Late medieval readers sometimes interacted with manuscripts in highly physical ways, by rubbing and touching their books. Physical evidence from the books themselves—with signs of repeated abrasion—indicate that such touching must have taken place ritualistically. Formative examples of such rituals were the priest kissing the sacramentary or missal during Mass, and people touching a gospel book in order to make an oath. In the later middle ages, these rituals were expanded and adapted to include other situations and book types but preserved two ideas: that the book was the locus of authority (definitional within an Abrahamic religion of the book), and that figures represented within books could provide a direct conduit to the people they represented. This article considers the Passional of Abbess Kunigunde of Bohemia (National Library of Prague / Národní knihovna České republiky, Praha, Ms.XIV.A.17), a manuscript dating from 1312-14. Users have intentionally damaged several of the images in the book, but seemingly for different reasons. In this brief article I analyse these marks of wear and speculate on how they were formed and why.


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Kunigunde of Bohemia, abbess of the St. George's Convent in Prague. Material. The Passional of Abbess Kunigunde[1][note 1] is an illuminated Latin manuscript commissioned by Prague Benedictine Abbess Kunigunde of Bohemia, daughter of King Ottokar II of Bohemia, after 1312. The library also houses books for Charles University in Prague, the library won international recognition in 2005 as it received the inaugural Jikji Prize from UNESCO via the Memory of the World Programme for its efforts in digitising old texts. The project, which commenced in 1992, involved the digitisation of 1,700 documents in its first 13 years, the most precious medieval manuscripts preserved in the National Library are the Codex Vyssegradensis and the Passional of Abbes Kunigunde. Kunigunde in the Passional of Abbes Kunigunde. Duchess consort of Mazovia. Tenure. 1291–1313. Kunigunde of Bohemia (January 1265 – 27 November 1321) was the eldest daughter of Ottokar II of Bohemia and his second wife, Kunigunda of Slavonia. She was a member of the Přemyslid dynasty. She was Princess of Masovia by her marriage to Boleslaus II of Masovia and later became abbess of the St. George's Convent at Prague Castle. family. life.