

4 The Holy Stone

4.1 A(w)hol(l)y Roman emperor: Manuel I Komnēnos and the Holy Stone

One additional sacred object of the Middle Byzantine period receives extended mention and treatment across a variety of sources, namely the so-called Holy Stone. The stone, believed by many in the 12th century—including Emperor Manuel I Komnēnos (r. 1143–1180),¹ who comes to be connected intimately with the object—to be the one on which Jesus Christ was laid after the crucifixion to be washed, anointed, and mourned by his mother Mary and the disciples, came to Constantinople by order of Manuel I in 1169 and was placed in the Pharos chapel alongside the other Passion relics. The extant sources for this object include two historical chronicles that mention this event and this relic, albeit from different perspectives and with different narrative intents; a liturgical service composed for the occasion of the Stone’s translation to the capital; and a poem that was probably inscribed onto the pedestal of the Stone after its subsequent translation from the Great Palace to Manuel’s tomb at a nearby monastery following the emperor’s death. Near the end of this chapter, we will also have recourse to a drawing of the tomb cover surviving from the mid-18th century. In this final chapter, the questions set out in the introduction still guide my reading: How do these sources speak of the holy relic and the emperor? How are they understood in conjunction with one another? How is the emperor’s holiness understood and communicated vis-à-vis this particular relic? Near the end of the studied time period here, shortly before the Fourth Crusade, I argue that the textual evidence for the Stone and Manuel bear witness to a nearly complete apotheosis of the sovereign, with him being likened in extreme ways to Christ himself and approaching a near-divine status—which in turn may describe why this relic, of all the sacred objects connected to Christ’s Passion, does not remain in the Pharos chapel, but rather leaves the palace along with Manuel at his death. We begin our examination of these 12th-century sources with the historical accounts offered by Kinnamos and Chōniatēs.

4.2 Historical accounts of the Stone

4.2.1 John Kinnamos

The first text comes from the chronicle written by John Kinnamos, personal secretary to Emperor Manuel I.² In his history, which picks up in 1118 where Anna Komnēnē’s

1 On this emperor, see the following comprehensive studies: CHALANDON 1912, MAGDALINO 1978, ANGOLD 1995, and MAGDALINO 2002.

2 Cf. “Kinnamos, John” in *ODB* 2:1130; LJUBARSKIJ 2020.

Alexias stops and itself ends suddenly in 1176, Kinnamos narrates the legend of the Stone's white spots (said to be the tears of the Virgin shed in mourning her son), its miraculous discovery at sea near Ephesos after being left in the waters by Mary Magdalene at her departure for Rome, and then its arrival in Constantinople, where it was greeted by the city's elite and personally transported by the emperor:

When it had been brought to the region of Damalis across [from Constantinople], a splendid procession from Byzantion received it. The whole senate of the Romans composed it, and whoever was among the priests and monks, while Loukas, who then directed the church, and the emperor went ahead of their respective portions of the official body. The emperor indeed lifted the stone with his shoulder, being unnecessarily modest in such things and desiring very humbly to render them service.³

Though Kinnamos is perhaps infamous for his excessive praise of Manuel elsewhere in his chronicle,⁴ the passage quoted above displays both continuity and discontinuity with previous relic translations to the imperial capital. If earlier centuries saw emperors simply greeting relics upon arrival or taking part in their procession to Hagia Sophia and/or the palace,⁵ here we see the emperor bearing the relic himself in the festal cortège, and in particular, the direct involvement of Manuel in the transportation of the Holy Stone could be seen to evoke priestly imagery in connection with the sovereign.⁶ Though Kinnamos is far from waxing theological in his narrative, the immediate context of these events before the chanting of the liturgical service commemorating the Stone's translation allows for this act to be read as a special twofold adventus on Manuel's part. First, by carrying the relic himself, Manuel becomes a reliquary, as it were, bearing the object and becoming a locus for holding and containing what is holy. Second, Manuel reverses in the performance of his direct bodily contact with the stone the historical narrative of Christ with the Stone: unlike the Messiah, who lay lifeless on the Stone after the crucifixion and was himself borne by the rock, Manuel is here alive and triumphant as he carries the Stone as a victory trophy to his palace. Furthermore, the description of the emperor as acting humbly in service to others could also serve as a further evocation of Christ, the divine king who urges his followers in the Gospel of

3 John Kinnamos, *The Deeds of John and Manuel Comnenus*, transl. by Brand, 6.8 (p. 207).

4 John Kinnamos, *The Deeds of John and Manuel Comnenus*, transl. by Brand, p. 8 (introduction by Brand).

5 For a study of this phenomenon in the ninth century, see: SPRECHER 2023. For imperial involvement in the arrival of the Mandylyon in the mid-tenth century, see chapter 1 above.

6 Cf. here the episode in Josh 3:3–17, where the priests carry the ark of the covenant across the Jordan River into the Promised Land, a theme taken up in the so-called Joshua Scroll from the tenth century; on the latter, see esp. WANDER 2012, 93–112, who also links this manuscript to the patronage of Basil Lakapēnos.

Matthew to “take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am meek and humble in heart”⁷ and who says of himself that he has come “not to be served but to serve.”⁸ Read thus, Kinnamos not only recounts Manuel’s imperial authority—the emperor summons the Stone from Ephesos and it is transported at his command—but also subtly depicts the divine sanctity of the sovereign as both a bearer of holy things and an imitator of the humble God-man Jesus, whose own holiness sanctified this particular relic through bodily contact: imagery perhaps implicit in Kinnamos but utterly explicit in the liturgical texts for the Holy Stone examined in depth below.

4.2.2 Nikētas Chōniatēs

The second chronicle text hails from Kinnamos’s 12th-century contemporary, the court functionary Nikētas Akominatos (most often referred to by the toponym Chōniatēs [meaning “of/from Chōnai”, present-day Honaz]).⁹ If the personal secretary Kinnamos describes the arrival of the Stone in historical sequence amidst the other events in his chronicle, waxing lyrical about his imperial benefactor, the grand logothete Chōniatēs displays a more sober tone with regard to Manuel throughout his writing,¹⁰ waiting until the death of Manuel (the final passage on the sovereign in Chōniatēs’s history) to speak of the Holy Stone, describing its original entry into the city in the context of its removal from the Great Palace and the Pharos chapel to the monastery of Christ Almighty (usually referred to by its Greek name, *Pantokratōr*):

He was buried beside the entrance to the church of the Monastery of the Pantokratator, not in the temple itself but in the shrine attached to it. Where the church wall led round to an arch, a broad entrance way was opened around the sepulcher, which was faced with marble of a black hue, gloomy in appearance, and was divided into seven lofty sections. To the side, resting on a base, was a slab of red marble the length of a man, which received veneration; it was formerly located in the church of [St. John the Evangelist in] Ephesos and was

7 Matt 11:29.

8 Matt 20:28; Mark 10:45; cf. also the foot-washing of the disciples, John 13:1–17.

9 He eventually rose to the highest office of chancellor (*logothetēs tōn sekretōn*, later called simply *meḡas logothetēs*) under Emperor Isaac II Angelos (r. 1185–1195, 1203–1204) and witnessed the destruction wrought during the Fourth Crusade, which he describes in detail in his history. Cf. “Choniates, Niketas” in *ODB* 1:428. On the office in question, cf. “Logothetes” in *ODB* 2:1247. For more on the man and his work, see HARRIS 2000 as well as the collection of essays in SIMPSON/EFTHYMIADIS 2009.

10 Chōniatēs is notably critical of Manuel’s stance and actions in the controversy over the latter’s interpretation of Jesus’s statement “My father is greater than I” (John 14:28), which led to the Council of Constantinople in 1166; cf. here Nikētas Chōniatēs, *History*, ed. by Dieten, 211–213; cf. transl. by Magoulias, pp. 120–121.

commonly reported to be that on which Christ was washed with myrrh and wrapped in burial linen clothes after he had been taken down from the cross. This emperor had it taken out of the church, and, placing it on his back, he carried it up from the harbor of Boukoleon to the church in the lighthouse of the palace [Pharos] as though it were the actual body of God conveying its grace on him. Not long after the emperor's death, the marble slab was removed from the palace to the place described above with proclamations, I believe, that declared loudly all the feats for which he who lay silent in the tomb had labored and struggled so hard to achieve.¹¹

We shall return to the architectural details of the tomb description below in the analysis of the inscription poem, but presently, we see that Chōniatēs picks up the theme of contact between divinely touched relic and divinely appointed regent, suggesting that divine power from the stone enabled the emperor to complete his Samsonian undertaking. The logothete then provides the historical details of the Holy Stone's transferral to the Pharos chapel, where it remained until after Manuel's death, at which time the sacred relic was placed beside the imperial sarcophagus in the Pantokratōr monastery.

The details provided by Chōniatēs on the location and movement of the Holy Stone after its arrival in Constantinople are of twofold historical and religious significance. Firstly, Chōniatēs appears to be the only source we have for fixing the placement of the Holy Stone in the Pharos chapel.¹² Housing the sacred relic in the lighthouse chapel dedicated to the Theotokos is of itself not suspect or hard to imagine; as a relic pertaining to the Passion of Christ, the Pharos chapel with its treasury of other such objects would make perfect sense, given the high prestige and holiness perceived to be granted by the object's proximity to the imperial bedchamber (not to mention the body of the emperor, as seen in the recounting of its transport into the city). Curiously, though, all other chronicle- or pilgrim-style sources that have survived from the period which mention the Pharos chapel and its holdings are silent on the Stone. In the comprehensive listing prepared by Michele Bacci of the medieval sources mentioning the relics of the Pharos chapel,¹³ two are extant from the time period during which the Holy Stone (according to Chōniatēs) was located there: the chronicle of William of Tyre (1171)¹⁴ and a listing of relics mentioned by the Pisan

11 Chōniatēs, *History*, ed. by Dieten, 222.71–76; transl. by Magoulias, p. 125.

12 Chōniatēs is a rare exception here in this era for providing this information from a Byzantine perspective. As Paul Magdalino notes, "le caractère des sources change à l'époque des Comnènes: à une exception près, tous les témoins des reliques de la Passion au XIIe siècle sont des pèlerins, en grande majorité occidentaux" (MAGDALINO 2013, 16).

13 Cf. BACCI 2003, 243–245.

14 Cf. William of Tyre, *Chronicon*, ed. by Huygens, 20, 23 (pp. 944–945); listed in BACCI 2003, 243.

translator Leo the Tuscan (ca. 1177).¹⁵ A third text, a description of Constantinople by an anonymous visitor edited and published by Krijnie N. Ciggaar in 1973,¹⁶ can also be considered here with some reservation: although the date range suggested for this document's composition ranges from 1137–1185, Ciggaar suggests a more likely time-frame of 1136–1143 based on the lack of any mention of the death of John II Komnēnos, which dating would place this account well before the Stone's arrival in the city.¹⁷

Ciggaar opines that access to the palatine relics in the 12th century was quite free and open, although no specific evidence is given to support this claim;¹⁸ perhaps this access can be inferred by the number of pilgrim and visitor accounts to the city from the 12th century which mention the Pharos chapel and its holdings amongst other sites and treasures,¹⁹ as well as the quite varied backgrounds and provenances of the texts' authors.²⁰ Nevertheless, given the chronicle texts' descriptions of the very public and very imperial reception of the Holy Stone into the city and into the Pharos chapel, the silence of the two (or three) contemporary descriptions of the chapel and its inventory is peculiar: none mention the Holy Stone whatsoever, and this despite William of Tyre's (perhaps hyperbolic) insistence that nothing was hidden from the view of King Amalric I of Jerusalem's visiting entourage.²¹

What might be the reason for this glaring lacuna? Perhaps the Stone was not perceived by visitors to the Pharos chapel during the years it was kept there, either because it did not 'look' like an obvious relic or reliquary, or because it was perceived to be part of the stone furnishings of the sanctuary. Yet even if we allow for Ciggaar's claim to stand—namely, that access to the chapel by a vetted and well-heeled pilgrim 'public' was semi-frequent²²—such visitors would not have been

15 Cf. Leo the Tuscan, *On the heresies and transgressions of the Greeks*, PG 140:544–550; listed in BACCI 2003, 243.

16 Cf. Anonymous, *Description of Constantinople*, edition available in CIGGAAR 1973; listed in BACCI 2003, 243.

17 CIGGAAR 1973, 338.

18 Cf. CIGGAAR 1973, 352: "À l'époque où son auteur visita la ville, la plupart des reliques de la Passion étaient conservées au Palais impérial, où, paraît-il, les visiteurs avaient accès sans trop de difficulté."

19 Bacci lists a total of twelve such lists dating from ca. 1099–ca. 1200; cf. BACCI 2003, 243.

20 The authors of the accounts listed by Bacci hail from as far afield as Iceland, England, Kyivan Rus', and southern Italy; cf. BACCI 2003, 243.

21 William of Tyre, *Chronicon*, ed. by Huygens, 20 (p. 944).

22 A note of contradiction to this claim of Ciggaar's seems to be provided by William of Tyre himself in his *Chronicon* (ed. by Huygens, 20 [p. 944]), where the latter narrates King Amalric I of Jerusalem's reception by Emperor Manuel: "Meanwhile, as befitted his imperial magnificence, he showered numerous gifts upon the king and the nobles of his suite and during frequent visits showed much solicitude about their well-being and health. By his orders, even the inner parts of the palace—the private apartments usually accessible only to his own people, the private chambers set apart for his own use—were thrown open to them as to his own household. These privileges were extended also to the basilicas closed to the common people, and to all the priceless treasures which had

left alone in one of the most important relic treasuries of the empire and in all likelihood would have had some medieval ‘tour guide’ (probably a household deputy under the *papias*) to point out and show the relics.

Yet another possibility might also come into play, given the strong personal connection of the Holy Stone to Emperor Manuel I: perhaps this relic was hidden from public view, or perhaps such putative palace tour guides were instructed *not* to point it out and mention it to visitors. Though such secrecy would seem to contradict the public entrance of the object, the very intimate connection of the specific occupant of the imperial throne (Manuel) with this object might have provoked a different response to how this particular relic was housed, displayed, and viewed—or not, as the case may be. Barring the revelation of any newly unearthed sources on Manuel I’s reign and this object in particular, the above possibilities must all remain mere speculation. Yet the personal connection of the Holy Stone to Manuel, a connection of relic to specific ruler hinted at perhaps in earlier centuries with Constantine VII and the Mandylion but never as explicit as in this case, is made very plain in the liturgical office written for the Stone’s translation, the Stone’s movement to accompany Manuel I’s tomb, the alleged inscription on the Stone’s plinth in the Pantokratōr monastery, and the architectural setting of the tomb/Stone complex. To these texts and settings we now turn our eye.

4.3 The liturgical office of the translation of the Holy Stone

4.3.1 Sources of the office

Unlike in the case of the Mandylion, the translation of the Holy Stone to Constantinople does not seem to have found a place in regular Byzantine liturgical commemoration. It does not appear in any extant synaxaria,²³ and the liturgical texts in question come down to us in a single parchment manuscript, MS Athous Laura B 6 (Eustratiadēs no. 126), fols. 78r–83v, an edition of which has been published by Theodora Antonopoulou.²⁴ Provided for the commemoration of the Stone’s translation are three

been gathered there by his imperial ancestors.” Translation taken from: William of Tyre, *Chronicon*, transl. by Babcock/Krey, 2:381.

23 Cf. “Synaxarion” in *ODB* 3:1991. The *Synaxarion of Constantinople*, ed. by Delehaye, in its original version contains no commemorations dating to after 904 and thus is of little help on this question. Moreover, the synaxarion was a text pertaining to the Great Church of Hagia Sophia, and thus palace-specific commemorations performed only in the palatine rite might not have been introduced to this document, even in recensions and additions from later centuries. For more on this text, its variants, and translations into other medieval languages, see LUZZI 2014.

24 Cf. ANTONOPOULOU 2013. Antonopoulou also notes (*ibid.*, 120) the earlier mention and description of this liturgical text in LAVRIOTIS/EUSTRATIADĒS 1925, 13, as well as the earlier edition in PAPAPOPOULOS-KERAMEUS 1898 (reprinted 1963), 5:180–189 (text proper),

stichēra in plagal second mode and an eight-ode kanōn²⁵ in fourth mode (with a kathisma in fourth mode inserted after Ode III, a kontakion²⁶ in second mode after Ode VI, and an exaposteilarion,²⁷ the mode of which is not indicated [but probably second mode] after Ode IX). No readings from the Old or New Testament are indicated.²⁸ The acrostic of the kanōn indicates the composer of the office to be a certain Skylitzēs, whom earlier scholarship has identified as George Skylitzēs, an educated layman who served as an imperial secretary at the Council of 1166 and held the office of *protokouropalatēs* under Manuel I.²⁹ The manuscript, in terms of the date of its production and writing, has been dated to the 12th or 13th century,³⁰

5:424–426 (notes and commentary); my English-language translation of this office, to which reference is made in this chapter, can be found in the appendix below.

