

# 1 General Introduction

## 1.1 Thematic preamble

On the eve of the Fourth Crusade, Constantinople was not only known by the sobriquet of “Queen of Cities” and the capital of the Roman Empire, but could also boast of possessing one of the greatest collection of relics in Christendom.<sup>1</sup> Yet when the Crusaders turned aside in 1204 from their planned (re-)conquest of Jerusalem and brought instead calamity upon the imperial capital, most of these treasures ended up leaving the palace and city, never to return; this plunder and destruction is narrated in both Byzantine and Latin Crusader sources.<sup>2</sup> Though sovereignty over Constantinople and its dwindling imperial holdings was wrested from the Latins by the Palaiologan dynasty in 1261, the holy relics once preserved in the palatine precincts remained lost, scattered amongst the monasteries, great houses, and palaces of the Crusaders’ homelands.<sup>3</sup>

For centuries prior to this significant loss, Constantinople was a veritable treasury of relics.<sup>4</sup> The altar of every church in the city was required to contain at least

- 1 Cf. KRUEGER 2010b, 5–17, esp. 13, where he mentions the estimation made by Meinhardus of there being 3,600 relics of 476 different saints in the city during the Middle Byzantine period. Cf. also the account of the conquest of the city by Villehardouin in n. 2 below, who writes (*On the Conquest of Constantinople* 192): “Many of our men, I may say, went to visit Constantinople, to gaze at its many splendid palaces and tall churches and view all the marvellous wealth of a city richer than any other since the beginning of time. As for the relics, these were beyond description, for there were as many at that time in Constantinople as in all the rest of the world” (cited in WORTLEY 1999, 353). A lemma proximity search for the terms βασιλῆς/βασίλισσα and πόλεων on TLG shows evidence of the phrase “Queen of Cities” for describing Constantinople as early as the ninth century in the works of Leo the Deacon and Joseph the Hymnographer and surviving in Greek-language works after the fall of the city to the Ottomans, including the early Modern Greek *History of the Emperors of the Turks* from the late 16th–early 17th century (ed. by Zōras 1958).
- 2 For Byzantine narrations of the fall of the city to the Crusaders, see: Nikētas Chōniatēs, *History*, ed. by Dieten 1975; Nicholas Mesaritēs, *The Coup of John the Fat*, ed. by Heisenberg 1907 and transl. by Angold 2017 (a partial translation of the passage relating the relics of the Passion in the Pharos chapel is also available in FEATHERSTONE 2022); Mesaritēs, *Epitaph for his brother John*, ed. by Heisenberg 1922 and transl. by Angold 2017; anonymous, *Chronicle of the Morea*, ed. by Schmitt 1889 and transl. by Lurier 1964. For Crusader narrations, see: Robert of Clari, *The Conquest of Constantinople*, ed. by Noble 2005 and transl. by McNeal 2005; William of Tyre, *Chronicon*, ed. by Huygens 1986 and transl. by Babcock/Krey 1943; Geoffrey of Villehardouin, *On the Conquest of Constantinople*, ed. by Paris 1838 and transl. by C. Smith 2008.
- 3 Many of these treasures ended up in the treasury of the Cathedral of Saint Mark in Venice and in the Holy Chapel (Sainte-Chapelle) of the French kings on the Île-de-la-Cité in the heart of Paris. Cf. DURAND 1997; DURAND/LAFFITTE 2001; HAHNLOSER 1971.
- 4 Cf. the extensive article by EFFENBERGER 2015.

some portion of saints' relics,<sup>5</sup> and several prominent houses of worship—such as the church of the Holy Apostles<sup>6</sup> or the Great Church of Holy Wisdom<sup>7</sup>—contained large collections of sacred bones and artefacts. Yet no ensemble rivalled the hoard of holy objects housed not in any patriarchal church or urban monastery, but rather in the Great Palace of the Byzantine emperors. The churches within the palace complex contained relics of saints from both the Old and New Testaments, but amongst the numerous palatine chapels and temples, one stood out for its priceless treasures: the church of the Theotokos of the *Pharos* or Lighthouse, in which the most precious relics of the Christian faith—those holy objects connected to the Passion and person of Jesus Christ as well as his closest associates, such as the Virgin Mary and John the Baptist—were safeguarded.<sup>8</sup> From the fourth century onward, emperors in every century sought to raise the spiritual and sacral profile of the city by

