

**'BEATA IN PURPURA NOBILITER EDUCATA':
TEXTUAL TRADITION OF SAINT ELISABETH OF HUNGARY
IN 13TH-CENTURY CASTILE**

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ABSTRACT

The presence of the cult of saint Elisabeth of Hungary is well documented in the Kingdom of Aragon, but has not been properly addressed in Castile. Using manuscript Paris, BnF, Nouvelles Acquisitions Latines 868 as starting point, this article examines the possible routes of arrival of texts dedicated to saint Elisabeth in the Castilian territories. It addresses the role of Beatrice of Swabia as passive agent in the spreading of the cult mostly through her burial at the Cistercian monastery of Las Huelgas in Burgos, as well as the part played by Franciscan author Juan Gil de Zamora. This article provides, for the first time, a material analysis of London, BL, Add MS 41070, the only surviving manuscript that contains this author's *Legende Sanctorum*.

KEYWORDS: Hagiography, Elisabeth of Hungary, Beatrice of Swabia, Alfonso X, Juan Gil de Zamora, manuscripts, Las Huelgas.

'BEATA IN PURPURA NOBILITER EDUCATA': TRADICIÓN TEXTUAL DE SANTA ISABEL DE HUNGRÍA EN LA CASTILLA DEL SIGLO XIII

RESUMEN

La presencia del culto de santa Isabel de Hungría, bien documentada en el reino de Aragón, no ha sido todavía adecuadamente estudiada en el entorno de Castilla. Partiendo del manuscrito París, BnF, Nouvelles Acquisitions Latines 868, este artículo examina las posibles rutas de entrada de textos dedicados a santa Isabel en los territorios castellanos. Se analiza también el rol pasivo que pudo tener Beatriz de Suabia en la propagación del culto, a través de su enterramiento en el monasterio cisterciense de Las Huelgas, y el papel jugado por el autor franciscano Juan Gil de Zamora. Se incluye por primera vez un análisis material del manuscrito Londres, BL, Add. MS 41070, único testimonio escrito de sus *Legende Sanctorum*.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Hagiografía, Isabel de Hungría, Beatriz de Suabia, Alfonso X, Juan Gil de Zamora, manuscritos, Las Huelgas.

'BEATA IN PURPURA NOBILITER EDUCATA': TRADICIÓ TEXTUAL DE SANTA ELISABETH D'HONGRIA A LA CASTELLA DEL SEGLE XIII

RESUM

La presència del culte de santa Elisabeth d'Hongria, ben documentada al regne d'Aragó, encara no ha estat adequadament estudiada en l'entorn de Castella. Partint del manuscrit París, BnF, Nouvelles Acquisitions Latines 868, aquest article examina les possibles rutes d'entrada de textos dedicats a santa Elisabeth en els territoris castellans. S'hi analitza també el rol passiu que va poder tenir Beatriu de Suàbia en la propagació del culte, a través del seu enterrament al monestir cistercenc de Las Huelgas, i el paper de l'autor franciscà Juan Gil de Zamora. S'hi inclou per primera vegada una anàlisi material del manuscrit Londres, BL, Add. MS 41070, únic testimoni escrit de les seves *Legende Sanctorum*.

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PARAULES CLAU: Hagiografía, Elisabeth de Hungría, Beatriu de Suabia, Alfons X, Juan Gil de Zamora, manuscrits, Las Huelgas.

Elisabeth (1207-1231) was the daughter of king Andrew II of Hungary and the wife of landgrave Louis IV of Thuringia. Although her marriage did not take place until 1221, she lived in the Thuringian court since her betrothal in 1211 (Reber 1982: 53-54). As a child, she already showed signs of the piety that was to mark her short life. As *Landgraefin*, she often distributed clothes, food, and alms among the poor. The turning point came with the death of her husband in 1228 on his way to the crusade. The family of the late landgrave, fearing that Elisabeth would give everything to those in need, expelled her from the castle of Wartburg. With the money of her dowry, the newly widowed Elisabeth decided to build a hospital dedicated to Saint Francis in the city of Marburg. She spent the rest of her life actively working in the hospital and assisting the poor and, after her untimely death in 1231, her body was laid to rest in its chapel.

