi colle sue ancelle: 'Si come la vertu, crescendo lo fiume delle tribulationi, si ristregne et fortifica dentro; cosi scemando, si spande et indebolisce di fuori. Così noi, vegnendo la tribulatione, ci dobbiamo per humilitade sottoporre addio; ma cessandosi, per spirituale letitia ci dobbiamo levare a
 280 Dio'. Ad tanta humilitade si restrignea, che per nullo modo patia chelle sue ancelle la chiamassero donna, o alcuno onore le rendessero; ma con lei favellavano come alla più minima. Le scodelle e altre cose vili della casa colle sue mani lavava; et accio chelle sue ancelle nolla contradiessero, le celava. Diceva ancora: 'Se io trovasse o potessi trovare altra vita piu despetta che questa, per certo ch'io l'averei iscielta.

Et accio ch'ella possedesse l'optima parte con Maria, a continuoa contemplatione
 285 intendeva. Et certo nella sua contemplatione molte spirituali consolationi avea lagrime et di visioni; et pareva che fosse si infiammata dell'amore di Dio, che gli altri etiamdio chi l'udiva et vedeva s'infiammava. Et quando era piu gioconda et allegra allora piu in lagrime de devotione abondava. Et giamai non apparea nella sua faccia alcuna deformita disonesta, o che abondasse di lagrime, o che mostrasse alcuna letitia di fuori. Spesse fiata vedeva visioni celestiale, di grande consolatione. Ma essendo ella nel santo tempo della quaresima, nella chiesa, et essendo ella intenta, cogli occhi fixi, all'altare, come s'ella ivi vedesse la presenza di Dio, dove, per grande spazio consolata, pareva che fosse in paradiso. Poi tornata a casa, et per debolezza appoggiandosi un poco nel grembo d'una sua ancella, et levati li occhi a cielo
 290 e guatando per una finestra; di tanta letizia et allegrezza fue ripiena, ch'ella faccia sua abbondoe di molto gaudio di viso. La quale, per lungo spatio, fue in questa celestiale consolatione; et liberamente poi la letizia si converti in grande pianto. Et ancora, aperti li occhi et guatando a cielo, si allegrava e rideva con grande letizia; et chiudendo li occhi, come prima, abondava in pianto. Et cosi in questo modo fue infino al vespro, et in sì fatte
 295 consolationi divine. Ma, essendo ella stata, in quel tanto, in silenzio comincio a dire: 'Sì,

Signore mio, si; tu vuoi essere meco, si io teco, et gia mai non mi voglio partire da te.' Et poi
 riposata uno poco, per li prieghi delle sue ancelle; et per la loro inportunità ch'ella dicesse
 loro quello ch'avea veduto et udito, a loro edificatione et dottrina e all'onore di Dio. Quella
 rispuose e disse: 'Io viddi lo cielo aperto, et Gesu Cristo colla sua faccia splendida et ioconda.
 300 Et io per la sua visione tutta mi rallegrava, et quando mi si celava fortemente piangea. Et così,
 mostrandosi, mi rallegrava; et, celandosi, piangea. Lo quale, abbiendo misericordia et pieta di
 me, ancora mi consolava colla sua presenza et dicea: «Figliuola se vuoi essere con meco e io
 sarò co teco.» Et io li rispuosi come voi udiste.' Et ancora domandata di quella ch'ella vide
 all'altare rispuose et disse: 'Quelle cose ch'io allora vidi, non è bisogno di narrare. Però ch'io
 305 allora fui ripiena di molto gaudio e quivi vidi io lo mio Signore.'