- 5 The requirement for altars to contain relics is set out in Canon 7 of the Second Council of Nicaea. Cf. WAGSCHAL 2015, 270. For the canons of the council, see the editions by LAMBERZ 2012/2013/2016. An English-language translation of the acts of the Second Council of Nicaea has recently appeared in PRICE 2018 (here pp. 615–616). On relics in church buildings specifically, see: MARINIS/OUSTERHOUT 2015.
- 6 On this church in Constantinople, see among others: DOWNEY 1959; JANIN 1969, 41–50; and MULLETT/OUSTERHOUT 2020.
- 7 From the extensive body of scholarship on Hagia Sophia, see among others: JANIN 1969, 455–470; MARK/ÇAKMAK 1992. A look at the more recent history of the edifice can be found in: NELSON 2004; cf. also the work done by PENTCHEVA, listed below in this introduction, n. 63.
- 8 The earliest list of relics contained within the Pharos chapel made by a visitor to the city is that of the anonymous traveller of MS Tarragonensis 55, which has been dated to the years 1075–1099; a total of twelve such lists survive from the end of the 11th century until the sack of the city in the Fourth Crusade in 1204, with four others made between 1204–1247. A complete list of the sources and editions of these lists, as well as a helpful comparative table showing the differences and concordances of the lists with one another, is provided in: BACCI 2003, 234–246 and especially 243–245. For reference, I list here the twelve documents from the time period under consideration and as collected by Bacci, in chronological order of the accounts (document dates in parentheses): anonymous, *Description of Constantinople from the Late Eleventh Century*, ed. by Ciggaar 1995 (1075–1099); anonymous, *Description of Constantinople translated by an English Pilgrim*, ed. by Ciggaar 1976 (12th century); Alexios I Komnēnos, *Letter to Count Robert of Flanders*, ed. by Riant 1879 (1092); anonymous, *Narrative of Constantinople* (Διήγησις τῆς Κωνσταντινουπόλεως), ed. by Ciggaar 1973 (1136–1143); anonymous, *Description from the Year 1150*, ed. by Riant 1879 (1150); Nicholas of Munkačverá, *Catalogue of the Relics of Constantinople* (*Catalogus reliquiarum Constantinopoleos*), ed. by Riant 1879 (1157); William of Tyre, *Chronicon*, ed. by Huygens 1986 and transl. by Babcock/Krey 1943 (1171); Leo the Tuscan, *On the heresies and transgressions of the Greeks* (*De haeresibus et praevaricationibus Graecorum*), ed. by Migne (ca. 1177); anonymous, *A Description of Constantinople* (*Descriptio Constantinopolis*), ed. by Ciggaar 1973 (late 12th century; in this article, Ciggaar explains how the two MSS containing this text, previously presumed to be the same text, are actually two slightly different accounts from different times in the 11th century); Anthony of Novgorod, *Pilgrim's Book* (Книга паломник), ed. and German transl. by Jouravel 2019 (1200); Nicholas Mesarītēs, *The Coup of John the Fat*, ed. by Heisenberg and

means of relic translations, importing into the capital the spiritual riches it lacked in contrast to the earlier Christian centres of Rome, Jerusalem, Alexandria, and Antioch. Not all of these sacred treasures came to the Great Palace, yet increasingly in the Middle Byzantine period—from the mid-ninth-century “triumph of Orthodoxy” under Theodora and Michael III until the apogee/cataclysm at the start of the 13th century under Alexios V<sup>9</sup>—imperialy occasioned relic translations resulted in the augmentation of the treasures within the Great Palace, especially by means of the most sacred ones: relics pertaining to the Passion and to Christ himself. It is the concentration of these treasures within the palace and in close proximity to the emperor, rather than within the cathedral and near the patriarch, that is the primary occasion for this study and its concomitant questions.<sup>10</sup>

## 1.2 Aims and research questions

My work in the present volume elucidates the influence and impact of the presence of holy relics, and in particular relics connected to the Passion of Christ, in the Great Palace on the understanding of the imperial office and the figure of the emperor in the Middle Byzantine era, taking as chronological reference points the year 944 (when the Mandyllion was translated to Constantinople) and 1204 (when the Pharos chapel was plundered). This dating is significant because, although the translation of relics and antiquities to the Queen of Cities had already begun under the founding emperor Constantine I in the 330s, we begin to find with the arrival of the Mandyllion sources that speak in detail about the relationship between these relics and the emperor, whereas after the departure of these relics from the city in 1204, Byzantine sources fall silent on them and the interactive matrix of palace/Passion relics/emperor ceases to exist in the same full way as it had before the calamity of the Fourth Crusade. A central theme of this thesis, demonstrated across the following chapters via close studies of three key Passion relics, is that the sacrality of these objects—which sanctify spaces and protect persons by

transl. by Angold (ca. 1200); Robert of Clari, *The Conquest of Constantinople*, ed. by Noble and transl. by McNeal (ca. 1204).

