

AGNIESZKA ROŻNOWSKA-SADRAEI

*THEATRUM PASSIO SANCTI STANISLAI.*  
SOME THOUGHTS ON THE ROLE OF KRAKÓW CATHEDRAL  
AS THE SHRINE OF ST STANISŁAW\*

On 8 September 1253 bishop Stanisław of Szczepanów was canonised in the basilica of St Francis at Assisi. A year later his relics were elevated to the altar in the centre of the crossing of the so-called second Romanesque cathedral on the ancient Wawel hill at Kraków. This elevation transformed the church, which had functioned for centuries as the seat of the second most important bishop in the country, into the centre of St Stanisław's cult. In time the cathedral acquired other functions, becoming the Polish coronation church and royal necropolis, a true *Königskirche*<sup>1</sup>, as well as undergoing numerous architectural transformations. All the transformations, especially in the western part of the church, were to a great degree linked with the presence of the saint's shrine. Yet in the past students of the cathedral focused mainly on the changes in the structural fabric of the building<sup>2</sup>. Only a few scholars have devoted their attention to

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\* This is still work in progress as the essay has been written as a part of a PhD thesis entitled *Pater Patriae. St Stanislaus and the Art of the Jagiellonians (1385–1526)* began at the Courtauld Institute of Art in October 2002.

<sup>1</sup> As defined by H. Sedlmayr, *Die gotische Kathedrale Frankreichs als europäische Königskirche*, in: *Epochen und Werke, Gesammelte Schriften zur Kunstgeschichte*, I, 1959, p. 182ff.

<sup>2</sup> Among others P. Crossley, *Gothic architecture in the Reign of Kasimir the Great*, Kraków 1985, pp. 21–51, K. Czyżewski and M. Walczak, *Z badań nad gotycką katedrą w Krakowie*, "Studia Waweliana", VIII, 1999, T. Węćławowicz, *Fazy budowy prezbiterium katedry na Wawelu na przełomie wieków XIII i XIV. Kościoły biskupów Muskaty, Nankera i Grota*, "Studia Waweliana", VIII, 1999, pp. 5–19 and his *Kraków. Kościół katedralny pw. śś. Wacława i Stanisława*, [in:] *Architektura gotycka w Polsce*, part 1, vol. 2, ed. A. Włodarek, *Katalog zabytków*, Warszawa 1995, pp. 122–124 (*Dzieje Sztuki Polskiej II*) as well as T. Wojciechowski, *Kościół katedralny w Krakowie*, Kraków 1900.

other issues such as patronage or an ideological programme<sup>3</sup> and, most importantly, to the study of the church as the main sanctuary of St Stanisław<sup>4</sup>. But to understand fully the cathedral an examination of its function as a pilgrimage church is necessary. And although it is inevitable that such studies will be anthropologically oriented, the aim of this essay is to present a few thoughts on the visual strategies employed to structure pilgrims' experience in the Cathedral and, in consequence, to inspire a wide-ranging art historical discussion.

We have no evidence that a coherent, all-encompassing decorative programme was ever designed for the shrine. Moreover, no first-hand accounts relating pilgrims' response to images in the church have been discovered<sup>5</sup>. However, we are able to reconstruct the appearance of the shrine and the layout of the nave of Kraków cathedral at the beginning of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, when St Stanisław' cult was at its peak. So, an analysis of artistic and architectural initiatives exercised within the spatial grid of the cathedral should help us to recreate how art was used by the clergy to promote the cult of the Bishop Martyr, and by

<sup>3</sup> For example P. Crossley, *Kraków Cathedral and the Formation of a Dynastic Architecture in Southern Central Europe*, [in:] *Polish and English Responses to French Art and Architecture. Contrasts and Similarities. Papers delivered at the University of London/University of Warszawa History of Art Conference, January and September 1993*, ed. F. Ames-Lewis, London 1995, pp. 31–46 also his *Bohemia Sacra and Polonia Sacra. Liturgy and History in Prague and Kraków Cathedrals*, "Folia Historiae Artium. Seria Nova" VII, 2001, pp. 49–69, Z. Piech, *Średniowieczne herby w katedrze wawelskiej. Treści i funkcje*, [in:] *Katedra krakowska w średniowieczu*, Kraków 1996, pp. 127–152, J. Pietrusiński, *Krakowska Katedra Romańska fundacji Króla Bolesława Szczodrego*, [in:] *Katedra krakowska w średniowieczu*, Kraków 1996, pp. 43–105, M. Walczak and K. Czyżewski, *Die Krakauer Kathedrale und die Marienkirche in ihrer Funktion für Hof und Stadt*, [in:] *Krakau, Prag und Wien. Funktionen von Metropolen im frühmodernen Staat*, Stuttgart 2000, pp. 103–115 and M. Walczak, *Przemiany architektoniczne katedry krakowskiej w pierwszej połowie XV wieku i ich związek z działalnością fundacyjną kardynała Zbigniewa Oleśnickiego*, "Studia Waweliana", I, 1992, pp. 7–28, T. Węclawowicz, *Wawelski zespół katedralny i jego funkcje w Średniowieczu*, "Analecta Cracoviensia" XXXII, 2000, pp. LXVII–LXVIII.

<sup>4</sup> W. Miśchke, *Relacje dziejów katedry wawelskiej i kultu św. Stanisława*, [in:] *Katedra krakowska w Średniowieczu*, Kraków 1996, pp. 153–162, to some extent M. Jagosz, *Procesje ku czci św. Stanisława w Wawelu na Skatkę w okresie przedzoborowym*, "Analecta Cracoviensia" XI, 1979, pp. 603–614 and Walczak, 1992, pp. 24–27.

<sup>5</sup> At least I have not come across any in my research until now. The case of Weronika is not entirely relevant to my argument since she never enters the cathedral. It can only be pointed out that her vision testifies to the influence that images had in shaping medieval devotion for Ss Wojciech (Adalbert) and Florian appear in the vision dressed as a bishop and a knight and that is exactly how they were depicted in art. For a full transcript of her vision see: *Jana Długosza kanonika krakowskiego Dziejów polskich ksiąg dwanaście*, transl. K. Mecherzyński, vol. IV, Kraków 1869, pp. 552–557 also U. Borkowska, *Przykład pobożności mieszczańskiej w XV w. Weronika z Krakowa*, [in:] *Sztuka i ideologia XV wieku. Materiały sympozjum Komitetu Nauk o Sztuce Polskiej Akademii Nauk, Warszawa, 1–4 grudnia 1976 r.*, Warszawa 1978, p. 111.

the Polish kings to communicate their political message of the very special relationship with the *Pater Patriae*.

Pilgrims arriving at the Romanesque cathedral first approached the west façade of the church after a difficult climb up the steep northern pathway along the Wawel hill, and could then enter the church either through the south and/or the west portal. It has been implied that in the Romanesque cathedral, as well as in its successor, the main entrance led through the south portal<sup>6</sup> and it appears that, at least in terms of visual access to the shrine, entering through the south portal, the pilgrims' gaze met no obstacles and their attention could have been effectively channelled towards the shrine. In contrast, the western passage into the church led along narrow vestibules, squeezed between the towers and the crypt of the *Westwerk*<sup>7</sup>, and once inside, visitors were distracted by the possibility of glimpsing the interior of the crypt through hagioscopes in its raised walls, as well as looking towards the shrine in the crossing. Moreover, a reading of St Stanisław's *Vita maior* and his *Miracula* provides more support to a supposition that in the Romanesque church pilgrimage activity focused around the south portal of the building. It records that in 1244–1253 the custodian Trojan<sup>8</sup> guided worshippers to the first *sepulcrum* of the saint<sup>9</sup>, which was

<sup>6</sup> Pietrusiński, 1996, p. 68.