- 25 This kanōn lacks hymns for the second scriptural ode, but this had become common practice by the 12th century. Cf. MARY/WARE 1969, 547; KRIVKO 2011, 4, 48. See SPRECHER 2023, 66 and 74, for an instance of hymnography for Ode II from the mid-ninth century, also for a feast pertaining to relics. However, Sprecher notes there (*ibid.*, 66, n. 112), in his edition of the office commemorating the translation of the relics of Patriarch Nikēphoros I from his burial site in exile back into Constantinople in the course of his rehabilitation following the restoration of icons in 843, that this hymnography for Ode II is only present in the earliest extant manuscript—namely, the ninth-century MS Sin. gr. 607—while all subsequent extant manuscripts from the Middle Byzantine period omit this ode and its hymns.
- 26 Kontakia were originally lengthy liturgical poems consisting of an initial stanza and followed by upwards of 18 additional strophes called *oikoi*; later these become reduced to a single stanza (often accompanied by a single *oikos*) and are often placed after Ode VI of the kanōn; cf. MARY/WARE 1969, 554; on the use of the term οἶκος (“house”) for this specific poetic unit, see PARENTI 2016, 279, who notes the work by ASLANOV 2008.
- 27 Exaposteilaria are a type of troparion that follows the kanōn containing hymnographic texts, with the name said to derive from petitions to God to ‘send forth’ (cf. the 2sg. aorist active imperative in Greek, ἐξαπόστειλον, from the verb ἐξαποστέλλω) his light on those praying to him (thus explaining the Slavonic equivalent of this term, свѣтильна [and variants thereof], derived from the term свѣтъ (“radiant, splendid, light-filled”) which itself contains the root term свѣтъ (“light”); cf. MARY/WARE 1969, 551–552; PARENTI 2016, 301–302; cf. also *Lexicon Palaeoslovenico-Graeco-Latinum*, s.v. “свѣтильна”, “свѣтъ”, and “свѣтъ”, which shows the Latin and Greek equivalents of these terms as they appear in late antique and medieval texts and translations.
- 28 This contrasts, for example, with the case of the commemoration of the translation of the Mandyllion, for which readings were set and are preserved in fourteen *prophetologion* manuscripts; cf. ENGBERG 2004, 131, with the assigned readings listed in full on *ibid.*, 140–142. However, given that these liturgical texts are found in a codex collection of mostly kanones and short hymns connected with this genre, the fact that no scriptural readings are mentioned is not surprising and does not necessarily mean that none were read when the office was performed.
- 29 Cf. ANTONOPOULOU 2013, 110; earlier scholarship which she cites (*ibid.*, n. 5) includes PETRIDÈS 1903, 463; and BECK 1959, 662. On the noble title of (proto-)kouropalatēs, cf. “Kouropalates” in *ODB* 2:1157.
- 30 ANTONOPOULOU 2013, 110, where the author notes that Papadopoulos-Kerameus opts for the former dating, while Lavriotis and Eustratiadēs opt for the latter.

but Antonopoulou notes that with the exception of the service for the Holy Stone, all other hymns in the manuscript date no later than the ninth century, and thus concludes that the presence of this singular, later text in the manuscript is a sign of personal choice on the part of the compiler/scribe³¹ as well as perhaps “an indication of the proximity of the codex to the composition of the Office.”³² If the latter fact is true, then the manuscript could have been part of the liturgical holdings of the Great Palace more generally, or of the Pharos chapel more specifically, but barring further evidence, this must remain only speculation. The evidence we *do* have is the scant information in the preface to the office and the text of the service itself, to which we now turn.

4.3.2 The office and its imperial connection

Preceding the office proper in the manuscript is a descriptive preface,³³ which is interesting both for what it says and does *not* say about the event and the parties involved. We do have mention of the event (the translation [ἀνακομιδή] of the Holy Stone), a description of the Stone (namely, the one on which the body of Christ was laid after the crucifixion by Joseph of Arimathea), and the emperor at whose command this occurred, who is explicitly named (Manuel). Other details, however, are either curiously missing or added. From the chronicle texts, we know that the Stone is said to have been brought from Ephesos to Constantinople, but the preface leaves out any notice regarding the source of the object and refers to the destination—to the Byzantine capital—simply as “the great city” (τὴν μεγαλόπολιν). Given the context, I believe the referent here to be clear, but the word itself is quite rare in medieval Greek, being found primarily in historical writings of the Middle Byzantine period.³⁴

The mention of the emperor by name—Manuel—in such a preface is not in and of itself surprising or strange; Constantine VII is mentioned explicitly in the synaxarion and liturgical texts pertaining to the Mandylicon’s translation to Constantinople, as seen above in chapter 2. Nor is the epithet “purple-born” (πορφυρογέννητος) or

31 ANTONOPOULOU 2013, 120. She notes that the Holy Stone office was “pertinently inserted ... at the end of the section containing stauroanastasimoi and anastasimoi kanons”, which would make thematic sense given the role played by the Holy Stone as the location of the post-crucifixion, pre-burial washing and anointing of Jesus’s body.

32 ANTONOPOULOU 2013, 120.

33 For the translated text, see Appendix C below.

34 A *TLG* corpus search for the word μεγαλόπολις retrieves six results: one from Euripidēs’s tragedy *The Trojan Women*, and five others, all from Middle Byzantine authors (Michael Psellos, Anna Komnēnē, Constantine Manassēs, Michael Attaliatēs, and Eustathios of Thessaloniki); interestingly, *TLG* notes neither this instance of the term in Skylitzēs’s office, nor the one in Chōniatēs’s *History*, where Andronikos refers to Constantinople by this term (see below this chapter).

the office title “emperor” (βασιλεύς) out of place or odd; both Constantine and Manuel were entitled by birth to this moniker and held the imperial throne. Yet Skylitzēs also names the sovereign with the respectful title “Lord” (κύρ)³⁵ and provides his family name (Κομνηνός): the former perhaps marking out the composer’s relationship of service to the emperor, the latter perhaps stressing the importance of dynastic house in society and court in this period of Byzantine history.³⁶

4.3.3 The office and its dating

Finally, Skylitzēs gives us the *year* in which the translation took place—“the 27th year of the sole rule (αὐτοκρατορίας)” of Manuel—but declines to note the day or month! Without the latter information, it is very difficult (if not impossible) to determine when exactly the celebration of this office actually took place, regardless of whether it was a one-time event or an annual commemoration. This glaring lack of a specific date might be why Antonopoulou states that “[t]here is no evidence that the [office] was performed again after the original event”,³⁷ but we must also state that if this service took place at the Pharos chapel, whither the Stone was translated, any such service would have been performed by palace clergy and chanters who had their own rite different from that of the Great Church; and unlike in the case of the Great Church, for which synaxaria and orders of service for the year have come down to us, no such documents documenting the rite and possible calendar commemoration differences in the palatine chapels have survived. Furthermore, Antonopoulou notes that the repeated use of the word “today” (σήμερον) in the office implies that “[t]he work was performed on the day of the translation.”³⁸ This makes sense given the nature of the event, but the use of the word σήμερον in Byzantine (as well as *hodie* in early Western hymns) is often used to signal the present-moment importance and theological reality of a given feast, and would be

35 This word, originally a derivation of the standard word κύριος (“lord”), comes to be used as a title of respectful address in the Middle Byzantine period; cf. Lampe, s.v. “κύρις, ὁ”; *LBG*, s.v. “κύρ, ὁ”.

36 This dynastic importance was found both in political and poetic constructions of the time; cf. FRANKOPAN 2007; praise and wishes for the success of the Komnēnian dynasty are also to be found in several of Theodore Prodromos’s so-called ‘historical’ poems. Cf. the edition by Hörandner 1974, esp. poems 1 (“On the crowning of Alexios Komnēnos”, pp. 177–181), 13 (“Paeon for an imperial wedding; for the demes”, pp. 265–266), and 14 (“Paeon for another imperial wedding; for the demes”, pp. 268–270). Manuel I Komnēnos was the first ruler to bear this name, so the family name would not be serving any sort of disambiguative function here. A more recent study of Prodromos’s style and his hitherto unedited ‘miscellaneous’ poems is available in ZAGKLAS 2023.

37 ANTONOPOULOU 2013, 120.

38 ANTONOPOULOU 2013, 109; the word “today” in the office can be found in: Stichēra 1, 3; Ode I, troparia 1, 4; Ode III, troparion 3; Ode IV, troparia 2, 5; Ode VII, troparia 2, 4.

sung anytime (and every year) the service was to be celebrated.³⁹ Moreover, the usage of “today” is outnumbered in these texts by another temporal marker, “now” (νῦν), which thus serves to heighten the immediacy of the event rather than necessarily provide a chronological pinpoint for the day on which the office was sung.⁴⁰

One clue, however, that might help us determine the date of this office’s celebration during the year are the heirmoi used in the kanōn, nearly all of which are from the second kanōn for the feast of the Dormition of the Theotokos on August 15.⁴¹ This would suggest that the service took place during the afterfeast of the Dormition (since the kanōn for the translation would have been sung after that of the feast during such a period, and these heirmoi from the second festal kanōn would have then been sung as the *katabasiai*⁴²), which lasts eight days until August 23. The Mandylion was celebrated annually by this point on August 16, and this centuries-old commemoration would not have been displaced by the arrival of a newer relic (albeit one from the Passion) in 1169/1170, the 27th such year of Manuel’s sole rule. Thus, we can limit the hypothetical date range to August 17–23. In the case of the two odes here whose heirmoi are *not* from the second kanōn of the Dormition, but from other fourth mode kanones, we see that both are used on Sundays in fourth mode.⁴³ Assuming in this hypothesis that such a substitution of heirmoi indicates the performance of the rite on a Sunday in the afterfeast of the Dormition, one date would be possible: August 17, 1169 (thus one day after the feast

39 On this phenomenon, see TROELSGÅRD 1990. One can also note here that the usage of the word “today” also occurs in Byzantine hymnographical texts for ‘biblical’ feasts that cannot possibly be contemporary with the writing of a given office (e.g., Nativity of Christ, Pascha, etc.).

40 Instances in the office are to be found in: Ode I, troparia 4, 5; Ode III, troparia 3, 4; Ode IV, troparion 1; Ode V, troparia 3, 5; Ode VI, troparion 1; Kontakion; Ode VIII, troparion 3; Exapostearion.

41 To wit, the heirmoi for Odes I, III, V, VII, VIII, and IX; cf. ANTONOPOULOU 2013, 123–134, who cites as sources on the heirmoi: EUSTRATIADĒS 1932 (2nd revised edition of the corpus by PANAGIŌTOU et al. 2006) and FOLLIERI 1960–1966.

42 *Katabasiai* (sometimes transliterated via Modern Greek pronunciation as *katavasias*) are the concluding stanzas of the odes of a kanōn, which often pertain to nearby great feasts in the ecclesial calendar (either in anticipation or retrospect); the name derives from the fact that both choirs would descend (cf. Greek καταβαίνω, aorist active participle καταβάς, -ᾶσα, -άν) from their respective areas to chant the stanza together. Cf. MARY/WARE 1969, 553.

43 The heirmos for Ode III is taken from Sunday matins; Antonopoulou states that the heirmos for Ode VI is taken from Wednesday in the fourth week of Great Lent, but the same text is also used as the heirmos for Ode VI at the midnight office (μεσονυκτικόν) for Sundays in fourth mode. Interestingly, however, *all* the heirmoi are noted as being attributed to a certain monk John (of Damascus?) in Follieri’s compendium. Cf. Appendix C below for these texts. The choice of fourth mode texts from Sunday, in my view, further lends credence to the afterfeast of Dormition being determinative here, since Pascha, which causes a re-start of the weekly oktoëchōs cycle in Byzantine chant, occurred in 1169 on Sunday, April 20, making Sunday, August 17 to be the start of a week in first mode.

of the Mandylion's translation). Given the fact that the Byzantine calendar began in September, one could also posit at this juncture August 23, 1170 (also a Sunday, and the leave-taking of the feast, and thus also possible given the reasoning outlined above), but Kinnamos notes in his account of events the presence of Patriarch Luke Chrysobergēs in the entourage welcoming the Holy Stone to Constantinople, and this Luke died sometime between November 1169–January 1170, leaving us in the end with only one viable option, that of August 1169.⁴⁴ Such hypotheses aside: even if we allow that Skylitzēs knew from the outset of his compositional project that the liturgical office was to be performed only once, leaving out the specific date in the office's preface shifts the focus of the event for any future reader (or contemporary one, for that matter) from the date on which the Stone was translated to the reign of Manuel as emperor—and not merely basileus, a title which by the 12th century could have been applied to non-Byzantine rulers and even elder sons in the dynasty,⁴⁵ but as the supreme ruler, the autokratōr of the Roman Empire. This particular focus on the person of Manuel rather than the figure or office of emperor/autokratōr is a key feature of the entire liturgical office, distinguishing these hymns from other liturgical texts for relics and relic translations examined here and elsewhere extant in Byzantine literature.

4.3.4 Themes and imagery in the office of translation

In her edition of the liturgical texts of the office for the translation of the Holy Stone, Theodora Antonopoulou also offers a brief study and overview of some of the themes and textual features present in the hymns,⁴⁶ building on the even briefer comments provided by Papadopoulos-Kerameus at the end of his 1888 edition of the same service.⁴⁷ She groups her comments under three thematic areas: (1) the deposition of Christ's bloodied body on the Stone; (2) the Virgin's tears; and (3) eulogy or praise of the emperor.⁴⁸ My reading of the texts also shows a tripartite thematic division, but of another kind: (1) *imperial* imagery; (2) *civic* imagery; and (3) what I shall term *lithic* imagery, each of which groups permeate the office, with important bookending features and implications for the understanding of ruler, relic, and sacrality, which I believe Skylitzēs (and/or his imperial patron) wished to transmit to his hearers (and readers).

44 For a brief synopsis of the life (and death) of this Patriarch Luke, cf. GRUMEL 1943, 257; also MAGDALINO 2002, 289.

45 Cf. chapter 2 above, n. 247.

46 ANTONOPOULOU 2013, 115–119. She also provides a thorough accounting of the metrical structure of the hymns (p. 119), but this musicological knowledge—while important—bears no relevance to the present study.

47 PAPADOPOULOS-KERAMEUS 1898, 5:424–426.

48 ANTONOPOULOU 2013, 115–116.

4.3.4.1 Imperial imagery

Beginning with the preface to the office, the liturgical texts⁴⁹ abound in references to the emperor. Yet unlike in the kanones for the translation of the Mandyllion⁵⁰ or in earlier offices for relic translations undertaken at imperial behest,⁵¹ explicit mention is made throughout the office of Manuel by name,⁵² linking the event of the translation and the relic itself not merely to the figure of the emperor or the general occupant of the throne, but with a concrete, unique individual. The name Manuel (Μανουήλ) is a derivation of the Septuagint ἐμμανουήλ, itself an attempted transliteration of the Hebrew *‘immānū ’el* (“God [is] with us”), the divine appellation of the Virgin’s son proclaimed in the prophecy of Isaiah⁵³ and interpreted in the Gospel of Matthew as referring to Jesus Christ.⁵⁴ Skylitzēs evokes this divine name, however, not merely in reference to the Son of God, but in the context of the emperor, calling Manuel “an emperor of divine name”.⁵⁵ Divine assistance is linked to Manuel, whose heart is said to have been strengthened by God for the task of the Stone’s translation⁵⁶ and whose plans were advanced by God himself.⁵⁷ Continued help from on high is besought to “make firm [the] sceptre” of Manuel’s rule on earth⁵⁸ and to grant him both the heavenly and earthly kingdom.⁵⁹ The figures of celestial king and terrestrial potentate, however, seem to be elided when Skylitzēs—who, as imperial secretary, surely knew of the emperor’s hand in the matter—speaks of the translation as coming about “by the command of Christ”.⁶⁰

49 Unless otherwise specified, liturgical text references in this section are to Appendix C below.

50 See Appendices A-1 and A-2 below.

51 Cf. the edition of the office for the translation of the relics of Patriarch Nikēphoros I (commemorated on March 13) in SPRECHER 2023, 60–76; also the new texts composed in the mid-ninth century for the commemoration of the translation of the relics of Saint John Chrysostom back into the Byzantine capital (celebrated on January 27); cf. also *ibid.*, 47–54, where he also cites the work by TOMA 2018, 266–288 (who analyses the kanones composed for this feast by Joseph the Hymnographer) and ZERVOUDAΚΙ 2002, who talks about the hymnography composed by Theophanēs “the Branded” (ὁ γραπτός, thus nicknamed on account of the visible marks remaining after his being tortured for his iconophile beliefs) in her study of the man and his œuvre.

