



## “A LADY WANDERING IN A FARAWAY LAND” THE CENTRAL EUROPEAN QUEEN/PRINCESS MOTIF IN ITALIAN HERETICAL CULTS<sup>1</sup>

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*“Il fut un temps une damoiselle, fille de roy, de grant  
cœur et de noblesse et aussi de noble courage, et demouroit  
en a strange país”*

(Marguerite Porete)

### Introduction

In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries a new religious model formed in Western Europe. People started to require an active, personal participation in religious life. The popularity of different heresies, the flourishing of popular movements on the borderline between heresy and acceptance, and finally, the foundation and development of the new mendicant orders, first of all the Dominicans and Franciscans, are all manifestations of this new model of religious life.

At the beginning of the thirteenth century, with the foundation of the mendicant orders, a new form and ideal of sainthood was created for both men and women.<sup>2</sup> By the time this model was formed we can record the double character of this ideal: together with Saint Francis, who was the most influential model, Saint Claire became the archetype for women who decided to follow a life dedicated to Christ. For the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries another characteristic woman figure appeared, Saint Catherine, who inspired the formation of the female model. In Central Europe a slightly different model was formed for women. The prototype of that female sainthood was Saint Elisabeth of Hungary. The main difference was that in the West the saints were

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<sup>2</sup> André Vauchez, *Sainthood in the Later Middle Ages*, tr. Jean Birrel (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997); Michael Goodich, *Vita perfecta: The Ideal of Sainthood in the Thirteenth Century*, Monografien zur Geschichte des Mittelalters 25 (Stuttgart: Hiersemann, 1982); Sofia Boesch-Gajano, *La santità* (Rome-Bari: Laterza, 1999).



mostly members of middle-class families, but in Central Europe there were a whole series of aristocratic, or rather dynastic, women saints.<sup>3</sup>

The principal aim of the present paper is to investigate what happened when these categories of female religiosity interacted. How did the Central European model undergo a transformation in a Western context? How could the memory of a heretical woman be protected by using the name and the attributes of a saintly woman? And finally, how could all these elements meet: what kind of interactions and modifications occurred when Western European memory of heretical women was contaminated with the cults and attributes of Central European dynastic female saints cults and attributes?

I shall deal with this issue mainly on the basis of two case studies. In both cases the veneration and memory of a Western heretical woman was mixed with the name and main attributes of a Central European saintly queen or princess. The first case study is that of Guglielma of Milan and Saint Guglielma, an English princess who became queen of Hungary; the second case is Marguerite Porete and Margaret of Hungary. Three, out of these four figures, were contemporaries; they all lived at the end of the thirteenth century—except Saint Guglielma, who was not an historical person—although the contamination of the cults happened in the fourteenth-fifteenth century in Italian ambience.

### **Guglielma of Milan — Saint Guglielma**

Guglielma of Milan lived in Milan in the second half of the thirteenth century although. She was venerated as a saint, but after her death her followers were condemned as heretics. In the case of Guglielma we can speak of a double connection between Western and Central Europe and between heresy and sainthood. On the one hand she was believed to be a Bohemian princess, on the other hand a late hagiographic tradition combined her name with a legend that spoke of a certain Saint Guglielma, princess of England, Queen of

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<sup>3</sup> See Gábor Klaniczay, *Holy Rulers and Blessed Princesses. Dynastic Cults in Medieval Central Europe*. Past and Present Publications (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002); idem, “A női szentség mintái Közép-Európában és Itáliában” (The models of female sainthood in Central Europe and in Italy), in Tibor Klaniczay and Gábor Klaniczay, *Szent Margit legendái és stigmái* (The Legends and the stigmata of Saint Margaret) (Budapest: Argumentum, 1994); idem, “I modelli di santità femminile tra is 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: Olschki, 1995), 75–109.



Hungary.<sup>4</sup> In this part of my paper I will summarize the source material concerning this tradition and reconstruct its literary and spiritual context.

Let us see what little information we have about Guglielma of Milan's 'real' life. Around 1260 a woman appeared in Milan with her son; she lived in the Cistercian abbey of Chiaravalle. In a few years, she became popular among the inhabitants of Milan and a circle of mostly middle-class persons formed around her. They started to venerate her and call her a saint. On the basis of the inquisitorial trial made by the Dominicans in 1300 we have the names of her followers who were interrogated, and we know about the character of the group (called 'the Guglielmites'). The most important ones were Andrea Saramita and Maifreda of Pirovano, who were condemned and executed as a result of the trial.

Her followers venerated Guglielma of Milan not only because of her saintly life, but also because they thought she was a Central European princess. We can perceive from the testimony of her followers that some of them strongly believed that she was actually the daughter of the Bohemian king.<sup>5</sup> One of them, Andrea Saramita, during the trial confessed to having gone, after the death of Guglielma, directly to Bohemia to see the king (her supposed father). The historiography of Guglielma has dealt with, for a long time, the truth or falsity of this Bohemian origin.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> To make my argumentation clearer, I introduce a merely 'artificial' distinction in the terminology: I shall use the name 'Guglielma of Milan' for the first tradition, and 'Saint Guglielma' for the second one, even if Guglielma of Milan was called 'Saint' by contemporaries and by modern scholars, and I also deal with her veneration *in vita* and *post mortem*, using the expression 'Saint': see for example: Marina Benedetti, "Il culto di Santa Guglielma e gli inquisitori," in *Vite di eretici e storie di frati*, ed. Marina Benedetti, Grado Giovanni Merlo and Andrea Piazza (Milan: Edizioni Biblioteca Francescana, 1998), 221–242; Dávid Falvai, "Santa Guglielma, regina d'Ungheria: Culto di una pseudo-santa d'Ungheria in Italia" *Nuova Corvina. Rivista di Italianistica* 9. (2001).

<sup>5</sup> For this reason she is also called 'Guglielma the Bohemian.' Following the terminology of the most recent monograph I will use the form proposed by Marina Benedetti: 'Guglielma of Milan.' Marina Benedetti, *Io non son Dio: Guglielma di Milano e i Figli dello Spirito santo* (Milan: Ed. Biblioteca Francescana, 1998).