<sup>7</sup> For the reconstruction of the western section of the so-called second Romanesque (or Herman's) cathedral see: *Ibidem* as well as J. Firlet, Z. P i a n o w s k i, *Początki katedry krakowskiej w świetle badań archeologicznych do r. 1995*, [in:] *Katedra krakowska w średniowieczu, Kraków 1996* and their *Przemiany architektury rezydencji monarszej oraz katedry na Wawelu w świetle nowych badań*, "Kwartalnik Architektury i Urbanistyki" XLIV, 2000, pp. 207–237.

<sup>8</sup> Trojan was a canon in 1210–1239, see: *Kodeks dyplomatyczny Małopolski*, (afterwards KDMP) vol. II, pp. 380, 383, 397, 413, 416; *Kodeks dyplomatyczny katedry krakowskiej*, (afterwards KDKK), ed. F. Piekosiński, vol. I, Cracoviae 1874, pp. 8, 21 and *Monografia opactwa cystersów we wsi Mogile. Zbiór dokumentów mogińskich*, (afterwards CDMog) ed. E. Janota, Kraków 1867, pp. 1, 2, 5, 7, 10. He was the custodian in 1244–1253 (KDKK, I, 29, 36) and before 1263 became a cantor (KDKK, I, p. 64; CDMog, pp. 28, 29). He died on 30 December 1268. See: *Monumenta Poloniae Historica* (afterwards MPH), A. Bielowski ed., vol. II, Lwów 1872, p. 812.

<sup>9</sup> From article VIII of Stanisław's *Miracula* we can deduct that the first grave was emptied around 1243. It describes how a boy named Mikołaj, suffering from epilepsy, was put in the Saint's grave just after his bones were raised from it, and that it happened seven years before the *Miracula* were compiled. See: *Miracula s. Stanisłai*, ed. W. Kętrzyński, MPH, vol. IV, Lwów 1884, pp. 285–318 or *Miracula s. Stanisłai*, second edition, ed. Z. Perzanowski, "Analecta Cracoviensia" XI, 1979, pp. 41–141. Both the date of the first translation of Stanisław's remains as well as the location of his grave in the cathedral has been hotly debated. Scholars argued three possible dates, that of 1088, of around 1142 and at the end of the 12<sup>th</sup> century. See among others D. B o r a w s k a, *Z dziejów jednej legendy. W sprawie genezy kultu Św. Stanisława biskupa*, Warszawa 1952, pp. 62–63, G. L a b u d a, *Święty Stanisław – biskup krakowski – patron Polski. Śladami zabójstwa – męczeństwa – kanonizacji*, Poznań 2000, pp. 136–138, Mischke 1996, pp. 155–156, Pietrusiński, 1996, p. 90, M. P l e z i a, *Dookoła sprawy św. Stanisława. Studium*

probably located somewhere *prope portam meridionalem*<sup>10</sup>. Pilgrims were blessed with Stanisław's ring<sup>11</sup> and those seriously afflicted were bathed in, or given to drink, the water in which the ring had been soaked<sup>12</sup>. They could also kiss the ground inside the grave<sup>13</sup> or were even laid in it<sup>14</sup>.

The south portal also functioned as *ostium maius*<sup>15</sup>, probably the royal entrance in the Gothic building, though the metal west door seems to be better suited for a popular entrance. This west door is small and narrow – as if echoing Christ's words from the Sermon on the Mount: '...strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life...'<sup>16</sup>. Archangel Michael – revered chief of the celestial army which defends the church against the rebel angels and the dragon of Revelations – guards the doorway on the left, and on the right St Margaret, who escaped the belly of an evil dragon thanks to her purity and faith, keeps watch over the pilgrims processing into the sacred interior<sup>17</sup>. If the modest

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Źródłoznawcze, "Analecta Cracoviensia" XI, 1979, pp. 355–356, J. R a j m a n, *Przedkanonizacyjny kult św. Stanisława Biskupa*, "Nasza Przeszłość" LXXX, 1993, p. 18.

<sup>10</sup> In the chapter entitled *Sacra ossa elevantur; equus mortuus resuscitatur*, Długosz, while relating the elevation of Stanisław's bones and division of his relics in 1254, mentions that the relics were raised *ex tumulo prope portam meridionalem*. Długosz, *Vita s. Stanislai* in his *Opera Omnia*, vol. 1: *Vitae Episcoporum Poloniae*, ed. I. Polkowski and Ż. Pauli, Cracoviae 1887, pp. 148–149. Because the chapter describes the post-canonisation elevation of the body to the centre of the crossing it seems that he refers to the temporary tomb in Prandota's chapel rather than Stanisław's first subterranean grave. Nevertheless, it is highly likely that this first grave was also located somewhere in the vicinity of the south portal. *Vita sancti Stanislai episcopi Cracoviensis (Vita maior)*, auctore fratre Vincentio de Ordine fratrum Predicatorum (afterwards *Vita maior*), pars III, cap. 2, ed. W. Kętrzyński, in: *MPH*, vol. IV, Lwów 1884, p. 394, states that in 1088 the body was placed *in medio ecclesiae*. In the 13<sup>th</sup> century this phrase usually referred to the area adjacent to the choir screen rather than the centre of the crossing. See: F. O s w a l d, *In medio Ecclesiae: Die Deutung der literarischen Zeugnisse im Lichte archäologischer Funde*, "Frühmittelalterliche Studien" III, 1969, pp. 313–26 and D. C o o p e r, *In medio ecclesiae: Screens, Crucifixes and Shrines in the Franciscan Church Interior in Italy (c. 1230 – c. 1400)*, PhD thesis, Courtauld Institute of Art, University of London 2000. Considering that Prandota moved Stanisław's relics in preparation for the canonisation, it is unlikely that they would have been removed from the prominent location in the centre of the church and placed in a much less important side chapel so we can infer that the first grave was indeed somewhere *prope portam meridionalem*.

<sup>11</sup> *Miracula S. Stanislai*, [in:] *MPH* IV, pp. 294, 305–306 (art. XI, XXVII, XXVIII).

<sup>12</sup> See for example *Vita maior*, part III, ch. 34 or a story of a noble man Włociej whose eyes turned inside and were cured only when crossed with St. Stanisław's ring and bathed in water in which the ring had been soaked, *Vita maior*, part III, ch. 36.

<sup>13</sup> *Vita maior*, part III, ch. 13.

<sup>14</sup> For instance *Miracula* article VIII, [in:] *MPH* IV, p. 293.

<sup>15</sup> Episcopal visitation of Bishop Zadzik in 1633. See: W o j c i e c h o w s k i, 1900, p. 83.

<sup>16</sup> Matthew ch. 7, 14.

<sup>17</sup> As Jerzy Gadomski has shown, these two sandstone fragments originally formed the tabulum of a 13<sup>th</sup>-century altar in the chapel of St Margaret, located in the north part of the cath-

appearance of the portal was due to the financial problems encountered by the patrons at the end of the building process, it was handled with impressive foresight and sense of decorum. Through its scale and structure, it explicitly marked the passage into the sacred topography of the church and thus the beginning of a miniature “pilgrimage” towards the shrine to receive the favours of St Stanisław.

