

TREASURES OF HEAVEN

SAINTS, RELICS, AND DEVOTION IN MEDIEVAL EUROPE

EDITED BY MARTINA BAGNOLI, HOLGER A. KLEIN, C. GRIFFITH MANN, AND JAMES ROBINSON

THE CLEVELAND MUSEUM OF ART • THE WALTERS ART MUSEUM, BALTIMORE • THE BRITISH MUSEUM, LONDON

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Sacred Things and Holy Bodies

Collecting Relics from Late Antiquity to the Early Renaissance

HOLGER A. KLEIN

The bodies of the martyrs, after having been exposed and insulted in every way for six days, and afterwards burned and turned to ashes, were swept by the wicked into the river Rhône which flows near by, so that not even a relic of them might still appear upon the earth. And this they did as though they could conquer God and take away their rebirth in order, as they said, “that they might not even have any hope of resurrection.”¹

As this passage from an early account of the martyrdom of a group of Christians at Lyon in Roman Gaul around 177 suggests, one of the ways in which Roman authorities tried to discourage Christians from spreading their faith and from seeking martyrdom was to shatter their hopes for resurrection and salvation by burning their bodies and scattering all that was left of their earthly remains. Similar stories of the scattering of holy bodies are known from a number of early saints’ *Lives* and *passiones*, or martyrdom accounts, most famously perhaps from the second-century *Martyrdom of St. Polycarp*, whose body was burned in the stadium at Smyrna in 155/56 to prevent his fellow Christians from venerating his earthly remains and worshipping him like Christ.² Prudentius’s description of the martyrdom of St. Hippolytus, whose body was torn apart and scattered by wild horses, paints an equally vivid picture of the violent dismemberment and scattering of a martyr’s body.³ However, both narratives also stress how

the martyrs’ disciples eagerly collected the bones and body parts of their masters. While St. Polycarp’s companions “took up his bones which are more valuable than precious stones and finer than refined gold, and laid them in a suitable place,”⁴ the disciples of Hippolytus, “stunned with sorrow, went along with searching eyes, and in their garments’ folds gathered his mangled flesh.”⁵

Intimately tied to concepts of wholeness, corporeal integrity, and the resurrection of the body, the collecting of bones and body parts of holy martyrs was an important aspect of the Christian cult of relics already during Antiquity.⁶ While the mangled bodies or ashes of many Christian martyrs of the first centuries were buried by members of local Christian communities in cemeteries or other “suitable places,” few burial sites were marked by *tropaia*, or victory monuments, like those of Sts. Peter and Paul at the Vatican Hill and the Via Ostiense, and developed into *memoriae*, places in which Christians gathered to commemorate the life and death of Christ’s most distinguished followers and martyrs.⁷ More often than not, as was the case with the protomartyr St. Stephen, the resting places of early Christian martyrs remained unrecorded or were forgotten soon after their death.⁸ In such cases, the saints themselves had to make their earthly presence known and communicate their wishes for proper burial and veneration to chosen individuals in dream visions or through other forms of divine inspiration.⁹

In 385/86, Bishop Ambrose of Milan was thus inspired to dig in front of the chancel screen of the Basilica of Sts. Felix and Nabor outside Milan, where he promptly discovered the intact bodies of the previously unknown martyrs Sts. Gervasius and Protasius.¹⁰ Despite long-standing prohibitions against disturbing the dead and the enactment, in February 386, of a law stipulating that “no person shall transfer a buried body to another place . . . sell the relics of a martyr . . . or traffic in them,”¹¹ Ambrose moved the remains of the martyrs to the Basilica of Fausta and on the following day transferred them to his new basilica, commonly known as the Basilica Ambrosiana, where he laid them to rest under the altar.¹² It was not the last time that local martyrs would call Ambrose to action. Less than ten years later, in 395, Ambrose discovered the bodies of Sts. Nazarius and Celsus in a garden outside Milan and transferred them to the Basilica of the Holy Apostles.¹³

Such transgressions of imperial law were not restricted to the bishop and the diocese of Milan. Other bishops were likewise able to channel and obey the wishes of long-forgotten martyrs and become, as Peter Brown has shown, important *impresarios* of their cult: In 392/93, Bishop Eusebius of Bologna, for instance, found the remains of the martyrs Agricola and Vitalis in a Jewish cemetery outside the city, removed them, and honored them with proper burial in a church.¹⁴ More careful in his efforts was Bishop Exuperius of Toulouse, who did not dare to move the body of St. Saturninus to a newly built church until he had received proper permission from both the martyr—who visited him in a dream—and the emperor, who officially sanctioned the removal and reburial of the saint’s body in 402/3.¹⁵