<sup>6</sup> For the best summary of this discussion and the whole historiography of Guglielma see Benedetti, *Io non sono Dio*, 109–158. Among recent scholars who take the Bohemian origin as granted, we can mention Luisa Muraro, *Guglielma e Maifreda: Storia di un'eresia femminista* (Milan: La Tartaruga, 1985); Patrizia M. Costa, *Guglielma la Boema: L' "eretica" di Chiaravalle: Uno scorcio di vita religiosa Milanese nel secolo XIII* (Milan: NED, 1985); Barbara Newman, *From Virile Woman to WomanChrist: Studies in Medieval Religion and Literature* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1995) and Bea Lundt, "Eine



Even if it is not the main purpose of the present paper to formulate an opinion on this issue, we have to underline that Marina Benedetti's argumentation seems plausible. She argues that all the information stating that Guglielma was a Bohemian princess was given by her followers during the inquisitorial trial, often with the addition of rather careful formulae such as *ut dicebatur* or *dicitur*. One of the most concrete testimonies concerning Bohemia during the inquisitorial process is Mirano of Garbagnate's *iuramentum*, when it is said that he, together with Andrea Saramita, went "*usque ad regem Bohemie*."<sup>7</sup> According to Benedetti's argumentation, the Bohemian origin seems to be rather a hagiographic element, and—since there is no any other data proving this supposed statement—the only fact we know is that she lived in Milan.<sup>8</sup>

In the case of Guglielma, however, there is one aspect that made her canonization or even her acceptance by the Church impossible. Her followers did not simply venerate her as a saint, but they rather spoke about her as God, or as the female incarnation of the Holy Spirit. As far as we know, Guglielma always refused such ideas, answering: "*Ite, ego non sum Deus*," which may have saved her from the inquisition during her lifetime. She died in 1282, and was buried in the abbey where she had lived, but her popular cult continued after her death. As Marina Benedetti formulated, "In 1300 Guglielma, who died as a 'saint', was reborn as a 'heretic'."<sup>9</sup>

I do not intend to investigate in detail the heresiologic part of this story, I will just point to a few aspects of it. Scholars dealing with this case usually stress the fact that she was thought to be the female incarnation of the Holy Spirit. This is the 'specialty' of Guglielma or rather of the Guglielmite movement.<sup>10</sup> There are different approaches with which to investigate this phenomenon. In recent decades attention towards female religiosity has grown, and there is an enormous number of studies concentrating on female spirituality,

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Vergessene Přemyslidenprinzessin: Neue Fragen und Forschungsergebnisse" *Bohemia. Zeitschrift für Geschichte und Kultur der Böhmisches Länder* 31 (1990): 260–269.

<sup>7</sup> Marina Benedetti ed., *Milano 1300: I processi inquisitoriali contro le devote e i devoti di santa Guglielma* (Milan: Scheiwiller, 1999) (henceforth: *Milano 1300*). This is the new critical edition and Italian translation of the document, 70.

<sup>8</sup> "Un dato certo della sua esistenza é la permanenza a Milano. L'origine boema sembrerebbe affermarsi come dato agiografico. La sua vita si svolge a Milano per cui optiamo per la forma *Guglielma di Milano*." Benedetti, *Io non sono Dio*, 28.

<sup>9</sup> "Nel 1300 Guglielma, morta *santa*, rinasce *eretica*" Benedetti, *Io non sono Dio*, 10.

<sup>10</sup> Stephen Wessley, "The Thirteenth Century Guglielmites: Salvation through Women," in *Medieval Women*, ed. Derek Baker (Oxford: Barkley, 1978), 289–303; Giovanni Grado Merlo, "Guglielma la Boema: Tra santità ed eresia al femminile." In *Eresie ed eretici medievali* (Bologna: Mulino, 1995), 113–118.



female sainthood, and female heresy.<sup>11</sup> Guglielma of Milan and the Guglielmites have been interpreted in this kind of approach as a specifically female heresy, and the ‘female incarnation of God’ motif as an attempt to create a female divinity and church against male religion and hierarchy.<sup>12</sup>

Before dealing with the Central European motif, I will mention a strange ‘negative’ *vita* in which the motifs of heresy and sainthood are mixed. In this legend—which can be found in several variants—the facts of Guglielma’s real life are mixed with the well-known motif of orgy-accusation: *In fine aiebant adunamini: adunamini: et lumen sub sextario ponite: et que ordinavit facite: et tali modo diebus ordinariis oculute stuprum commitebant.*<sup>13</sup>

It is no surprise that we find this motif in the case of a condemned cult. It was one of the favorite accusations used by the inquisition against almost any kind of heresy.<sup>14</sup> Here we can speak of an attempt of *damnatio memoriae*, when, after having destroyed the material holders of the memory (the images and relics), the living holder of the memory (the followers) is destroyed. This is an

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<sup>11</sup> See for example Caroline Walker Bynum, *Jesus as Mother: Studies in the Spirituality of the High Middle Ages* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982), 12; idem, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast: The Religious Significance of Food to Medieval Women* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987); Barbara Newman, “Flaws in the Golden Bowl: Gender and Spiritual Formation in the Twelfth century,” in *From Virile Woman* 19–45; Elizabeth Alvilda Petroff, ed., *Medieval Women’s Visionary Literature* (New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986); Giovanni Pozzi and Claudio Leonardi, ed., *Scrittrici mistiche italiane* (Genova: Marietti, 1988); Peter Dronke, *Women Writers of the Middle Ages: A Critical Study of Texts from Perpetua to Marguerite Porete* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984); *Mistiche e devote nell’Italia tardomedievale*, ed. Daniel Bornstein and Roberto Rusconi (Naples: Liguori, 1992); Rudolph M. Bell, *Holy Anorexia* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press); Lucetta Scaraffia and Gabriella Zarri, “Introduzione,” in *Donne e fede: Santità e vita religiosa in Italia* (Rome–Bari: Laterza, 1994).

<sup>12</sup> The feminist approach can be seen for example in the works of Luisa Muraro, “Margarita Porete y Gullierma de Bohemia (la diferencia femenina, casi una herejia),” *Duoda. Revista d’Estudios Feministes* 9 (1995): 81–97. Idem, *Guglielma e Maifreda*; Newman, “Woman Spirit, Woman Pope,” in *From Virile Woman*, 182–223.

<sup>13</sup> Donato Bossi “Chronica (Milano 1492)” in Costa, *Guglielma la Boema*, 117–118. Another version of the same story is described and analyzed by Muraro, *Guglielma e Maifreda*, 103–108.

<sup>14</sup> Normann Cohn, “The demonization of medieval heretics,” in *Europe’s Inner Demons: An Inquiry Inspired by the Great Witch-Hunt* (New York: Basic Books, 1975), 16–59. See for example the case of the Templars in Malcolm Barber, *The Trial of the Templars* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978).



attempt to destroy the memory by diffusing false and compromising variants that contain some elements of reality.<sup>15</sup>

Here we have, in brief, the life of Guglielma of Milan, the fate of her followers after her death, and the most important sources for this entire event. Most of the secondary literature concentrates on this part of the phenomenon, on Guglielma of Milan, but there is another significant religious tradition concerning the name Guglielma, that of Saint Guglielma.

A few Italian hagiographic sources from the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries write about a certain *Santa Guglielma, figlia del re d'Inghilterra e regina d'Ungheria*. Are all these sources speaking about Guglielma of Milan? One thing seems clear; no canonized saint bears the name Guglielma. Because of this, we might assume that these sources are also speaking about Guglielma of Milan, but if we analyze this tradition there is little congruence between the life and original cult of Guglielma of Milan (as far as we can know it) and the personality and legend of this new 'Saint' Guglielma.