The most successful shrines concealed their relics. They could be hidden behind the “veil” of a choir screen, or they could manipulate the pilgrims’ progress along narrow crypt corridors, up and down long flights of steps or through numerous portals. Such movement symbolised the journey through prayer, sacrifice and purification towards salvation<sup>18</sup>. At the same time, there were cults, which lapsed after relics had been moved from their original place behind the screen to the easily accessible location in the centre of the church<sup>19</sup>. Obstacles placed on the path towards the shrine heightened the sense of *rite de passage*, a process naturally associated in the medieval mind with socio-religious rituals consisting of a sequence of strictly specified actions<sup>20</sup>. And St Stanisław’s cult, as Tomasz Węclawowicz argued suggestively<sup>21</sup>, was from its early days articu-

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dral ambulatory. They were re-set in the western portal of the new gothic cathedral shortly before its consecration in 1364. See: J. G a d o m s k i, *Pozostałości retabulum pierwszego ołtarza w gotyckiej katedrze na Wawelu*, “Folia Historiae Artium” XXIV, 1988, pp. 5–12. I am grateful to Dr. Marek Walczak for sending me a copy of this article.

<sup>18</sup> One of the earliest shrines, which led pilgrims along an extremely elaborate route towards the relic of the burning bush, was Sinai. See: S. C o l e m a n and J. E l s n e r, *Art, Architecture and Ritual Movement at Sinai*, “World Archeology” XXVI, 1994. Others were for example the church of St. Martin at Tours as well as basilica of St Francis at Assisi and particularly the choir of Canterbury cathedral.

<sup>19</sup> This happened to the cult of St Julian of Norwich. Similarly, it has been argued that one of the reasons for which Dominican friars of the church of San Domenico in Bologna placed the *Arca di San Domenico* in the nave immediately to the west of the choir screen, on the south side of the church, was their desire to smother the nascent populist cult of St. Dominic. See: J. C a n n o n, *Dominic alter Christus? Representations of the Founder in and after the Arca di San Domenico*, [in:] *Christ among the medieval Dominicans*, ed. K. Emery and J. Wawrykow, University of Notre Dame Press, 1998, pp. 26–48, esp. pp. 30–31, fn. 42. I would like to thank Dr Joanna Cannon for bringing rite both cases to my attention.

<sup>20</sup> That is *rite de separation*, *rite de marge* and *rite d’agregation*. See: A. v a n G e n n e p, *Les rites of passage. Étude systematique des ceremonies*, Paris 1909, chapters I and IX, V. W. T u r n e r, *Betwixt and Between: The Liminal Period in Rites of Passage*, [in:] William A. Lessa ed., *Reader in Comparative Religion: An Anthropological Approach*, New York 1972, pp. 338–347. As Binski pointed out, a majority of socio-religious rituals of the Middle Ages, such as rituals of the sick and suffering, death or healing and birth have the tripartite structure described by Gennet. See: P. Binski, *Medieval Death. Ritual and Representation*, London 1996, pp. 29–33.

<sup>21</sup> T. W e c ł a w o w i c z, *Transitus Sancti Stanislai*, [in:] *Magistro et amico amici discipulique. Lechowi Kalinowskiemu w osiemdziesięciolecie urodzin*, Kraków, 2002, pp. 73–86, esp. pp. 75–78.

lated and understood in terms of such ritual. It therefore appears that the placing of the shrine not in the traditional position in the vicinity of the high altar but, unconventionally, in the centre of the crossing, transforming the sanctuary of the saint into a space accessible to the great and the good as well as to the simple and the poor<sup>22</sup>, might pose some danger to the survival of the cult. It might make it too accessible and devoid of mystery. Yet the shrine never ceased to attract flocks of pilgrims, and the saint, in his numerous guises of a holy martyr, powerful healer and intercessor as well as the patron of Polish kings and the guardian of national identity, continued for centuries to excite devotion. It would be far-fetched to ascribe too important a role to the shape of this western doorway and its surrounding façade but we cannot overlook its significance as one of the many factors used to manipulate the pilgrims' progress from profane exterior of *civita terrena* to supernatural interior of *civita Dei*.

The door, decorated with embossed monograms of a crowned letter *K*, bears the personal signature of king Kazimierz Wielki (1333–1370), during whose reign the Gothic rebuilding of the cathedral was completed with its consecration in 1364. But although it might appear as if royal authority grants entrance to the church, a glance at the western façade as a whole reveals that the monarch only watched over the passage by permission of St Stanisław. His figure under a baldachin reigns high up in the gable of the west front, pointedly above the royal signatures, and guards the kingdom not only symbolically, by standing above the white eagle of Poland<sup>23</sup> and the arms of a Kraków bishop Bodzanta (1348–1366), but also literally by embracing the city and the Vistula with his watchful gaze, cast from the highest spot on the Wawel hill.

<sup>22</sup> Ordinary village folk such as Bogusz from Pielgrzymowice. *Vita maior*, part III, ch. 14 or Radosław, son of a peasant Radota, *Vita maior*, part III, ch. 31, rich merchants and their wives such as a German woman called Adlejšta, *Vita maior*, part III, ch. 5 and Przybysława, a daughter of Kraków merchant Reiner, *Vita maior*, part III, ch. 26, noble knights, for instance Sułko, *Vita maior*, part III, ch. 6 or the knight Andrew from Proszowice, *Vita maior*, part III, ch. 17, but also priests: *Vita maior*, part III, ch. 29 and princes such as Władysław of Opole: *Vita maior*, part III, ch. 19.

<sup>23</sup> It seems that superimposition of the Saint's statue over the arms of Poland, and the arms of Jan Bodzanta over the signature of Kazimierz Wielki reflects the conflict between the monarch and the bishop of Kraków, and is meant to symbolise superiority of the Ecclesiastical power over secular authority. If the decoration of the facade was to reflect the partnership of *regnum* and *sacerdotium* the arms could have been placed side by side. On the other hand, since Stanisław is a saint, and thus naturally superior in the earthly hierarchy, the bishops were always in the winning position. For the conflict between king Kasimir and bishops Nanker (1320–1326) and Grot (1326–1347) see: M. Niwiński, *Biskup krakowski Jan Grotowic i jego zatargi z Władysławem Łokietkiem i Kazimierzem Wielkim. Ustęp z dziejów stosunku Kościoła do Państwa w Polsce w w. XIV*, "Nova Polonia Sacra" III, 1939, pp. 57–99. For analysis of how conflicts between royal and Episcopal power were reflected in the decoration of the Wawel cathedral see: C r o s s l e y, 2001, p. 56.

On the west front of the cathedral St. Stanisław's supreme position in the temporal hierarchy, and his privileged residence in heaven, are conveyed through a vertical composition, standing over and against the beholder. This 'diagram' represents the ideal kingdom, and is modelled like a hierarchical ladder, conveying the ascent from what in the theory of political theology<sup>24</sup> is known as the natural kingship – *Body Natural* (symbolized in Kraków by king Kazimierz's signature on the door) through political kingship – *Body Politic* (arms of Poland functioning as the emblem of "Corpus Regni Poloniae") to divine kingship (St Stanisław as *Alter Christus* that is an envoy of the King of Heavens on earth)<sup>25</sup>. But inside the cathedral, viewers also became participants, immersed in the sacred landscape of the everlasting *mysterium* performed in the *Theatrum Passio sancti Stanislai*. For here St Stanisław's hierarchy was laid out horizontally and in space, through furnishing and decoration, and was re-enacted in the spectacle of the Eucharist at the saint's altar. In the Gothic cathedral, where the floor of the nave was lifted to the level of the previous, Romanesque, western choir, pilgrims coming through the western portal were immediately confronted with a contrived perspective, the vanishing point of which was St Stanisław's altar. Medieval theory of optics construed such visual encounter through tangible lines of force: all things issued forth rays of light, which, like searchlights, locked the viewer to the object of his desiring gaze and imprinted its image (*specio*) on the soul of the beholder<sup>26</sup>. Just such a concentration was enforced in Kraków where the pilgrims stepped into the central axis of the nave, to be immediately confronted, on the same axis, with the shrine of St Stanisław. And this confrontation was powerful and enlightening because for the medieval mind seeing was tantamount with understanding<sup>27</sup>.