Et veggendo ella una fiata uno giovene dissoluto et secolare, disse a lui: 'O figliuolo,
 perchè vivi così dissolutamente quando doveresti servire al tuo Creatore? Vorresti tu ch'io
 preghassi Idio per te?' Et quelli rispose: 'Madonna, io voglio, et di ciò vi priego quanto
 posso.' Quella datosi ad oratione et amonito lui che preghasse et orasse per se. Cominciò a
 310 gridare lo giovane, et diceva: 'O Madonna, cessare dall'oratione, perciò che già tutto vengo
 meno di caldo d'amore.' Ed elli per ciò di tanto calore pareva acceso, che la faccia sua non
 solamente era bagnata, ma etiamdio le sue vestimenta erano tutte molli per lo sudore, intanto
 che tocchandolo quelli che li erano d'intorno, non poteano sostenere lo calore che gli usava
 delle mani. Et quelli gridando diceva: 'Iddio aiutatemi ch'io ardo tutto.' Ma poscia che Santa
 315 Elisabet ebbe compiuta l'oratione, quel giovane si rattempero; et ritornato a se medesimo per
 di una gratia alluminato, intro nell'ordine de' frati minori et qui vivette in molta santita. Et
 impercio l'orationi di Santa Elisabet erano accese di molto amore et di ferventissima carita, in
 tanto che coloro ch'ierano freddi dell'amore di Dio, sì li accendea colle sue oratione.

Et non solamente ella era contemplativa con Maria, ma ella era ancora sollicita et
 320 esercitavasi nell'opere della misericordia continuamente con Marta. Et così seguitava Maria et
 Marta perfectamente. Ma impercio essendole rendute per dote duo milia marchi d'oro,
 incontanente parte ne distribuiva a poveri, et del rimanente n'edifico un grande et ricco
 spedale in Marpiut, terra molto popolosa. Per la qual cosa da tutti era tenuta dissipatrice,
 prodiga et insana. Et impercio ch'ella portava con tanta patientia et letitia le'ngiurie, le
 325 rinproveravano ch'ell'avea tosto dimenticato la morte del suo marito. Et abbiendo ella fatto et
 edificato quello cotale spedale, et ordinato tutte quelle cose ch'abisognavano, incontanente si
 diede al servizio di poveri qui continuo, si come ancella humile et devota. Et impercio a
 poveri sollicitamente serviva per l'amore di Dio, et notricavali et raceptava, et ancora quando
 bisognava, li bagnava; et ne' lecti li ricopriva studiosamente. Et diceva alcuna volta alle sue
 330 ancelle et compagne: 'Ben ci dobbiamo rallegrare. Quando noi bagniamo et ricopriamo Dio
 ne' suoi poveri.' Adunque nel servizio li poveri si humilmente si portava, che uno
 monachizzo infermo e nel suo spedale reducto, in una nocta sei volte colle sue braccia lo
 portoe al luogo decessario, et tutti li panni suoi fetenti lavoe. Alcuna altra femina, oribilmente
 lebroza, racettata; et humilmente la lavoe, et forbendo et nectandole sue piaghe, la medicoe et
 335 nel lecto la riposoe. Et con grande humilitade s'inginocchiava a piedi di poveri et infermi, e
 schalzavali, et inducevali et confortavali tutti a confessione et comunione. Alcuna volta una
 vecchierella, et con dolci parole et conforti, et poi con battiture la indusse a confessione. Et
 quand'ella vacava dall'officio de' poveri si filava lana, chelli era mandata da uno monestero,
 e'l prezzo dava a poveri. Et ricevuta ancora in quantita di cinquecento livre per compimento
 340 delle sue dote infra pochi di tutte l'ebbe distribuite a poveri orfani et vedove, et poveri
 religiosi et così rimase in tutto ispacciata di quelli. Adivenne che una fanciulla molto bella del
 corpo et maravigliosa bellezza avea di capelli, quindi passando, entro nell'ospedale, non per
 ricevere limosina, ma per visitare alcuna sua serocchia inferma. Quella fue menata a Santa
 Elisabet et veggendola così curiosa del capo et con tanta bellezza di capelli, comando che
 345 incontanente le fossero tagliati i capelli, acio che non fossero cagione di sua dannatione et