- 9 The dates bookending what has come to be called the “Middle Byzantine” period vary amongst scholars, with some consensus however placing a start around AD 700 and ending with the Fourth Crusade in 1204. Cf. SHEPARD 2008, esp. pp. 21–52 on issues of periodisation. Cited in TUCKER 2023, 4, n. 12.
- 10 On the relics housed in the Pharos chapel, see the compilation of pilgrimage accounts listing relics in BACCI 2003 (above, n. 8) and Magdalino’s account of the relics housed in the chapel during the Middle Byzantine period (below, n. 52). I am also grateful to Nancy P. Ševčenko for having shared with me for consultation an unpublished list she prepared of known dates of relics arriving in Constantinople, along with their known locations in the city, from 336–1169/1170, which she compiled for the talk she gave on travelling relics at the 18th International Byzantine Congress held in Moscow, August 8–15, 1991.

contact and veneration in Byzantine theology—served to sacralise and sanctify the office of emperor, as well as the emperor himself, via the close contact and connection of these sacred objects to the emperor in his domicile and private apartments. In order to determine if this supposition holds true, the research behind this study poses several questions as to the objects and agents participating in this palatine connection in the Middle Byzantine period: What sources from this time period speak of relics pertaining to Christ and the emperor? How do these sources speak of this connection? Can we trace themes of continuity or change in how this connection between ruler and relic is understood during the time period under study? Is the emperor truly understood to be a sacred and holy figure, or merely the holder of a sacred office? And in the former case: does such imperial sacrality derive purely from Christian theology and sacred objects, or are other sacralising elements that pre-date the Christianisation of the empire also at work? These questions and the search for their answers take place in this study wholly within a Byzantine context; and while the sources examined and methodologies employed are various and interdisciplinary, as will be explained below, the study is firmly grounded in the Roman, Greek-speaking, Byzantine orthodox Christian world and the ways in which the relationship between these relics and the emperor were understood in this specific context. The present work thus does not aim to provide a comprehensive study of what Byzantium's many neighbours thought—or did *not* think—of the emperor, the empire, and the treasures of church and palace in Constantinople, which study is nonetheless a worthy subject of inquiry in need of further investigation.

### 1.3 Sources

Key to this study are the relics connected to Christ that were kept in the Great Palace and for which we have visual and textual sources that mention and reflect upon these objects and their relation to the emperor. Three such relics received this kind of extended literary, artistic, and/or theological reflection: the Mandyllion or Holy Face; the Limburg Staurotheke, a complex ensemble of relics, inscriptions, and art; and the Holy Stone, upon which Christ's body was believed to have been anointed for burial after the crucifixion. For these relics, we have various primary source texts including: contemporary historiographical sources such as chronicle narrations; guides to court ritual, such as the *Book of Ceremonies*; liturgical texts composed for the translation of these relics to the Byzantine capital; theological reflections on the objects; inscriptions and poems juxtaposed with the relics being investigated; and artistic depictions of the relics in question or else presented in conjunction with the relics and figures studied. For some of these source texts, in particular for the liturgical offices of relic translation studied here, an appendix containing English-language translations is provided.