Her canonisation started the spread of her cult throughout Europe. In this sense, one key aspect was the support of the Papacy and of emperor Frederic II. Another one was her status as Hungarian princess, which made her an ideal role model for members of the nobility and which contributed to the development of her cult thanks to the marriages among members of her family and European monarchs (Klaniczky 2002). It has been traditionally thought that it was through one of those marital arrangements, the one between Violante of Hungary and James I of Aragon, that the cult of Saint Elisabeth arrived in the Iberian Peninsula. In turn, it would have travelled to Castile with the daughter of this couple, Violante of Aragon, wife of Alfonso X.

The manuscript of the *Officium et vita Sanctae Elisabeth Thuringiae* (Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, NAL 868) plays a key role in the study of the arrival and development of the cult of saint Elisabeth in the kingdom of Castile. Although known by scholarship for decades (Astrik 1953, Avril 1982, Blume and Joneitis 2007: 325-39), it is only recently that it has been the object of deeper analysis, even if it remains largely unpublished (Ruiz Rodríguez 2022, 238-98; Rodríguez Porto 2012, vol 2, 7-39). This paper will seek to position the NAL 868 within the wider spread of the cult of Saint Elisabeth and its textual manifestations, with the aim to throw light on the role played by the Castilian elites in the development of the cult. It will also highlight the European connections that existed between the Iberian kingdoms and other territories such as the Holy Roman Empire and Capetian France.

1. ST. ELISABETH OF HUNGARY: TEXTUAL TRADITION IN EUROPE

Soon after the death of Elisabeth, miracles started to happen at her tomb. Conrad of Marburg, who had been the saint's confessor and also protector during her later years as a widow, compiled a list of miracles that had occurred at the saint's grave and sent it to the Holy See in 1232 (Wolf 1992: 6). Together with this list,

Conrad sent the Pope an account of the life of Elisabeth, known as the *Summa Vitae*, in which he praised her qualities (Wolf 1992: 91-96). This was the beginning of a speedy inquisitorial process that culminated in a lavish canonisation ceremony in the Dominican convent in Perugia in late May 1235, followed shortly after by the issuing of the papal bull *Gloriosa in majestate sua* on 1st June (Klaniczay 2002: 203).

Elisabeth's canonisation process was one of the first to be based on extensive questioning of witnesses (Vauchez 1974). The depositions taken from four of Elisabeth's servants throughout her life, Guda, Isentrud, Irmgard, and Elisabeth, were compiled and circulated in a text known as *Dicta quattuor ancillarum*, which was eventually refined with the addition of an introduction, a conclusion, and some biblical citations to create the *Libellus de dictis quattuor ancillarum sanctae Elisabeth confectus* (Huyskens 1911). This text was structured in chapters that focused on different periods of the life of Saint Elisabeth (childhood, marriage, life in Marburg), thus following more closely the traditional structure of hagiographical narratives (Klaniczay 2002: 286). This text became the basis for almost all later lives of the saint (Vauchez 2014: 584).

One of the earlier lives of saint Elisabeth is the so-called *Vas admirabile* (Bibliotheca Hagiographica Latina, henceforth BHL, 2510), very dependent on the *Summa*, the *Dicta* and the *Libellus*. Ottó Gecser dates this text to the period between Elisabeth's canonisation in 1235 and 1239, and gives it a curial origin (Gecser 2012: 5). This text had multiple versions in circulation in Europe during the thirteenth century and became widely used as lections in the office of saint Elisabeth (Gecser 2012: 15). In those same early years, between 1236 and 1237, the Cistercian monk Caesarius von Heisterbach (d. 1240) wrote his *Vita sanctae Elyzabeth* under the patronage of the Teutonic Order in Marburg (Folz 1992: 116). Caesarius also described the ceremony of the translation of her body in his *Sermo de translatione beate Elyzabeth*, written in 1237 (von Heisterbach 2007).

From this point onwards, many authors dedicated writings to the figure of saint Elisabeth, either as independent texts or as part of bigger compositions called *legendae novae*. Thus, Dominican author Vincent de Beauvais included Elisabeth in his 1240s *Speculum historiale* (Gecser 2012: 17), as did Jacopo da Varazze in his *Legenda Aurea* – although not until around 1266-1272 (Gecser 2012, 18-19). In parallel, Franciscan authors developed new lives of saint Elisabeth, introducing not only direct references to the influence of the Order of Saint Francis in her life –omitted in other texts– but also adding new thaumaturgical episodes (Gecser 2012: X; Pieper 2002). French poet Rutebeuf wrote the main work in the vernacular, *La vie de sainte Elysabel*, which was commissioned by the bishop of Auxerre and dedicated to Isabelle, daughter of king Louis IX (Klaniczay 2005: 286). The most complete and widespread thirteenth-century *vita* of saint Elisabeth was that of Dietrich von Apolda, written in the early 1290s (Gecser 2012: 27).