Not every place, however, was blessed in the same way by the presence of holy martyrs’ relics. Unlike Rome, which could boast the corporeal remains of numerous high-profile Christian martyrs, Constantinople, the Roman Empire’s new administrative center and imperial residence on the Bosphorus, was lacking such mighty presence and protection. In the eyes of Bishop Paulinus of Nola, it was therefore only proper that Emperor Constantine the Great decided to remove the remains of the apostles Andrew from Greece and Timothy from Asia to fortify his new city “with twin towers, vying with the eminence of great Rome, or rather resembling the defenses of Rome in that God has counterbalanced Peter and Paul with a protection as great, since Constantinople has gained the disciples of Paul and the brother of Peter.”¹⁶

Paulinus and his like-minded colleagues could see nothing wrong in the exhumation and translation of holy bodies. On the contrary, it was Christ himself, who they considered to have “graciously decided . . . , both by inspiring princes and by making a revelation to his servants to summon martyrs from their former homes and transfer them to fresh lodgings on earth.”¹⁷ Sharing the blood, bones, and ashes of holy martyrs among themselves and with less fortunate colleagues, eager to consecrate the altars of their churches with sacred matter, increased the number of holy bodies at their own local shrines and cult centers, while helping to spread the

martyrs’ sacred presence throughout the empire—and thus fortify it.¹⁸ But it was not only bishops who were willing to part with their sacred treasures. When Bishop Gaudentius of Brescia (d. 410) passed through Cappadocia on his way to the Holy Land in 386, the nuns of Caesarea bestowed on him a gift of relics of the Forty Martyrs of Sebaste, which they themselves had previously received as a gift from St. Basil. Upon his return, Gaudentius deposited these and other relics in a new church, which he consecrated in 402 and named *Concilium Sanctorum* in celebration of the precious “gathering of saints” he had been able to assemble.¹⁹

Sacred Things and Holy Places

Early Christian attempts to gather and preserve the remains of holy men and women were not an isolated phenomenon. Indeed, they formed part of a much broader culture of collecting that focused on bodily remains of *people* as much as on material remains of *things* that could either claim direct physical contact with the body of Christ or were associated with events and places related to his life, ministry, and death through the account of the Gospels.²⁰

Already during the first half of the fourth century, Christian pilgrims were drawn to Jerusalem and the Holy Land from faraway regions to see with their own eyes and touch with their own hands and lips the things and places that had witnessed Christ’s presence on earth and were known or presumed to have played a role in the story of his Passion and Resurrection. The anonymous pilgrim from Bordeaux, who visited Jerusalem in 333, recorded a detailed list of the objects and places shown to pilgrims: “the column at which they fell on Christ and scourged him . . . the hillock Golgotha where the Lord was crucified, and about a stone’s throw from it the vault where they laid his body.”²¹ Later pilgrims such as the pious Egeria, who visited Jerusalem and the Holy Land in the 380s, and Jerome, who chronicled the Holy Land pilgrimage of Paula and Eustochium, stress the importance of physical contact with such relics, especially those related to Christ’s Passion. Before the memorial cross that marked the spot of Christ’s Crucifixion on Mount Golgotha, the blessed Paula “fell down and worshipped before the Cross as if she could see the Lord hanging on it. On entering the Tomb of the Resurrection she kissed the stone which the angel removed from the sepulcher door; then like a thirsty man who has waited long, and at last comes to water, she faithfully kissed the very shelf on which the Lord’s body had lain.”²² Some pilgrims, however, went even further than kissing the material tokens of Christ’s earthly presence. As we know from Egeria, the relic of the True Cross had to be especially guarded at its annual presentation and veneration on Mount Golgotha during Good Friday because on one occasion someone had allegedly dared to bite off a piece of the Holy Wood and thus stole it away.²³ The eagerness of pilgrims to collect and take home with them souvenirs of their visit to the Holy Land and tokens of Christ’s Passion is well documented by literary