## 1.4 Methodology

Given the interdisciplinary nature of this study, involving texts and objects traditionally viewed through the distinct lenses of the disciplines of history, art history, and theology, several different methodological approaches are employed in pursuit of the aim of understanding the relic-ruler relationship in Middle Byzantium. With all written sources examined—chronicle texts, inscriptions, liturgical texts, poems—close readings of the texts have been made, with detailed attention to syntax, vocabulary choice, and possible syn- and diachronic polyvalences in word meanings.<sup>11</sup> These close readings have been accompanied by an awareness of the linguistic turn in the historical disciplines and the fundamental differences in pre-modern texts compared to those of our own day.<sup>12</sup>

In the case of inscriptions in particular, issues of location and reading order are also investigated, which opens up the study to using approaches familiar from the social sciences and the material turn, in which the performance(s) and affordance(s) of objects are considered in their spatio-chronological contexts.<sup>13</sup> In the case of the iconography and artistic depictions studied and for both historiographical and liturgical texts examined, this study also makes use of Christian patristic methods of reading texts: hearing and reading words, seeing images, and seeking out possible resonating connections and associations to these from within the Christian scriptures and hagiographical tradition, an allegorical method famously exploited in the early patristic era by Origen of Alexandria and a foundation of much later Christian exegesis and theological interpretation.<sup>14</sup> Such a ‘patristic’ or allegorical method of reading and interrogating texts and art is fitting for this

11 On this method of textual analysis, see LENTRICCHIA/DUBOIS 2003. For an exploration of the use of close reading in the modern academic context of teaching and research, see also CULLER 2010.

12 Cf. CLARK 2004, esp. chapter 8 (“History, Theory, and Premodern Texts”, pp. 156–185).

13 Select key works on the material turn in the humanities include: APPADURAI 1986; LATOUR 2005; MILLER 2005; and MEIER/OTT/SAUER 2015.

14 As KRUEGER 2010a notes: “Already in the third century, Origen of Alexandria had distinguished two modes of Christian biblical exegesis beyond the literal sense of the text. The first was moral, whereby most Christians derived basic edification and moral instruction. The other was spiritual, and involved searching after the higher (or deeper) and allegorical meanings embedded in the text. ...Even after the condemnation of parts of Origen’s theology in the sixth century, [parts of the work *On First Principles* by] Origen continued to be read by Byzantine monastics and to inform monastic exegesis” (p. 213). These portions of *On First Principles* (4.1–3) were included by Basil of Caesarea and Gregory of Nazianzos in their *Philokalia*, which ensured longlasting readership in Byzantine/orthodox circles; for a recent translation and study of the entire work, see BEHR 2019. The impact of Origen and his allegorical exegesis on both the writing of the New Testament (in the Pauline epistles) and the later patristic exegesis of these Christian scriptures is also explored by CONSTAS 2016, CUNNINGHAM 2016 (esp. pp. 193–195), and SHOEMAKER 2016 (esp. p. 302).

study, inasmuch as it involves objects that were believed to be imbued with sacred power and which were commented upon in highly theological and theologised contexts, which in turn made use of such ‘patristic’ allegorical or associative readings to interpret these relics and situate them in a larger cultural and imperial setting—a method of reading quite widespread in Middle Byzantium and deployed across literary genres.<sup>15</sup> It is thus my belief that applying this kind of exegetical and associative/allegorical reading of the texts and images studied here can help uncover more of the resonances these sacred objects possessed vis-à-vis the emperor in a time and place where such a manner of reading and interpreting objects was common, if not primary and preferred.<sup>16</sup>

## 1.5 Summary history of research

While hagiographical texts and saints’ lives began to be edited and critiqued as early as the mid-17th century by the Bollandists,<sup>17</sup> and the vast multilingual body of patristic literature first encountered serious sustained editorial activity in the *Patrologia Graeca* and *Latina* series founded by Jacques-Paul Migne in 1857,<sup>18</sup> relics and their study remained hidden from academic view until the end of the 19th century, when some individual studies of relics began to be written. One such case is that of the Limburg Staurotheke, the focus of the second chapter in this present work, on which the first scholarly article was published in 1866 by Ernst Aus’m Weerth.<sup>19</sup> This study, however, was firmly grounded in a purely art-historical, descriptive school of analysis, seeking to understand and explain styles, images, and techniques visible on the Staurotheke without investigating deeper connections to court, church, and city, given the historical context of the object; this approach also marks the later article by Jakob Rauch.<sup>20</sup>

15 On such polyvalency in Middle Byzantine literature, see the essential article by KRAUSMÜLLER 2006.

16 On these ‘patristic’ approaches to textual reading and analysis, see among others O’KEEFFE/RENO 2005. For a look at how this impacted later Byzantine historiography and narration, see: PAPAIOANNOU 2010 and MACRIDES 2016.