The writings dedicated to the life of saint Elisabeth were abundant and widespread in Europe, emanating not only from German territories but also from French and Italian milieux. Patronage of the works was also varied, with different religious orders involved (both mendicants and others) and with royal promotion, as in the case of Rutebeuf's poem. Although they were meant for niche audiences, these texts circulated through different European territories, as did the devotion to the saint herself. Proof of the spread of her cult are the different institutions dedicated to her throughout the thirteenth century in the territories of modern-day Germany and Northern France. These establishments included chapels, churches, hospitals, and beguinages, sometimes commissioned by members of the nobility (Bünz 2007; Werner 1994).

Given this situation of religious interchange, it is surprising that no attention has been paid to the spread of the cult in the kingdom of Castile, territory which by the mid-thirteenth century was very much "internationally" connected through Alfonso X's imperial ambitions (Ayala Martínez 1987). This lack of academic interest is especially remarkable given the documentary evidence of a cult (albeit small) and also given that the only known manuscript with a pictorial cycle of the life of saint Elisabeth came from Castile. This manuscript will be the main focus of the next section.

2. ST. ELISABETH IN THE KINGDOM OF CASTILE

The only material evidence known of the presence of a developed cult of saint Elisabeth of Hungary in the kingdom of Castile is manuscript Nouvelles Acquisitions Latines 868, preserved at the Bibliothèque nationale de France. This manuscript, dedicated to the life and office of Saint Elisabeth, is formed of twenty-nine folios that show a delicate array of musical notations, hymns, rubrics in Spanish, texts in Latin, illuminated initials and illuminations (Figure 1). The decorative elements of the manuscript present different levels of completion, ranging from nearly finished to merely sketched vignettes. The codex has suffered damages and losses, particularly evident in and after folio 23, which was at some point detached from the corpus and glued to the front inner cover of the book (traces of paint are still visible today). In addition, there is an indeterminate number of missing folios between current ff. 10 and 11, 17 and 18, 23 and 24, and at the end of the codex. In addition, very little is known about the provenance of this manuscript, which arrived at the BnF in 1905 as part of a donation made by collector Jules Maciet (Avril 1982, 82). There are no records of the state of the manuscript at that time, making it difficult to know when these damages and losses took place.

The date and origin of the manuscript are uncertain, but scholars have traditionally placed its creation in the city of Seville in the last quarter of the thirteenth century, mostly focusing on stylistic comparisons with other works issued from the scriptorium of king Alfonso X (Avril 1983: 82; Rodríguez Porto 2012: 7, 16). Furthermore, the kinship of his wife Violante of Aragon to Elisabeth,

who was the half-aunt of the queen, has led scholars to defend that the arrival of the devotion to saint Elisabeth –and the promotion of this manuscript– would be connected to Violante herself (Laguna Paúl 2014: 147; Blume and Joneitis 2007: 325). Rosa Rodríguez Porto has even suggested that the manuscript remained unfinished due to Violante’s flight to Aragon in 1278 (Rodríguez Porto 2012: 16).