52 Cf. Preface; Stichēron 1; Ode I, troparion 4; Kathisma; Ode VIII, troparion 2; Ode IX, troparia 4 and 5.

53 Cf. Isa 7:14.

54 Cf. Matt 1:22–23.

55 Gr. θεώνυμος; cf. Stichēron 1; Ode IX, troparion 4.

56 Ode I, troparion 2; the text is ambiguous as to whether the strengthening of heart is meant in terms of Manuel’s resolve to have the Stone translated from Ephesos, or in terms of Manuel’s physical endurance in personally carrying the Stone from the Boukoleon harbour up to the palace.

57 Ode V, troparion 2.

58 Ode IX, troparion 4.

59 Ode IX, troparion 5.

60 Ode I, troparion 2.

The composer also characterises Manuel as the bridegroom of the Song of Songs (a figure interpreted in patristic texts as typifying Christ) who gives the relic as a wedding gift to his beloved,⁶¹ the bride of the same scriptural book (whether the bride is perhaps meant to represent the city of Constantinople generally, or the Pharos chapel more specifically, is unclear from the text). The Stone's translation is lauded as coming about through Manuel's "divine zeal",⁶² and the emperor is also implicitly likened to Christ in the second stichēron: Moses is said to have chastised the unfaithful Israel of old, but Manuel leads the "new Israel" (more on this image below) and secures the continuation of his dynasty through the Stone.

To understand this allusion, we must look at the book of Deuteronomy and employ once again a patristic/associative reading of these texts. In the Old Testament text, Moses speaks of a prophet to come after him: "The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from your brothers; you shall heed him. ... And the Lord said to me, ... 'I will raise up for them a prophet just like you from among their brothers, and I will give my word in his mouth, and he shall speak to them whatever I command him. And the person who does not heed his words, whatever the prophet may speak in my name, I will exact vengeance from him.'"⁶³ Patristic authors such as Augustine of Hippo interpret this passage as referring to Jesus Christ as the one foretold by Moses: the prophet whom all should heed and who is sent by God.⁶⁴ This complex allusion not only strengthens the notion of Manuel specifically as a divine king, but the subtext of the scriptural passage and its injunction on Israel to heed the prophet to come after Moses also has a special echo here, given the controversy over the emperor's interpretation of Christ's saying in the gospels, "My father is greater than I" and Manuel's direct involvement in theological affairs.⁶⁵

The Christ-like nature of Manuel is also called to mind in the office through some instances of the usage of the term *χριστός* ("anointed"). Unlike with kings and other rulers in medieval western Europe, Byzantine emperors were rarely physically anointed as part of the coronation rites or ascension to the throne prior to the Palaiologan recapture of Constantinople after the Latin occupation following the Fourth Crusade in 1261; yet in all cases, the emperor was considered by

61 Ode I, troparion 4.

62 Kathisma; Ode VIII, troparion 2.

63 Deut 18:15–19.

64 Cf. LIENHARD 2002, esp. p. 382, where he cites Augustine, *Tractates on the Gospel of John* 15.23.1. It would not be impossible that the great late antique exegete Origen, given what is known of his immense theological output, commented on this passage in his works on Deuteronomy; however, as Lienhard also notes (*ibid.*, p. 376), none of Origen's homilies on this Old Testament book have survived.

65 John 14:28; on this controversy and the concomitant ecclesiastical synod called to resolve it, see: MAGDALINO 2002, 289–290; a full bibliography of sources and scholarship on the Council of 1166 is provided in PODOLAK/ZAGO 2016, 78, n. 4.

Byzantine society to be spiritually ‘anointed’ by God to be sovereign.⁶⁶ ‘The Lord’s anointed’—his *χριστός*—could thus also be an image applied to any emperor. Here, Skylitzēs makes such an application in several places, where the absence of an article preceding the word can allow for the double meaning of ‘Christ’ as signifying not only the God-man Jesus Christ, but also the emperor Manuel.⁶⁷ In the second troparion of Ode I, we hear that “a venerable stone ... has been delivered to us by the command of Christ” (λίθος ... σεβάσιμος ἡμῖν ἀποδέδοται τῆ ἐπινεύσει χριστοῦ). The historical chronicles mentioned above note that the Stone was brought to Constantinople at the behest of the anointed sovereign Manuel, and the ambiguity in referent here is only resolved at the end of the troparion where a clearer distinction is made between (Jesus) Christ and Manuel, whose heart was moved to this deed by divine inspiration. The first troparion of Ode III is again ambiguous: the first portion of the sentence reads, “Let all the nations behold Christ’s ineffable strength (χριστοῦ τὴν ἀπόρρητον ἰσχύν)” —which again, given the historical chronicle background, could be referring to the strength of the ‘anointed’ Manuel bearing the stone—and only clearly resolves the meaning in favour of Jesus Christ at the end of the hymn in reference to the Stone receiving the “deified flesh” of the Saviour.

A final stark example of this divine character of Manuel’s is provided by two similar examples at the beginning and ending of the office. Near the start of the office in the final stichēron, upon the solemn occasion of the relic’s translation, the assembled people are encouraged to make an offering, not to God, but to the sovereign: “Come, O people of God! As we worship with fear and joy, let us bring an offering of thanksgiving with prayers to the emperor.”⁶⁸ The term for “offering of thanksgiving” in the hymn text here is *χαριστήριον*, which usually refers to thank-offerings made to deities in Classical Greek⁶⁹ and is also used in connection with the Christian god and the Byzantine emperor in Middle Byzantine texts.⁷⁰ Of course, “emperor” here could be referring to God, given the prior addressee of

66 Cf. “Salbung” in *Theologische Realenzyklopädie Online: Religionspsychologie – Samaritaner*, https://www.degruyter.com/database/TRE/entry/tre.29_707_29/html (accessed 28/01/2022) and LILIE 2012.

67 Cf. Stichēron 1; Ode I, troparia 1, 2, 3, 5; Ode III, troparia 1, 2, 3; Ode IV, troparia 1, 3; Ode V, troparia 2, 4; Ode VI, troparion 4; Ode VII, troparia 3, 4; Ode VIII, troparia 2, 3; Ode IX, troparia 4, 5; Exapostellarion.

68 Stichēron 3.

69 Cf. LSJ, s.v. “χαριστήριον, τό”.

70 A *TLG* search shows the term used by John of Damascus, *Sacred Parallels* 5.8, PG 95.1465: “Give an offering of thanksgiving to God” (Δός τι Θεῷ χαριστήριον, translation mine); Michael Attaliatēs, *History* 34.8, where the author notes “I who am writing this presented an oration of thanks (χαριστήριον λόγον) to the emperor” (transl. by Kaldellis/Krallis, p. 533); Anna Komnēnē, *Alexias*, ed. by Reinsch/Kambylis, 15.11.7: “we sen[t] up an offering of thanksgiving to God” (χαριστήριον ἀναπέμπομεν τῷ Θεῷ, translation mine).

the “people of God” to make this offering;⁷¹ however, the fact that we find no further adjective or phrase delimiting the term βασιλεύς here unambiguously to God (such as “heavenly” or “on high” or “above”) continues Skylitzēs’s pointed ambiguity throughout these texts, which allows the hearer/reader to link Manuel with such epithets and such activities: here, then, we can understand Manuel as the divine recipient of the people’s offerings. The same ambiguity and imagery is deployed again near the end of the service in the first troparion of Ode IX. There, “a special people of God” (λαὸς περιούσιος) keeps festival at the Stone’s translation and “offers the hymn of thanksgiving to the emperor, who has bestowed this gift of grace” (προσάγει τὸν εὐχαριστήριον βασιλεῖ τῷ τὴν χάριν βραβεύσαντι). As Antonopoulou notes in her apparatus,⁷² the use of the term “special” (περιούσιος) here recalls both the Israel of the Old Testament (Exod 19:5) and the Christian church of the New Testament, which is proclaimed to be a new Israel (Titus 2:14). The “hymn of thanksgiving” (εὐχαριστήριον, a term also carrying overtones of offerings to a deity in both pagan and Christian contexts⁷³) is directed here not to God, but to the sovereign; through this application of vocabulary, the hymn situates the people of the city witnessing the spectacle of the Stone’s translation in a sanctified relationship as ‘special’ with respect not only to God, but also the emperor—a continuation of the imagery declaimed in the military harangues of Constantine VII Porphyrogennētos, as seen in the previous chapter. To my mind, the divine connection is also further strengthened by the fact that the thanksgiving is made in return for a gift of grace (χάρις), a word also heavy-laden with spiritual and religious connotations.⁷⁴

The actions and status of the emperor as being divine and divinely pleasing are further emphasised by the frequent mentions of David, the biblical king par excellence who pleased God;⁷⁵ he is referred to as the “son” of God in the Old Testament⁷⁶ (just as Jesus is in the New Testament⁷⁷) and was also considered in Byzantine tradition to be an inspired prophet and the composer of much of the

71 Here one should also bear in mind the fact that *basileus* is the normal term for referring to God as a celestial king in both the Septuagint translation of the Old Testament (translating the Hebrew *melek*) and the frequent mentions in the New Testament of the “kingdom of God” (βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ) or the “kingdom of heaven” (βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν) in clear reference to the divinity as king.

72 ANTONOPOULOU 2013, 134.

73 Cf. LSJ, s.v. “εὐχαριστήριον, τό”; Lampe, s.v. “εὐχαριστήριον, τό”.

74 Cf. LSJ, s.v. “χάρις, ἡ”; Lampe, s.v. “χάρις, ἡ”.

75 On David pleasing God in scripture, cf. 1 Kgdms 13:14; 3 Kgdms 15:5; Acts 13:22. In the liturgical office under discussion here: Ode III, troparion 4; Ode V, troparia 1, 5; Ode VI, troparion 5; Ode VII, troparion 4. The abundance of Davidic references is also mentioned by ANTONOPOULOU 2013, 119. In general on the Byzantine interpretation of the figure of David vis-à-vis the emperor, see also: RAPP 2010 and OUSTERHOUT 2010.

76 2 Kgdms 7:14, “I will be a father to him, and he shall be a son to me.”

77 Matt 14:33, 16:16, 27:54; Mark 1:1, 3:11, 9:7, 15:39; Luke 1:35, 4:41; John 1:34, 11:27, 20:31; Acts 9:20, in addition to numerous other locations in the Epistles.

book of Psalms.⁷⁸ David is also mentioned as one who “passes over” (διαβαίνοντος) the waters into the Holy Land, in this case the River Jordan, much as Manuel is spoken of as doing the same in his return to the city with the relic.⁷⁹ These references to David continue the familiar trope of likening the Byzantine ruler to the Israelite king, as can be seen in the tenth-century liturgical texts for the Mandylion’s translation,⁸⁰ before that at the start of the same century with Arethas’s description of Leo VI translating the relics of Lazaros into the city,⁸¹ and in the earliest centuries of Byzantine rule.⁸² Moreover, Manuel is also hailed as one who has fulfilled biblical prophecy in bringing the Stone to the city,⁸³ further cementing the parallels between him and David (said to have uttered the prophecies in the Psalms) and Jesus Christ (said in the New Testament to have fulfilled such prophecies).

This holy and sacred character of the Komnēnian emperor is not merely expressed via Old Testament types and images; Skylitzēs explicitly describes Manuel as “pious” and “orthodox” in several places,⁸⁴ underscoring his correct faith and, perhaps again, his correct tack in the theological controversies in which he was embroiled. As Antonopoulou pointedly notes, “in the aftermath of the Synod [of 1166], the translation of the Stone can be seen as a statement on the part of the emperor ... declaring his immediate, physical as well as spiritual, contact with the divinity. It thus implied the correctness of his ideas ... imposed on the Synod. This situation is reflected in Skylitzes’ Office.”⁸⁵ Yet beyond the ideas of divinity and Christian piety and prophecy explicitly linked to the individual person of Manuel, I believe that Skylitzēs also seeks to stress another, non-scriptural but very much Roman (i.e., ‘Byzantine’ in the Byzantines’ own sense of themselves being Roman and their realm being the continuation of the Roman Empire), characteristic of Manuel, and

78 Most likely based on the superscriptions of some psalms which attribute them to David (Gr. τῷ Δαυΐδ, Heb. *l’dāwid*); historical ascriptions, however, are far from sound on the basis of historical critical research and in-depth linguistic analysis. On this, see the great linguistic study (and groundbreaking translation involving a full comparison with other Canaanite dialects, not yet surpassed yet seldom consulted) in DAHOOD 1965–1970. More recently, see DALY-DENTON 2000, especially chapter 2, “Davidic ‘Authorship’ of the Psalms” (pp. 59–101), and SKINNER 2016.

79 For David: 2 Kdgm̄s 19:18–23, which also serves as a locus demonstrating David’s total authority over life and death as sovereign; for Manuel here, see Stichēron 2.

80 Cf. Appendix A-1: Ode I, troparion 4; Ode III, troparion 1; Ode VI, troparion 4; Ode VIII, troparion 3; Ode IX, troparion 3; and in Appendix A-2: Ode IV, troparion 3.

81 Cf. Arethas of Caesarea, *Disembarkation Speech for the Precious Relics of Lazaros, which the Christ-loving Emperor Leo Translated from Cyprus* (Ἐπιβατήριος ἐπὶ τοῖς τιμίους λειψάνοις Λαζάρου, ἃ λέων ὁ φιλόχριστος βασιλεὺς ἐκ Κύπρου μετέηνεγκεν), in his *Homilies*, ed. by Westerink, 7–10.

82 Cf. here again RAPP 2010.

83 Ode I, troparion 1. ANTONOPOULOU 2013, 124, notes the scriptural reference here as being Isa 28:16.

84 Stichēron 2; Kathisma; Ode VI, troparion 3; Ode VII, troparion 1; Ode VIII, troparion 2.

85 ANTONOPOULOU 2013, 118.

does so via the terms used for the sovereign in the texts. In addition to the term *basileus*, which is the standard Septuagint and New Testament term for “king”, Skylitzēs addresses Manuel with two other terms: (1) *autokratōr*,⁸⁶ used not in the Classical Greek adjectival sense of “independent” or “plenipotentiary” but in the later Greek noun sense as a translation of the Latin *dictator* or *imperator*, and referring to the emperor as the one who had complete power and authority;⁸⁷ and (2) *anax*,⁸⁸ dating to Homeric times and denoting the lordship of the gods, heroes, or masters of the house in terms of their complete dominion over family members and slaves (all of which could be resonant here with Manuel),⁸⁹ which word is also used later by Christian authors of the patristic era to refer to God as divine king,⁹⁰ as well as by later Middle Byzantine rhetors in orations to, and poems about, the emperor.⁹¹ Besides its use in directly referring to Emperor Manuel, the term also serves as the basis for deriving a designation for the Stone’s final destination after its translation. In Ode III of the *kanōn*, the command is given for the “gates of the palaces” to be lifted up (ἀρθήτωσαν πύλαι ἀνακτόρων). As Antonopoulou notes in the apparatus to her edition, this is a reference to Psalm 23,⁹² which speaks of God as the triumphant king of heaven, entering his palace which none other may dare approach. The verses alluded to in the psalm (vv. 7, 9) speak of “eternal gates” (πύλαι αἰώνιοι) that are to be lifted, and of “princes” or “leaders” (οἱ ἄρχοντες) who are to assist, but the use of the term *anaktoron* here, designating the home of the anax or supreme lord (and thus showing possession of the gates by the lord in question, rather than their mere operation by the scriptural princes), allows Skylitzēs to connect this psalm—with all its language of God, the divine heavenly king (βασιλεύς,

86 Alluded to in the mention of the emperor’s self-rule (αὐτοκρατορία) in the preface; cf. also Ode I, troparion 2; Ode VI, troparion 3; Ode VII, troparion 1.

87 Cf. LSJ, s.v. “αὐτοκράτωρ, ὁ”; *CGL*, s.v. “αὐτοκράτωρ, ὁ”. Early Christian authors primarily use the word with its imperial meaning, with the meaning of self-control or -mastery being secondary; cf. Lampe, s.v. “αὐτοκράτωρ, ὁ”.