17 The group took its name from the Jesuit priest Jean Bolland (1596–1665); though no longer consisting only of Jesuits, the Société des Bollandistes continues its historical work today via the journal they publish, *Analecta Bollandiana* (1882–present). They have also published a study on the history of their work as a group: cf. GODDING et al. 2007.

18 Originally published in editions by MIGNE 1857–1866 under the series names *Patrologia Latina* and *Patrologia Graeca*, respectively. All volumes are now available online: <http://patristica.net/graeca/> and <http://patristica.net/latina/> (accessed 21/09/2023). A somewhat tongue-in-cheek biography of Migne and study of his printing activity can be found in BLOCH 1994.

19 AUS’M WEERTH 1866.

20 RAUCH 1955.

Scholars of the 20th century began to pay more sustained attention to relics as objects, phenomena, and key nodes in historical, religious, and interpretive networks. Included in this engagement with the relics themselves was also an examination of the reliquaries containing them. Before the outbreak of the Second World War, the Italian scholar Silvio Giuseppe Mercati published his findings on shrines and relics in Constantinople before the Fourth Crusade in 1936,<sup>21</sup> while Joseph Braun published in the midst of the wartime hostilities his encyclopaedic study on reliquaries, which attempted to categorise relic containers based on size, shape, material, and function.<sup>22</sup> Braun admits that his study was focused more on the then present-day state of affairs in terms of available reliquaries rather than on offering a comprehensive historical retrospective on such objects;<sup>23</sup> he does mention the Limburg Staurotheke<sup>24</sup> but the emphasis in the work leans heavily on Western Europe and Western relics/reliquaries, with Braun explaining (or perhaps excusing) this imbalance by alleging a paucity of Eastern sources on relics<sup>25</sup> and the dearth of such relics themselves.<sup>26</sup> Another mid-century (and again, more Western-based) study on relics proper in the early medieval period can be found in an essay by Heinrich Fichtenau,<sup>27</sup> with another key study on relic translations in the West (both in terms of these being actual events as well as being a new literary genre) in the West published by Martin Heinzelmann in 1979.<sup>28</sup> A turn eastward, however, did

21 MERCATI 1936.

22 BRAUN 1940.

23 BRAUN 1940, v.

24 BRAUN 1940, 91.

25 BRAUN 1940, 8: "Im Osten versagen die schriftlichen Quellen fast vollständig. Völlig fehlen aus ihm die für die Geschichte der Reliquiare im Westen so reichlich vorhandenen Inventare und Reliquienverzeichnisse mit Angaben über die Reliquiare."

26 BRAUN 1940, 12–13: "Aus dem Osten hat sich aus altchristlicher Zeit und dem Mittelalter nur eine verhältnismäßig geringe Zahl von Reliquiaren erhalten. Es handelt sich bei ihnen zumeist um Reliquiare, die schon im Mittelalter von dort durch Kreuzfahrer, Pilger oder als Geschenke in den Westen kamen. In den Kirchen des Ostens scheint sich aus älterer Zeit nur sehr wenig gerettet zu haben. Finden sich doch selbst in den Klöstern des Athos, in denen man noch am ersten eine größere Zahl von mittelalterlichen Reliquiaren erwarten dürfte, sehr wenige solcher. Überraschen kann das übrigens bei den Geschicken, denen der christliche Osten durch den Islam verfiel, nicht. Der Wert der aus dem Osten noch vorhandenen Reliquiare besteht bei ihrer sehr beschränkten Zahl nur darin, daß sie uns Aufschluß geben über die dort gebräuchlichen Formen derselben und ihre Ausstattung. Ein Bild ihrer Entwicklung in der einen wie der andern Beziehung vermögen sie uns nicht zu bieten."

27 FICHTENAU 1952.

28 HEINZELMANN 1979; see therein his bibliography on Western relic translations in late antiquity and the Middle Ages, pp. 9–15. Most of his work—as with the works in his bibliography—does not touch on Byzantium, given its Western focus, but he does note the intimate connection of relics with royal/imperial circles in the late antique and medieval West (p. 35), something demonstrated in the following chapters via the specific relics/reliquaries studied and the Byzantine rulers of the time.

take place in the work by Anatole Frolov on the relics of the True Cross and their associated containers,<sup>29</sup> and a dedicated examination of Eastern reliquaries was published in 1957 by Rainer Rückert.<sup>30</sup>