accounts and surviving objects. As we know from Bishop Cyril of Jerusalem, small fragments of the True Cross had already started to “fill the entire world” by the middle of the fourth century.²⁴ Like Makrina (d. 379), the sister of Gregory of Nyssa, who is known to have carried a splinter of the True Cross in a ring around her neck, relics of the True Cross were highly desirable collectibles, often procured through a network of trustworthy friends with good connections to the bishop of Jerusalem.²⁵ Paulinus of Nola, who himself had received such a splinter from a friend in Jerusalem and later “buried” it within the altar of his basilica at Nola, passed on an even smaller splinter of the same relic to his friend Bishop Sulpicius Severus, explaining to him: “Let not your faith shrink because the eyes behold evidence so small; let it look with the inner eye on the whole power of the cross in this tiny segment. Once you think that you behold the wood on which our Salvation, the Lord of Majesty, was hanged with nails whilst the world trembled, you, too, must tremble, but you must also rejoice.”²⁶

Not everybody was as fortunate or well connected as Sulpicius and Paulinus. Few bishops or pilgrims of later centuries could hope to obtain actual fragments of Christ’s Cross. However, from at least the sixth century onward, pilgrims who came to venerate the True Cross in the courtyard of Constantine’s basilica on Mount Golgotha could receive a blessing of oil, contained in little flasks, or *ampullae*, and sanctified through direct contact with it (see cat. nos. 23, 24). An anonymous pilgrim from Piacenza, who visited Jerusalem around 570 and witnessed the ritual veneration of the True Cross, described the event as follows: “At the moment when the Cross is brought out of the small room for veneration, and arrives in the court to be venerated, a star appears in the sky. . . . It stays overhead whilst they [the pilgrims] are venerating the Cross, and they offer oil to be blessed in little flasks. When the mouth of one of the little flasks touches the Wood of the Cross, the oil instantly bubbles over, and unless it is closed very quickly it all spills out.”²⁷

As the remains of leather straps on a number of surviving *ampullae* indicate, pious pilgrims are likely to have worn such objects around their neck in hope that the sanctified oil would grant them health and protection from bodily harm and maladies long after they had left Jerusalem. While the Greek inscriptions identifying the flasks’ contents as “Oil from the Wood of Life from the Holy Places” or simply as “Blessing of the Lord from the Holy Places” might not have been understood by every pilgrim, especially those from the western parts of the empire, the images imprinted on the flasks would have kept the memory and desire for Jerusalem’s holy places alive in them, visually connecting the sacred substances they carried with the *loca sancta* they once visited and the sacred events that—in a somewhat more distant past—had taken place there.

Flasks filled with sanctified oil, water, or earth from the holy places, however, were appreciated not only for their curative and salvific powers. Their cumulative presence could also serve, as Jaś Elsner has shown, to bolster the authority of new saints. Such was the case with the Irish missionary St. Columban (d. 615). To enhance the status of his newly established

monastery and church at Bobbio in the Apennines, his body was interred among a veritable collection of Holy Land relics that included the fragments of twenty such *ampullae*, earthenware medallions, and other *eulogiai*.²⁸ Evoking the sacred topography of Palestine through the images imprinted on them as well as through their sacred content, these relics and reliquaries—while buried and thus not visible—made “the Holy Land accessible in Lombardy through its tangible mementos” thus creating a *locus sanctus*, in which “the sacred traditions of early Christian Ireland and Palestine should coincide in the form of a saintly body buried with holy relics.”²⁹

Similar attempts to enhance the status and authority of churches through the accumulated presence—both visible and invisible—of relics were made at other places as well. The treasury of the Church of St. John the Baptist at Monza in Lombardy preserves not only sixteen tin-alloy pilgrim *ampullae* of the type described above (see p. 11, fig. 7)—the largest cache surviving at any one institution—but also a number of other precious objects donated by the Lombard queen Theodelinda (d. 627) and her husband, King Agilulf (r. 590–616), who founded and richly endowed the basilica in the late sixth century. These include twenty-eight glass *ampullae* filled with oil collected at the tombs of more than sixty saints and martyrs in and outside of Rome.³⁰ Likely procured with the help of Pope Gregory the Great (r. 590–604) and sent to Monza through a deacon named John, these relics and reliquaries were not buried like their counterparts in Bobbio, but were apparently intended for display and veneration from the outset, thus granting both visual and tangible access to important sacred sites in Italy and beyond.³¹

Evoking the sacred topographies of Rome and Palestine through images and substances sanctified by spatial proximity or direct contact with sacred things and holy bodies, the caches of relics and reliquaries at Bobbio and Monza illuminate two different ways in which secondary relics served to elevate the prestige and status of a recently deceased saint and a newly established church. They also highlight the crucial role played by high-ranking ecclesiastical officials in procuring such sacred treasures, and emphasize the role of prominent aristocratic patrons in assembling them.