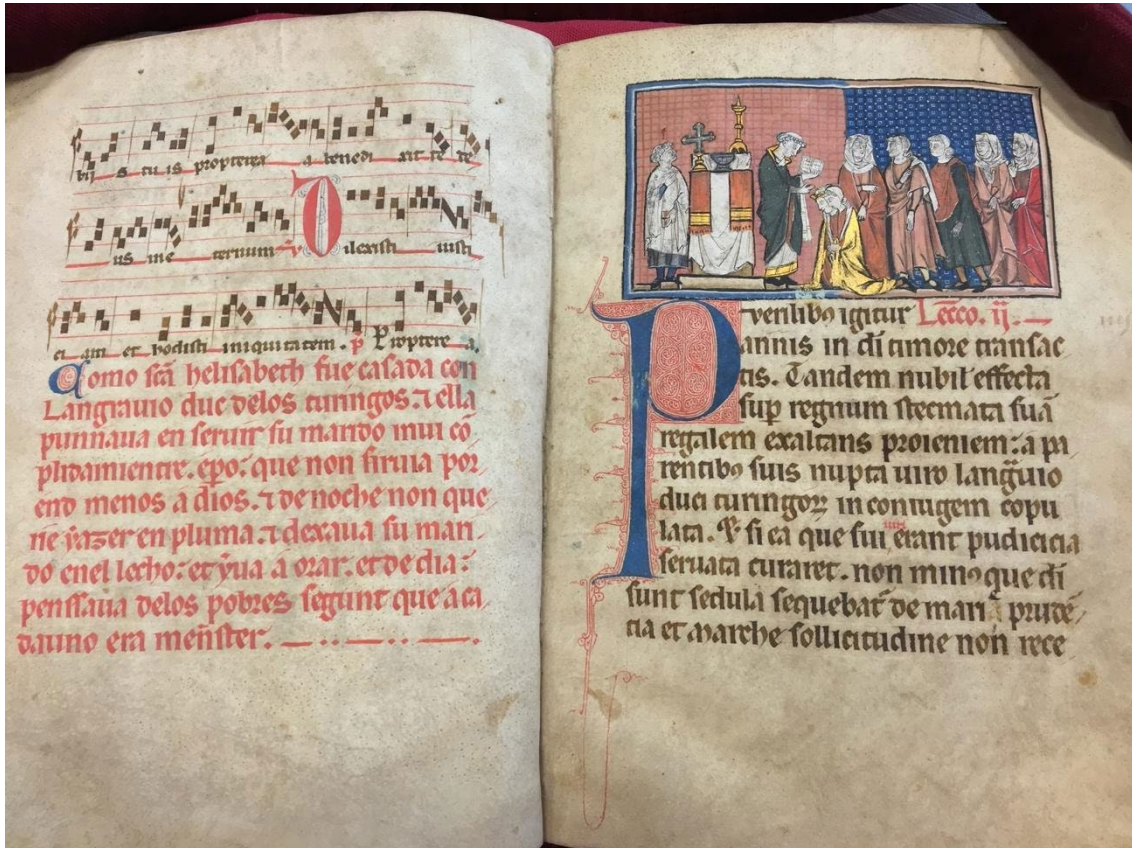


Figura 1. Paris, BnF, NAL 8686 (*Officium et Vita Sanctae Elisabeth Thuringiae*), ff. 5r-6r.

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Besides this manuscript, two other examples of documentary evidence speak of the presence of the cult of saint Elisabeth in thirteenth-century Castile. In a privilege given to the clergy of Seville in November 1271, king Alfonso X asks the clergymen to undertake a series of anniversaries for five of his relatives. The one dedicated to his father should take place in the cathedral, but the other four (to his mother, grandmother, grandfather and great-grandfather) should take place in “*la nuestra capiella de santa Elyzabeth*”, that is “our chapel of saint Elisabeth” (Gonzalez Jimenez 1991: nº 387). Unfortunately, the location of this chapel is unknown, although it has been suggested that it could have been located in the *alcázar* of Seville (Laguna Paúl 2014: 147).

According to the above-mentioned theory of the key role of Violante of Aragon, the cult of the saint would have arrived in Castile with her marriage in 1249 or, at the earliest, in 1240 when the betrothal was accorded (Fuente Pérez 2017: 63). However, the second evidence of the cult in Castile predates both occurrences. On the 7th of June 1235, just a week after the canonisation of

Elisabeth, pope Gregory IX wrote a letter to queen Beatrice of Swabia, wife to Ferdinand III, urging her to follow the example of the newly canonised saint in order to become a “precious pearl” (Sbaraglia 1759: 162-164). This well-known letter is the earliest reference to Elisabeth that can be found in Castile, although scholars have failed to acknowledge its importance.

Gregory’s letter includes the words “*vas admirabile*” in his description of saint Elisabeth. As stated above, this expression forms the incipit of BHL 2510. These same words can be found in NAL 868, folio 4v (Fig. 2). Gecser suggested that the Pope might have sent a copy of the life of saint Elisabeth with his letter (Gecser 2012, 22). After all, Beatrice would have found it useful to have a reference text in order to emulate the saint. I firmly believe that the presence of these words, “*vas admirabile*”, in the letter, in BHL 2510 and in NAL 868 unmistakably indicates that Gregory IX did in fact send Beatrice a life of saint Elisabeth and that this text therefore circulated in the Castilian court since 1235.