More scholars began to investigate the origins of relics and their veneration, with Peter Brown's groundbreaking book *The Cult of the Saints*, published in 1981,<sup>31</sup> firmly setting holy persons and their holy bodies at the centre of late antique and medieval studies. Yet much subsequent research on relics and reliquaries remained firmly focused on saints, objects, and locales in Western Europe,<sup>32</sup> with notable and important exceptions being the scholarship of Enrica Follieri,<sup>33</sup> Rodolphe Guiland,<sup>34</sup> and Raymond Janin<sup>35</sup> in the mid-1960s; Otto Meinardus in the 1970s;<sup>36</sup> and Johannes Koder in the 1980s.<sup>37</sup> Only in the late 20th century do we see Byzantinists and other scholars turning their gaze to relics of the Byzantine East and shifting their interpretive lens to speak of these objects in their native Eastern Mediterranean contexts. Consciousness of the Byzantine heritage of the Mandylion is displayed in Isa Ragusa's 1991 article on the object,<sup>38</sup> and Eastern perspectives on the Mandylion also appear in the 1998 volume edited by Herbert Kessler and Gerhard Wolf<sup>39</sup> as well as in the volume edited by Gerhard Wolf and Giovanni Morello accompanying an exhibition of art and iconography of the Holy Face in 2000–2001,<sup>40</sup> with a 2002 article by Giovanni Zaninotto exploring the role and meaning of the Mandylion in its Constantinopolitan context in the Middle Byzantine period.<sup>41</sup>

The turn of the century continued this momentum towards more work being done on the Great Palace of Constantinople, the Pharos Chapel contained therein,

29 FROLOW 1961b, FROLOW 1965.

30 See esp. RÜCKERT 1957, 25, where he notes the difficulties in his day of actually accessing some of the Byzantine treasures preserved in the West: "Meist liegen die byzantinischen Reliquien in westeuropäischen Kirchenschätzen in späteren Reliquiaren unter Siegeln geborgen und sind deshalb dem photographischen Apparat nahezu völlig entzogen. So vor allem die vorzüglichen Beispiele in der Domopera in Florenz, in S. Maria della Scala in Siena oder in S. Marco in Venedig"—a comment which still holds true in large part today.

31 BROWN 1981; on relics in particular, cf. chapter 5 ("Praesentia", pp. 86–105).

32 In terms of scope and methodology, mention can be made here of the doctoral dissertation published by KÜHNE 2000. He focuses on the ostentatious public presentation of relics in the Western European medieval context, providing an extensive bibliography on this subject as well as parallels to the present volume and the connection again of sacred relics with royal and imperial figures.

33 See especially FOLLIERI 1964 (esp. p. 450) and FOLLIERI 1965.

34 GUILLAND 1967, GUILLAND 1969. Note also his earlier article on the Pharos chapel: GUILLAND 1951.

35 See n. 6 above.

36 MEINARDUS 1970, esp. pp. 130–133.

37 KODER 1985, KODER 1989.

38 RAGUSA 1991.

39 KESSLER/WOLF 1998. See in this volume especially the article by TRILLING, pp. 109–127).

40 MORELLO/WOLF 2000.

41 ZANINOTTO 2002.



and the relics housed in the chapel. The Limburg Staurotheke is the focus of a 1994 article by Nancy P. Ševčenko,<sup>42</sup> who later studied in detail the Holy Stone relic in a 2010 essay.<sup>43</sup> The 1997 tome edited by Henry Maguire on Byzantine court culture<sup>44</sup> gathered together a number of essays on ritual, rhetoric, and relics at the imperial court, addressing various aspects of the interaction of sovereign and court with one another, with sacred spaces, elite objects, and even clothing. Edina Bozóky and Anne-Marie Helvétius edited a volume appearing in 1999 on relics as cult objects;<sup>45</sup> these published conference proceedings mainly focused on the Western medieval context, but a section on relics throughout the Christian world is included, containing an essay on the role of relics in the development of the cult of the saints in Byzantium by Michel Kaplan.<sup>46</sup> Bozóky later connected the topic of relics more specifically to politics and political power (already addressed in the Byzantine context in 2001 by Sophia Mergiali-Sahas<sup>47</sup>) in her publication from 2006.<sup>48</sup> The ripples in the waters of academe caused by the material turn reached the shores of Byzantine studies in the 1980s and 1990s, with various studies on the depiction of material goods in medieval art and on domestic tools and utensils in the Byzantine world.<sup>49</sup> Maria Parani focused on the textiles and couture of the Byzantine court in her 1999 dissertation and 2003 book,<sup>50</sup> while theoretical considerations more generally speaking were examined in an article by Michael Grünbart and Dionysios Stathakopoulos in 2002.<sup>51</sup> 2004 saw the publication of the proceedings from the 20th annual International Congress of Byzantine Studies edited by Jannic Durand and Bernard Flusin, which focused specifically on relics connected to Christ in Byzantium and included important articles on the Passion relics and the Pharos chapel by Paul Magdalino, Holger Klein, Sysse Engberg, and Sandrine Lerou.<sup>52</sup>