delli altri. Et disse allei contastante et piagnete: 'Oggi mai non potrai tu andare adorna a balli ne adoperare alcuna vanitate con quelli'. Et domandotala Santa Elisabet lei s'ella avesse avuto alcuna volta veruno buono proponimento. Et quella rispuose et disse, che gia ebbe volunta di prendere habito di religione, ma tanto amore avea alli suoi belli capelli, che percio
 350 avea perduto ogni buono proponimento. Et Santa Elisabet disse: 'Certo hora me piu caro che tu gli ai perduti, che se 'l mio figliuolo proprio fosse exaltato allo stato dell'impero.' Allora la fanciulla per conforto di Santa Elisabet prese habito di religione, et qui insieme collei rimase et nel servizio di Dio et di poveri in santa vita preservaroe.

Adunque approssimandosi il tempo nel quale Idio onnipotente avea ordinato di
 355 chiamare a se la sua dilecta Santa Elisabet, et trarla dela carcere di questa vita presente. Et da poi ch'ella avea dispregiato lo reame eternale. Et essendo in sul lecto agravata di febre, et tenendo al paritio rivolta la faccia, fue udita da quelli chi erano collei una voce cantante con dolcissima melodia; per la qual cosa a domandoe Santa Elisabet che cio fosse suto. Et quella disse alle sue ancille: 'Uno ucello venne et puosesi tra me el paritio et si dolcemente comincio
 360 a cantare, che etiamdio me ae provocata a cantare. Et in tutta quella sua infermitade sempre sue allegra et ioconda, et giamai non cesse dall'oratione. Ma nell'ultimo die dinanzi alla sua fine, disse alle compagne che stavano collei: 'Che farete voi, se voi vedeste lo diavolo venire?' Et stando uno pocho, con grande voce, quasi acomiatando et chacciando via il demonio, disse: 'Fuggi, fuggi', tre volte gridoe. Poi disse: 'Ecco, serocchie mie, io sono oggi
 365 mai sicura, et lo tempo del mio passare e presente; ecco che Dio onnipotente mi chiama alle nozze celestiali, alle quali tutta la corte di cielo m'aspecta.' Et cosi confortandole, et ricevuti prima tutti i sacramenti della santa chiesa con grande reverenza et devotione, vegnendo allora extrema quella santissima anima si parti dal corpo et dorma in pace, nel MCCXXXI a di XVIII di novembre. Et avegnadio del suo corpo venerabile quattro die stesse cosi, anzi che si
 370 riponesse a sepultura, impertanto neuno fetore, anzi odore grandissimo et soavissimo n'usciva, intanto che molta gente venia a quell'odore, et non si poteano satiare, ne dipartire di quello santissimo corpo. Et allora furono veduti molti uccelli bianchissimi sopra la somita della chiesa dove s'apparecchiava di riporre; li quali uccelli cantavano di soave dolcezza et variata melodia di canto, la quale gia mai non fue udita; et quelli modi variati et formati di
 375 cantare a tutti davano grande ammiratione. Et cio era quasi come si rappresentassero alle sue exequeie. Quivi fue grande pianto di poveri, et grande devotione di populi, et grande moltitudine di chierici et religiosi da presso et da lungha, li quali erano venuti ispirati da Dio. Et le particole di suoi panni chi ne poteo avere furono tenuti per grande reliquie. Et lo suo corpo, poscia che fue riposto nel monumento, fue trovato che ne usciva uno licore odorifero
 380 d'olio.

Adunque e manifesto a tutti di quanta santita questa pretiosa Santa Elisabet sia suta. Et quanto all'apparitione delli uccelli et del loro cantare. Per certo quello uccello chelle apparve al paritio et quella inuito a cantare, crediamo che fosse l'angelo deputato alcuna ala sua guardia, lo quale lo gaudio eternale le venne annuntiare. Sicome alli rei e annuntiato alcuna
 385 volta la loro eternale dannatione, dinanzi alloro transito per loro maggiore confusione. Cosi alli buoni electi e annuntiato alcuna volta la loro eternale salvatione, ad maggiore loro consolatione. Ma quello cotale canto, ch'ella udi da quello cotale uccello le diede concepimento di tanto gaudio, che'l cuore etiamdio non poteo comprendere, et cio ch'ella il dimostro per voce di fuori, formata di canto. Ancora il diavolo suo le apparve alli santi
 390 uomini, se potesse trovare alcuna ragione in loro quando passano di questa vita. Ma in Santa Elisabet nulla ragione vi trovo, percio confuso et licentiatto fuggio. Et percio e manifesta la sua santita; dalla quale lo diavolo non sostenendola incontanente si partio.