Figura 2. París, BnF, NAL 868 (*Officium et Vita Sanctae Elisabeth Thuringiae*), f. 4v.
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This version of the BHL 2510 is the main source of the NAL 868 Latin text. Although the manuscript opens with the words “*Beata Helisabeth filia regis Hungarorum in palatio et in purpura nobiliter educata*”, taken from a different source, the BHL 2510 was followed uninterruptedly throughout folios 4v to 7r. After a gap that will be discussed below, folio 18r restarts BHL 2510 exactly where it was left on folio 7r. From this point forward, NAL 868 follows selected sections of

BHL 2510. The biggest loss seems to have happened after folio 23, where the manuscript is probably missing a whole quire that described the death and burial of the saint. It is impossible to know which sections were chosen or which scenes were depicted. Rodríguez Porto suggested the presence of an illumination depicting pope Gregory IX (2012, vol 2: 8), but it is not far-fetched to think that the loss of this quire could be due to a later reader's desire to cut out and keep an illumination of the death and burial of saint Elisabeth.

After this gap, there is a selection of post-mortem miracles, taken directly from BHL 2510 (which, in turn, took them from the proceedings of the canonisation process). At the end of the manuscript there is another loss, as the text finishes in the middle of a sentence.



Figura 3. París, BnF, NAL 868 (*Officium et Vita Sanctae Elisabeth Thuringiae*), f. 7r.
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Returning to folio 7r (Fig. 3), it opens with the last words of the Latin BHL 2510 text (*-geret ancillarum*) followed by a rubric in Spanish. The following Latin text is not using BHL 2510 as source. Scholars have until now failed to address the question of which Latin text is the underlying model for folios 7r-17v and folios 3v-4r. The comparison with other texts dedicated to the life of saint Elisabeth has allowed me to identify this second source as the life of Elisabeth present in the *Legende sanctorum et festiuitatum aliarum* by Franciscan author Juan

Gil de Zamora. In NAL 868, the text in folio 17r finishes abruptly at the beginning of a word (*do-*, belonging to *domini*), indicating the loss of an unknown number of folios. As mentioned before, folio 18r follows BHL 2510 once again, exactly where it left it on folio 7r. The manuscript's quire structure seems to suggest that this loss took place before the rebinding of the book.

There is therefore an intentional "insertion" of the text of Juan Gil at the beginning (ff. 3v-4r) and then in the middle (ff. 7r-17v) of the BHL text, although the evidence of the scribe and the materiality of the manuscript indicate that the totality of the text was copied contemporaneously. What prompted this modification of the original text?

3. JUAN GIL DE ZAMORA

Juan Gil de Zamora is one of the most prominent figures of the intellectual thirteenth-century Castile. Despite this, not much is known about his life. Most of the information comes from his own writings or from documents that mention certain individuals that may or may not be our Juan Gil. Manuel Castro y Castro (1955), main scholar of Juan Gil throughout the twentieth century, built a narrative of the intellectual's life that recent scholars such as Ferrero Hernández (2010), Otero Pereira (2009), and Martín Iglesias and Otero Pereira (2014) have started to question. What follows is a summary of the life of Juan Gil, even if uncertainties still remain.

Juan Gil was born in the Castilian city of Zamora in the early 1240s or early 1250s.¹ After entering the Franciscan Order, he left Zamora to study in Salamanca and then in Paris. He remained in Paris for at least four years in order to complete the studies that would allow him to become lector at the provincial Franciscan studium of Zamora (Martín Iglesias, Otero Pereira 2014: 15). It is highly likely that he travelled to other cities in France, such as Tours and Toulouse (Ferrero Hernandez 2009: 27). Although the dates of his studies in Salamanca and Paris are still a matter of discussion, what is certain is that he was back in Castile by 1278: a document signed in San Esteban de Gormaz dated in that year mentions Juan Gil (Martín Iglesias, Otero Pereira 2014: 15). After this date he probably fulfilled different roles within his order, the last being that of provincial minister of the Franciscan province of Santiago. A replacement for this role was not sought until 1318, a date that has traditionally been established as that of his death (Martín Iglesias, Otero Pereira 2014: 18).