<sup>24</sup> E. Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies. A Study in Medieval Political Theology*, Princeton 1957.

<sup>25</sup> Here again we encounter the medieval triad. And it is especially relevant to my argument that a tripartite model was also employed by such Christian writers as St. Thomas Aquinas and St Bonaventura in theory of meditation of the divine which advocated that the liable human mind cannot ascent to the uncircumscribable God in any way other than through circumscribed objects – *invisibilia per visibilia*. This ascent has three stages: from the material to the mental, and then to the spiritual. See: D. Friedberg, *The Power of Images. Studies in the History and Theory of Response*, Chicago 1989, esp. pp. 161–1167.

<sup>26</sup> This theory, called intromission, seems to have been favoured by Aristotle and it became increasingly popular in the 13<sup>th</sup> century. It was advocated most of all by Thomas Aquinas in his *Summa Theologica*, Roger Bacon and John Pecham among others. During the earlier Middle Ages an essentially Platonic theory, called extromission, had been most common. It advocated that the eye functioned like a lamp sending out visual rays, which lighted upon an object and made it visible. See: D. C. Lindberg, *Theories of Vision from Al-Kindi to Kepler*, Chicago, 1976 and W. Tatariewicz, *Historia Filozofii*, Warszawa 1988, vol. 1, p. 278.

<sup>27</sup> As argued by Thomas Aquinas in his *Summa Theologica*. He defines *visio* saying: "The term in view of the special nature and certitude of sight, is extended in common usage to the

This powerful perspective was reinforced by the changes introduced to the nave in the 1400s by the Jagiellonians. When, in c. 1421<sup>28</sup>, Władysław II Jagiełło inserted his tomb against the south-eastern nave pillar<sup>29</sup> the easternmost arcade of the south nave was effectively filled and the nave became, even more conspicuously, a channel prepared to focus the concentrated gaze of the visitor towards the dominant shrine of St Stanisław. The sumptuous shrine must have had a suggestive grip on the visual experience of the faithful the instant they entered the church. St Stanisław, present on earth in his relics, reigned here in his sumptuous casket reliquary – “lamina argentea inaurata circumducta” – as described in visitation protocol of bishop Bernard Maciejowski in 1602<sup>30</sup>. Elevated on the marble altar mensa it dominated the interior of the nave, the crossing and the transept. As far as we can deduce from descriptions by Długosz and a 17<sup>th</sup>-century Episcopal visitation, the reliquary, which would have been seen by late medieval pilgrims<sup>31</sup>, was in the form of a gilded casket with a sloping roof, decorated with scenes of the Saint’s martyrdom and miracles, the

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knowledge of all the senses and it is even made to include intellectual knowledge...”. I use the English translation as given in M. Camille, *Gothic Art. Visions and Revelations of the Medieval World*, London 1996, p. 25.

<sup>28</sup> For the summary of arguments in favour of this date see: P. M r o z o w s k i, *Polskie nagrobki gotyckie*, Warszawa 1994, pp. 82–83.

<sup>29</sup> P. C r o s s l e y in: *History, Coronation and Space: The sacred topographies of Kraków and Prague cathedrals under the Jagiellonians* a paper delivered on 26 March 2002 during a GWZO conference in Leipzig, p. 11.

<sup>30</sup> *Acta actorum capituli cracoviensis, Wizytacja kardynała Bernarda Maciejowskiego* (afterwards *Wizytacja Maciejowskiego*), p. 12.

<sup>31</sup> It seems highly likely that the first reliquary was commissioned some time before 1254 by the Blessed Kinga, wife of prince Bolesław Wstydlivy (the Shy). There has been no consensus on this matter but it appears natural that, after a carefully prepared and long-awaited canonisation, a special receptacle was made for the lavish ceremony of the saint’s elevation, which, due to the number of attending royal Piasts, proved a true dynastic gala. 1<sup>st</sup> October 1336 can be given as *terminus ante quem* for its creation since the reliquary is then mentioned in bishop Jan Grot’s charter. See: *KDKK*, ed. F. Piekosiński in: *Monumenta Medii Aevii Historica*, I, Cracoviae 1874, pp. 201–202. It has also been argued that there existed other reliquary coffins and different individuals were credited with their commission. For example M. K o c h a n o w s k a - R e i c h e, *Najstarsze cykle narracyjne z legendą św. Stanisława*, “Ikonotheka” III, 1991, pp. 38–39, linked the reliquary to king Ladislaus Łokietek. In addition, on the basis of a 17<sup>th</sup>-century note in the acts of the Cracow Chapter, which reads as follows: *veterem tumbam cineribus Sancti Stanislai ab Helizabetha regina constructam, qua in sacristia est reposita* (in: *Acta actorum capituli cracoviensis*, vol. 13, k. 163 v.), it has also been suggested that queen Elżbieta Łokietkówna also commissioned a coffin reliquary. This hypothesis was introduced into literature by L. Ł ę t o w s k i, *Katalog biskupów, prałatów i kanoników*, vol. I, Cracow 1859, p. 20 and in his *Katedra krakowska na Wawelu*, Cracow 1859, p. 20, also by I. P o l k o w s k i, *Grób i trumna św. Stanisława*, “Sprawozdania Komisji Historii Sztuki”, III, 1888, p. 25. For further arguments see the article by K. Czyżewski in this volume.



arms of Poland, and a panegyric inscription (or epitaph) in honour of the Holy Bishop<sup>32</sup>. His holiness was the direct result of his martyrdom. Introduced in Wincenty Kadłubek's *Chronica Polonorum*<sup>33</sup> and then elaborated on in the Wincenty of Kielcza's *Vitae of the saint*<sup>34</sup>, St Stanisław had been a victim of an ultimate sacrilege: he had been martyred while celebrating the Eucharist at the altar, cut down by a sword wielded by king Bolesław himself. Little wonder that this dramatic murder constituted the primary motif of his iconography. When illustrating the Saint's death, his art manifested the belief that martyrs were in a profound manner the members of Christ's mystical body and thus emphasised the moment of the elevation of the Host<sup>35</sup>. The subject was most frequently employed in the 16<sup>th</sup> century but it seems that already in the 14<sup>th</sup> St. Stanisław was perceived as *Alter Christus*. The Anjou *Legendarium* (c. 1333)<sup>36</sup> includes the earliest surviving depiction of the murder at the altar and we can also speculate that one of the principal scenes on the west side of the Saint's first reliquary coffin would have portrayed the same tragic event<sup>37</sup>. It is equally likely that the now lost silver altarpiece commissioned after 1512 by king Zygmunt I Stary (the Elder), placed on the mensa and depicting the martyrdom, could have reiterated this theme<sup>38</sup>.

As with every Christian martyr, St Stanisław's *passio* at the altar was implicitly compared to the redeeming sacrifice of Christ on the cross and his victory over death. In Kraków this idea found a sophisticated elaboration not only

<sup>32</sup> Joannis Długossii, *Opera Omnia*, vol. I: *Vitae Episcoporum Poloniae*, ed. I. Polkowski and Ž. Pauli, Cracoviae 1887, p. 96, *Acta visitationis...* A. Trzebicki, vol. II, shelf mark 52, pp. 394–402, Archives of the Metropolitan Chapter in Kraków, also E. Śnieżyńska-Stolot, *Ze Studiów nad ikonografią legendy św. Stanisława Biskupa*, "Folia Historiae Artium", VIII, 1972, pp. 161–182 also Kochanowska-Reiche, 1991, pp. 33–36.

<sup>33</sup> Magistri Vincenti dicti Kadłubek, *Chronica Polonorum*, ed. M. Plezia, MPH, s.n., vol. XI, Kraków 1994.