Secondariamente manifesto quanta fue la sua monditia et purita. Et cio si dimostra del grande odore che appario. Inpercio che quel corpo, che nella vita sua resplendette d'ogni
 395 munditia di castita et purita, percio nella morte abbandoe d'ogni suavita d'odore.

Ancora e cosa manifesta, nel terzo luogo, quanta fue la sua excellentia et dignita et quanta la sua devotione et carita. Et cio e quanto al canto et alla letitia che mostraro la moltitudine di quelli uccelli. Quella compagnia degli uccelli, che cantantavano in sulla chiesa et giubilavano, crediamo che fossero angeli mandati da Dio, accio ch'ella sua anima portassero in cielo, e 'l corpo suo con tanti celestiali honorassero.

Nel quarto luogo e ancora manifesto quanta fue la sua misericordia et pieta. Et cio si dimostra per l'abbondanza dell'olio che apparve nel corpo suo. Percio del corpo suo uscio olio, perche tutta la sua vita fue piena dopo di misericordia.

Nella quinta cosa e manifesto di quanto merito et excellentia ella sia appodio. Et cio si pruova per la efficacia della moltitudine di suoi miracoli. Fue adunque adornata di Dio, etiamdio dopo la sua morte, di molte maniere di miracoli. De quali alquanti ne porremo qui appresso, et molti ne lasceremo per cagione di breuita.

Chome fue uno monaco sanato.

Nelle parti di Sasognia, in un monistero dell'ordine di cestella, del vescovato di Risdia, fue uno monaco chavea nome Enriucho, lo quale era gravato di tanta infermita, et di tanti dolori era circondato, che tutte le persone chell'udivano et vedevano, si moveano a compassione. Adunque istando elli una nocte in questa dolore e tormenti et dolori, apparveli una donna molto venerabile, vestita di vestimenti bianchissimi, la quale l'amonio che, s'elli desiderava sanita, Santa Elisabet chiamasse, et allei alcuno voto facesse. Anche nella sequente nocte li apparve, et in simile modo lo confortoe. Ma quelli, non essendovi l'abate ne'l priore, fece il voto per consiglio del soppiore. Nella terza nocte ancora li apparve, et sopra lui fece lo segno della santa croce ett incontanente perfecta sanita ricevette. Ma ritornati l'abate e'l priore, et udito quel chiera advenuto della sanita del monacho, molto si maravigliaro, et del voto ch'avea fatto fortemente dubitaro; con cio sia cosa che non sia licito ad alcuno monaco di fare alcuno voto, ne obbligarsi a veruna altra cosa. Ancora lo priore disse he monachi erano et poteano essere inghannati per inghanno del dimonio, et inducti alle cose illicite, alcuna volta, sotto spetie d'alcuno bene. Et impercio era da confortare il detto monaco ch'elli per diligente confessione la sua mente fortificasse. Et adunque ancora nella sequente nocte quella persona medesima persona li apparve et disse al monaco: 'Tu sarai sempre infermo infino a tanto che tu adempierai quel ch'ai promesso.' Adunque incontanente quella infertade che prima li ritornoe, e 'n quelli medesimi dolori, che prima, si comincio a tormentare la qual cosa habbiendo sentito l'abate, incontanente comandao chelli fosse dato la cera per fare l'immagine ch'avea promessa. Et incontanente adempiuto et renduto il voto ricevette sanita; et giamai poi nulla gravezza sentio.

Chome una idemoniata fue liberata.