The story, of which there are a number of variants, describes the life of an English princess called Guglielma, who is living a saintly life. The Hungarian king asks her to be his wife because he has heard about her saintly life. The new queen maintains her virginity during the marriage. When her husband is away, his brother feels a desire for her. His seduction fails; therefore, when the king returns, the brother accuses Guglielma. The king believes him and condemns Guglielma to death, but the girl escapes. After her evasion, she meets the King of France, who asks her to be the tutor of his little son. In France almost the same happens as in Hungary, in this case one of the officers attempts to seduce her, and after his failure kills the little prince. Guglielma seems to be responsible, so again they condemn her, and she has to escape. She boards a ship, and in an unknown country she finds a monastery where she becomes a nun. She continues her saintly life and her fame spreads around the whole world. The Hungarian and the French kings also hear about the fame of this woman and both of them make a pilgrimage to venerate her. After a closing scene everything is revealed, Guglielma forgives everyone, returns to Hungary, and becomes a famous saint also there.

Before investigating the content and the wider literary context of Saint Guglielma's *vitae*, let us make a comparative, formal analysis of the corpus of

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<sup>15</sup> Cf. "Guglielma al negativo" in Benedetti, *Io non sono Dio*, 75–88, Luisa Muraro analyzes this element with sexual-psychological reasons by the accusers: "Quando delle donne si mettono insieme di propria iniziativa, non costrette da altri o dalle circostanze, si cerca subito di nominare i loro possibili moventi sessuali..." Muraro, *Guglielma e Matilde*, 107.



writings. This is probably not the entire corpus of the legend of Saint Guglielma, nevertheless, it is useful to summarize it because such a general overview has not been made so far. There seem to be only three sources from this corpus that have been previously used in the secondary literature. No references have been noted concerning two other *vitae* and a *Guglielmina* poem; therefore I will first describe the three less well known sources in more detail, mentioning the three better known ones afterwards.

First, let us deal briefly with the two *vitae* of Saint Guglielma. The first is the text of Bologna written by Antonio Bonfadini in Italian and edited by G. Ferraro.<sup>16</sup> From the introduction by Ferraro we can learn some information about the author. Bonfadini (d. 1428) was a Franciscan monk from Ferrara (close to Bologna) who wrote sermons and this work. We know that Ferraro found the manuscript in the “*civica biblioteca*” of Bologna (which probably means the present *Biblioteca dell’Archiginnasio* of Bologna) without any date or further indication.<sup>17</sup>

The second manuscript is unpublished; it can be found in the *Biblioteca Universitaria* of Padua.<sup>18</sup> No date or author is indicated on it. It is a small paper codex from the fifteenth century. The small size of the book, the absence of any decorative elements, the rapidity of the script, and the usage of the vernacular instead of Latin seem to show that it was made for everyday use and for a relatively wide and illiterate public. The narrative itself is similar to the Bonfadini text, with the same story and the same characteristics. Nevertheless, it seems clear that it is not a simple copy, since there are evident linguistic and textual differences between the two variants. The very beginning of the story provides an example:

Bonfadini

Nel tempo che novamente seran convertiti gli Ongari alla fede cristiana, per maggior confermatione di quella fu fatto consiglio allo Re de quel Reame, che era in quel tempo senza donna, de darli compagnia.

MS of Padua

Lo tempo che nuova mente erono chonvertiti gli ungari alla fede cristiana per maggiore confermatione del quale, fu fatto consiglio allo re di questo reame ch’era in quel tempo senza donna che lui si dovesse accompagnare.

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<sup>16</sup> Frater Antonio Bonfadini, “Vite di S. Guglielma Regina d’Ungheria e di S. Eufrosia vergine romana,” ed. G.(sic) Ferraro, in *Scelta di curiosità letterarie inedite o rare*, vol.159, 47–49, (Bologna: Gaetano Romagnoli, 1878).

<sup>17</sup> See Bonfadini’s introduction to his edition. Bonfadini, *Vite*, V–VIII.

<sup>18</sup> *Vita di S. Guglielma* (Padua, Biblioteca Universitaria di Padova MS 2011). I would like to thank Marina Benedetti who informed me about the existence of this text.



A plausible hypothesis is that the two manuscripts were translated independently from a common—probably Latin—text, since the meaning of the texts is almost identical, but there are structural differences in the sentences that cannot be explained otherwise.

*Guglielmina: Regina d'Ungheria* is a printed religious poem by an unknown author called Bernardo<sup>19</sup> that seems to have the same contents as the two *vitae*. It tells the story of Guglielma the Hungarian princess who was unjustly accused and afterwards declared innocent in a marvelous way. According to Cioni's indication it can be found in the National Library of Naples. It is notable that another example of the same poem can be found under the name of Santa Guglielma *imperatrice romana*.<sup>20</sup> This printed poem is being kept in the *Biblioteca Casatanense* of Rome. Cioni also published a reproduction of its cover page, an image representing Guglielma praying to the Virgin Mary and a ship with the figures of three men. It is important to emphasize that in this poem Guglielma's name and legend is connected to the title 'empress.' We will discuss the literary context for this connotation below.

Along with the two *vitae* and the poem, there are three other sources containing the story of Saint Guglielma that have been used in previous scholarship. The *Breve Relazione* is a third variant of the legend. Michele Caffi in the nineteenth century quoted it, described it in detail, and connected it to a living religious tradition in Brunate (province of Como). The stamp made of it dates to 1642; the manuscript can be dated to the fifteenth century.<sup>21</sup> Furthermore, there is an Italian religious drama—a *sacra rappresentazione*—dealing with the personality of Saint Guglielma, a short play by the Italian dramatist Antonia Pulci (1452–1501).<sup>22</sup> This play tells a story similar to the *vitae*. The third source, which has been widely investigated by previous scholarship, is the *Annales Colmarienses*, which will be analyzed below.

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<sup>19</sup> *Guglielmina: Regina d'Ungheria* (Venice: Giovanni e Gregorio de Gregori, c. 1485); see the detailed description of the poem in Alberto Cioni, *La poesia religiosa: I cantari agiografici e le rime di argomento sacro* (Florence: Sansoni, 1963), 261–263.

<sup>20</sup> *Sancta Ghuglielma imperatrice di Roma* (Roma: Eucharius Silber, ca. 1500).

<sup>21</sup> Andrea Ferrari, *Breve relazione della vita d S. Guglielma, figlia del re d'Inghilterra e regina d'Ungheria* (Como: n.p., 1642). For a detailed description of it see Michele Caffi, *Dell'Abbazia di Chiaravalle in Lombardia. Iscrizioni e Monumenti. Aggiuntavi la storia dell'eretica Gulielmina Boema* (Milan: Giacomo Gnocchi, 1843): 110–111. Cf. Benedetti, *Io non sono Dio*, 25, n 34; Costa, *Guglielma la Boema*, 147–149.

<sup>22</sup> Antonia Pulci, "Rappresentazione della vita, Santa Guglielma," in *Sacre rappresentazioni fiorentine del Quattrocento*, ed. Giovanni Ponte, 69–98, (Milan: Marzorati, 1974); cf. *Florentine Drama for Convent and Festival: Antonia Pulci*, ed. and tr. James Wyatt Cook (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997).





In my view three essential questions must be examined: Is the story of Saint Guglielma a real *vita* in the hagiographic sense of the word? What can we know concretely about this Guglielma? What could the connection be between this Saint Guglielma and Guglielma of Milan?