<sup>34</sup> *Vita sancti Stanislai episcopi Cracoviensis (minor)*, ed. W. Kętrzyński, MPH, vol. IV, Lwów 1884, p. 238–285 and *Vita maior*, pp. 319–438.

<sup>35</sup> From the time of St Augustine, the martyrs were the *membra Christi* par excellence. P. Brown, *The Cult of the Saints*, Chicago 1981, p. 72.

<sup>36</sup> Produced probably in Bologna for the Hungarian royal family, and specifically for the education of the young princes, it might have been commissioned by Queen Elżbieta Łokietkówna. See: F. Levárdy ed., *Węgierskie Legendarium Andegaweńskie*, Budapest 1978.

<sup>37</sup> Trzebicki's visitation tells us that on the west side there was a depiction of the eagles guarding the body of the Saint as well as Piotrowin with a sarcophagus from which we can infer that the scenes on this side illustrated the legend of Stanisław's martyrdom and miraculous re-composition of his body. Thus one of the scenes, presumably with two people, could portray king Bolesław murdering the Bishop. See: Śnieżyńska-Stolot, 1972, pp. 178–179.

<sup>38</sup> A. Bochnak, *Mecenat Zygmunta Starego w zakresie rzemiosła artystycznego*, "Studia do Dziejów Wawelu", II, 1960, pp. 131–301, esp. pp. 134–136.

in images of the bishop's martyrdom on his reliquary and the silver altarpiece, but also through the special ensemble created in the shrine area. To the left of St Stanisław's shrine, *contra Beati Stanislai sepulchrum*<sup>39</sup>, St John the Evangelist's altarpiece bore an image of Christ Triumphant in his Resurrection<sup>40</sup>, and directly above St Stanisław's altar, aligned with the Saint's reliquary, a large crucifix<sup>41</sup> rose above the choir screen, which extended across all three aisles of the choir entrance<sup>42</sup>. The Mass itself identified St Stanisław as *Alter Christus*, but in Kraków cathedral the saint's mysterious assimilation to Christ was manifested with a force that finds few parallels in any other major shrine church.

In the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup>-centuries the cathedral functioned as the centre of both popular and official devotion to St Stanisław. In the two subsequent centuries the royal and episcopal cult remained centred on the cathedral, whereas the popular cult began flourishing in St Michael's church on the Skałka (*Rupella* or the Rock), traditionally venerated as the site of St Stanisław's death. This shift is most clearly detected through a comparison of the pre-canonisation *Miracula* with miracles recorded by chancellor Jan Długosz in the 15<sup>th</sup> century<sup>43</sup>. According to the *Miracula*, visions and miracles either took place in the cathedral or provoked a pilgrimage to its shrine and pilgrims stayed there sometimes for days at a time, fasting<sup>44</sup> and sleeping<sup>45</sup>. An analysis of Długosz's records reveals the prevailing number of miracles taking place at the church on the Rock. The Skałka's rise in popularity was a result of a complex social and religious pro-

<sup>39</sup> J. Długosz, *Liber Beneficiorum Diocesis Cracoviensis*, ed. A. Przeździecki, vol. I, Cracoviae 1863–1864, p. 235.

<sup>40</sup> The protocol of the visitation of cardinal Bernard Maciejowski gives a description of the St. John's altar. *Wizytacja Maciejowskiego*, No. 20, pp. 389–390.

<sup>41</sup> The crucifix is mentioned twice, once in 1593 with a record of a payment for the pole and a sheet of black cloth for the Lent curtain to cover "the crucifix on the tomb of St Stanisław" and in 1602 when a candelabra hanging "in corpore eccl(esi)ae ante imaginem crucifixi" is recorded. See respectively: *Acta actorum capituli cracoviensis Liber Fabricae*, vol. 4, p. 13 and *Wizytacja Maciejowskiego*, p. 71. Also Walczak and Czyżewski, 1999, pp. 27–28.

<sup>42</sup> Czyżewski and Walczak, 1999, pp. 21–51, esp. pp. 27–28, suggested that the small vault brackets in the lower parts of the choir aisle entrance arches are the remains of a wide choir screen. This suggestion is supported by Długosz who describes the altar of Sancti Joannis Evangelistae sub titulo ante portam Latinam (not to be confused with another altar dedicated to the same Saint but described as *Altare Sancti Johannis apostoli et evangeliste*) as: "...sed applicatum est muro fornicis, qui inter chorum et corpus ecclesiae mediat, contra Beati Stanislai sepulchrum...". Długosz, *Liber Beneficiorum...*, p. 235 (my underlining).

<sup>43</sup> As noted by A. Witkowska, *Kuły pątnicze piętnastowiecznego Krakowa: z badań nad miejską kulturą religijną*, Lublin 1984, pp. 82–82.

<sup>44</sup> Przewój, see: *Vita maior*, part III, 23.

<sup>45</sup> A mad Marcin from Łętkowice was left at the shrine for four days and nights and in his sleep saw St Stanisław in his pontifical vestments. *Vita maior*, part III, ch. 32.

cess<sup>46</sup> and, at least to some extent, due to the efforts of Długosz, whose clerical ambitions led him to concentrate on a shrine that lay outside the boundaries of the old town, in the manner of the grand late Antique bishops of Rome, the *impresarios* of the early martyrs' shrines<sup>47</sup>. He prepared an 'updated' edition of the Saint's *Life* and, as mentioned above, recorded the new miracles. He also installed on the Skałka the order of Pauline monks, a congregation of medieval pilgrimage 'spin doctors' who had proved extremely successful at running the other major Polish shrine, that of the Black Madonna at Częstochowa.

The shift in the character of the cathedral shrine can also be explained through a development of the new relationship, close and intimate, of the Polish kings with the *Pater Patriae*. Transformed exclusively into the centre of the official cult, the cathedral provided a platform for a campaign of the theme of sacred kingship, orchestrated by Cardinal Oleśnicki and the Jagiellonians who, as Paul Crossley noted recently<sup>48</sup>, were the first to understand fully and exploit the propagandistic, dynastic and sacred potential of the shrine. After his military triumph at Grunwald, Jagiełło, on his return to Kraków, honoured St Stanisław at Skałka. Then in a thanksgiving procession the king proceeded to the cathedral and hung in the shrine 39 Teutonic banners, presenting them to St Stanisław as special *ex voto* offerings in recognition of his role as the father of the state<sup>49</sup>. Kings, queens and royal children, when returning to the capital, were ceremonially greeted on the Wawel by the bishop and the clergy, and presented St. Stanisław with votive offerings *ad manum s. Stanislai*, also kissing his relics<sup>50</sup>. Installation of the tomb of Jagiełło and his son in the nave, being an important element of the scenography of the spectacle of St. Stanisław's feast performed in the cathedral twice a year, incorporated the two kings, in death, into the direct orbit of St Stanisław's intercession.

<sup>46</sup> Witkowska, 1984, p. 83, underlines the tendency to withdraw pilgrimage cults from cathedrals with their ever expanding elaborate liturgies and rigid calendar, which did not give alleyway to the development of pilgrimage rituals, which were governed by their own, specific rules, rhythm and rites.

<sup>47</sup> Brown, 1981, p. 8.

<sup>48</sup> Crossley, *History, Coronation and Space...*, p. 11.

<sup>49</sup> However, some scholars, on the basis of Długosz's story of Teutonic captives and banners being brought to Kraków (Długosz, *Dzieje*, vol. 4, p. 426) maintain that it was king Władysław Łokietek who first offered to St. Stanisław banners taken in battle of Płowce in 1331. See: Rożek, 1979, p. 454. For the history of the banners given to the shrine by king Jagiełło see: Joannis Długosii, *Banderia Prutenorum*, ed. K. Górski, Warszawa 1985, p. 10. It had been assumed that Jagiełło hung all 51 banners at the shrine but recently it turned out that the king's brother, Witold, the Grand Duke of Lithuania, offered seven of those to the Vilnius cathedral. They were brought to Kraków in 1431. See: Rożek, op. cit., p. 454, n. 115.