Una fanciulla, ch'avea nome Benigha, nel vescovado di Maggia, habbiendo a domandato bere ad una sua ancella, et quella turbata disse allei: 'Togli et bei nel nome del diavolo.' La fanciulla, bevendo, incontanente sentio iscorrere per la gola come fosse uno tizzone di fuocho acceso, intanto che per l'arsura che sentio, et per la grande infiatione del ventre et di tutta la persona. La fanciulla, non cessava di gridare et non trovava luogo, et in questa tormenti stando tutti si com'era dicevano chiera invasata. Et in questo stato la detta fanciulla con molta pena et tormento istette per due anni. Finalmente da' parenti menata et conducta al sepolcro di Santa Elisabet. Et qui posta sopra la tomba del sepolcro quasi come morta; et fatta l'oratione per lei, et promesso il voto a Santa Elisabet; incontanente manicato ella uno pocho di pane intinto nell'acqua benedetta sopra la sua sepoltura, maravigliosamente sana et libera perfectamente la fanciulla si levo diricta in piede. Et ella, insieme con tutti quelli chierano presente, rendero laude et gratie a Dio et a Santa Elisabet.

Come fuo uno attratto et cieco sanato.

Uno huomo del vescovado traientino, ch'avea nome Tederigo, habbiendo una mano attracta et al tutto avea perduto il viso, et essendo ito due fiata in ritorno colla mogle et con molta

devotione et fidanza. Et andando elli incontrossi in uno uomo vecchio con aspetto molto da riverire. Et ancora salutato da lui et domandatolo donde venisse, disse allui il vecchio: Io vengo da Marpuro, dove giace il corpo di Santa Elisabet et qui Idio per amore di Santa Elisabet dimostra molti miracoli. E 'l vecchio veduta la sua infermità, lo benedisse dicendo
 450 allui: 'Va' securamente, impercio che tu riceverai sanita perfectamente, pur che tu metta la mano inferma in alcuna fosserella che un sotto la lapida; la quale, quanto piu a dentro la metterai, tanto piu tosto riceverai sanitade. Ma tu abbi sempre in memoria Nicholao, lo quale fue et e sicome compagno et devoto di Santa Elisabet, et qui adopera Idio molti miracoli, per li meriti di ciascuno.' Et disse ancora: 'Molto sono istolti coloro che spendono la fatica loro
 455 invano, et le loro offerte gittano mattamente; concio sia cosa che santi vogliono et alloro piace che con perseveranza et doti tutta fede sia dal loro a domandato aiuto.' Et incontanente lo vecchio dispari, et nol potero piu vedere. Della quale cosa molto maravigliandosi andavano con grande fidanza di ricevere perfecta sanita. Et giunti al sepolcro et fatta l'oratione, ricevette il viso; et messa la mano sotto la pietra, secondo lo consiglio del vecchio,
 460 incontanente la ricevesse sana et libera. Et cosi ritornaro al loro albergo reddendo grazie et laude a Dio, che degna continuoamente d'operare cotali miracoli et benefici per li meriti de' suoi santi.

Come uno inpicchato fue liberato

Fue uno huomo del vescovado di Colonia, Hermano per nome. Essendo sostenuto dal giudice et messo in carcere, tutto si raccomandoe a Dio et a Santa Elisabet et al maestro Corrado, et
 465 con tutta devotione quanto potea, si raccomandava alloro, et continuoamente il loro autorio adomandava. Nella nocte sequente apparì al detto Hermano con grande lume, et consolatolo con dolci parole anbedue et a perseveranza confortandolo, si di partiro da lui. Alla perfine, dato la sentenza contro al detto Hermano. Fue inpicchiato et per ispazio d'uno miglio a loro usanza lo lasciano in sul patibolo. Ma poi, lo giudice conceduta la licentia alli parenti chello deponessero et sepellissero tornaro et apparecchiato la fossa. Apparecchiato adunque ogni cosa che bisognava per sopellirlo, lo padre e l' zio devotamente si raccomandavano alla beata Elisabet per lo morto loro. Et essendo permetterlo nella fossa et sapellirlo, ecco colui ch'iera morto, subitamente si levo sano et vivo. Et maravigliatosi tutti rendero grazie et laude a Dio et
 475 alla beata Santa Elisabet.