Although this text contains some elements of a *vita*, it seems to be closer to the genre of a vernacular, hagiographic romance.<sup>23</sup> This genre was popular in Western Europe during the High and Late Middle Ages. These works were mostly diffused orally to an audience of illiterate people.<sup>24</sup> The usage of Italian as a vernacular language, instead of Latin, is also characteristic for this genre.

What concrete information can we learn from this story about Guglielma's personality and about the historical context? The first interesting aspect is that only one personal name—Guglielma—is mentioned in most variants of the story. There is just one sentence that indicates the time in which this story takes place, the first sentence of the legend: “At the time when the Hungarians/the Hungarian king were/was newly converted to the Christian faith,” and just three geographical names in the text: England, Hungary and France. It is strange that the convent where Guglielma lived is absolutely unknown in these two *vitae*. The name of the country is omitted and even the city is always indicated simply as “*quella cittade, la cittade*.” Nevertheless, we can find an indirect indication: Guglielma, as well as both the Hungarian and the French kings, arrived there by ship.

Only the *Breve Relazione* gives us additional concrete pieces of information. It mentions the name of the Hungarian king: a certain Teodo; a year, 795; and an additional geographical indication: the monastery in which Guglielma lived in the last part of the story is in Italy.<sup>25</sup> The first two data strengthen the impression that in this tradition the Hungarian origin is simply a hagiographic *topos* and does not indicate—at least not directly—historical persons, since there was no Hungarian king with a similar name and the Hungarians became Christians two centuries later. The third element, the indication of Italy as a point of arrival, seems important since this is another connection between the two Guglielma traditions.

Therefore, we can say that the *vita* of Saint Guglielma seems to be almost completely depersonalized and contains hagiographic *topoi* that can be analyzed in a comparative way. We can assume that one reason for this is that this

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<sup>23</sup> For the description of the genre see Brigitte Cazelles, ed., *The Lady as Saint: A Collection of French Hagiographic Romances of the Thirteenth Century* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1991), 3–88.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibidem*, 15.

<sup>25</sup> Caffi, *Dell'Abbazia*, 110–111.



redaction was a relatively late variant. Usually these legends, when written just after the life of the saint, contain a huge amount of concrete information—names, places, testimonies. There is one argument that could explain the loss of almost every real piece of information about the original Guglielma: the cult of Guglielma of Milan. We have to bear in mind that she was condemned, and therefore for some time only memory and oral tradition could transmit her figure, since any kind of official cult and written work were probably prohibited.

In the legends of Guglielma there are motifs that can be interpreted as reminiscences of the real life (or at least the original cult) of Guglielma of Milan. In these legends Saint Guglielma is a queen and princess coming from a distant Central European country (as Guglielma of Milan was venerated as Bohemian princess) and we will see below that an eastern royal origin was a significant element in some western cults. Neither manuscript specifies the city of the convent where Saint Guglielma lived, we only know that one can travel there by ship. This can be interpreted as an allusion to Italy—as was also stated in the *Breve Relazione*—and the omission of the name of the country and the city as an attempt to avoid suspicious information.

We have seen, therefore, the tradition of this second Saint Guglielma. We have encountered a ‘regular’ saint from mostly typical hagiographic sources of a different genre. Nevertheless, our original question has not been answered yet. What is the connection between the two traditions? Can we reconstruct the relationship between Guglielma of Milan, the heretic, and Saint Guglielma?

One source (although not a hagiographic work) has a special importance in this regard. It was written at almost the same time as the events concerning Guglielma of Milan and we can find some information about her, already modified. Under the year 1301, the annals of the French town Colmar speak of a woman who had arrived the previous year from England. She was said to be the Holy Spirit and after her death was transported to Milan:

*In precedenti Anno venit de Anglia virgo decora valde pariterque facunda, dicens se Spiritum sanctum incarnatum in redemptionem mulierum. Et baptizavit mulieres in nomine Patris, et Filii ac sui. Que mortua ducta fuit in Mediolanum, ibi et cremata; cuius cineres Frater Johannes de Wissenburc se vidisse pluribus referebat.*<sup>26</sup>

As we can see, this is different information than we have from our other documents, but it seems apparent that this part is speaking of Guglielma of Milan, even if her name is not mentioned. The elements, such as ‘the year

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<sup>26</sup> “Annales Colmarienses maiores,” *Monumenta Germaniae Historica*, Scriptores, XVII, ed. Georgius Henricus, (Hannover, 1861. Reprint Stuttgart and New York: Anton Hiersemann-Kraus Reprint Corporation, 1963), 226.



1300', 'the city of Milan', or the expression 'after her death', or 'the incarnation of the Holy Spirit' are all well-known topics connected with Guglielma of Milan. We also have to bear in mind that this is a contemporary source, based on the testimony of a monk who visited Italy during this period.

On the other hand, we find here elements that are definitely absent from the cult of Guglielma of Milan, but they can be easily connected to Saint Guglielma. First, the English origin is one of the main attributes of Saint Guglielma. Second, virginity also plays a central role in Saint Guglielma's *vita*, but it has nothing to do with Guglielma of Milan (since she arrived in Milan with her son).

Here we can see a connection between some elements of Guglielma of Milan and some aspects of Saint Guglielma. As a point of departure, we can state that the English origin is such an element, which was attached to the personality of Guglielma of Milan very soon, twenty years after her death (in the year of the legal proceedings against her followers). It is clearly a false connotation, used instead of the Bohemian origin, and we can only guess the motivation of this falsification. Luisa Muraro assumes that it cannot be the simple mistake of the chronicler of Colmar, since in a French town Bohemia and England could not be easily confused. She also hypothesizes that the Dominicans of Milan, to avoid a dangerous attribute (since a royal origin related to a case of heresy would have been problematic), attached this false English origin to the personality of the popular, but condemned, Guglielma of Milan.<sup>27</sup>

Even if we can explain this addition to the cult of Guglielma of Milan, we have to answer how the whole story of 'Saint Guglielma, English princess and Hungarian queen' grew from this simple changing of countries. In my view, the testimony of the *Annales Colmarienses* proves that at least a few basic elements of the future Saint Guglielma tradition were already attached to the memory of Guglielma of Milan at the time of the inquisitorial trial. In the following part of this paper I will try to investigate the literary context for this Saint Guglielma story.

We can assume as a hypothesis, therefore, that the memory of Guglielma of Milan was first altered in the Annals of Colmar by changing the Bohemian origin into an English one.<sup>28</sup> However, in the case of the Guglielma story we

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<sup>27</sup> "Più probabilmente la Boemia è diventata l'Inghilterra nel racconto stesso che gli fu fatto dai domenicani milanesi ... Tanto valeva non nominar nemmeno il paese dell'eretica straniera a dargliene uno di fantasia." Muraro, *Guglielma e Maifreda*, 109; cf., Benedetti, *Io non sono Dio*, 20–21

<sup>28</sup> For the usage of the same name in different cults see for example the case of Saint Guinefort in Jean Claude Schmitt, *Le saint levrier: Guinefort, guérisseur d'enfants depuis le XII. siècle* (Paris: Flammarion, 1979).



can get a more concrete idea, since the narrative in the *vitae* of Guglielma is one of the best-known legends of the medieval West.