<sup>50</sup> U. Borkowska, *Polskie pielgrzymki Jagiellonów*, [in:] *Peregrinationes. Pielgrzymki w kulturze dawnej Europy*, Warszawa 1995, p. 199.

The commemoration of St Stanisław's feast days, celebrating his martyrdom and translation, on 8<sup>th</sup> May and on 27<sup>th</sup> September respectively, focused on the display of the relic of the Saint's hand<sup>51</sup> in Prandota's chapel, and of his head from the now demolished gallery over the entrance arch to St Nicholas' chapel<sup>52</sup>. The latter is documented to have remained the centre of St Stanisław's cult from the 14<sup>th</sup> century, but the gallery was part of Cardinal Oleśnicki's rebuilding campaign around 1437, which, through a highly elaborate setting for the ritual of the head-relic exhibition, gave a new focus to the cult<sup>53</sup>. Included in the setting was the decoration of the gallery's balustrade with the arms of various Polish regions, of which only one, now inserted into the south face of the cathedral's north tower, survives. This display of national heraldry, mirrored the decoration of king Jagiełło's tomb on the opposite, southern side of the nave. Together with the arms of Poland on the reliquary of St Stanisław, and the banners hung over his shrine, these heraldic accents formed a special environment for the dynastic and national hagiography celebrated in the cathedral in conjunction with the 15<sup>th</sup>-century promotion of St Stanisław as the official patron saint of the Polish kingdom.

The holy grave was now brought more directly into the orbit of a single dynasty. This privileged *depositio ad sanctos* mapped out, in terms of proximity to the saint, the balance of power within the community of the realm: kings and St. Stanisław rested in the same privileged space. This strongly monarchical cult may have been one of the reasons behind the increasing departure of popular devotion to the shrine on the Skalka. The threat of complete withdrawal of popular support for the cathedral shrine may have been the primary motivation behind the royal penitential procession to the Skalka on the eve of the coronation<sup>54</sup>, as well as numerous pilgrimages to the site of Stanisław's death prac-

<sup>51</sup> Wojciechowski, 1900, p. 94 and Crossley, 1985, p. 31.

<sup>52</sup> Bishop Jan Grot's edict of 1328 over the revenues derived from the exhibition of the head suggest that the cult was well underway on either side of the nave before the mid-15<sup>th</sup>-century adaptations. *KDKK*, ed. F. Piekosiński, vol. I, Cracoviae 1874, no. 145, pp. 201–203. The late medieval appearance of this gallery was convincingly reconstructed by Walczak, 1992, pp. 7–28, esp. p. 19ff.

<sup>53</sup> Crossley, *History, Coronation and Space...*, p. 12.

<sup>54</sup> It was first mentioned by the *Ordo ad coronandum regem Poloniae* probably written for the coronation of Władysław III in 1434, it may or may not reflect 14<sup>th</sup> century practice and some scholars, for example M. Derwich, *Rola opata w koronacjach królów polskich*, [in:] *Imagines potestatis. Rytuły, symbole i konteksty fabularne władzy zwierzchniej. Polska X–XV w.*, ed. J. Banaszkiewicz, Warszawa 1994, pp. 46–48, believes that it did not become the regular part of the coronation ritual before the early 16<sup>th</sup> century. The scope of this paper does not allow for full discussion of this issue. For its superb analysis see: Crossley in: *History, Coronation and Space...*, as well as in *Bohemia Sacra and Polonia Sacra...*, pp. 49–69.

ticed by the Jagiellonians; on their return to the capital from abroad, frequently on Fridays and on St Stanisław's feast days<sup>55</sup>. A well-developed pattern of pilgrimage, during which the king walked *ad limina s. Stanislai* and gave alms *in via*, testifies to highly developed social and political sensitivity of the early Jagiellonians, for it ensured and enlisted the support of the people for their ruler and his political objectives. Every celebration at the shrine, involving the reunion of St Stanisław's relics on his altar, re-enacted the divinely ordained miracle of the re-composition of his body and constituted a symbolic ratification of the political unity regained thanks to the Saint's sacrifice and intercession. Its regular performance guaranteed the perpetual unity and prosperity of the kingdom. In a similar manner every procession from the Wawel to the Skałka reached out beyond the confines of the royal hill to Kraków, Stradom and the New Town of Kazimierz, stretching and re-defining the bonds of the community, just the emperors' *adventus* registered what Peter Brown called a moment of ideal concord between ruler and citizens, palace and town<sup>56</sup>.

In conclusion, the appearance of the western part of Kraków cathedral, especially in its Gothic form, was to a great degree moulded by the presence of the shrine of St Stanisław. Although in both Gothic and Romanesque cathedral the south portal served as the main royal and ceremonial entrance, the west door of the 14<sup>th</sup>-century cathedral seems to be better suited to provide access for ordinary pilgrims. The viewer's experience of the shrine and his perception of St Stanisław as the guardian of the nation and the patron of its kings, a holy martyr and *Alter Christus*, was determined first by the decoration of the west façade and then, more explicitly and inclusively, by the interior of the nave and the shrine area. Artistic and architectural initiatives of episcopal and royal patrons also had a significant bearing on pilgrims' experience. In the Romanesque cathedral the accent was probably placed, as it was in Stanisław's early hagiography, on the saint's role as healer, intercessor and patron of political reunification. During the reign of the last Piasts, the central and pivotal appearance of the shrine placed emphasis on the saint's Christ-like sacrifice and the redemptive qualities of his intercession. They also emphasised his presence as *Pater Patriae*. The Jagiellonians the saint's shrine into an *Ara Patriae*, centred on their own *memoria*, a semi-private dynamic mausoleum. This royal emphasis

<sup>55</sup> For instance prince Zygmunt Jagiellończyk went in pilgrimage to Skałka on every return from Buda or Silesia. Royal bills for 1471–1526 record around 29 such "return processions". The Jagiellonians' bills also attest to royal participation, especially of Kazimierz Jagiellończyk, Jan Olbracht and Alexander Jagiellończyk, in Friday processions. B o r k o w s k a, 1995, p. 200.

<sup>56</sup> B r o w n, 1981, p. 98.

may have influenced the divergence of the more popular pilgrimage towards the church of St Michael on Skałka. The practice of frequent royal pilgrimages to Skałka not only expressed the kings' private devotions to the saint but also acted as a form of communal control in the face of an ever-fragile structure of social loyalty.