Come uno affogato fue diliberato e risucitato.

Uno scolaio, del vescovado di Maggia, ch'avea nome Borcardo essendo ito una fiata ad uno fiume a pescare, disavedutamente cadde nel pelago et affogho. Et essendo passato alcuno ispazio di tempo anzi che ne fosse tracto, fue poi ritrovato lo suo corpo freddo et senza alcuno
 480 sentimento et con tutti segnali della morte, intanto che da tutti fue giudicato morto, come cosi era. Allora da tutti suoi parenti et amici fue chiamato le merita di Santa Elisabet, e 'l suo aiuto con devotione et fidanza grandissima invocato. Per la qual cosa, vedendolo tutti, subitamente quelli chiera morto si levo, et per li meriti della beata Santa Elisabet fue adiuta et a salute pristina revocato.

485 Come uno risucito da morte.

Uno giovane del vescovado magnare, ch'avea nome Vercellino, di tre anni e mezzo, essendo gravato di grande infermità, poi finalmente passato di questa vita, rimase il corpo suo et giaque senza alcuno sentimento, per ispazio di quattro miglia all'usanza tedesca. Et trovato al tutto freddo et morto. La sua madre con tutta devotione a Sancta Elisabet si racchomandoe, et
 490 incontanente lo suo figliuolo vivo et sano del lecto si levoe.

Come fue uno fanciullo affogato fu risucitato.

Uno fanciullo di quattro anni essendo caduto disavedutamente in uno pozzo, al quale essendovi ito uno giovane per attignere acqua, avvidesì che 'l fanciullo giacea nel pozzo e pareva morto. Et abbiendolne tracto con molta malagevolezza, compresero al tutto ch'elli era
 495 morto. Le cui indizia di morte erano queste: istanza di molto tempo, asprezza del corpo,

orribile aspetto della faccia, la nerezza della cotenna, la infigione del corpo e la privatione di tutti sentimenti. Adunque per l'aiuto et soccorso alla Beata Elisabet lo padre ella madre con fede intera et con devotione perfetta ricorrono, et fatto il voto incontanente lo fanciullo ad vita salutifera respiroe et per li meriti di Santa Elisabet sano et salvo fu loro renduto.

500 Come una fanciulla affogata risucitò.

Una fanciulla cadde in uno fiume, et affoghoe, et essendone tratta incontanente per li meriti di Santa Elisabet a vita resuscitava, sana et salva si levoe.

Come risucitò uno ch'iera affogato

505 Uno huomo, ch'avea nome Frederico, del veschovato di Moggino, molto docto et experto nel notare, mentre ch'elli si bagnava in alcuno fiume, vide uno povero, chi era da Santa Elisabet istato illuminato. E facendosi beffe di quel povero et provocato lo povero contra lui disse: 'Santa Elisabet, la quale mi rendeo sanita, mi faccia vendetta di te, si che tu quindi non esci se non morto ed affogato.' Ma, colui despregiando le parole del povero, e mettendosi nell'acqua arrogantemente nell'acqua, li venne incontanente meno la forza, intanto che aiutare
510 non si potea; e al fondo discese come pietra. Ma dipo' molto tempo cercato di lui, e tratto dell'acqua, a casa de' parenti fu portato. E facendosi grande pianto a casa sua, alcuni suoi parenti fecero voto per lui, e a Santa Elisabet recorrendo devotissimamente, non cessavano d'adomandare lo suo aiuto. Incontanente l'uomo respirò, e, quasi come dal sonno vivo et sano levoe.