The knowledge of the works written by Juan Gil is also scarce. His literary production must have been enormous, although its actual magnitude is unknown (Ferrero Hernandez 2009: 33). The primary collection of his writings was kept at the Franciscan convent of Zamora. Unfortunately, the expropriation of the building in 1834 as part of the "*desamortización*" led to the scattering of the

¹ Castro y Castro proposed 1241 or 1242, whereas Otero and Martin have given a slightly later date, 1250 (Castro y Castro 1955: XLIII; Martín Iglesias, Otero Pereira 2014: 14).

manuscripts, some of which had already signs of extended damage (Ferrero Hernández 2009: 33). In spite of this far-from-ideal situation, numerous works by Juan Gil have survived, such as *De praeconiis Hispaniae*, the *Liber contra uenena*, *Liber Ihesu*, etc. Many others (such as his *Historia canonica ac ciuilis* and his *Armarium scripturarum*) are only known through later mentions or fragments copied in early modern manuscripts.

One of the manuscripts that play a key role in the study of Juan Gil's lost works is MSS/2763 of the Biblioteca Nacional de España, written in the eighteenth century by father Francisco Méndez. Father Méndez copied two lost manuscripts written by a certain Miguel Ordóñez, who in 1707 had copied the works of Juan Gil kept in the convent of Saint Francis in Zamora (Martín Iglesias, Otero Pereira 2014: 27, 85). Father Méndez copied some fragments and the index entries of the twenty-three books of Juan Gil's *Historia canonica*.

Both the preserved fragments and the documentary mentions indicate that the *Historia canonica* was a massive, alphabetically-organised encyclopaedic project that addressed a wide range of topics, from hagiography to zoology and natural history. Juan Gil compiled, reused, and modified the information conveniently (Ferrero Hernández 2009: 37; Martín Iglesias, Otero Pereira 2014: 28). Shorter, more specifically-themed texts were extracted from the *Historia canonica* and circulated independently. This is the case of the *Liber Ihesu*, the *Liber contra uenena*, and the *Legende Sanctorum et festiuitarum aliorum* (Martín Iglesias and Otero Pereira 2014: 22).

The *Legende Sanctorum* is a compilation of the lives of saints and feasts of the Church whose main function was to aide Franciscan preachers with the writing of their sermons (Martín Iglesias, Otero Pereira 2014: 20). Although its exact date is unknown, Otero Pereira and Martín Iglesias have successfully argued that it must have been composed after the *Historia Naturalis* had been completed. This gives a *terminus post quem* between 1279 and 1289 (Martín Iglesias, Otero Pereira 2014: 14). The text of the *Legende Sanctorum* is only known through one manuscript, British Library Add MS 41070, of which Otero Pereira and Martín Iglesias have recently published a critical edition (Martín Iglesias, Otero Pereira 2014, although Pérez-Wamba already mentioned it in his *Hagiología y Sociedad* (Pérez-Embida Wamba 2002: 314-15). The 2014 edition focuses exclusively on the text, neglecting the materiality of the codex. The following paragraphs aim to contribute to the analysis of the codex by giving, for the first time, a detailed study of the manuscript's materiality.

The Add MS 41070, probably made in the fourteenth century, is currently formed of 465 parchment folios, four unfoliated modern paper flyleaves (two at the front and two at the back), and a photograph of folio 1r, taken in the 1930s.² The manuscript is missing one folio after f. 291 (current end of quire 23) and

² For the sake of clarity, I will follow the modern notation present in the manuscript, which does not acknowledge any of the evident losses.

before f. 292 (beginning of quire 24), as well as the last quire, evident in the sudden interruption of the text.³