88 Ode I, troparion 4; Ode III, troparion 2; Kathisma; Ode VIII, troparion 2; Ode IX, troparion 5.

89 Cf. LSJ, s.v. “ἄναξ, ὁ”; *CGL*, s.v. “ἄναξ, ὁ”.

90 Cf. Lampe, s.v. “ἄναξ, ὁ”, who mentions such authors as Apollinarios, Gregory of Nazianzos, and John of Damascus.

91 While the 11th-century poets Christopher of Mytilene and John Mauropous use divine imagery when speaking of the emperor in some of their works, the combination of this imagery with the term *anax* really comes to the fore in the poems of Theodore Prodromos, who uses the term in works for Manuel’s father, John II Komnēnos (poem 4, “Political dekastichs for the demes at the triumphal procession of Emperor John Komnēnos for the capture of Kastamon”, in the edition by Hörandner, p. 201; poem 6, “Description of the entrance of the emperor John Komnēnos after the capture of Kastamon, in heroic verse”, in *ibid.*, p. 220; poem 10, “Hymn to Emperor John Komnēnos on the Baptism of Christ, for the demes, in three verses”, in *ibid.*, p. 248). On changes in Byzantine poetry between these two centuries, including issues of individualism, patronage, the revival of more ancient vocabulary and forms, and questions of audience and invective, see MAGDALINO 2013.

92 ANTONOPOULOU 2013, 126.

used here in the Septuagint translation⁹³), triumphantly returning from battle and gloriously ascending his mountain to “his holy place”⁹⁴—to the earthly basileus Manuel, as he makes the ascent from the Boukoleon harbour in glory with the prized relic to his own ‘holy place’, the Great Palace and the Pharos chapel.

Indeed, “anax” is the final term used to refer to Manuel in the texts, curiously in the final troparion of Ode IX, the so-called theotokion, which usually has as its focus the Virgin.⁹⁵ Instead, the emphasis here is firmly on the emperor, mentioned one last time as the singers beseech the Theotokos to “make the lord Manuel (Μανουὴλ τὸν ἄνακτα) also worthy of the kingdom of God.” Though the context of this final troparion is very much Christian in nature (reference to the prophet Daniel, the Mother of God, Christ, the kingdom of God), the usage of the word “anax”—laden as it is with pre-Christian, pagan, and indeed *Roman* ideas of kingship and power—might be a sign of the final image Skylitzēs wishes to leave in the minds of his hearers: namely, that of Manuel as a divinely-sanctioned and God-pleasing ruler, and himself perhaps also sharing in this divine status in some fashion. This would indeed be consonant with the Roman imperial notion of the emperor as an ‘iconic’ person in the terminology of Ivanovici, namely, “persons whose bodies were held to represent the divine”⁹⁶—a notion that survived the demise of paganism and endured in the Eastern Roman Empire in later centuries⁹⁷ such that Anna Komnēnē could speak of her royal parents as being “natural statues”,⁹⁸ while the physician Michael Italikos could consider Emperor Manuel during his lifetime as a living and moving “statue” representing the heavenly king in singular fashion.⁹⁹

4.3.4.2 Civic imagery

Roman elements are mixed with biblical ones, not only in the imperial imagery deployed by Skylitzēs, but also in the civic imagery evoked by him in this liturgical office, a set of imagery mentioned only fleetingly by Antonopoulou in her study.¹⁰⁰

93 Cf. Ps 23:7–10.

94 Ps 23:3.

95 On this term, cf. MARY/WARE 1969, 559.

96 IVANOVICI 2023, xxv.

97 IVANOVICI 2023, xxxvi.

98 Cf. MARSENGILL 2018, 96, who refers here to Anna Komnēnē, *Alexias*, ed. by Reinsch/Kambylis, 3.3, an extended passage in which the author describes as paragons of beauty and classical form “these natural statues, I mean, the newly-crowned rulers” (τὰ τῆς φύσεως ἀγάλματα ταῦτα, λέγω δὴ τοὺς ἀρτιστεφεῖς αὐτοκράτορας, translation mine) surpassing the canon of the celebrated classical sculptor Polykleitos.

99 IVANOVICI 2023, 37, who cites Michael Italikos, *Letters and Orations*, ed. by Gautier, p. 294: τοῦ δ’ ἄνω βασιλέως καὶ σὲ βασιλεύσαντος ἀγαλμα περινοστεῖς ἐνταῦθα, βασιλεῦ, ἔμπνουν τε καὶ κινούμενον καὶ οὐκ οἶδα εἴ τις τοῦτω γέγονε τῶν ἐπὶ γῆς ὁμοίωτερος (“You dwell here below as a living and moving statue of the King above who made you king, O emperor, and I don’t know of anyone else on earth more like him”, translation taken from MAGDALINO 2002, 437).

100 ANTONOPOULOU 2013, 117.

As noted above, nowhere is the Byzantine capital named as such: we have no mention of Constantinople or Byzantion, and in only one instance do we hear of a “royal city” (πόλιν βασιλείαν);¹⁰¹ the common Middle Byzantine epithets of “ruling” or “first” city (πόλις βασιλεύουσα/πρωτεύουσα), as well as that of the “Queen of Cities” (βασίλις τῶν πόλεων), are absent here. In fact, it is noteworthy that the one mention of a royal city is precisely that: *a* royal city, not *the* royal city, the lack of the definite article here further obviating Constantinople per se as a focal point amidst the events and figures narrated here, and thus casting the limelight back on the ruler and the relic. The language that *is* used in terms of locating the events is a combination of both Christian scriptural images and Roman imperial parlance: namely, that of new Zion and new Rome.

References to new Zion occur throughout the office,¹⁰² but the contexts do not permit a clear determination of what exactly is being referred to as such. Given the abundance of references to the relic of the Holy Stone when we do hear of ‘new Zion’, however, and Skylitzēs’s mention of new Zion being the destination of the object, I am inclined to believe that the referent here is the Pharos chapel, rather than the city of Constantinople. ‘New Zion’ as a term is applied to many places and contexts in the Middle Byzantine period, both within the imperial capital and without,¹⁰³ but a slight variation on this theme in the office allows for further speculation and interpretation. In one location, Skylitzēs speaks of the Holy Stone being brought up, covered noetically by invisible angel wings, “towards the newer Zion” (πρὸς Σιών τὴν νεωτέραν).¹⁰⁴ First, as noted above in this chapter, the Holy Stone was too large for a proper reliquary or case to hold it, but the notion of a ‘noetic’ or ‘spiritual’ covering, as was proper for other relics in the Middle Byzantine period,¹⁰⁵ could suggest as destination somewhere indeed like the Pharos chapel, renowned for its role as imperial relic treasury. Second, while there are instances of ‘other’ or ‘second’ Zions in extant Greek literature, the *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae* database records not a single instance of “newer Zion”—not even the one here in Skylitzēs’s office. We do know, however, of another secretary of the imperial bureaucracy who speaks of a new Zion: Gregory Antiochos, who uses the term specifically to refer to the cathedral of Holy Wisdom in a homily from the same time period.¹⁰⁶ Disagreeing outright with Gregory in shifting the attribution of this term from the cathedral to the palace lighthouse chapel would probably have been a gauche move for Skylitzēs, especially since Gregory was also known from his speeches for his support of “imperial omnipotence”, as Kazhdan notes.¹⁰⁷ Adding the subtle twist of ‘newer’ Zion in

101 Stichēron 3.

102 Ode I, troparion 1; Kathisma; Ode VII, troparion 1.

103 Cf. above for discussion on this in chapter 2, section 2.3.2.

104 Ode VII, troparion 2.

105 On the hiddenness of relics here, see above chapter 2, n. 286.

106 For reference, see above chapter 2, n. 163.

107 Cf. “Antiochos, Gregory” in *ODB* 1:119.

reference to the Pharos chapel would not only serve to avoid a potentially embarrassing confrontation at court between the two bureaucrats, but would also highlight the historical reality (the Pharos chapel was built after Hagia Sophia and came to prominence later) while permitting for individual rhetorical emphasis (this mention of “newer Zion” in Ode VII is in fact the final mention of Zion in the office). Lastly, the phrase “newer Zion” might also be an allusion to the phraseology of Elder Rome and New(er) (sometimes translated as: Younger) Rome, which figures both in earlier, late antique reflections on the city’s architecture and topography (albeit collected in the late tenth century and further amended in the 11th)¹⁰⁸ as well as in some of the laudatory poetry of Gregory and George’s Constantinopolitan contemporary, Theodore Prodromos.¹⁰⁹ Just as Constantinople—as New Rome—overtakes Old Rome in terms of importance and prestige, maintaining a continuous unbroken bond of tradition while embodying a new start in a new locale¹¹⁰—so too might Skylitzēs here be positioning the Pharos chapel precisely as this kind of Newer Zion: continuing the tradition of Zion-based imagery while making a subtle break to push for greater application thereof to the home of the Holy Stone. Yet the continuation of Zion in the heart of the Byzantine Empire is not the only ancient thread maintained in Skylitzēs’s texts. Unlike Prodromos, he makes no comparison and simply speaks

108 One finds such reflection, for instance, in the so-called *Patria* or “inherited things” of Constantinople. An edition of the Greek text was published by Theodor Preger in two volumes between 1901–1907; an English translation appeared in 2013, prepared by Albrecht Berger. A comprehensive study of this text and the themes evoked therein can be found in the now-classic work by DAGRON 1984.

109 Prodromos was a poet at the court of John II Komnēnos, known for the range of his work in terms of poetry and prose, bawdy images from everyday life and celestial themes in archaic vocabulary. Little, alas, is known about him personally; cf. “Prodromos, Theodore” in *ODB* 3:1726–1727; on the use of the phrase “newer Rome” in Prodromos’s œuvre, see his poem 17 (“Dekastichs to Emperor John Komnēnos on his new expedition against the Persians: prayers taken from all the prophets” in the Hörandner edition, pp. 286–300), where imagery of David is mixed with that of the emperor (ll. 41–42: “Listen, O divine emperor, O radiant trophy-bearer, what the ancient David [says] to you, the new David” [Ἄκουσον, θεῖε βασιλεῦ, λαμπρὲ τροπαιοφόρε, / ἄπερ Δαυὶδ ὁ παλαιὸς σοί, τῷ Δαυὶδ τῷ νέῳ]), and the names Zion and Rome equally applied to the city of Constantinople, albeit with the twist that the Byzantine capital is new Zion but newer Rome (l. 121: “Arise, O daughter of Zion, younger Rome” [Ἀνάστα, θύγατερ Σιών, ἡ νεωτέρα Ῥώμη]; l. 271: “Rejoice with me, O city of Byzantium, rejoice, O new Zion” [Χαῖρε μοι, πόλις Βυζαντίς, χαῖρε, Σιών ἡ νέα]) (translations mine). Prodromos’s poetry, and particularly poem 17 (namely, ll. 371–374), are also mentioned in the study by ESHEL 2018, 151, where the author notes how Prodromos applies the imagery of Zion and the chosen people of Israel to Constantinople and its denizens (albeit referring here always to New Rome, whereas the poem in l. 374 speaks clearly of the new Israel as being planted “in a good and rich land, in the newer Rome” (ἐν γῆ καλῇ καὶ πύονι, τῇ νεωτέρῳ Ῥώμῃ) (translation and italics mine).

110 A sentiment seen at the beginning of Michael Psellos’s *Brief History*, which he begins thus: “This is a brief history of those who reigned in Elder Rome and later in the Younger...” (Ἱστορία σύντομος τῶν παρὰ τῇ πρεσβυτέρῳ Ῥώμῃ βασιλευσάντων καὶ αὐθις τῇ νεωτέρῳ...), as noted by KAMPIANAKI 2016, 311.

thrice of “New Rome” (Νέα Ῥώμη), the importance and significance of this appellation being clarified by the context of the respective hymns in which it appears.

The first instance of New Rome appears at the beginning of Ode V, which (given the absent second ode) is the middle point of the *kanōn*. The initial troparion of this ode is short but densely packed with imagery: David the king is mentioned, with the words of the psalm attributed to him¹¹¹ being applied to Manuel, whose crown is said to be adorned with a precious stone, to wit the Holy Stone, with the result that “having given this [stone] also to New Rome, he [sc. Manuel] has ruled over all things by his counsel and action.”¹¹² The second troparion of the same ode continues the theme of divine assistance to the king in his counsels; the third troparion recalls the punishment of death that befell Uzzah for touching the ark of the covenant when the oxcart carrying it began to tilt¹¹³ and speaks of angels invisibly defending the Stone; the fourth troparion speaks of Christ being laid on the Stone and sanctifying the relic (or perhaps Manuel as a new ‘Joseph of Arimathea’ carrying the stone);¹¹⁴ while the theotokion concluding the ode again speaks of David, the image of Christ as a sleeping lion on the Stone¹¹⁵ (which in a patristic/associative reading would also evoke the image of the namesake stone lions at Boukoleon harbour near the Great Palace) and Christ’s eternal rule as king after being raised from the dead. In my reading, then, the midpoint of the liturgical office can be understood as positioning Manuel as a Davidic and Christ-like king—fulfilling the Christian imperial trope—whose sacred Stone remains hidden by angelic powers in New Rome. Again, I believe that the context of the ode here permits one to understand New Rome as being the Pharos chapel, rather than the city as a whole. In such a reading, the imagery of New Rome joins with that of New Zion to colour the Pharos chapel with a patina of Mosaic and Roman ideas of divine imperial rule and authority.

New Rome appears again in two hymns at the very end of the liturgical office, thus also positioning this epithet as the final and enduring civic image in the mind of Skylitzēs’s hearer/reader. In the fourth troparion of Ode IX before the final theotokion, the singers of the office pray that Manuel’s sceptre be strengthened by the Holy Stone, which has been “brought up to New Rome” at the emperor’s command. In the final hymn of the office, the *exapostellarion*, we hear that a “joyful day of solemn celebration has dawned for the city of God, New Rome”, into which the Stone has been brought. The equation of “city of God” with “New Rome” might at first sight (or hearing) lead us to think of the *city*, that is, of Constantinople. Given the many scriptural allusions and citations woven into the text by Skylitzēs, however, I believe that another locus for interpreting “city of God” here is precisely this scriptural matrix. Psalm 47, for instance, speaks of “God’s city, his holy mountain” and

111 Cf. Ps 20:4, noted by ANTONOPOULOU 2013, 129.

112 Ode VII, troparion 1.

113 Cf. 2 Kgdms 6:6–7, noted by ANTONOPOULOU 2013, 129.

114 Cf. Appendix C, n. 26, where the ambiguity of the Greek text here is also noted.

115 Cf. Gen 49:9, Abraham’s famous blessing upon his son Judah the “lion”.

the “mountains of Zion, the slopes of the north, the city of the great king”,¹¹⁶ while Psalm 86 speaks of God’s foundations being “on the holy mountains”, “the Lord lov[ing] the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob”, and “glorious things [having been] spoken about you, the city of God.”¹¹⁷ While this scriptural language, with which Skylitzēs and the educated among the office’s hearers would have been familiar, permits one to construe the “city of God” with Zion and thus New Zion (in my reading here = the Pharos chapel), Skylitzēs shifts the theme into another key by uniting “city of God” with another imperial image, that of New Rome: an image permissive of a deified emperor and divine ruler on earth, all while lauding the same as being pious and fully orthodox in “counsel and action”.

Before passing on to the imagery of the Stone itself, it is curious to note here also the civic imagery *absent* from the service in terms of places and persons who remain unnamed. As mentioned above in the first look at the preface to the office, no reference whatsoever is made to the relic’s city of origin, namely Ephesos. Mention is thrice made of the location whence the Stone has been brought to the capital, and each time the place is referred to merely as “the East”.¹¹⁸ The specific word used in each instance is ἑῶα; this word, meaning “of the dawn”, is recorded as being used in Greek translations of Roman imperial administration documents to refer to the Eastern parts of the empire, standing for the Latin *oriens*.¹¹⁹ The use of such an imperial Roman term, rather than the more common (but undoubtedly more theologically laden) term ἀνατολή,¹²⁰ might further serve to heighten, even in the absence of a direct mention of Ephesos, the Roman imperial character of Manuel’s actions here, summoning something from part of the ‘Roman’¹²¹ empire over which he ruled. Be that as it may, we still have no explicit explanation for why Ephesos is veiled in silence. In her analysis, Antonopoulou posits that eschewing any mention of Ephesos was “advantageous for the imperial effort required for the translation in terms of distance and echoes the older translations of Passion relics from the East to the capital.”¹²² I would add that the advantage here was derived from a clear focus being placed in the liturgical office on the destination, rather than the starting point, of the Stone’s journey.