515 Come uno impicchato fue deliberato.

Uno giovane, ch'avea nome Giovanni, innocentemente con uno ladro trovato, fue preso insieme con lui, et alle forche giudicato. Et essendo menato al luogo insiememente col ladro, andava gridando e pregando tutti che pregassero Santa Elisabet ch'ella secondo ch'elli era in colpa, l'aiutasse. Essendo adunque inpiccato, udi una voce che disse allui: 'Confiditi et abbi
520 speranza in Santa Elisabet et sarai liberato.' Et incontanente la fune, ch'era sofficiente et forte fue tagliato et rimanendo il ladro inpiccato, elli solamente cadde et nulla lesione ricevette. Lo quale essendosi adunque levato et ritrovatosi etiamdio sciolta la funa delle mani, con grande letizia disse: 'O Santa Elisabet la quale m' ai diliberato di morte et quasi come s'io cadessi in uno morbido letto, a te rendo sempre gratie et laude.' Et con tutto che da molti fosse detto et
525 gridato al giudice chelli un'altra volta lo facesse lo facesse impicchare. Lo giudice rispouse et disse: 'Poi che Dio la deliberato et io lo voglio anche deliberare.' Et cosi licentiatto reddendo gratie a Dio et a Sancta Elisabet al suo albergo con grande allegrezza ritornoe.

Fue uno converso in uno monisterio nel vescovado di Moggia, ch'avea nome Volemano. Questi continoamente avea portato uno corsetto di carne, nel torno di XX anni, et giacea tra
530 legni et alcuna volta in sulla terra; et in così aspra penitenza perseverava. Essendo questo converso in uno molino del monastero, per caso advienne chella pietra molare li prese la mano et chome fosse tutta contrita nel mortaio così tutta glile rupe e spezzoe. Onde di tanto dolore et angoscia era tormentato, ch'elli per la grande pena et afflictione avea in tutto deliberato di farsi mozzare quella mano. Et pregando elli continoamente Santa Elisabet ch'ella gli porgesse lo suo aiuto, et nollo abandonasse in tanto dolore; la quale fue in sua vita a lui molto familiare. Et stando questi in tanta pena, una nocte Santa Elisabet gli apparve, et
535 disse: 'Vuoli tu essere sano?' Et quelli rispouse: 'Sì, voglio volentieri.' Quella prendendo la sua mano inferma, incontanente gli sano i nervi, l'ossa rotte li rintegro et in tutto li sano perfettamente come prima era. Ma fatto la mattina et trovatosi così sano com' grande allegria a tutti del convento maravigliandosi molto la mostroe. Et così tutti quelli del monistero, vedendo questo miracolo della mano del converso, reddendo gratie et laude a Dio et a Santa Elisabet, sempre fuoro poi devoti allei.

540 Come uno cieco fue alluminato.

Anchora uno fanciullo, in quelle contradi, nacque ciecho, et per gli meriti et per la invocatione
545 di Santa Elisabet li occhi el viso perfectamente ricevette.

Come fue sanata una fanciulla della sua infermita.

Fue ancora una fanciulla, di quel medesimo vescovado, ch'avea nome Beatrice. Essendo lunga inte di grandissima infermitade gravata, alla perfine diventoe scrigniuta dinanzi et di dietro, intanto che per nullo modo si potea rizzare, ma, chinata molto le convenia andare, quasi sostendosi colle mani. Et con cio sia cosa quella madre sua la portasse in una sportella al sepolcro di Santa Elisabet, et qui demorati per diece dì, non poteano trovare alcuno rimedio di sanita. Adunque ad irata la madre della fanciulla contra Santa Elisabet mormore et disse: 'A tutti dai dono et beneficio di sanita et me misera disdegni e non essaudisci. Ritorneromi dunque a casa et impediro quant'io potro che non ti venghino a visitare.' Ritornandosi questa a casa et già era dipartita et dilungata per ispazio d'uno migliaio et mezzo, et la figliuola di dolore agravata piagnea. Et quivi riposandosi un poco et adormentandosi appavele Santa Elisabet, con faccia molto risplendente et chiara, la quale, tocchatole le reni e 'l pecto disse allei: 'Lievati fu figliuola et va' ritta et si e sanata.' Et la fanciulla incontanente per la letitia isvegliatasi tutta si ritrovo da ogni curvita et deformita liberata. Onde vedendo cio la madre et udita la visione con grande gaudio et letizia ritornaro al sepolcro di Santa Elisabet, et generaro allei grande amore et devotione qui le rendero molte laude et grazie. Et ritornatosi a chasa con letitia, lasciaro qui la sportella in segno della sanita.