The gatherings or quires used are of sixteen and twelve folios, except for the last one, which has 14 folios: 1-4¹⁶ 5-6¹² 7-8¹⁶ 9-10¹² 11¹⁶ 12-26¹² 27-29¹⁶ 30¹² 31-34¹⁶ 35¹⁴. The quires are arranged following Gregory's rule throughout the totality of the manuscript. There is also a systematic use of catchwords, except between quires 23 and 24 (which indicates the loss of the aforementioned folio after f. 291) and between 34 and 35 (although, in this case, there is no apparent loss). The catchwords are positioned horizontally in the centre of the lower margin of the page. The folios have been ploughed, probably as part of the process of rebounding the manuscript in the 19th century –and perhaps even during earlier reboundings. As a consequence, some marginal notes have been partially cut off, as well as most of the quire and folio signatures. The only surviving folio signatures can be found in quire 16, where folios 209v to 213r present alphabetical signatures, positioned in the lower right margin of verso folios, and in the lower left of recto folios. The current measurements of the folio are 183 x 120mm, and 130 x 90mm for the textbox. There are between twenty-five and twenty-eight lines of writing positioned in a single column. Lead point ruling is used. The first line of writing is positioned under the upper ruling line. The type of script used is Gothic minuscule (*textura*), although there is a clear change of scribe in the last twenty folios, with slightly more angular letters. The decoration of the manuscript consists solely of illuminated, pen-flourished initials in blue and red, alternatively, with flourishings that spread on the margins. Scribe marks are still visible next to almost all the illuminated initials. There is also an alternance of red and blue *piéd-de-mouches*. Rubrics are in red.

The reduced size of the manuscript responds to its intended use as a practical tool for Franciscan friars when composing their sermons. The presence of wax marks (ff. 96r, 207r, and 322r) and of later marginal notes (folios 48v, 54v, 114r, 201r, 204r, 285v, 337v, 341v, 342r, 370r, 448v) indicate that it was, in fact, widely used. According to the location of these marks, the most read entries were those of saint Isidore of Seville, saint Catherine, the birth of the Virgin and All Saints (among others). Despite its practical use, the book was certainly the product of a refined process, which resulted in the equal distribution of the text, and the presence of very few corrections. The high quality of the parchment used also indicates the care put into the creation of this codex.

Little is known about its provenance besides the fact that it was acquired from the widow of George Neilson in 1924.⁴ Neilson, who had passed away the previous year, was a Scottish lawyer, historian, and antiquarian whose manuscript collection has unfortunately not been the object of any detailed

³ Thus, the current foliation stands as follows: 1 flyleaf + Photograph of f. 1r + 1 flyleaf + 1 - 291 + [1] + 292 - 465 + 2 flyleaves.

⁴ This is written in pencil the front flyleaf of the manuscript.

research. Focusing on Add MS 41070, it probably came from a Franciscan convent in Castile, although further studies are needed to narrow down a possible context of origin.

Folios 210r to 216v of Add MS 41070 contain the life of saint Elisabeth of Hungary. According to Otero Pereira and Martín Iglesias, Juan Gil based his work mainly on the *Libellus de dictis quattuor ancillarum* (Martín Iglesias, Otero Pereira 2014: 809). Pérez-Wamba mentioned Conrad of Marburg's *Summa Vitae* and the works of Caesarius von Heisterbach as other possible sources (Pérez-Embid Wamba 2002: 314-315). However, Juan Gil's life of saint Elisabeth includes three episodes that are not present in these sources. These are the miracle of the healing of a child during her lifetime (which is a post-mortem miracle in the witness statements of the canonisation process), the miraculous healing of a brother of Conrad of Marburg and the miracle of the dress. The latter takes place during Elisabeth's time in Wartburg castle. Her husband, Louis IV, asks Elisabeth to join him and some other guests for dinner. Elisabeth, having given all her clothes to the poor, begs to God for his help in order not to embarrass her husband in front of his guests with her poor clothing. God promptly sends an angel with a beautiful dress that allow her to fulfill her role as wife of the landgrave.

These three miracles are not part of the original list sent to Pope Gregory IX. In fact, they seem to appear for the first time in the French Franciscan entourage sometime between 1250 and 1280 (Gecser 2012: 21). As mentioned above, Juan Gil studied in Paris and visited other French cities in the 1270s, which would have allowed him to come into contact with these new versions of the life of saint Elisabeth.

There is another interesting aspect regarding Juan Gil's use of sources. The Franciscan author made an extensive use of the *Legenda Aurea* as source for many of the entries of his *Legende Sanctorum*. However, the absence of the miracle of the roses in his account of the life of Saint Elisabeth is remarkable, given the presence of this episode in Varazze's work since at least 1266-1272 (Gecser 2012: 17-18). This leads us to believe that the text of the life of saint Elisabeth predates the rest of the *Legende* and that it was initially written for the *Historia canonica*. After all, Juan Gil himself admitted reusing texts from his *Historia* (Martín Iglesias, Otero Pereira 2014: 8), a fact that Otero Pereira has proven in recent years (Martín Iglesias, Otero Pereira 2014: 26-29). Unfortunately, as stated before, only fragments of the *Historia canonica* have survived, as well as its indexes in BNE MSS/2763. Interestingly enough, the index for the eighth book of the *Historia canonica*, in BNE MSS/2763, folio 155r, records an entry dedicated to "Helisabeth". Although nothing else has survived from this entry, it is very probable that it was dedicated to Elisabeth of Hungary, called "Helisabeth" in the *Legende Sanctorum*.