The legend of the persecuted, innocent woman probably originated from an eastern (Arabic-Persian) tradition and arrived in the West around 1150.<sup>29</sup> The story diffused quickly in the West; there are 260 variants of it that can be grouped in different ways. Lajos Karl divides the text variants according to the name of the protagonists and the main motifs. It is significant that in all four western variants the protagonist is often a Hungarian princess.

Another feature that figures in many versions of the legend is that the woman is a Roman empress. Karl does not give an explanation of this motif, but here we can emphasize that it has different possible parallels in the hagiographic literature. Among these possible parallels one is especially interesting for our investigation. In the well-known case of Saint Cunegond<sup>30</sup> one can find a number of elements (the royal marriage, the virginity, the accusation, the last period of her life in a monastery, etc.) that are also present in the legend of the persecuted, innocent woman. This motif is connected even more concretely to our topic, since, as we noted above, there is a variant of the Guglielmina-poem entitled “*Santa Ghuglielma, imperatrice di Roma.*”<sup>31</sup>

It is important to emphasize that the Guglielma story is not the only version that can be found in the Italian language, but the name Guglielma appears exclusively in Italian. Karl does not give an explanation as to why this name emerges in these Italian writings, since his main purpose is to point out how the Hungarian royal origin and the motif that the husband left to participate in a crusade were inserted in the original story, and to argue how this variation could be explained by the influence of the cult of Saint Elizabeth of Hungary.<sup>32</sup> Furthermore, he does not mention the name of Guglielma of Milan at all in his argument.

Therefore, the original question of how these two different cults—both related to the name Guglielma—could be connected is complex and complicated. The following four elements lead us closer to the clarification of this issue:

- 1) The memory of Guglielma of Milan was strong enough to survive even the inquisitorial process, condemnation, and attempted *dammatio memoriae*.

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<sup>29</sup> Lajos Karl, “Erzsébet és az üldözött ártatlan nő mondája” (Elizabeth and the story of the persecuted, innocent woman), *Ethnographia* (1908) [off-print], 3–4.

<sup>30</sup> “Vita s. Cunegundis” in *Acta Sanctorum Martii* 1; *Biblioteca Hagiographica Latina* 2001–2009; Claudio Leonardi, Andrea Riccardi and Gabriella Zarri ed., *Il grande libro dei Santi: Dizionario Enciclopedico* (Cinisello Balsamo: San Paolo, 1998), 502–504.

<sup>31</sup> See note 20 above.

<sup>32</sup> Karl, “Erzsébet,” 24–30.



- 2) A Central European royal origin (the daughter of the Bohemian king) was a significant aspect in the original cult of Guglielma of Milan.
- 3) In the *Annales Colmarienses* the Bohemian origin was changed into an English one as early as the time of the inquisitorial trial.
- 4) The story of the persecuted innocent woman, which is narrated in the *vitae* of Saint Guglielma, is a widely diffused story in the medieval West.

### **Marguerite Porete — Margaret of Hungary**

Our second case study is the contamination of Marguerite Porete's memory with Margaret of Hungary's Italian cult. Margaret of Hungary is one of the best known Hungarian saints. Even if she was not canonized during the Middle Ages,<sup>33</sup> she had a widespread cult in Hungary immediately after her death and her fame spread quickly even abroad. Her Italian cult is the richest and perhaps the most interesting one among her Western European cults. The majority of her legends have some connection with Italy and there were a number of images representing her in Italy.

One of the most particular aspects of her Italian cult are the elements that were not part of her original cult: we cannot find them in her first legend, or in her canonization trial. The story of her stigmatization has been analyzed in the studies of Tibor and Gábor Klaniczay and Florio Banfi, consequently the main point of our investigation will be another apocryphal element of her Italian cult.

In three Italian manuscripts of a famous and important mystical text we can find Margaret of Hungary's name as author. This booklet is the *Miroir des Simples Ames* (Mirror of Simple Souls) by Marguerite Porete,<sup>34</sup> a French beguine who was executed in 1310 because of this book. Here I shall investigate in detail how and why this book was attributed to Margaret of Hungary and try to place this story in a wider context.

Since 1946, when Romana Guarnieri identified an executed beguine, Marguerite Porete, as the author of this book, it has become a popular topic of religious studies and from the 1970s even for gender studies. Conferences and monographs, hundreds of articles and studies have dealt with the person of

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<sup>33</sup> Because of this reason in the sources and secondary literature before 1943 she was called Blessed Margaret. I will use the form 'Margaret of Hungary'.

<sup>34</sup> I have chosen the French form, 'Marguerite Porete', even if other forms (Margaret, Margarita, Margherita) have been also used by the secondary literature.



Porete, and with her work, which has been also translated into the major modern European languages.<sup>35</sup>

We have little information about the life of Marguerite Porete. She lived in the second half of the thirteenth century; she was probably born in Valenciennes around 1250/1260. She wrote *The Mirror of Simple Souls* (her only known work) around 1290 in the Picard language; this original manuscript has not survived. At the beginning of the fourteenth century, during an inquisitorial trial she was condemned, and in 1310 in Paris she was burned together with her book.<sup>36</sup>

The *Miroir* itself is now considered one of the most important late medieval mystical works. Almost every scholar agrees she and Master Eckhart were influenced by each other in one way or another. It is possible that they could have met in Paris and some scholars argue that Porete even influenced Eckhart directly.<sup>37</sup>

Although the original version of the *Miroir* has been lost, there were Latin, English, French, and Italian versions made of it during the late Middle Ages.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> A detailed bibliography can be found in Margherita Porete, *Lo Specchio delle anime semplici*, ed. Giovanna Fozzer, Romana Guarnieri and Marco Vannini, (Milano: Ed. San Paolo, 1994), 110–115, (henceforth: *Specchio 1994*). We will quote only those works, which are relevant from our viewpoint. The modern translations: Clare Kirchberger, ed., *The Mirror of Simple Souls by an Unknown French Mystic of the Thirteenth Century: Translated into English by M.N.* (London–New York: The Orchard Books, 1927). This edition is a modern English transcription-translation of the middle English text; Marguerite Porete, *Le Miroir des ames simples et anéanties et qui seulement demeurent en voluoir et désir d'amour*, ed. and tr. Max Huot de Longchamp (Paris: Albin Michel, 1984) is the modern translation of the French manuscript (MS Chantilly); Margareta Porete, *Der Spiegel der einfachen Seelen: Aus dem Altfranzösischen übertragen und mit einem Nachwort und Anmerkungen*, ed. and tr. Louise Cnadinger, (Zürich und München: Artemis Verlag 1987) is the German translation of the MS Chantilly; *Specchio 1994*. This edition contains the MS Chantilly, its modern Italian translation, and the MS Riccardiano in appendix, see footnote 38. below.

<sup>36</sup> *Specchio 1994*, 105–106.