Sharing Ephesos’s lot of obscurity in the texts are indeed most people and power-players beyond the emperor Manuel. The inhabitants of the city are important and mentioned only insofar as they represent a new Israel or people of God juxtaposed

116 Cf. Ps 47:2–3.

117 Cf. Ps 86:1–3.

118 Stichèron 1; Kathisma; Ode VII, troparion 2.

119 Cf. LSJ, s.v. “ἑῶος”; CGL, s.v. “ἡῶος”.

120 Cf. Lampe, s.v. “ἀνατολή, ἡ”.

121 The debate on proper nomenclature for the field of Byzantine studies vis-à-vis the Byzantines’ own terms of self-reference is extensive, ongoing, and beyond the scope of this work. One of the contemporary proponents of a return to the Byzantines’ own sense of self as being “Roman(s)” and using such vocabulary to refer to this empire is Anthony Kaldellis; see especially KALDELLIS 2012 and KALDELLIS 2019.

122 ANTONOPOULOU 2013, 117.

with a quite divinely characterised Manuel, as shown in the foregoing. The Constantinopolitan civic and religious elite also remain an anonymous and ambiguous collective group. Though Kinnamos explicitly mentions Patriarch Luke as taking part in the translation procession, as well as representatives of the Senate and civic leaders, Skylitzēs refrains from naming the prelate, as Antonopoulou points out.¹²³ But more than this, I believe the patriarch—like Ephesos—is actively de-emphasised here in the hymns through this kind of generalisation. Ode VI recounts that “patriarchs, hierarchs, and a people gathered together by God ran together with Manuel”,¹²⁴ whereas an unnamed group of “the hierarchs of Christ” receives a blessing in venerating the Holy Stone with praise in Ode VIII.¹²⁵ The use of plural terms here (especially the plural “patriarchs”) could be a subtle reference to other patriarchs residing in the Byzantine capital; we know that after the wars with the Seljūq Turks in the 11th century, many Christians and their bishops took refuge in Constantinople,¹²⁶ and the presence of the patriarchs of Antioch in the city is noted in this period.¹²⁷ Then again, it could also be simply a rhetorical move meant to eliminate any focus on the specific patriarch present. As for the Senate and other high functionaries, Skylitzēs passes over them in complete silence; the name of the emperor Manuel alone is permitted to resound at the translation of the Holy Stone and upon him alone does any personal focus fall in the texts.¹²⁸ Nevertheless, the office does not only speak of the emperor and his ‘city’, filled with its nameless new Israel and clergy: the holy relic at the heart of this translation office is accorded a rich series of images by the author, which I also categorise in tripartite fashion. To this imagery of the Stone itself—this ‘lithic’ imagery—we now shift our gaze.

4.3.4.3 Lithic imagery

4.3.4.3.1 Appearance of the Stone: colour and dimensions

In terms of the actual relic itself, very little is said of its appearance, either in the historical chronicle texts presented above or in the liturgical texts that are being

¹²³ ANTONOPOULOU 2013, 116.

¹²⁴ Ode VI, troparion 3.

¹²⁵ Ode VIII, troparion 3

¹²⁶ Many of these bishops are noted for being present and active in the so-called “permanent synod” (ἐνδημοῦσα σύνοδος) of the Church of Constantinople after taking refuge in the capital in this period. On this body, whose influence increases in the Middle Byzantine period with the addition of these extraneous bishops, cf. in brief “Endemousa Synodos” in *ODB* 1:697 and more fully HAJJAR 1962.

¹²⁷ In particular Theodore Balsamōn, the canon lawyer and later patriarch of the church of Antioch, noted for his high view of the sacrality of the emperor (and critiqued by others for this, notably by Nicholas Kabasilas); cf. “Balsamon, Theodore” in *ODB* 1:249. For more on his poetry, see RHOBY 2018; on his activity as a canonist, see STEVENS 1969, GALLAGHER 1991, and GALLAGHER 1996.

¹²⁸ Also noted by ANTONOPOULOU 2013, 116.

closely examined here. From the extended quotation of Chōniatēs above, we read that the Stone was a “slab of red marble the length of a man” (λίθος ἐρυθρὸς ἀνδρομήκης). A clear colour term is given in this chronicle text, and the kathisma hymn composed by Skylitzēs speaks of the Stone as being like *lychnitēs*, which could mean either a kind of precious stone of red hue, or else be a reference to Parian marble, a semi-translucent whitish marble which can become reddish in hue when light shines through it.¹²⁹ The length of the Stone cannot be determined exactly, but Mango—basing himself on the testimony of a 15th-century Spanish diplomat who visited the Pantokratōr monastery and Manuel’s tomb, Ruy González de Clavijo—offers a measurement of 1.70–1.80 metres for the length of the Stone, which would be consonant with a typical male human height and which Antonopoulou in her review neither dismisses nor refutes.¹³⁰ On account of this size, as mentioned above, it is understandable why there would be no reliquary or case for the Stone, and as such, it is not surprising that the language of relic containers is absent from Skylitzēs’s office: the normal words one would expect to encounter—“ark” (κιβωτός), “case” (θήκη), “casket” (σορός), or “box/chest” (λάρναξ)—are nowhere to be found. In her short study of the text, however, Antonopoulou does note a few instances where vocabulary might be alluding to the Stone’s dimensions. In one location, the Stone is described (here literally, rather than freely) as a “slab” (πλάξ)—albeit in a troparion where reference and pun is made on the crushed tables of the law which Moses received inscribed by God (πλάκας θεογράφους);¹³¹ this image and language of “slab” or “tablet”, however, is not sustained throughout the office. Elsewhere, Antonopoulou takes the third troparion of Ode VIII as bearing indirect evidence of the Stone’s man-length size via the adjective σύσσωμον used there,¹³² yet this word simply means “united with the/a body”, and in the context of the entire phrase in which it is used (λόγον Θεοῦ σύσσωμον), the more apparent stress in meaning to my mind is the dogmatic point about Christ being the Word of God incarnate in a body, rather than the anatomical point of body length. Finally, she cites a usage of the verb τείνω, meaning “to stretch” (here the aorist passive participle, ταθείς¹³³) as “impl[ying] the length of the stone.” Whether one reads the word thus, or as τεθείς, the aorist passive participle of τίθημι (“to put, place”),¹³⁴ these are simply verbs of motion with reference to the dead and crucified body of

129 Cf. LSJ, s.v. “λυχνίτης, ὄ”; the *LBG* documents what seems to be a related word, s.v. “λυχνιταῖος, ὄ”, meaning “ruby”, together with other similar words on the same root (τὸ λυχνιτάριον, a stone shining with reddish hue; ἡ λυχνίτις, meaning basically the same as ὁ λυχνίτης; and the adjective λυχνιτώδης, meaning “ruby-like”).

130 ANTONOPOULOU 2013, 113, who cites Mango and his original sources for determining the length: cf. MANGO 1969/1970, 374.

131 Stichēron 2; cf. ANTONOPOULOU 2013, 115.

132 ANTONOPOULOU 2013, 115.

133 Ode VIII, troparion 2.

134 Noted by ANTONOPOULOU 2013, 115, and in the edition apparatus, *ibid.*, 133.

Christ placed on the Stone. To see in either verb form a necessary implication of the length of Christ's body is, linguistically at least, a bit of a stretch. The imagery and descriptions we do have of the Stone in the liturgical office, on the contrary, abound in three main categories: imagery of blood, imagery of water, and imagery of action. Given that the effusion of both blood and water is intimately connected with the crucifixion of Christ,¹³⁵ it should not surprise the hearer/reader to be confronted again with blood and water in the context of this particular Passion relic.

4.3.4.3.2 Blood

The first set of images revolves around blood, occasioned both by the tale of the relic as bearing the bloodied corpse of Jesus as well as by the Stone's reddish hue.¹³⁶ The first stichēron of the office introduces the theme of the bloodied Christ laid on the Stone by Joseph of Arimathea, and in the third stichēron, a strange exchange of characteristics takes place. The relic is called a "precious stone" (λίθος τίμιος) which received upon its surface the crucified Lord. This Lord is then equated in the hymn with "the cornerstone that had been cut without any mason" (λίθον τὸν ἀκρόγωνον τὸν ἀλαξεύτως τμηθέντα), a reference to both Old Testament prophecy and New Testament interpretations of this image as being types of Christ,¹³⁷ and is himself described as this stone, covered in divine blood and drenched in the tears of both the Virgin and the disciple John (more on these tears below). Immediately following this hymn, though, the first troparion of Ode I of the kanōn speaks of the relic, the "precious stone", as being wholly hallowed by the blood that dripped from Christ. The fluid imagery of blood seems to allow for a fluid understanding of the relic: the Stone in this reading is not merely a contact relic, a kind of Byzantine *brandeum*, but perhaps embodies the very presence of Christ (although unable to represent him in the way that the Mandylion as icon-relic can).

This identification of the sanctified with the sanctifier might also be seen as being continued in the language of "dipping" or "dyeing" (forms of the Greek verb βάπτω) as well as that of "becoming red" (the verb κατερυθρόμαι) which also emerge from the office. The kontakion speaks of the Holy Stone as being "dyed by a stream of divinely flowing blood" (ρόῃ δὲ βαφεις τοῦ θεορρύτου αἵματος) and Ode IX of the kanōn speaks of Christ's body parts—his hands, feet, and sides—being dyed or dipped (βεβαμμένα) in blood. Antonopoulou does not cite any scriptural references in her apparatus for either term, but it is conceivable that the biblically literate Skylitzēs, who speaks of the "reddened flesh" (σάρκα ... κατηρυθρωμένην) of Christ,¹³⁸ might have had in mind here Isaiah 63, which offers rich parallels to his liturgical office. This chapter in the prophetic book opens with questions of

135 Cf. John 19:34; also 1 John 5:6–8.

136 Cf. ANTONOPOULOU 2013, 115.

137 Cf. ANTONOPOULOU 2013, 124, who notes the following passages in her apparatus: Isa 28:16, Dan 2:34, 1 Pet 2:6, and Eph 2:20.

138 Ode IV, troparion 5.

amazement: “Who is this that comes from Edom, a redness (έρύθημα) of garments from Bosor, so beautiful in apparel, in might, with strength? ... Why are your garments red and your clothes as if from a trodden wine press?”¹³⁹ The two questions are interrupted by an explanation from the prophet: “I discourse about righteousness and judgment of salvation”,¹⁴⁰ and further verses in the chapter clarify that this salvation is from the Lord, who tramples and crushes the nations (τὰ ἔθνη)¹⁴¹ and has a direct hand in saving his chosen people.¹⁴² The prophet continues to speak of the people of Israel yearning for divine leadership, asking to “inherit a little of your holy mountain” since “[w]e have become as at the beginning, when you did not rule us, nor when your name was called upon us.”¹⁴³ The liturgical texts, as shown in the foregoing, already activate in a patristic/associative reading the resonant images of Mount Zion, and this “little” piece of that mountain could indeed be the Holy Stone come to the city. Moreover, the final verse of Isaiah 63 here, which speaks of the divine name being called upon or over the people, could also allow for an allusion to one divine name in particular, given the people’s yearning for God’s presence in this prophetic utterance: *‘immānū’ēl*, God-with-us, ἐμμανουήλ/Μανουήλ, especially given the instances in the liturgical office where the onomastic link between God and emperor is made clear through the use of the epithet θεώνυμος or “divinely named”.¹⁴⁴ The divine connection of this dipping in blood and Christ is established later in the New Testament in the book of Revelation, where the perfect mediopassive participle of βάπτω is used just as in Skylitzēs’s office: the victorious Saviour at the end of days appears “clad in a robe dipped in blood” (περιβεβλημένος ἱμάτιον βεβαμμένον ἐν αἵματι).¹⁴⁵ Patristic authors such as Origen linked this imagery from Isaiah to the assumption (ἀνάλυσις, literally “taking up”) of Christ into heaven in the Gospels,¹⁴⁶ and John of Damascus connects the assumption to the heavenly

139 Isa 63:1–2.

140 Isa 63:1.

141 Isa 63:3.

142 Isa 63:8–9: “And he became to them salvation out of all affliction. It was not an ambassador or angel, but the Lord himself that saved them.”

143 Isa 63:18–19.

144 The term appears in the liturgical office in Stichêron 1 and Ode IX, troparion 4.

145 Rev 19:13.

146 Origen of Alexandria, *Commentary on the Gospel of John* 6.37 (PG 14:297): “But when he [sc. Christ] goes as one carrying off both victory and trophy with his body that has risen from the dead—for how else ought one understand the saying, ‘I have not yet ascended to my father’, and ‘I go to my father’—then some of the powers say, ‘Who is this that comes from Edom, a redness of garments from Bosor, so beautiful?’ Those going before him say to those stationed at the heavenly gates: ‘Lift up your gates, O rulers, and be lifted up, O eternal gates, and the king of glory shall enter’” (Ὅτε δὲ πορεύεται νικηφόρος καὶ τροπαιοφόρος μετὰ τοῦ ἐκ νεκρῶν ἀναστάντος σώματος, πῶς γὰρ ἄλλως δεῖ νοεῖν τὸ, Οὐπω ἀναβέβηκα πρὸς τὸν πατέρα μου; καὶ τὸ, Πορεύομαι δὲ πρὸς τὸν πατέρα μου; τότε μὲν τινες λέγουσι δυνάμεις; Τίς οὗτος ὁ παραγενόμενος ἐξ Ἐδώμ, ἐρύθημα ἱματίων ἐκ Βοσῶρ, οὕτως ὠραῖος; οἱ δὲ προπέμποντες αὐτὸν τοῖς ἐπὶ τῶν οὐρανίων πυλῶν

powers lifting up the gates in Psalm 23, an image seen above in this study in terms of the imperial imagery present in Skylitzēs’s work.¹⁴⁷ This link is maintained in the liturgy of the Great Church in Constantinople in the Middle Byzantine period, which calls for the beginning of Isaiah 63 to be read as part of the Old Testament readings within its *pannychis* or vigil for this feast.¹⁴⁸ The Middle Byzantine liturgy of Hagia Sophia—as noted above, this was *not* the rite used in the palatine chapels, but would have been familiar to Skylitzēs—contains a hymn for the feast of the Assumption of Christ which has the chanter ask rhetorically how he might “ascend the mountain of virtues” and “enter the place of good things”,¹⁴⁹ phrases allowing for allusion both to Zion in terms of location and to relics in terms of the good things sought after making such an ascent.¹⁵⁰ The same hymn also speaks of Christ having become for the singer “the way of justice (δικαιοσύνη)” and “salvation” (σωτηρία), which are also both mentioned of the ruddy figure in the passage from Isaiah and here explicitly linked with the person of Jesus Christ. Finally, the Holy Stone is likened in the office’s kathisma to a “divine ladder leading up to the heavens” and completes this image, serving not only as a transported relic and token of Christ’s presence of old on the rocky slab, but also itself as a means of transport to paradise in the present, a signal of the agency of the Stone which will be further explored below.

τεταγμένοι φασι τό· Ἄρατε πύλας, οἱ ἄρχοντες, ὑμῶν, καὶ ἐπάρθητε, πύλαι αἰώνιοι, καὶ ἐλεύσεται ὁ βασιλεὺς τῆς δόξης) (translation mine). Following the condemnations of Origen’s teachings by the local Synod of Constantinople in 543, the imperial edict of Justinian I in 543/544, and the Fifth Ecumenical Council of Constantinople II (553), much of Origen’s work and thought was suppressed and lost. However, his thought was received and persisted in the works of Leontios of Byzantium (484–543) and arguably revised and re-packaged in the works of Maximos the Confessor (ca. 580–613). Evidence of later Byzantine knowledge of Origen’s works is also provided by the fact that Basileios Bessarion (ca. 1403–1472), a refugee in Western Europe from Constantinople after the fall of the city to the Ottomans in 1453 and later a cardinal of the Roman Catholic church, oversaw a Latin translation of Origen’s text *Against Celsus*, which was printed posthumously in 1483. On Leontios, see: EVANS 1970 and DALEY 1976. On Maximos and his reception/retooling of Origen’s thought, see: LOUTH 2010 and CVETKOVIĆ 2016. On Bessarion, see: MOHLER 1923–1942, MÁRTL/KAISER/RICKLIN 2013, and MARIEV 2021.