The first decade of the 21st century saw several important articles on relics and reliquaries at the Great Palace by Holger Klein, heralded in 2004 by his comprehensive study of the True Cross relics of Byzantium.<sup>53</sup> One of his essays appeared in

42 N. ŠEVČENKO 1994.

43 N. ŠEVČENKO 2010.

44 MAGUIRE 1997.

45 Cf. BOZÓKY 1999.

46 Cf. KAPLAN 1999.

47 MERGIALI-SAHAS 2001.

48 BOZÓKY 2006, esp. chapter 2 (“Le modèle byzantin”, pp. 73–118).

49 Cf. VIKAN/NESBITT 1980, KISLINGER 1982, BOURAS 1982, BRYER 1986, GUILLOU 1986, KÖPSTEIN 1987, KOLIAS 1988, BAKIRTZES 1989, and DE’ MAFFEI 1997.

50 PARANI 2003.

51 GRÜNBART/STATHAKOPOULOS 2002. This work was followed by the publication of conference proceedings on the same topic: GRÜNBART et al. 2007.

52 DURAND/FLUSIN 2004, and especially the articles contained in this edited volume by the authors mentioned above: MAGDALINO 2004, KLEIN 2004b, ENGBERG 2004, and LEROU 2004.

53 KLEIN 2004a, KLEIN 2004c, KLEIN 2006, KLEIN 2009, BAGNOLI 2010, KLEIN 2021. An important earlier work on relic removals and theft (including the [in]famous removal of

the important volume edited by Franz Alto Bauer on early medieval visualisations of dominion and rule,<sup>54</sup> which further spurred research and interest on the interplay of space, objects, and ritual in the Great Palace of Constantinople, having taken up the mantle of the important 20th-century studies published by David Talbot Rice<sup>55</sup> and Cyril Mango.<sup>56</sup> The fruits of such focus on sacred spaces and the Pharos chapel in particular can be seen in the copious outputs by Bernard Flusin<sup>57</sup> and Alexei Lidov,<sup>58</sup> while new translations and editions of the important tenth-century *Book of Ceremonies* have appeared in the last decade in English by Ann Moffatt and Maxeme Tall,<sup>59</sup> and most recently in French by Gilbert Dagron and Bernard Flusin.<sup>60</sup> The issues of relic/reliquary performance(s) and affordance(s) have been studied extensively by Roland Betancourt,<sup>61</sup> Brad Hostetler,<sup>62</sup> Bissera Pentcheva,<sup>63</sup> as well as by Cynthia Hahn and Gia Toussaint (the latter two albeit with a more Western focus),<sup>64</sup> while essays on Byzantine religious culture, including relics in conjunction with the emperor, appear in a volume published in 2012 and edited by Dennis Sullivan, Elizabeth Fisher, and Stratis Papaioannou.<sup>65</sup> Recent years have seen both a new focus on the sacrality of palaces and courts themselves, often by means of sacred rites and objects (including relics)<sup>66</sup> as well as a new return *ad fontes* to re-examine and better understand the origins and importance of the cult of relics in the earliest Christian centuries;<sup>67</sup> the links between the divine and the imperial/cultic that originate in classical antiquity and endure into early and

the relics of Saint Nicholas from Myra in Lycia, Asia Minor [present-day Demre, Turkey] to Bari in Apulia, Italy in 1051) is GEARY 1978.

54 BAUER 2006.

55 Cf. RICE 1947.

56 Cf. MANGO 1959, MANGO 1962, MANGO 1969/1970.

57 FLUSIN 1997, FLUSIN 2000a, FLUSIN 2000b, FLUSIN 2019. Flusin has also written extensively on the emperor as hagiographer and holy personage; cf. FLUSIN 1998, FLUSIN 1999, FLUSIN 2001. In his *œuvre*, the scholar builds on the groundbreaking work of his colleague Gilbert Dagron; cf. DAGRON 2003a, as well as the other studies DAGRON 1991, DAGRON 1994, and DAGRON 2003b.