<sup>37</sup> Marco Vannini, *Mistica e Filosofia* (Casale Monferrato: Piemme, 1996), 21–32.

<sup>38</sup> The four Latin manuscripts can be found in the Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana: Vaticano latino 4355, sec XIV; Rossiano 4, sec. XIV; Chigiano B IV 41, a. 1398 ca; Chigiano C IV 85, a. 1521; The edition of the French manuscript by Romana Guarnieri, and the critical edition of the four Latin ones by Paul Verdeyen: Marguerite Porete, *Le Mirour des Simples Ames*. Édité par Romana Guarnieri/Margaretæ Porete. *Speculum animarum simplicium*, Cura et studio Paul Verdeyen, Corpus Christianorum, Continuatio Medioevalis, LXIX (Turnhout: Brepols, 1986). The two English versions and their critical edition: London, British Museum Add. 37790; Cambridge, St John's Coll. 71 e;



The two Italian versions of the *Miroir* were written between the fourteenth and fifteenth century, probably on the basis of the Latin text. The first version is preserved in only one manuscript. According to Guarnieri's opinion this version "seems to be slightly earlier."<sup>39</sup>

The most important version for this study is the second Italian one, which survives in three manuscripts. It is a particularity of the historiography of the *Miroir* that until the 1950s Hungarian and Italian scholars dealt with it almost exclusively, since the first known manuscripts were the three Italian ones containing the attribution to Margaret of Hungary.

As noted above, from the viewpoint of the connection between Marguerite Porete and Margaret of Hungary, the most important version of the *Miroir* is the second Italian one, surviving in three examples. The special nature of this text variant is that it not only contains the Italian text of the *Miroir*, but also a Prologue and an Appendix. The Prologue is where the name of Margaret of Hungary appears as author, and the Appendix (which is missing from the manuscript in Budapest) contains the apocryphal history of Margaret of Hungary's stigmatization.

We have few, but interesting data on the provenance of two out of the three manuscripts. The manuscript of Naples was in the possession of John of Capistran's convent (at least for a while in the fifteenth century), because John was the official inquisitor of the *Miroir*. The manuscript of Budapest was in the possession of Gusztáv Emich, a private collector, who in 1905 sold it to the National Library, together with two books containing works by John of Capistran.<sup>40</sup>

The main body of this version, the Italian translation of the *Miroir* by Porete, has not been edited. Romana Guarnieri in her preface to her edition of the other version, points out that she had intended to make a critical edition of

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and Oxford, Bodleian Library 205. The critical edition is: Marilyn Dorion ed., "Margaret Porete. "The Mirror of Simple Souls" *Archivio Italiano per la Storia della Pietà* 5 (1968): 241–355.

<sup>39</sup> Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale di Firenze Riccardiano 1468. This manuscript has been edited by Romana Guarnieri. In *Specchio* 1994, 503–624.

<sup>40</sup> The description of the seven manuscripts: *Magyar Könyvszemle* XIII (1905): 376–377; About Emich see Sándor Mágocsy-Deitz, *Emich Gusztáv, 1843–1911: Élet és jellemrajz* (Gusztáv Emich 1843–1911: Biography and character) (Budapest: Atheneum, 1912). The author's description of his Italian journey: Gusztáv Emich, *Notizien über Bibliotheken und Miniaturen in Ober Italien*, Magyar Tudományos Akadémia Könyvtára (Budapest, Library of the Academy of Sciences), MS 702/2, 1879.



both the Italian versions, but because of her age she was forced to renounce this project.<sup>41</sup>

The Prologue and the Appendix of this version (where the attribution to Margaret of Hungary can be found) are partially edited. The Appendix, with the story of Margaret of Hungary's stigmatization, was published first by Florio Banfi, and re-edited by Tibor Klaniczay.<sup>42</sup> The Prologue of the Naples manuscript was published by Romana Guarnieri; I transcribed that of the Budapest manuscript, and the prologue of the Vienna manuscript is discussed in the study of Koltay-Kastner.<sup>43</sup>

Although, the identification of the author with the *Miroir* has been widely known and investigated, the Hungarian connotation of it has been a less popular research topic. To my knowledge, only two scholars have dealt with the issue of the Hungarian connection of the three Italian manuscripts of the *Miroir*: the works of Romana Guarnieri and Tibor Klaniczay. Guarnieri investigated the question from the point of view of the Italian diffusion of the *Miroir*, while Tibor Klaniczay analyzed it from the viewpoint of Margaret of Hungary's Italian cult.

Romana Guarnieri in her 1965 study formulated a hypothesis concerning the identity of the Italian translator. She found documents dealing with the Italian *Gesuati* order, among whom the *Miroir* was well-known and popular. Her main point was to find out who knew and diffused the *Miroir*, supposing that they would have made the vernacular translation of the treatise. She also published several letters between one of the leaders of this order, John Tavelli of Tossignano (1368–1446), and John of Capistran, who was the official

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<sup>41</sup> "Non sono piú in età di da poter sperare di veder realizzato un giorno o un'altro quel mio sogno ambizioso" *Specchio* 1994, 505.

<sup>42</sup> Florio Banfi, "Specchio delle anime semplici dalla Beata Margarita d'Ungheria scripto" *Memorie Dominicane* 57 (1940), 304–306, and Tibor Klaniczay, "A Margit-legendák történetének revíziója" (The revision of the history of the legends of Margaret)," in Klaniczay, *Szent Margit*, 70–72.

<sup>43</sup> Romana Guarnieri, "Il movimento del Libero Spirito: I) Dalle origini al secolo XVI. II) Il 'Miroir des simples ames' di M. Porete III) Appendici," *Archivio italiano per la storia della pietà* 4 (1965), 640–642; Dávid Falvay, "Il libro della beata Margherita: Un documento inedito del culto italiano di Margherita d'Ungheria in Italia nei secoli XIV–XV" *Nuova Corvina. Rivista di Italianistica* 5 (1999), 35–46; Jenő Kastner, *Együgyű lelkek tükköre* (Mirror of Simple Souls), (Budapest: Minerva, 1929). 245–253.





inquisitor of the *Miroir* in Italy.<sup>44</sup> On the basis of this information, she inferred that the author of this version was John Tavelli of Tossignano<sup>45</sup>

Tibor Klaniczay concentrated mainly on the Italian cult of Margaret, consequently his hypothesis was also based on this main aim of his research. Two manuscripts out of the three we are dealing with contain the Appendix with the story of Margaret of Hungary's stigmatization. Tibor Klaniczay demonstrated that the diffusion of the story of Margaret's stigmatization in the fifteenth century was made by the Italian Dominicans for the campaign to canonize Catherine of Siena. According to his argument, if the Dominicans used the stigmata story it is probable that they also made the translation of the *Miroir*.<sup>46</sup>

How and why was the name of Margaret of Hungary attached to this heretical treatise? One reason is obvious: it was a popular work that had been condemned and prohibited by the Church; it was persecuted intensively in the period when this version was made. We have seen above that Margaret of Hungary's name was popular and well-known in fourteenth and fifteenth century Italy. We can glean these pieces of information from charters and other documents, but we can also infer them from the character of the work and the manuscripts containing them. First, concerning the popularity, the simple fact that it was translated into vernacular languages indicates a wide and in part illiterate audience. In the Prologue we read the formula "*chi lege o ode legere.*"

Furthermore, the character of two out of the three manuscripts leads us to a similar conclusion. The codex of Budapest and that of Vienna are both manuscripts of small size, without any decorative elements, written quickly and not very carefully. In both manuscripts we find errors, corrections, and inconsistencies in the use of abbreviations and in the vernacular translation of the Latin text. In the manuscript of Vienna the places for the initials are left empty, there are words and sometimes entire sentences missing from the text. This peculiarity of the two manuscripts shows that they were made for everyday use, rather than for representative reasons, and they had a function close to what we call today a 'manual'. We know that in this period a new type of book had already formed—mainly in urban and university environments, but also among

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<sup>44</sup> Guarnieri, "Il movimento," 645–660.