***Theatrum Passio sancti Stanislai.***  
**Kilka uwag na temat roli katedry krakowskiej**  
**jako mauzoleum świętego Stanisława**  
Streszczenie

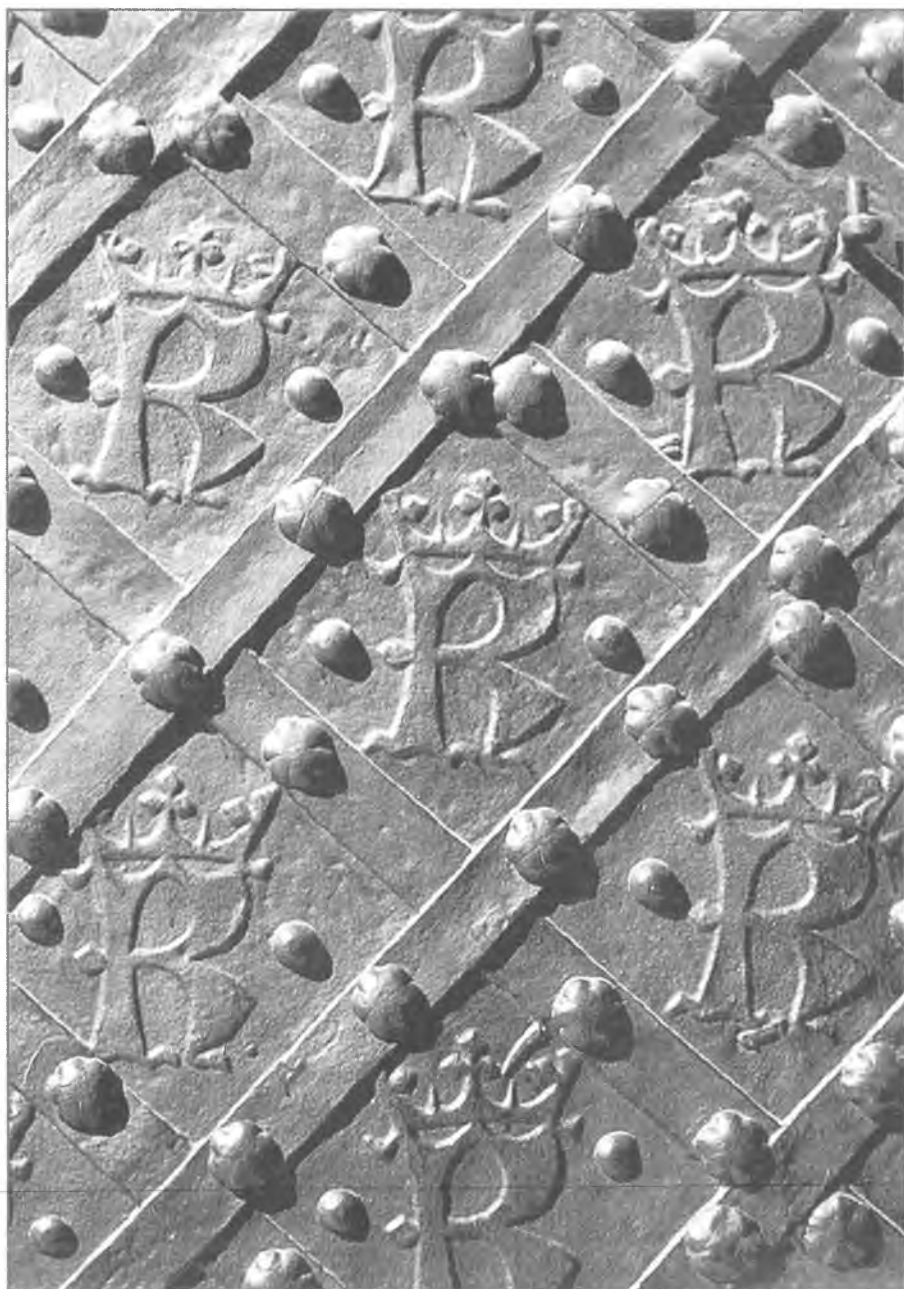
Dnia 8 września 1253 roku biskup Stanisław ze Szczepanowa, pierwszy polski męczennik, został kanonizowany w Asyżu. Rok później szczątki św. Stanisława uroczyście podniesiono na ołtarz w centralnym punkcie tzw. drugiej (albo Hermanowskiej) katedry romańskiej na Wawelu. Wraz z wyniesieniem biskupa na ołtarze katedra uzyskała rangę głównego sanktuarium Świętego i *Caput Regni Poloniae*. Z czasem stała się też miejscem koronacji i mauzoleum królewskim; parokrotne przebudowy były w dużym stopniu związane z istnieniem ołtarza i grobu św. Stanisława – *Ara Patriae*. Aby w pełni zrozumieć rolę katedry, należy więc przeanalizować jej funkcję jako kościoła pielgrzymkowego.

Nie ma podstaw, aby przypuszczać, że planowany był spójny program ikonograficzny związany z mauzoleum św. Stanisława. Możliwa jest jednak rekonstrukcja planu nawy świątyni romańskiej jak również nawy i fasady gotyckiej zachowanych w swojej istocie do dnia dzisiejszego. Na tej podstawie artykuł postuluje, czerpiąc argumenty z arystotelewskiej teorii optyki i teorii poznania św. Tomasza z Akwinu, że choć w katedrze romańskiej i gotyckiej portal południowy służył jako *ostium majus*, to analiza czternastowiecznej fasady i jej kutyh metalowych drzwi wskazuje, że właśnie tędy wchodzili do kościoła zwykli pielgrzymi. Było to przejście rzeczywiste, a także symboliczne i drzwi kazimierzowskie (ich skromna skala była podyktowana prawdopodobnie trudnościami finansowymi kapituły i dworu) okazały się świetnie dostosowane do roli portalu między *civita terrena* i *civita Dei*. Za zapowiedź, ale także ilustrację, tego *rite de passage* uznać można symboliczny „diagram” wykreślony na fasadzie zachodniej. W formie drabiny hierarchicznej wznosi się od drzwi z cyfrą Kazimierza Wielkiego, symbolizujących *Body Natural* czyli królestwo doczesne, poprzez herb państwa polskiego (*Body Politics* czyli majestat królestwa jako „Corona Regni Poloniae”) do figury świętego Stanisława, który jest *Alter Christus* czyli przedstawicielem Króla Niebios na ziemi. Momentalnie po przekroczeniu portalu wierni zanurzali się w ten mistyczny krajobraz *Theatrum Passio sancti Stanislai*, którego perspektywa zdominowana była przez mauzoleum Stanisława wznoszące się na osi nawy.

Męczeńska śmierć biskupa przy ołtarzu w momencie podniesienia Hostii czyniła go naśladowcą Chrystusa i *membra Christi*. Ten motyw, wprowadzony przez Kadłubka i rozwinięty przez Wincentego z Kielczy w *Vitae*, dominował w narracyjnych cyklach w XVI w., ale pojawił się już w czternastowiecznej ikonografii św. Stanisława.