58 Cf. LIDOV 2007, LIDOV 2009, and LIDOV 2012.

59 MOFFATT/TALL 2017.

60 DAGRON/FLUSIN 2020.

61 BETANCOURT 2016a, BETANCOURT 2016b, and BETANCOURT 2018.

62 HOSTETLER 2011, HOSTETLER 2012, HOSTETLER 2016, and HOSTETLER 2021.

63 PENTCHEVA 2007, PENTCHEVA 2008, and PENTCHEVA 2012. Pentcheva is also known for her work on acoustics and performance in the space of Hagia Sophia; cf. PENTCHEVA 2011, PENTCHEVA 2017.

64 Cf. HAHN 2010, HAHN 2012a, HAHN 2012b, HAHN 2017, HAHN 2020, HAHN/KLEIN 2015, HAHN/PALLADINO 2018; REUDENBACH/TOUSSAINT 2005; TOUSSAINT 2011.

65 Cf. SULLIVAN/FISHER/PAPAIOANNOU 2012, esp. the article therein by SULLIVAN, pp. 395–409.

66 Cf. LUCHTERHANDT/RÖCKELEIN 2021.

67 Cf. HARTL 2018, who looks at the role relics played in the development, establishment, and consolidation of the five early Christian metropolises and patriarchal sees of Rome, Alexandria, Antioch, Constantinople, and Jerusalem; cf. also WIŚNIEWSKI 2019.

medieval Christianity;<sup>68</sup> and the survival and development of classical ideas about divine inspiration in Byzantine theological discourse and iconography.<sup>69</sup>

Across this history of research, one finds a movement from recognising and recording inventories of Byzantine relics and reliquaries, to investigating the material reality of the objects via their concomitant art and inscriptions, to striving to understand the impact the location of the relics had on the places where they were kept, and culminating in recent decades with the extensive studies on the Passion relics in Constantinople and how these relics can be seen to transform the city/palace into a New Jerusalem. My study focuses the lens of inquiry onto how the presence of these holy objects in the Great Palace affected a change in how *the emperor himself* was understood to be a sacred, even divine, figure. This change occurred in progressive stages, made visible in how the texts and art surrounding three key Passion relics—the Mandyllion, the Limburg Staurotheke, and the Holy Stone—single out the emperor as having a special connection to the relics and elucidate imperial sacrality by means of the juxtaposition of relics and ruler. As I show in the close case studies presented below, this proximity of sacred objects and sovereign seems to allow for an increased direct association, first of relics with the office of emperor and then of specific relics with specific rulers, imbuing the Byzantine emperor with an aura of divine election and even divinity, as comes to be expressed in the textual sources on these relics examined in the chapters to follow. The acquisition of relics and the manufacturing of new relic ensembles in the Middle Byzantine period can thus be seen to act as an engine that generates new meanings and understandings of imperial sacrality on an increasingly personal level, up to the zenith of this development, culminating in the blurring of lines between Emperor Manuel I Komnēnos—the Lord’s Anointed on the terrestrial throne—and Jesus Christ, the Anointed One par excellence and Emmanuel in heaven—and coming to a halt at the dispersal of these objects in the fall of the city to the Crusaders in 1204.

## 1.6 Structure of the study

The present investigation of the links between relics and emperors and the influence of the former on the latter in the Middle Byzantine period focuses on the three relics mentioned above in the passage on sources, for which we have surviving evidence of extended reflection on both sacred object and sovereign. Chapter 2 discusses the Mandyllion, brought to Constantinople in 944. The Limburg Staurotheke, a complex amalgam of relics and reliquary datable in form to the late tenth century, forms the focus of Chapter 3. Finally, Chapter 4 centres around the Holy Stone of

68 Cf. IVANOVICI 2023.

69 Cf. KRAUSE 2022.

unction, translated to the imperial capital in 1169. Following some concluding remarks on the answers this research provides to the guiding questions posed above as to change, continuity, and manner of how imperial sacrality was understood against the backdrop of these relics, the abovementioned appendix of translated texts and the bibliography are presented.