147 Kanōn attributed to John of Damascus, PG 96:844, where one of the troparia reads: “The powers on high began to cry to those even higher: ‘Lift up the gates for Christ our king, whom we hymn together with the Father and the Spirit’” (Αἱ τῶν ἄνω δυνάμεις ταῖς ἀνωτέραις ἐβόων· Πύλας ἄρατε Χριστῷ τῷ ἡμετέρῳ βασιλεῖ, ὃν ἀνυμνοῦμεν ἅμα τῷ Πατρὶ καὶ τῷ Πνεύματι) (translation mine).

148 Cf. TUCKER 2023, 506–507.

149 Translation here from the text provided in the edition/translation prepared by TUCKER 2023, 197.

150 Relics are referred to as “good things” (τὰ ἀγαθὰ) which the faithful harvest from the saints like fruit; for example, in two homilies by John Chrysostom: *On the Holy Martyr Ignatios* (PG 50:595) (English translation in MAYER 2006, 116) and a homily delivered in the presence of the emperor on the relics of unnamed saints brought to Constantinople (PG 63:473).

Sanctification via blood also remains a continuous thread presented to the hearer/reader from the start of the office to the end via the image of a stone sprinkled with blood and made red, and which thereby has become sacred and sanctified.¹⁵¹ The different words used here involve forms of verbs meaning “to sprinkle” (καταρραπτίζω, ῥαπτίζω),¹⁵² which open up semantic fields rich in scriptural/Christian and pagan/Roman/imperial allusion. The first term of sprinkling—specifically, the language of blood being sprinkled on objects and people—is found in the Old Testament Pentateuch, where the law prescribes that the entire people, the book of the law, and the stone altar of the tabernacle in the wilderness be purified and sanctified by the sprinkling of blood from sacrifices.¹⁵³ These same rites of purification and sanctification are said to have taken place in the temple built on Mount Zion as well,¹⁵⁴ which would provide a typological connection between the blood-sprinkled stones of the old altar of the Israelite temple and the Holy Stone, sprinkled with divine blood and brought into the “temple” (the Greek word for a church building, ναός, also has this meaning¹⁵⁵) of New(er) Zion. In the Christian interpretation of these types as found in the New Testament epistles, the bloody sacrifice of Christ on the cross fulfilled once and for all the blood sacrifices of animals prescribed in the law.¹⁵⁶ Thus, the Holy Stone need not be continually sprinkled with blood—its status as having once been touched by the divine blood of Christ made it permanently holy and effective as a vehicle of grace. Following the doctrinal controversies between the emperor and the patriarch in 1166 (over the full equality of the Son with the Father within the Trinity)¹⁵⁷ and in 1180 (over the anathema against the ‘God of Muhammad’ required of Muslim converts and rejected by Manuel),¹⁵⁸ the sanctity of the Stone and its immediate connection to the emperor could serve to legitimate Manuel’s stance over and against any theological opposition to his own positions, which may have been motivated more by Manuel’s political agenda than any rigour of faith.¹⁵⁹

Curiously, the liturgical office texts for the Holy Stone’s translation are silent on a previous link between the relic and the emperor, which would further underscore

151 Ode I, troparion 1; Ode IV, troparia 2, 5; Kontakion; Ode VIII, troparia 1, 3, 5; Ode IX, troparion 2; Exapostearion. This theme is also continued, albeit obliquely, in Ode III, troparion 5, where mention is made of Christ fashioning for himself a body from the Virgin’s “pure blood” (ἐξ ἁγνῶν αἱμάτων σου).

152 Stichera 1, 3; Ode IV, troparion 2.

153 Cf. Exod 24:5–8.

154 Cf. 3 Kgdms 8:1–11, 62–65.

155 Cf. LSJ, s.v. “ναός, ὅ”; Lampe, s.v. “ναός, ὅ”.

156 Cf. Rom 6:10; 2 Cor 5:15; Eph 1:7; Heb 9:12, 26–28; 10:10–12; 1 Pet 3:18; 1 John 2:2.

157 See above this chapter, n. 65.

158 On this controversy, see HANSON 1996.

159 Cf. MAGDALINO 2002, 290, where he notes that in the wake of the 1166 controversy, “Manuel no longer regarded theology as a distraction from diplomacy and war, but treated it as central to his personal and political interests.”

the role of the Stone as a specifically imperial source of help and protection. A century before Manuel's reign, we have evidence of there being a partial relic—a small piece of the Holy Stone—contained within an enkolpion reliquary associated with the emperor Constantine IX Monomachos (r. 1042–1055). Antonopoulou notes this relic/reliquary in her study as a sign that a cult of veneration of the Holy Stone existed before the relic's translation to Constantinople,¹⁶⁰ but she also notes here the inscription on the reliquary, preserved in the Codex Markianos 524¹⁶¹ and referring to the 11th-century sovereign. In the Lambros edition of this manuscript, the inscription is described as being “for an enkolpion containing a part of the holy stone on which Joseph placed Christ after the deposition [from the cross; literally “the unnailling”] and part of the swordblade of Saint George”,¹⁶² with the manuscript continuing with the entire inscription (ἔχει ὅλον ὄδε): “O Christ, fight together with Constantine Monomachos, who bears on his breast a piece of the stone on which a winding-sheet binds you, dead, with myrrh, and [a piece] of the swordblade of your martyr George.”¹⁶³ The combination here within the inscribed enkolpion reliquary of a relic associated with Christ's Passion and one associated with a military saint, borne about on the breast of the emperor, recalls another earlier complex construction of multiple relics and texts connected to the emperor: the Limburg Staurotheke. Divine defence deriving from the contact relic of the Stone is combined with military might deriving from the martyr's sword, just as the True Cross and relics of the Virgin and the Forerunner were seen in the Staurotheke to project both protection against evil and dominion over “barbarian temerities”.

Whether this enkolpion remained in the Great Palace after the death of Constantine IX, and whether Manuel I Komnēnos knew of it or possessed it, does not come down to us in any extant source; indeed, as mentioned above, the liturgical office for the translation makes no mention of any other (partial) relic of the Stone, much less one that would have already been connected to an emperor. What Manuel most certainly would have known from his tutors and the vagaries of Byzantine history is that Constantine IX waded into deep theological waters himself, no less deep than the great schism that emerged between Byzantine and Latin Christianity and which became crystallised for the first time in 1054 with the mutual excommunications of Cardinal Humbert of Silva Candida and Patriarch Michael Keroularios, and that Constantine IX failed in his intervention to restore communion and union

160 ANTONOPOULOU 2013, 114.

161 LAMPROS 1911, cited by ANTONOPOULOU 2013, 114, n. 28.

162 Cf. LAMPROS 1911, 128, no. 112: Εἰς ἐγκόλπιον ἔχον μέρος τοῦ ἁγίου λίθου ἐν ᾧ μετὰ τὴν ἀποκαθήλωσιν ἔθετο τὸν Χριστὸν ὁ Ἰωσήφ καὶ μέρος τῆς σπάθης τοῦ ἁγίου Γεωργίου. Translation mine.

163 Cf. LAMPROS 1911, 128, no. 112: Στέρνοις φέροντι τμήμα, Χριστέ, τοῦ λίθου, / ἐν ᾧ νεκρὸν σμύρνη σε σινδῶν συνδέει / καὶ μάρτυρός σου τῆς σπάθης Γεωργίου / Κωνσταντίνω σῶ συμμαχέι Μονομάχῳ. Translation mine.

with the Roman church.¹⁶⁴ As the office by Skylitzēs presents affairs, however, Manuel is alone amongst emperors in being associated with the relic. By becoming “master of the relics of Christ”, as Sandrine Lerou writes, Manuel consequently became a “master of victory, of diplomacy, of oaths”—of everything in which Monomachos could be seen as having failed.¹⁶⁵ Lerou further argues that the veneration of the Holy Stone was an actualisation of “un attachement tout particulier à la Jérusalem terrestre, au Christ dans sa mort, et, seulement ensuite, dans sa souffrance.”¹⁶⁶ This might be the case with regard to the broken piece of stone revered in the Monomachos enkolpion, which speaks of Christ in these terms: dead and bound with myrrh in the winding-sheet (the second key vocabulary item here). Skylitzēs too makes mention of myrrh: at the beginning of the office in the first stichēron, where the historical stage is set with Joseph wrapping up the dead Christ with myrrh and linen; in the middle, where we see a transition from the language of binding and wrapping (implied in the stichēron with the mention of the *sindōn*) to that of anointing;¹⁶⁷ and at the end, where mention of being anointed (σμυρνιζόμενος) is immediately followed by intercessions for the divinely characterised ruler by name (Μανουὴλ τὸν ἄνακτα). Myrrh turns from burial balm to anointing oil, and the focus shifts away from the dead Christ to the living Manuel. While the streams of blood may be the result of the sufferings of the Passion, Skylitzēs’s office is devoid of any terminology of pain or suffering, these only being marginally implied by the few instances speaking of the “unnauling” and deposition from the cross.

4.3.4.3.3 Water

Blood is not the only thing streaming or flowing in Skylitzēs’s office: water imagery also pervades the hymns, drawn from examples in the Old Testament which the office exegetes as being types of the Holy Stone. The first ode of the kanōn recalls the stone struck by Moses in the wilderness which gushed forth water for the people of Israel, and proclaims that the new “Israel of Christ” now glories in the “precious stone” from which they “draw forth ever-gushing strength” of soul.¹⁶⁸ These rocky waters are not only a conduit of strength but a source (pun intended) of miracles and wonders,¹⁶⁹ and the “nature of stones” is enjoined to rejoice with the people on account of the sanctified relic, while the mountains are commanded to “drip gladness” on the occasion of the translation: reading this in patristic/associative

164 An extensive bibliography exists on the so-called Great Schism; for a short selection of lengthier studies on the subject, see: RUNCIMAN 1955, PAPANAKIS/MEYENDORFF 1994, CHADWICK 2003, and NICHOLS 2010.

165 LEROU 2004, 170.

166 LEROU 2004, 177.

167 Ode V, troparion 4.

168 Ode I, troparion 3.

169 Ode III, troparion 1; Kathisma; Ode VI, troparion 2.

manner, an allusion is being made here to images in the prophecy of Isaiah of the mountains and hills rejoicing and breaking forth in celebration of God's mercy.¹⁷⁰ Yet just as Old Testament images are complemented by those from the New Testament in terms of imperial rule and blood, so too is the imagery of water supplemented here by examples from the Gospels. The theotokion for Ode VII speaks of a "heavenly rain" (οὐράνιος ὑετός) that came upon the Virgin's womb "like a dew-drop upon grass" (ὡς ἐπ' ἄγρωστιν ... καὶ ὡς σταγών), thus making her conception of Christ the fulfilment of a perceived Old Testament type,¹⁷¹ with Christ, the Word of God, falling like rain upon the "unwatered"¹⁷² womb of the Virgin, just as Moses's words are exhorted to "fall like rain" in the passage from Deuteronomy upon the dry hills of the wilderness. Water imagery in this troparion is combined with that of fire, elsewhere absent in the texts, but the office also speaks of Christ as being the cornerstone, and so we have both water and stone as images of Christ and thus the divine as well.

Water is also evoked by the tears of the Virgin and of John the beloved disciple, which are shed over the corpse of Christ on the Holy Stone. The narrative in the liturgical text takes here what I believe can be read as a complex oenological turn when we hear of the two virgins, mother and disciple, making a mixture of their tears with Christ's blood on the Stone.¹⁷³ Antonopoulou finds the mention of John here strange, as he does not appear elsewhere at all in Skylitzēs's office.¹⁷⁴ I believe the key to unlocking this mention of John in this context is the verb κατακίρνάω that is used, and the allusions this verb permits in a patristic/associative reading

170 Cf. Isa 44:23, 47:12, 49:13, noted in the apparatus by ANTONOPOULOU 2013, 126. The Greek here in the service, σταλάξατε ὄρη εὐφοροσύνην, is not a direct quotation, but perhaps combines the imagery of mountains (ὄρη) and gladness (εὐφοροσύνη) from Isaiah with the notion of mountains "dripping sweetness" (σταλάξατε ... γλυκασμόν) found in Joel 3:17–18, a passage not noted in Antonopoulou's edition apparatus: "And you shall know that I am the Lord your God, who tents in Sion, my holy mountain. ... And it shall be in that day, the mountains shall drip sweetness (ἀποσταλάξει τὰ ὄρη γλυκασμόν)"; the same exact phrase also occurs in Amos 9:13. The phrase with the imperative "drip sweetness, O mountains" (σταλάξατε ὄρη γλυκασμόν) is found in Byzantine hymnography as early as the mid-ninth century: for example, in Theodore Stouditēs's kanōn for the restoration of the holy images (Ode IX, troparion 2; cf. PG 99:1777).

171 Cf. Deut 32:2, noted by ANTONOPOULOU 2013, 133.

172 The other instances of the word ἄγρωστις in the Septuagint all cast this "grass" as being dry or prone to fire: Isa 9:18, "and lawlessness shall burn like fire and like dry grass (ὡς ἄγρωστις ξηρά) shall be consumed by fire"; Isa 37:27, "I weakened their hands and they withered up and became like dry grass on housetops and like [wild] grass (ὡς χόρτος ξηρός ἐπὶ δωμάτων καὶ ὡς ἄγρωστις); Hos 10:4, "uttering words, false excuses, he will make a covenant; judgment shall rise like grass on a dry bit of field (ὡς ἄγρωστις κρίμα ἐπὶ χέρσον ἀγροῦ)."

173 Stichēron 3; Ode VIII, troparion 1: "together with your virginal disciple, she who had no experience of a man was shedding tears and made a mixture (κατεκίρνα) from your side"; the Virgin's tears are also said to have washed the Stone, cf. Ode IV, troparion 5.

174 ANTONOPOULOU 2013, 116.

of the imagery. Unlike in the three Synoptic Gospels, there is no narrative of the Last Supper or ‘institution of the Eucharist’ in the Gospel of John, the virgin disciple. There is, however, the very important scene in John chapter 6 of the feeding of the five thousand, where Jesus proclaims to the astonishment of the crowds that unless they eat own flesh and drink his blood, they will have no life in themselves—a “hard saying” that occasions many of his followers to leave him.¹⁷⁵ The Gospel of John, then, speaks of Christ’s blood as being necessary for life. We have in this liturgical text then John, blood, tears, and ‘mixing’: the second clue. The verbal root here, κιννάω, dates back to Homeric times and has as its root meaning not just any mixing, but specifically the mixing of (concentrated) wine with water to prepare it for drinking.¹⁷⁶ This verb causes the hearer to think of wine against the backdrop of a scriptural figure and thus scripture more generally, allowing one to recall the passage near the end of Genesis, where Abraham blesses his son Judah the “lion” (whom Christ is said to be at the end of the Christian scriptures in the book of Revelation¹⁷⁷), describing him as ruling over the nations with a sceptre that shall never leave him, and as “wash[ing] his garments in wine and his vesture in the blood of the grape.”¹⁷⁸

Against this matrix of images, the reason for John’s presence becomes clear to me in this single troparion: together with the Virgin Mother, the Virgin Disciple mingles the water of their tears with the blood/wine from Christ’s side on the Holy Stone, evoking the liturgical Eucharist where water and wine would be mixed in the chalice and offered on the Pharos chapel’s altar, which was probably made of stone and decorated with precious stones in addition to the gold mentioned in Patriarch Phōtios’s ninth-century ekphrasis.¹⁷⁹ Antonopoulou and Lerou have pointed out that the mention of the Virgin Mary’s tears being fused with the Holy Stone could permit the relic to be considered not only as pertaining to the Passion of Christ, but also to the Theotokos,¹⁸⁰ and its presence would thus endow the Pharos chapel, dedicated to the Mother of God, with an explicit Marian relic in addition to the famed icon housed there,¹⁸¹ further heightening Manuel’s prestige for having acquired such a treasure. Yet to my mind, the mention here of the Virgin Disciple, while not alienating the Mother of God, deepens the focus on blood imagery to blood-as-wine, rather than shifting the relic’s focus away from Christ and allowing for a ‘Marian

175 Cf. John 6:48–66.

176 Cf. LSJ, s.v. “κιννάω”; Lampe, s.v. “κιννάω”.

177 Cf. Rev 5:5: “Then one of the elders said to me, ‘Weep not; lo, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has conquered, so that he can open the scroll and its seven seals.’”

178 Cf. Gen 49:11: πλυνεῖ ἐν οἴνῳ τὴν στολὴν αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐν αἵματι σταφυλῆς τὴν περιβολὴν αὐτοῦ.