<sup>45</sup> "Non è impossibile che l'autore della nostra versione ...sia il famoso Giovanni Tavelli da Tossignano, ottimo volgarizzatore di testi devoti" *Specchio* 1994, 507.

<sup>46</sup> "Így talán nem kizárt, hogy magának a műnek a fordítója is domonkos lehetett" Tibor Klaniczay, "A Margit-legendák," 90–91.



religious circles—which was copied in large numbers and was made for everyday reading.<sup>47</sup>

The third manuscript, the codex of Naples, is slightly different from the other two. It is nicely written, with careful calligraphy. Even if it does not contain decorations, the use of two colors, and the medium size of the codex indicates that it would be in between a ‘classical’ representative medieval codex, and a late medieval manual for a wide audience and everyday use.<sup>48</sup>

If we assume on the basis of the three Italian manuscripts the popularity and even the audience of the *Miroir*, we can also learn pieces of information about the mechanism of its persecution. The simple fact that a new authorship was created for the work shows that the audience of the book wanted to protect it from the inquisitors. False attribution was a widely used tool for this phenomenon in the Middle Ages. This is also one of the reasons why the Prologue and the Appendix were written. In the Appendix the stigmatization story of Margaret of Hungary served to make the attribution even more convincing.

The Prologue is a theologically ‘neutral’ introduction to the *Miroir*, its author tries to prepare the reader for the embarrassing content of the book, which can be entirely understood only by a reader who participates in the same spiritual status, as the author; otherwise the book would be dangerous for an unprepared audience. The Prologue had the same function as the appendix: to emphasize the authorship of an indisputable person (Blessed Margaret of Hungary), and to function as a cover. Both the Prologue and the Appendix had a more technical protective function: since they form those first and the last parts of a book, which would be probably checked by an inquisitor, consequently they could simply ‘hide’ the main body, the *Miroir* by Marguerite Porete.

The Budapest manuscript has a peculiarity in this respect. It does not include the Appendix, with the stigmata, and there are also differences in the text of the Prologue. The Prologue of the other two manuscripts starts with a sentence containing the title of the book; on the contrary, the manuscript of

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<sup>47</sup> Jacques Le Goff, *Az értelmiség a középkorban* (The intellectuals in the Middle Ages), tr. Gábor Klaniczay, (Budapest: Magvető, 1979), 121–122.

<sup>48</sup> For the manuscript of Vienna see Jenő Kastner, *Együgyű*, 4–5, for the manuscript of Budapest, Falvai, “Il libro,” 41–42, for the one of Naples see István Miskolczy, “A nápolyi Biblioteca Nazionale magyar vonatkozású kéziratái” (The manuscripts with Hungarian connection of the Biblioteca Nazionale of Naples), *Magyar Könyvszemle* 1927: 146–148.



Budapest modifies the title of the book in its first phrase and even slightly the relationship between the supposed author and the text:

Ms of Naples

“Incomincia il prologo di questo seguente libro chia(ma)to specchio delle anime **semplici scripto** dalla Beata Margherita”

Ms of Budapest

“Incomincia el prologo del seguente libro chiamato Specchio delle anime **pure overo humile, composto** dalla beata Margarita”  
(emphasis mine)

At the beginning of the Budapest text, the title of Porete’s book became the ‘Mirror of the Pure or Humble Souls’, and it has a separate and unique title on the cover-page of the codex: ‘*Libro della Beata Margherita.*’ Even if this new title were added later, the modification of the first title sentence was probably used to hide and better protect the content of the book, since the original title, *Specchio delle anime semplici*, would have been known by the inquisitors.

The author or transcriber of the Budapest text is also more careful with the attribution. Margaret of Hungary in this version becomes the compiler instead of the author of the text. We can only guess at the reasons for this modification: one explanation might be that in the time when it was transcribed some suspicions had been raised concerning the person of Margaret of Hungary. Chronologically it fits well in the time when Tommaso Caffarini—the promoter of the canonization of Saint Catherine—asked the opinion of the Hungarian Dominicans about the stigmata of Margaret of Hungary. A Hungarian Dominican friar, namely Gregory, answered him in 1409, stating that the stigmata had been given not to Margaret, but to her *magistra* Helen; and, as an attachment to his letter, he sent the oldest legend and the first part of the canonization trial of Margaret. We know that Caffarini after receiving this information emphasized that it had been a mistake stating that Margaret was stigmatized.<sup>49</sup> This context could explain why the stigmatization part is missing from the Budapest manuscript, and why the writer of the Prologue is more careful in speaking about Margaret of Hungary’s authorship.

It was necessary to protect the *Miroir* from the inquisition, but there was also another reason. To prove that this embarrassing book was written by an indisputably orthodox person was important also for the audience of the *Miroir*. We can form a more or less clear idea about the mentality of its audience. In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries the *Miroir* was read, or listened to, by a large and varied public. Scholars have shown that from southern Italy to

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<sup>49</sup> Tibor Klaniczay, “A Margit-legendák”; Klaniczay, “*I Modelli.*”



northern Germany various religious communities used the book: beguines, mendicants, *Gesuati*, *humiliati*, and, of course, the members of the Free Spirit movement.<sup>50</sup> There are two main characteristics of these persons, first, they were in the majority women; second, they mostly considered themselves good, Catholic Christians, and rarely wanted to oppose the orders of the Church.<sup>51</sup> We can therefore infer that not only was the book so popular that it had to be protected from the inquisition, but also it was so popular because it was protected in such a way that the audience thought there was nothing wrong in it. The devout ‘simple souls’ who formed the audience of this embarrassing and strange book—so strange that only the “taste that could tell, whether it was catholic,” since it was written in such a “wonderful style, which has not been yet used in any kind of writing”—could read it more calmly if they knew that it was written by “Blessed Margaret, daughter of the Hungarian king.”<sup>52</sup>

Why exactly was Margaret of Hungary attached as an author? She was a popular saintly figure in Italy in this period and she had the authority to be able to protect a heretical work and to assure its audience that it was a Catholic and pious book. It seems obvious that the identity of the names Marguerite-Margaret spontaneously gave the identification, or mixing up, of the two persons. However, in my opinion there is also another reason, which to my knowledge has not been mentioned. At the beginning of the *Miroir* (in the main text, which is present in every known version of the book, so for sure was part of the original text written by Porete) there is a story, an *exemplum* about a princess who was wandering in a foreign country:

*Il fut un temps une damoyselle, fille de roy, de grant cuer et de noblesse et aussi de noble courage, et demouroit en a strange pais.*<sup>53</sup>

We have to remember that a foreign and royal origin was almost the only concrete information about Margaret of Hungary in Italy: we can say that this motif was her best known attribute. It was a piece of information that would

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<sup>50</sup> Guarnieri, “Il movimento,” 355–509; Ulrich Heid, “Studi su Margherita Porete e il suo *Miroir des simples ames*,” in *Movimento religioso e mistica femminile*, ed. Peter Dinzelbacher and Dieter R. Bauer, (Bologna: Edizioni Paoline, 1993), 220–224.