4. ROYAL CONNECTIONS: BEATRICE OF SWABIA

NAL 868 compiles in one single text two of the main lives of saint Elisabeth that seem to have been available in Castile during the thirteenth century. On the one hand, it heavily relies on BHL 2510, probably through the text sent to queen Beatrice of Swabia in 1235. On the other, the original text appears to have been “updated” by Juan Gil’s account, adding new episodes that had emerged later in the century. What prompted this textual modification and the creation of a lavish manuscript dedicated to saint Elisabeth? I believe the answer to this question is linked to the figure of Beatrice of Swabia.

Even if Beatrice received a copy of the life of saint Elisabeth, her active role in the spread of the saint’s cult could not have been significant, given her untimely death on the 5th November 1235, just a few months after the letter from the Pope. After her passing, the queen was buried in the monastery of Las Huelgas in Burgos (Baura García 2018: 79). Although there are no contemporary inventories of goods owned by Las Huelgas that may shine a light on the matter, it is not far-fetched to assume that the manuscript of the life of saint Elisabeth was bequeathed to the monastery when the queen was laid there to rest. The study of thirteenth-century liturgical books made in and for Las Huelgas, such as MS 1 and MS 2 of Las Huelgas, and BNE MSS/20324, shows the presence of saint Elisabeth in the liturgical calendars. Furthermore, a 1246 prayer book from the Cistercian monastery of Santo Domingo de Silos el Antiguo in Toledo (BNE MSS/17820) also mentions the commemoration of Elisabeth’s *depositio* in the month of November. It is important to bear in mind that the marriage of Alfonso and Violante of Aragon did not take place until 1249. Given these mentions, it seems highly likely that the arrival of the manuscript of the life of saint Elisabeth to the collections of Las Huelgas after the death of the queen gave way to the development of the cult of the Hungarian saint within the Cistercian community. From there, the cult of the saint spread to other Cistercian centers, as shown in the prayer book from Toledo.

This expansion alone does not explain the creation of NAL 868 and the work of textual “modernisation”. I believe this to be in fact a result of an important event in the life of king Alfonso, namely the transfer in 1279 of his mother’s remains from Las Huelgas to the Royal Chapel in Seville. The pope’s manuscript with the life of saint Elisabeth would have accompanied the body of the queen from Burgos to Seville, where it could have become the main source for NAL 868. However, by then the text was obsolete and in need of an update, which was provided by Juan Gil due to his knowledge of the new lives written in the French Franciscan entourage.

5. CONCLUSIONS

The text of NAL 868 is much more complex than its length might suggest. It condenses a series of influences and European connections that have been neglected until now, and that should be the object of further research.

On the one hand, the use of BHL 2510 indicates a clear link with early lives of saint Elisabeth, strongly suggesting the arrival of a *vita* as early as 1235. Shifting the focus of scholarly research from the 1271 privilege to the letter of the pope, and from Violante to Beatrice, allows for a much richer –and more logical– arrival and development of the cult of saint Elisabeth. Beatrice (born Elisabeth) was, after all, daughter of Philip of Swabia and second cousin of emperor Frederic II. Her bloodline connected Alfonso X with the biggest families and kingdoms in Europe, a fact that the Learned King surely had very present throughout his life. The connection between Beatrice and Elisabeth must have remained evident even after the Queen's passing, which could have been, in my opinion, the drive behind the courtly development of the cult.

On the other hand, the addition of new textual passages by Juan Gil, one of the greatest authors of the late thirteenth century, indicates the will to actively “renovate” the text, keeping it up-to-date with the rest of Europe. The hypothesis that the translation of the remains of Beatrice from Burgos to Seville was the trigger for the creation of this manuscript leads to pose other questions regarding the importance of women in the life of Alfonso X of Castile.

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