179 Phōtios of Constantinople, *Homilies*, transl. by Mango, 10 (p. 186): “... but more wonderful than gold is the composition of the holy table”, which Mango interprets as “probably referring to incrustations and enamels” on the altar (*ibid.*, p. 182).

180 Cf. LEROU 2004, 179; ANTONOPOULOU 2013, 117.

181 On this icon, see BACCI 1998.

gaze', as it were. In this mention of the two virgins and their tears, we simply have another reflection of blood imagery linking Christ to the Stone and to Manuel, yet transposing the fluid from the aftermath of the Passion to the present circumstances of the Divine Liturgy celebrated in the Pharos chapel in the presence of the newly-translated Stone.

4.3.4.3.4 Action

The Holy Stone in the liturgical office studied here is the object of translation and veneration, as well as the locus of blood and tears. Yet the relic is no passive bystander in Skylitzēs's hymns, but rather takes on an active role in the texts as well, leading us to the final set of lithic imagery, namely that of action. In several of the hymns sung in Skylitzēs's office, the Holy Stone is spoken of as an entity with agentive power: not merely being a source that passively serves as a conduit for gushing forth miracles, but also actively providing protection and strength. The relic is said to strengthen the souls of the faithful and provide a firm foundation for Manuel, his dynasty, and the city,¹⁸² as well as manifest the strength of Christ after contact with the God-man's body.¹⁸³ The image of the ladder associated with the Stone, noted above, also implies movement, with the relic enabling transit from one place to another: in this case, from earth to heaven,¹⁸⁴ recalling the Old Testament image of the ladder Jacob the patriarch beheld in his dream while resting against the stone at Bethel.¹⁸⁵ The placement of Christ's dead body on the Holy Stone is said to have "smashed the gates of hell",¹⁸⁶ while the relic in turn enables the faithful to crush spiritual enemies just as David "smashed the foreigner Goliath".¹⁸⁷ The relic is also addressed directly in one hymn,¹⁸⁸ something we saw in the second chapter pertaining to the texts on the translation of the Mandyllion to the Byzantine capital and the Pharos chapel.¹⁸⁹ Yet the trope of relics serving as sources of protection and power, seen in the Mandyllion texts and the inscriptions and art of the Limburg Staurotheke, reaches here an apogee of development in the texts for the Holy Stone. While the Mandyllion's protection is for the unnamed (and thus general) emperor and city, and the Staurotheke's protection (and patronage) is open to many individuals (Constantine, Rōmanos, Basil, and via imperial mediation, to far-off military forces), the Holy Stone—in all the imagery associated with it in Skylitzēs's office for the translation—is firmly and frequently linked to one specific person, one specific

182 Stichēron 2; Ode I, troparion 1; Ode IV, troparia 2, 3; Ode V, troparion 2; Kontakion; Ode VII, troparion 3; Ode IX, troparia 4, 5.

183 Ode III, troparion 1.

184 Ode IV, troparion 1.

185 Cf. Gen 28:10–19.

186 Ode IV, troparion 4.

187 Ode VII, troparion 4.

188 Ode VI, troparion 4, where one finds the vocative form λίθε ("O stone").

189 Namely, the *Sermon* of Gregory the Referendary; see above chapter 2, n. 61.

emperor: Manuel, not just king or basileus but sole ruler of divine character (autokratōr, anax). This idea of the divine emperor thus emerges as a thread in the tapestry of Christian Byzantine praise and awe of the Lord's anointed on the imperial throne via these texts and against the background of the most sacred relics and spaces in the Middle Byzantine Christian empire.

As noted above in the section on chronicle sources, we know little else of the Holy Stone, its veneration, or its relevance after its translation to the city and the Pharos chapel. One final source, however, does come down to us on this object and its special connection to Manuel: a poem said to have been inscribed on the plinth on which the Stone was fixed when it was translated again, this time from the Pharos chapel and the Great Palace to beside the tomb of Manuel I when he was buried in the Pantokratōr monastery founded by his ancestor, John II Komnēnos and his wife Irene (Piroska) of Hungary (built between 1118–1136).¹⁹⁰ Personally linked to Manuel in life, the Stone remained linked to him in death, an unusual case for any relic, much less one from the Passion of Christ. In this final section of this chapter, we shall look at this pedestal poem, the tomb of Manuel I Komnēnos in the Pantokratōr monastery, and possible issues of performance and interaction with the Holy Stone in this final phase of relic-ruler interaction before the Fourth Crusade and the snapping of this thread of understanding imperial sanctity in the course of the plundering of the city and the loss of these treasures.

4.4 Manuel's tomb and the Holy Stone at the Pantokratōr monastery

As presented above in the excerpt from Chōniatēs's history, the Holy Stone was moved after the death of Manuel I Komnēnos from the Pharos chapel and the Great Palace and placed next to the emperor's tomb "on a base" (ἐπὶ κρητῖδος) in a shrine (ἡρῶον) next to the monastery church.¹⁹¹ Cyril Mango, in his important article on Byzantine monuments from the late 1960s, published the Greek text of a poetic eulogy said to have been inscribed on this base,¹⁹² preserved in the *Geography* of Meletios of Ioannina and published early in the 20th century in what was then a nearly inaccessible Hungarian study on Empress Irene (Piroska) of Hungary, together with an English translation.¹⁹³ Given the fact that Meletios himself notes that he knows of the inscription "according to tradition" (ἐκ παραδόσεως)¹⁹⁴ and

190 On the couple as founders of the monastery and the complex's beginnings, see: MAGDALINO 2013b.

191 Cf. above this chapter, n. 11; cf. also N. ŠEVČENKO 2010.

192 I follow Mango here *pace* Meletios in his edition, who claims that the verses were written on the stone proper; cf. MANGO 1969/1970, 372 and 375.

193 Cf. MORAVCSIK 1923, cited in MANGO 1969/1970, 372, n. 23.

194 MANGO 1969/1970, 372.

that he was preparing the manuscript of his *Geography* while resident in Naupaktos (and not in Constantinople), Mango surmises that Meletios did not himself copy the inscription from sight in the remains of the Pantokratōr monastery, but rather must have copied it from another (presumed lost) anthology of Constantinopolitan inscriptions.¹⁹⁵ Nonetheless, based on the style, subject matter, and other corroborating historical sources such as Chōniatēs's chronicle and the office by Skylitzēs, he avers that “[t]he poem shows every mark of authenticity”,¹⁹⁶ and this authenticity is also accepted by Ioannis Vassis, who likewise published an edition of the poem with some small variant readings *contra* Mango in 2013.¹⁹⁷ Nevertheless, despite there being eyewitness accounts of the presence of the Stone from Western visitors to the Pantokratōr complex up until the fall of the city to the Ottomans and descriptions of the object *per se*,¹⁹⁸ none of the latter recount even seeing the poem, much less understanding it or providing a transcription thereof. Perhaps what could not be understood was simply left out of sight, out of mind; or perhaps the poem was never in fact actually brought onto the relic's pedestal, but was drafted as a possibility for such work and never carried out.¹⁹⁹ In any case, whether actually carved into the pedestal or simply prepared as a prospective commemorative text, this funerary poem is an important source for further understanding the divine characteristics applied to Manuel in conjunction with the presence of the Holy Stone relic, especially *vis-à-vis* the location of the tomb at the Pantokratōr monastery more generally and within the *hērōon* more specifically.

195 MANGO 1969/1970, 375. A point not taken up by Mango here (nor indeed by Vassis in the few comments he provides to his edition; cf. below this chapter, n. 193) is the fact that Meletios ends his transcription of the poem with the words *καὶ τὰ ἐξῆς* (“and so forth”). It is hard to know why exactly he chose to end the poem in this way; several other passages in Meletios's *Geographia* end with the same words, notably after long lists of topical features in Greek locales, such that a need to abridge the poem for the sake of printing space seems unlikely. Other possibilities for the text breaking off could be that the inscription had been damaged and/or that the manuscript from which Meletios made his copy broke off; a further possibility could be that the poetic inscription was even longer (not impossible for the Komnēnian period; on this, Mango [*ibid.*] notes the famous example of the Edict of 1166 brought onto the wall of Hagia Sophia) and that Meletios lost interest in the poem after the final line preserved by him; or else the rest of the content was judged by him to be irrelevant to the point at hand in the work, namely, information descriptive of the contents of the Pantokratōr monastery. Barring the recovery of this purported source text of the inscription in Naupaktos, these comments must remain speculative.

196 MANGO 1969/1970, 373.

197 Cf. VASSIS 2013 (edition of pedestal poem text printed on pp. 240–242). Vassis does not provide a complete translation alongside his edition, but only a prose summary in German.

198 Mango and N. Ševčenko list these; cf. MANGO 1969/1970, 374–375; N. ŠEVČENKO 2010, 609.

199 Inscriptions and other epigrammatic texts in medieval Byzantium could be bespoke compositions as well as choices made by patrons from amongst pre-composed texts, which may or may not have been slightly adapted to match the name(s) and taste(s) of such clients. Cf. RHOBY 2012, 734 and 754.

4.4.1 The pedestal poem: imagery and themes

As extant in Meletios of Ioannina's *Geographia*, the poem is 44 lines long²⁰⁰ and is written in dodecasyllabic verse typical for the Middle Byzantine period, combining the Ancient Greek iambic trimeter with obligatory stress on the penultimate syllable. Though the poem is thought to have been on the pedestal erected for the Holy Stone next to Manuel's tomb, the focus throughout the poem—as in the translation office—is again squarely on the reposed ruler rather than the relic. The eulogy begins with a command to the beholder: “Admire these strange things as thou seest them, stranger” (l. 1). This activity is envisaged as enduring throughout the poem by the use of the present rather than aorist active imperative (θαύμαζε) and the present active participle (ὄρων) here, and we find again perhaps the agentiveness of the stone through the inscription, since no other person mentioned in the poem speaks directly to the onlooker in the first person.²⁰¹ Manuel immediately comes to the fore in the poem, with a recounting of the emperor bearing the Stone on his shoulders on the day of the translation; yet instantly the dead ruler is connected with scriptural language and the person of Christ. Manuel is called “emperor” or “king” (βασιλεύς) and “master” or “lord” (δεσπότης): on the one hand, these are scriptural terms associated with God/Christ (ll. 2–3)²⁰² and paralleled in the poem in the following lines, where Manuel is patterned directly after Christ, being buried with the crucified one so that he might “arise together with [the] buried Lord” (ll. 7–8), thus giving us the direct equivalent of Manuel and Christ both described as δεσπότης; on the other hand, these are also terms that are regularly used for the emperor apart from any scriptural context or allusion. Manuel is described as having a doubly divine name: Manuel and Matthew (from monastic tonsure; ll. 19–24),²⁰³ alluding to the common Byzantine practice of taking monastic vows before death.²⁰⁴

200 Both Mango and Vassis present the poem in this length, consonant with the printed edition of Meletios from 1728. Any edition can thus be consulted for any of the line references that follow, unless otherwise specified regarding a specific variance between Mango's and Vassis's readings.

201 For a volume of recent studies on such ‘speaking objects’ in the late antique and medieval periods, both Eastern and Western, see EDELMANN-SINGER/EHRICH 2021. This command issuing forth from the stone echoes other types of Byzantine texts which include such performative elements, namely poems and homilies with injunctions for blessings to be given before the reading aloud of the word; on this, see: ANTONOPOULOU 2010, 57–59. On the function of performative speech in general, see: AUSTIN 1962 as well as SEARLE 1969. This performative feature of inscriptions and decorative texts brought onto Byzantine liturgical items is also highlighted by FREEMAN 2019, 14.

202 Cf. Luke 2:29; Acts 4:24; 2 Pet 2:1; Jude 1:4; Rev 6:10.

203 The sense of the second name being divine here, it seems, would be understood from a Middle Byzantine perspective as coming from the “angelic schema” of monastic life (cf. l. 24) rather than any understanding of the original Hebrew form of Matthew (Gr. Ματθαῖος), namely *mattityāhū*, meaning “gift of God”.

204 On this practice, see: A.-M. TALBOT 1987; GARLAND 2013, 33–34.

Furthermore, the language of anointed one/Christ is used again explicitly with reference to Manuel, and against the backdrop of language pertaining to burial and stones covering tombs, the one-to-one association between earthly anointed and heavenly/divine anointed is hard to ignore.

The scriptural/Christian image of the pious departed sovereign continues further on in the poem, when the widowed Maria enters the narrative scene. Like her namesake amongst the myrrhbearing women,²⁰⁵ the empress Maria wishes “that she may roll that life-giving stone [sc. the Holy Stone] to the tomb wherein is buried the body of the Lord's anointed, the emperor Manuel ...” (ἀλλ' ὡς κυλίση ζωτικὸν λίθον τάφω, / ἐν ᾧ τέθαιπται σῶμα χριστοῦ Κυρίου, / τοῦ Μανουήλ ἄνακτος ...) (ll. 17–19a).²⁰⁶ In the short span of these lines, a transition in reference takes place: from using the term “basileus”, thence to “anointed”, and further to “anax”, with Manuel and the God-man Jesus Christ both being evoked by these terms, and with no resolution towards a definitive attribution one way or the other—we as the beholders continue to marvel as instructed by the Stone itself and remain in this puzzled state over the divine emperor's death and burial. The pattern of Holy Scripture in the funerary poem is also present in the bereaved empress's desire in her grief to “steal the beloved corpse” (καὶ τὸν νέκυν κλέψειε περιλιμένον, l. 33), an allusion perhaps to Mary Magdalene seeking the body of Christ in the garden, worrying that it might have been stolen and expressing her own desire to take the body away in that case.²⁰⁷ This allusion to Mary Magdalene might also have been strengthened by the iconography of the myrrhbearing women coming to the tomb and the post-resurrection appearance to Mary Magdalene in the garden, which are said to have decorated one of the arches in the hērōon according to the typikon of the Pantokratōr monastery.²⁰⁸ But whatever the exact location of this art in the sepulchral shrine, the equation of Maria

205 All four canonical Gospels mention this group of women disciples: Matt 27:55–61; 28:1–10; Mark 15:40–16:11; Luke 23:50–24:10; John 19:38–20:18.

206 This desire expressed by Maria in the poem may also be a reference to her initiating the translation of the Holy Stone from the Pharos chapel to beside Manuel's tomb in the Pantokratōr monastery.

207 Cf. John 20:11–15. The allusion to Mary Magdalene in the garden becomes more vivid if we follow Vassis's reading of l. 27 with παρεστῶς (p.241, apparatus) against Mango's παρεστῶσ', which clearly links the action of being present or standing with Christ, and Maria/Mary as the one seeking out the God-man to raise up Manuel from the dead.

208 Cf. MANGO 1969/1970, 374, n. 34, who cites the earlier work by DMITRIEVSKIJ 1895, 678, which contains the text of the typikon of the Pantokratōr monastery with this description. An edition and French-language translation of this text was published in GAUTIER 1974, while an English-language translation later appeared in R. JORDAN 2000. On the artistic programme here specifically, see OUSTERHOUT 2009, 108: “Poem, relic, and tomb would have had a special resonance situated beneath the mosaic of the Holy Women at the Tomb. At the same time, the setting for the ensemble of tombs, relic, and images was a unique twin-domed church. I suspect here a relationship between the Komnēnian *heroon* and the church of the Holy Sepulchre, which marked the site of the events commemorated in the mosaics.”

of Antioch with Maria Magdalene nonetheless serves to heighten the parallel connection between Manuel I and the God-Man *'immānū 'ēl*. Connection is also made, however, to Maria the mother of Jesus. Some patristic authors held that “the other Mary” mentioned in the Gospel of Matthew was the Theotokos;²⁰⁹ given this interpretative background, the mentions of Maria “mix[ing] unguents with her tears” (τὰ μύρα τοῖς δάκρυσιν κίρνῃ, l. 14) and “shedding tears like unguents...before the stone” (δάκρυσιν ὡσπερ μύροις...πρὸς τὸν λίθον, ll. 25–26) recall Skylitzēs’s account of the Virgin herself shedding tears on the Holy Stone as Jesus’s lifeless corpse was laid out thereon. The bereaved widow’s tears echo those of the Virgin Mother bereft of her divine son; the outpouring of Maria’s tears for her dead husband Manuel merge with those of the Theotokos for the dead *'immānū 'ēl*, again serving to unite the earthly emperor and the heavenly king almost inseparably.