<sup>51</sup> As far as we know Porete herself was a contra-example, since she was opposing the Church openly and directly. Even the Free Spirit movement was not a real heretical movement, we have examples exactly from this period, that beguine communities integrate easily in the mendicant orders.

<sup>52</sup> “Solo lo gusto consente queste uerita essere catholiche... Mirabile stile et quasi fore de omne uso di scriptura...dalla beata Margarita figliuola del re d’Ungaria scripto.” Guarnieri, “Il Movimento,” 640–642.

<sup>53</sup> *Specchio* 1994, 130.



have been known by anyone who had heard about her. Margaret, because of her name, her fame, her royal and foreign origin, was a perfect cover for Marguerite Porete and her *Miroir*.

For this investigation it is essential to emphasize that by the end of the thirteenth century, when Marguerite Porete was writing the first variant of her book, she inserted an *exemplum* in which she wrote about a foreign princess. Even if in this form it did not contain the attribute of a Central European princess, the presence of this motif probably influenced the more secure attribution of the whole treatise to a specific foreign princess, namely Margaret of Hungary. It also shows that by the end of the thirteenth century, the motif of the foreigner princess was present in Western European religious writing.

Consequently, we can speak about a double presence of the foreign-princess motif in the case of the *Miroir des Simples Ames* by Marguerite Porete. First, in the original treatise she used it merely as a literary instrument, to start her *itinerarium* with a nice secular *exemplum*. Second, between the end of the fourteenth and the beginning of the fifteenth century in Italy in three examples of her book, an actual foreign—by this time already Central European—princess, namely Margaret of Hungary, was indicated as the author or compiler. This second level of admixture served, as we have seen, to protect the persecuted work, and to make it more plausible and less embarrassing for its devout audience. The fact that Margaret of Hungary was the most useful name for this modification can be explained by the peculiarities of Margaret of Hungary's diffused cult in Italy, and obviously by the identity of their first names.

## Conclusion

I have tried to demonstrate here, on the basis of two case studies, a special connection between Western and Central Europe, between heresy and sainthood. Both cases were studied by previous scholarship, but I hope I have raised some new aspects, and clarified the religious context of these cults. In both cases the religious tradition originated in the late thirteenth century, but their mixture with the Central European motif likely happened in the fourteenth and fifteenth century.

In the fourteenth and fifteenth century in Western Europe the model for female sainthood changed: a new, mystical, visionary female religiosity developed, with the growing cult of Catherine of Siena and many other female mystics. In Italy a whole group of modern mystical saintly women was



formed.<sup>54</sup> In this religious context the original characteristic of Central European female saints was not interesting enough anymore, but still their memory, cult, images and names were preserved.<sup>55</sup>

The cults of the Central European saintly royal women had to be ‘colored’ somehow, since their original character was not ‘exciting’ enough for the Italian audience. There are several examples of this transformation of the original cults, such as the ‘new miracles’ of Elizabeth of Hungary (the archetype of the Central European saintly woman), which were added to her original cult in this period in the Italian context. The most famous case is Elizabeth’s rose miracle, which does not appear in her first *vitae*, but became one of her main attributes in Western Europe in this period. Another case of the transformation of her cult is a mystical work attributed to her. This treatise was entitled *Revelationes beate Marie virginis facte beate Elisabet filie regis Ungarie*. This booklet contains a dialogue between Elizabeth and the Virgin Mary. Around 1320 in Tuscany and Umbria it was diffused in one volume with Bonaventure’s *Meditationes vitae Christi*. It has ten Latin manuscripts, and furthermore Italian, Spanish, Catalan, French, and English translations. Gábor Klaniczay suggests that it was written in Italy and the well-known name of Saint Elizabeth was attached to it.<sup>56</sup>

This modified religious atmosphere was also the context for the transformation of the cults we have dealt with here. The Saint Guglielma English princess, Hungarian queen legend was formed in this period and context. According to Lajos Karl’s hypothesis, the persecuted-woman-story—which was connected in Italy to the name of Saint Guglielma—was diffused in this period. The stigmatization story of Margaret of Hungary was also created in this context, and furthermore it was directly connected to the fifteenth century canonization campaign for Catherine of Siena. In addition, the false attribution of the authorship of the *Miroir* probably happened in the same period and—as I argue—under similar circumstances and spiritual background.

In Guglielma’s case I have tried to analyze this second tradition, and investigate the literary relationship between the “two Guglielmas.” I have also made an effort to define the literary context for the legend narrated in these sources, pointing to the persecuted-woman legend, with some Hungarian connotations.

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<sup>54</sup> Daniel Bornstein, “Donne e religione nell’Italia tardomedievale,” in *Mistiche e devote*, 241–247; Leonardi-Pozzi, *Scrittrici*; Klaniczay, “Modelli di Santità.”

<sup>55</sup> Klaniczay, *Holy Rulers*, 367–94, and idem “A női szentség,” 239–244.

<sup>56</sup> Livarius Oligier, “Revelationes B. Elisabeth. Disquisitio critica una cum textibus latino et catalannensi” *Antonianum* 1 (1926): 14–83; Klaniczay, *Holy Rulers*, 372–75.



In the second case study, the connection between Marguerite Porete and Margaret of Hungary, I have provided a wider context, demonstrated some new aspects that have not yet been analyzed in detail, and analyzed the peculiarity of the manuscript of Budapest in the title and relationship between the author and the treatise. In addition, I have emphasized the ‘double’ presence of the foreign princess motif in this tradition, which has not been stressed before.

In both cases the motif of a ‘Foreigner or Central European Princess’ motif was present in the original cult (Guglielma of Milan, Marguerite Porete). Guglielma of Milan during her lifetime was believed to be a princess of Bohemia, and Marguerite Porete began her book with an *exemplum* about a foreigner princess.

We have seen that in the fourteenth and fifteenth century in these newly formed cult elements—the *Vitae* of Saint Guglielma and the Italian manuscripts of the *Miroir*—the protagonist lost almost every personal characteristic (life story, attributes, personality). Only the name was maintained and one motif remained from the original life or attributes: a princess/queen coming from Central Europe.