Come fue una femina sanata.

Fue una donna in quelle parti ch'avea nome Geredruda, la quale essendo aggravata di molte infermitadi, intanto ch'iera diventata attratta e curva, et lungamente avea auto lo flusso del sangue, fue amonita nel sonno dormendo ch'ella dovesse visitare la chiesa di San Niccholao, et qui d'una infermitate si trovoe sanata. Et poi conducta pervenne al sepolcro suo. Et incontanente da ogni infermitade et dolore perfectamente si levoe sanata. Onde fue grande devota di Santa Elisabet.

Come una femina cieca fue sanata.

Fue una femina di quelle contradi, la quale per uno anno intero era stata cieca, et fattasi menare al sepolcro di Santa Elisabet, et allei con tutta fede et devotione raccomandandosi, incontanente per li meriti di Santa elisabet riebbe lo vedere chiaro come mai avesse auto.

Chome fue uno cieco alluminato.

Anchora fue uno uomo de quelle contradi medesime, ch'avea nome Henrico. Essendo elli al tutto privato del lume degli occhi, et visitato ch'ebbe lo sepolcro di Santa Elisabet fue incontanente perfectamente alluminato. Poscia, dopo alcuno tempo, lo detto Herrico gravato del flusso del sangue intanto che pare chelli morisse. Ma elli, prendendo uno pocho della terra del sepolcro di santa Elisabet et mescolandola col l'acqua et beutola, incontanente fue di quella infermitade liberato.

Come fue liberata una fanciulla cieca sorda e mutola.

Una fanciulla, ch'avea nome Melciade, del vescovado di Teruento, essendo cieca, sorda et mutola, et nulla potenza di potere andare li era rimaso. Lo padre ella madre portata chel'ebbero al sepolcro di Santa Elisabet, quivi laudando et magnificando Idio et Santa Elisabet, incontanente ricevertero beneficio di perfecta sanita.

Come fue una femina ciecha alluminata.

Ancora una femina ch'avea nome Eliungis, di quelle contrade, abbiendo perduto lo vedere per più d'uno anno, al sepolcro di Santa Elisabet con devotione andoe, et prendendo della polvere del suo sepolcro, et intrisa con poco d'acqua, et untosi li occhi incontanente fue sanata et lume ricevette interamente.

Come fue uno sanato infermo.

Anche fue uno uomo, ch'avea nome Teodorico, appresso alla chiesa, dov'era lo sepolcro di Santa Elisabet, per diece miglia. Et essendo elli gravemente tormentato nelle gambe e nelle ginocchia, andando ch'elli non trovava riposo, ne andare non potea, se non in quanto elli era portato, pervenue al sepolcro di Santa Elisabet. Et qui istato per quattro settimane et non

avendo ricevute alcuno remedio, tornavasi a casa molto inconsolato. Et riposandos' elli un poco in uno luogo allato a uno infermo, e dormendo, vide nel sonno uno che venne a lui e tutto lo bagnoe d'acqua. Lo quale subitamente invegliatosi, disse contr'al compagno adirato: 'Perchè m'hai tu così bagnato? Ma io credo che questo bagnare mi sara cagione di salute.' E levandosi suso, e trovandosi interamante sano li bastoni ch'avea recato gittatolisi in sulla spalla, al sepolcro di Santa Elisabet ritornoe, ivi reddendo grazie a Dio; poi tornato a casa con gaudio et molta devotione si ritornoe.

Qui è compiuta la leggenda e la vita di Santa Elisabet, e alquanti de' suoi miracoli. Deo gratias. Amen