Why exactly the Holy Stone was moved out from the Great Palace to the Pantokratōr monastery by Maria is unclear. There do not seem to be any extant texts disputing the sanctity or authenticity of the Holy Stone as a Passion relic, which might have occasioned its movement after Manuel’s death: to the contrary, the relic’s status and veneration as source of protection and power have been shown above to pre-date his reign. More probable, given the tone of the pedestal poem and the great role allotted therein to the empress, is that Maria wished for Manuel to remain linked to the Holy Stone, the translation of which was a highlight in her husband’s long reign, in death as in life. The setting of the emperor’s tomb in the Pantokratōr monastery founded by his family further served to connect sovereign with Christ Almighty, a link made all the more tangibly and visibly evident by the juxtaposition of the imperial tomb and the divine relic in the shrine, where the monks of the monastery continually prayed for the souls of the emperor and his ancestors, while censuring his tomb.²¹⁰ It is precisely this architectural and artistic context of the tomb at the monastery from which we can glean some final clues to understanding this threshold moment of imperial sacrality that occurs in Manuel’s reign.

4.4.2 *Taphos* and temple: imagery at the tomb of Manuel I Komnēnos

The eulogy poem on the pedestal of the Holy Stone, despite its frequent mention of Manuel and its plaintive evocation of the widow Maria’s grief, is utterly silent on the matter of the emperor’s own tomb. We find no description of the sepulchre

209 Such early witnesses to this belief include texts by Pseudo-Cyril of Jerusalem, John Chrysostom, Gregory of Nyssa, Sevēros of Antioch, Anastasios of Sinai, and later into the medieval period with George of Nikomēdeia and Symeon Metaphrastēs. Textual citations of these authors, as well as an examination of early artistic depictions of the Virgin Mary at the tomb, such as the Rabbula Gospels, are provided and analysed in BRECKENRIDGE 1957.

210 Cf. GAUTIER 1974, 34–35; 44–45. See also GAUTIER 1969, esp. p. 240.

here, which in a way makes sense, given the immediate proximity to the poem and the pedestal. The stranger enjoined to behold the Holy Stone in the *hērōon* need only slightly shift his or her gaze to the sovereign's sepulchre, the wonder of which is borne witness to by other contemporary sources. In his chronicle, Chōniatēs contents himself with the following brief and sober remark in the passage quoted at the beginning of this chapter: "Where the church wall led round to an arch, a broad entrance way was opened around the sepulcher, which was faced with marble of a black hue, gloomy in appearance."²¹¹ Perhaps Chōniatēs, the imperial bureaucrat accustomed to the grandeur of the palace and the imperial retinue, was not especially impressed. The same cannot be said of Robert of Clari, who waxes eloquent on the tomb in his account of the conquest of the Constantinople in the Fourth Crusade in 1204:

And there was another of the abbeys where the good emperor Manuel lay, and never was anyone born on this earth, sainted man or sainted woman, who was so richly and so nobly sepulchred as was this emperor. In this abbey there was the marble slab on which Our Lord was laid when He was taken down from the Cross, and there could still be seen there the tears which Our Lady had let fall upon it.²¹²

The French Crusader here confirms the arrangement—the imperial tomb with adjacent Holy Stone, as well as the maintenance and spread of the legend of the Virgin's tears, where this colour and splotch scheme becomes the dominant Byzantine depiction of the scene²¹³ (see Fig. 20)—and provides an overall impression of the

211 See above this chapter, n. 11.

212 Robert of Clari, *The Conquest of Constantinople*, transl. by McNeal, 112; cited by N. ŠEVČENKO 2010, 609.

213 The spread of this specific manner of depicting the Holy Stone in Byzantine art has been studied by: SPATHARAKIS 1995, 435–446, who shows that the earliest depiction of the Stone of Unction with the mottled red motif dates to 1200, shortly after the movement of the Stone to the monastery, and that the spread of this depiction also changed how the depicted scene itself came to be interpreted ("The fact that the addition of the lithos drastically changed the whole conception of the scene for the Byzantines is shown by the replacement of the older inscription, Ο ΕΝΤΑΦΙΑΣΜΟΣ, with a new one, Ο ΕΠΙΤΑΦΙΟΣ ΘΡΗΝΟΣ", *ibid.*, p. 438); and DRPIĆ 2019, who especially explores the political implications of placing the Stone of Unction at Manuel's tomb of Manuel, this being perhaps an attempt by his widow Maria of Antioch (a Latin from Outremer), to show her political *bona fides* to the new imperial administration (*ibid.*, p. 68). From Constantinople, this imagery of the Holy Stone spreads into medieval Western art as well; on this phenomenon, see PRATER 1985 (my thanks to Albert Dietl for this reference). A new Stone of Unction appears in the Middle Ages in Jerusalem again as well, although here it is the case simply of a stone at the site of Christ's burial in the church of the Holy Sepulchre, rather than the imitation of a specific mottled type of marble in a previously extant slab; on this, see RACHMAN-SCHRIRE 2017.

Fig. 20: Depiction of the Holy Stone with mottled red colouring. Vatopedi Monastery, Mount Athos.



stunning sight of this sepulchre, but no proper physical description: not even the red colour of the Stone merits mention here.

Where we do find a strange description of the tomb is immediately after Chōniatēs's statement of black gloom: he speaks of the sepulchre being ὃς καὶ εἰς ἑπτὰ διέσχισται λοφιάς, "divided into seven lofty sections" as Magoulias translates it.²¹⁴ The phrase here ἑπτὰ λοφιάς, however, is simply a nominalisation of the adjective ἑπτάλοφος, meaning "seven-hilled" and used primarily to refer to Rome,²¹⁵ long known by this epithet in antiquity. The same image is repeated later in Chōniatēs's text when he recounts the visit of Manuel's first cousin, Andronikos I Komnēnos, to the royal tomb. Andronikos weeps at the sight of the tomb and appears to be mumbling something, which the chronicler notes that those standing by interpreted as invective uttered against the dead man. In this imagined moment of *Schadenfreude*, Andronikos is said to mention ὁ ἑπτακόρυμβος ... λίθος, which Ševčenko in her close study of the tomb translates as "seven-pointed stone"²¹⁶ and Magoulias much more

214 Cf. n. 11, above; translation by Magoulias, p. 125.

215 Cf. Cicero, *Letters to Atticus* 6.5.2: ἐξ ἄστεος ἑπτάλοφου στείχων. Cf. LSJ, s.v. "ἑπτάλοφος".

216 N. ŠEVČENKO 2010, 610.

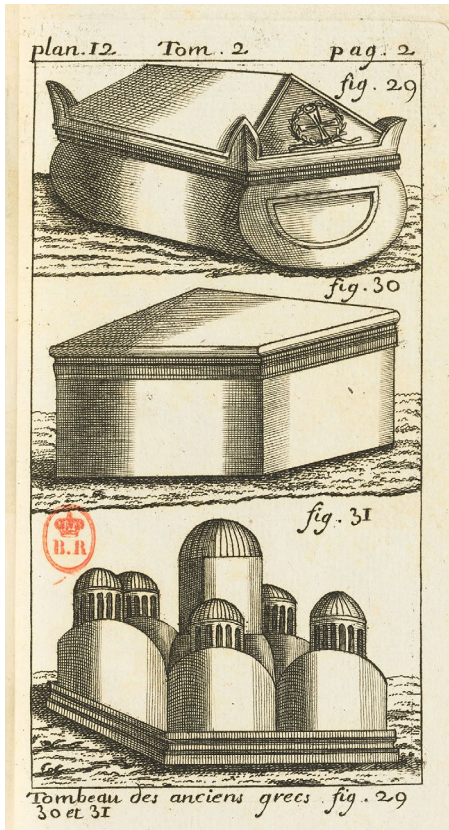


Fig. 21: Drawings of Byzantine sarcophagus lids by Jean-Claude Flachet, printed 1766.

loosely as “this marble with its seven clusters of ivy”.²¹⁷ This could merely be seen as an instance of rhetorical *inclusio* in this fictional quotation, since the end of this supposed vindictive mumbling by Andronikos ends with him claiming that “I shall fall upon your family like a lion pouncing on a large prey, and I shall exact fitting revenge for the injuries I have sustained at your hands when I enter the splendid seven-hilled megalopolis (τὴν ἐπτάλοφον ταυτηνὶ καὶ λαμπρὰν εἰσιὼν μεγαλόπολιν).”²¹⁸ However, as Ševčenko remarks in a footnote, a variant manuscript of Chōniatēs reads here ἐπτάτρολος, or “seven-domed”, a strange description at any rate but one that Cyril Mango has found to be confirmed in a mid-18th-century series of sketches made by Jean-Claude Flachet from his time in Constantinople (see Fig. 21).²¹⁹

What might be the meaning and significance of these “strange things” pertaining to Manuel’s tomb, as the pedestal inscription itself describes them (l. 1)? In her study, Ševčenko considers the possibility of there existing “an intentional analogy

217 Translation by Magoulias, p. 143.

218 Chōniatēs, *History*, transl. by Magoulias, 257 (p. 143); also quoted in N. ŠEVČENKO 2010, 610.

219 Also reproduced in N. ŠEVČENKO 2010, 610, where she notes the dissenting view on the lid by André Grabar (see this chapter above, n. 11).



Fig. 22–23: Obverse and reverse of gold hyperpyron of Manuel I Komnēnos. 1143–1152?, Constantinople.

between the seven domes of Manuel’s tomb and the seven hills of Constantinople, or the city of Constantinople as the New Sion”,²²⁰ which she notes is a frequent image in the office composed by Skylitzēs (and which the analysis of those hymns has shown above in this chapter). Robert Ousterhout has also suggested that the tomb might have been meant to evoke the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem, given the double domes of the Pantokratōr at this time and the myrrhbearer iconography.²²¹ Yet the fact that the Holy Stone is moved from the palace to be next to Manuel’s tomb, and that Christ, Mary, and Lazaros are all mentioned explicitly in the pedestal poem, seem to lead Ševčenko to agree with this Zion-influenced reading, in which “the three components of the tomb, relic and poem ... serve, in their architectural setting and physical relationship to each other, to align Manuel with Christ, in death as in life.”²²² This alignment, then, can be seen as the continuation and culmination of the visual identification of emperor and God which marked the early years of Manuel’s reign (during which minted gold *hyperpyra* showed the Emperor Manuel on the obverse and the beardless, Christ-child *‘immānū ‘ēl* on the reverse [see Fig. 22–23]) and of the textual alignment seen and heard in the texts composed by Skylitzēs for the translation of the Holy Stone to Constantinople near the end of Manuel’s time on the throne.

²²⁰ N. ŠEVČENKO 2010, 614.

²²¹ OUSTERHOUT 2009, 107: “I suspect that the five-domed form of the irregular complex may have been intended to equate the Pantokrator with the nearby church of the Holy Apostles, the imperial dynastic mausoleum of Constantine the Great and of the early Byzantine emperors. In a like manner, the oddly archaic term *heroon*—meaning a hero’s shrine—calls to mind the monumental martyria of the Early Christian period—of which the Holy Apostles was the nearest example. In fact, Nicholas Mesarites employed the term *heroon* in reference to the imperial mausoleum at the church of the Holy Apostles, explaining that those buried there are heroes.” Nancy Ševčenko also notes this line of thought on the part of Ousterhout; cf. N. ŠEVČENKO 2010, 615, n. 41.

²²² N. ŠEVČENKO 2010, 616.

4.5 Concluding thoughts

As mentioned above, visitors to Constantinople in later centuries still saw the Holy Stone and Manuel's tomb; the monks at the Pantokratōr monastery still prayed for the soul of the emperor and honoured his sepulchre with incense.²²³ Yet the thought-world that could enable these two ideas of ruler—anointed of Christ and sacred, quasi-divine autokratōr—could not be restored with the loss of the relics and the rise of Western political, military, and economic might even with another Greek-speaking emperor ascending the throne in 1261 and claiming for himself the title of anax.²²⁴ At the end of the 12th century and after this long path of development in the wake of the interaction of holy relics with human rulers, a figure of the highest stature such as Theodore Balsamōn, accomplished lawyer and canonist and patriarch of Antioch, could justify the emperors' special access to the altar of a church and their right to offer incense and preach (much like ordained ministers) as being simply a matter of fact based on their status as being 'anointed' by God:

For the Orthodox emperors who put forth patriarchs for office, and who are anointed ones of the Lord (χριστοὶ ὄντες Κυρίου) through the invocation of the Holy Trinity, enter unhindered into the holy sanctuary when they wish, offering incense and making the sign [sc. of the Cross] with the triple candlestick, just like the archpriests do. And they also teach the people via catechesis, which is only granted to the archpriests entrusted therewith.²²⁵

This anointing is also described by Balsamōn as something shared by Christ God and the Byzantine emperors: “And since the current emperor (ὁ κατὰ καιροὺς βασιλεύς) is also an anointed of the Lord (χριστός Κυρίου) through the unction of kingship (διὰ τὸ χρίσμα τῆς βασιλείας), and since the anointed/Christ and our God (χριστός καὶ θεὸς ἡμῶν) is proclaimed among other things also as high priest, it is fitting that the former also be adorned with the charismatic gifts of the archpriesthood.”²²⁶ Similarly, the poet Theodore Prodromos (ca. 1100–ca. 1165/1170) could speak of the emperor explicitly and publicly as being divine in poems declaimed at court, an aspect of his work deserving comprehensive study.²²⁷ Yet in 1261, after the Palaiologan

223 Cf. above this chapter, n. 206.

224 On the use of the title “anax” by the first post-Latin emperor, Michael VIII Palaiologos, see Rhoby 2019, 272, where he quotes an anonymous poem which speaks of the emperor as “Michael, ruler of the Romans” (ὁ Μιχαήλ ... Ῥωμαίων ἀναξ).

225 Theodore Balsamōn, *Commentaries on the Canons*, ed. by Rhallēs/Potlēs, 2:466. Translation mine.

226 Theodore Balsamōn, *Commentaries on the Canons*, ed. by Rhallēs/Potlēs, 2:467. Translation mine.

227 No complete English-language translation of Prodromos's poems and other writings has yet been published, although individual texts have seen print. A great number of such instances of divine language applied to the emperors can be found in the so-called

restoration, an anointing from on high no longer suffices to legitimate the rulers of a rump empire: the emperors are anointed with very material (albeit blessed) oil.²²⁸ The loss of the imperial relic treasury of the Pharos chapel in 1204 (and the permanence of the translation of the Holy Stone from thence to the Pantokratōr monastery in the preceding decades) thus seems to have occasioned a break in one of the oldest continuing threads in Byzantine history: namely, that of a divine ruler, which had progressed from being simply blessed or elected or ‘anointed’ to being called divine and seemingly assimilated to the second person of the Trinity in the case of the rhetoric and texts around Manuel I Komnēnos examined in this study. Going forward into the later Middle Ages and the final centuries of the Byzantine Empire, the broken strands of that thread were left to slumber with the kings of the past, sealed in a seven-domed tomb, waiting for the resurrection of the divine, light-bearing Emmanuel.

historical poems, available in the edition prepared by Hörandner (1974), who observes that “[d]en Kern der Kaiseridee bildet auch bei Prodrornos die Vorstellung von der Gottähnlichkeit in all ihren Aspekten” (p. 91). Prodrornos often addresses the sovereign as “divine emperor” (e.g., poem 4, ll. 81 and 91: θεῖε βασιλεῦ) and applies sun and light imagery to the ruler (e.g. *ibid.*, l. 121: ἦλιε θεῖε βασιλεῦ φωσφόρε σελασφόρε); according to Hörander, “Sonnengleich heißt in Byzanz—bei aller mythologischen Verbrämung—stets auch ‘christusgleich’” (p. 103). The scope of this study (and footnote!) cannot permit all such instances to be examined, but poem 10 (“Hymn to Emperor Ioannes Komnenos on the Baptism of Christ, for the demes, in three verses”, first verse, ll. 11–15) displays the extent to which the emperor in this time could be linked with Christ: “I seem to hear a second voice crying again to the peoples from heaven: ‘This is my emperor, this one in whom I am well pleased; so obey him!’” (δοκῶ φωνῆς ἐξ οὐρανοῦ δευτέρας ἐπακούειν / βώωσης πάλιν τοῖς λαοῖς· Οὗτος ὁ βασιλεύς μου, / οὗτος εἰς ὃν εὐδόκησα, τούτῳ καὶ περὶθαρχεῖτε) (translation mine), alluding to the baptism of Christ and the voice of the Father as recorded in the Synoptic Gospels (cf. Matt 3:13–17, Mark 1:9–11, Luke 3:21–23).

²²⁸ Cf. NICOL 1976, 44–49, where the author explains the transition from the use of mere oil to specially blessed chrism by the end of the 13th century. On later innovations regarding imperial unction at coronations in the Palaiologan period, see also TUDORIE 2011.