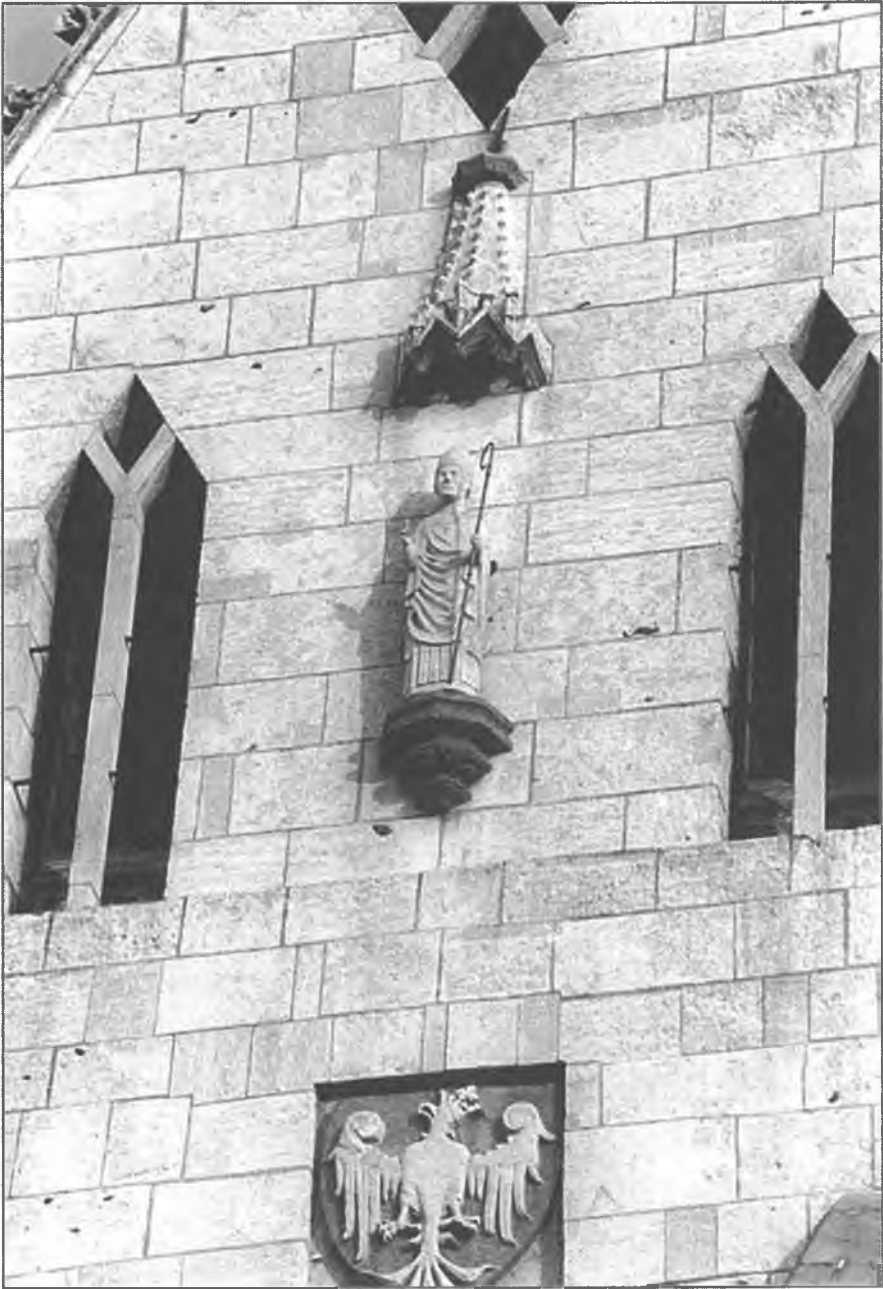
W ten sposób jego męczeństwo przedstawiały miniatury *Legendarium Andegaweńskiego* oraz, prawdopodobnie, pierwsza trumna relikwiarzowa (rekonstruowana na podstawie *Vita s. Stanislai* Długosza i protokołu wizytacji biskupiej z XVII w.). Szczególnie w katedrze święty jawił się jako *Alter Christus* – na lewo od jego grobu wznosił się ołtarz św. Jana Ewangelisty z obrazem Chrystusa Zmartwychwstałego, a okazały krucyfiks królował nad mauzoleum.

Duchowieństwo kapitulne i królowie polscy, kształtując formę katedry i dekorację mauzoleum, kreowali obraz świętego i wpływali na przeżycia religijne pielgrzymów. Artykuł stawia tezę, że ich decyzje artystyczne, a w szczególności przemiana katedry w nekropolię jagiellońską, spowodowały migrację religijności ludowej w kierunku kościoła św. Michała na Skałce, uznanego przez tradycję za miejsce egzekucji św. Stanisława. W świetle tego wydaje się prawdopodobne, że niebezpieczeństwo zupełnego odwrócenia się miasta od katedry było jednym z motywów, dla których Jagiellonowie podejmowali tak częste pielgrzymki na Skałkę. Procesje te integrowały i manifestowały społeczną lojalność, a także zabiegały o poparcie narodu dla osoby i polityki króla. Będąc aktem kontroli społecznej, miały wielkie znaczenie jako moment „konkordii idealnej”.



1. Gothic metal west door of Kraków cathedral.

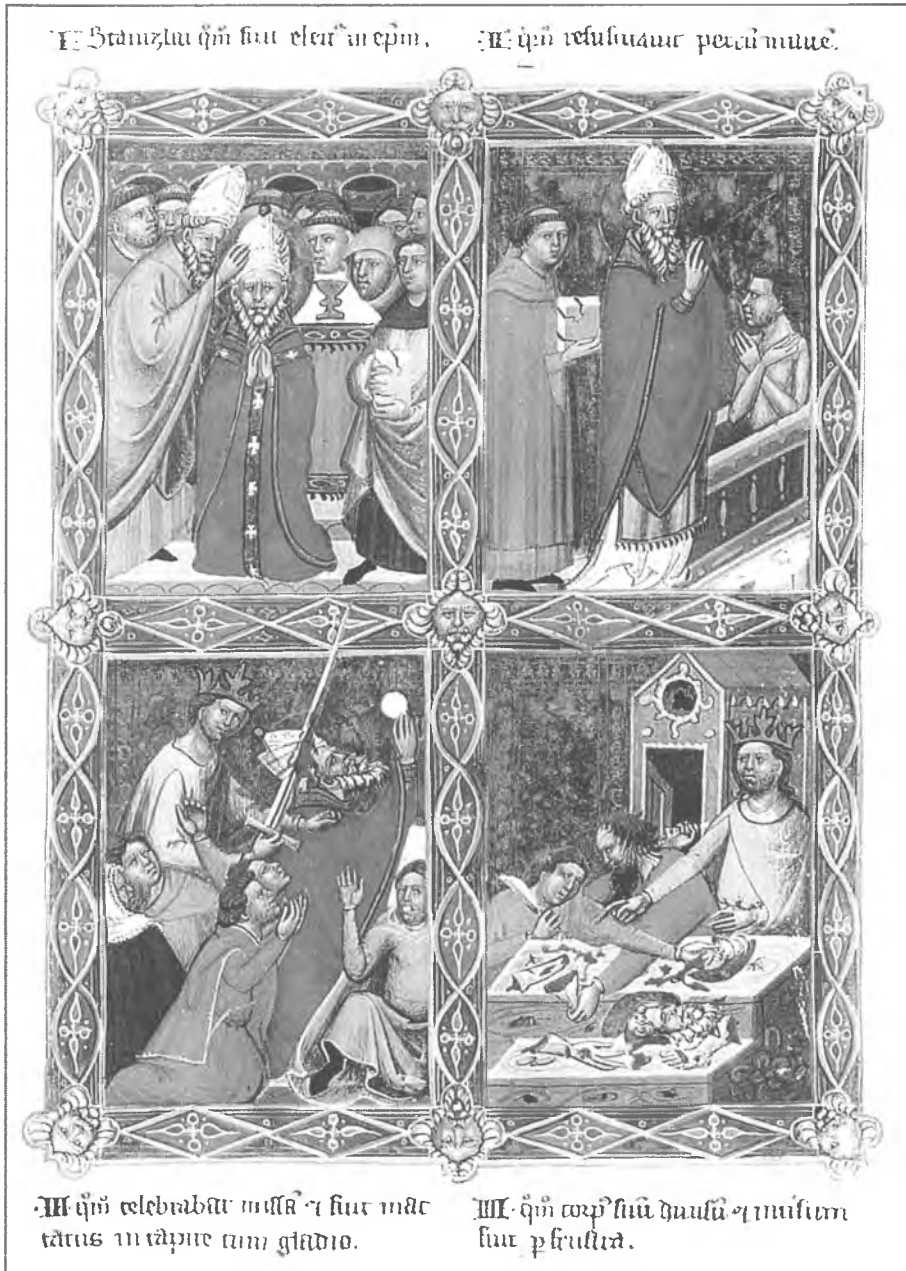




2. Kraków cathedral – the west façade.



3. Baroque shrine in the centre of the crossing.



4. *Anjou Legendarium* c. 1333, scenes of Stanisław's consecration, resurrection of Piotrowin, killing at the altar and hacking of the body.



5. Hand reliquary of St Stanisław, c. 1500.



6. Head reliquary of St Stanisław, 1503.