Rome and Constantinople

As far as the distribution of relics was concerned, Pope Gregory’s presumed involvement in facilitating Queen Theodelinda’s request for oil from the tombs of Roman martyrs was not an isolated incident. It formed part of a broader papal attempt to make accessible the remains of the most prominent Roman martyrs—especially those of St. Peter—and to distribute material tokens of their miracle-working presence among the most prominent aristocratic, royal, and even imperial petitioners.³² Papal munificence, however, had its limits. When Empress Constantina, wife of Emperor Maurice (r. 582–602), requested the head of St. Paul for a new church dedicated to the saint in Constantinople, Gregory responded by invoking

a long-standing Roman tradition prohibiting the dismemberment of saintly bodies and sending her *brandea* instead—textile relics created by bringing pieces of cloth into contact with sacred matter.³³ Only on a few occasions did Gregory feel inclined to part with relics of a higher order. In 599, for instance, he sent a very small key containing iron shavings from the chains of St. Peter, a cross containing “wood from Christ’s Cross and hair from the head of St. John the Baptist” to the Visigothic king Reccared I (r. 586–601).³⁴ A few years later, in 603, another gift of relics, namely, “a crucifix with wood from the Holy Cross of our Lord, and a text from a holy evangelist, enclosed in a Persian case,” was sent to Queen Theodelinda on the occasion of the baptism of her son Adaloald (d. 625/26).³⁵ Both gifts seem to indicate that under Gregory the Great the distribution of relics had become as much an act of papal munificence as a means of papal diplomacy, serving to reaffirm orthodox Catholicism among the newly established dynasties in Italy and Spain.



Fig. 20. The Cross of Justin II (*Crux Vaticana*). Byzantine (Constantinople), 6th century, with later additions. Tesoro di Capitulo di San Pietro, Vatican

The papal court in Rome, however, was not only a source of relics for recently converted “barbarian” tribes and their aristocratic elite. It was also the recipient of important gifts of relics from elsewhere, notably from the imperial court in Constantinople and from high-profile Western pilgrims to the Holy Land. The earliest imperial gift of relics that is known—or alleged—to have reached the city of Rome was a sizable portion of the True Cross, sealed “with gold and jewels.”³⁶ According to the so-called *Liber Pontificalis*, or Book of the Pontiffs, the donor was none other than Constantine the Great, who had sent the True Cross to Rome to be kept at the Basilica of the Sessorianum—later named Sta. Croce in Gerusalemme—which his mother Helena is said to have established.³⁷ Other emperors followed Constantine’s example: At some point during his reign, Emperor Justin II (r. 565–78) and his wife, Sophia, likewise donated a precious reliquary cross “to Rome,” as the accompanying inscription records (fig. 20). Richly decorated with gold and precious stones and containing a portion of the wood of the True Cross, it is still preserved in the treasury of St. Peter’s in Rome, making it one of the earliest surviving True Cross reliquaries.³⁸ However, the Cross of Justin II is not the only distinguished portion of the relic in Rome. Others have been preserved as part of the famous papal relic chapel at the Lateran Palace: the *Sancta Sanctorum*, or Holy of Holies. Named after the tabernacle of Solomon’s temple in Jerusalem, in which the most precious objects of Judaism—the Ark of the Covenant with the Tablets of the Law—were preserved together with other objects, the heart of this chapel—the true *Sancta Sanctorum*—is a cedar chest, made during the pontificate of Leo III (r. 795–816) and locked behind bronze doors cast under Pope Innocent III (r. 1198–1216), underneath the chapel’s altar.³⁹ Successive popes have added to this most sacred treasure chest of Christendom and thus accumulated an ecclesiastical treasure beyond compare.

Until the tragic events that led to the conquest of Constantinople in 1204, however, not even papal Rome could rival the imperial city on the Bosphorus in either the number or the importance of its sacred treasures. If not since the days of Constantine and Helena, as many firmly believed, then at least since the reign of Constantine’s son and successor, Constantius (r. 337–61), emperors and their spouses, patriarchs and clerics, patricians and noble women had steadily increased the city’s holdings in sacred bodies.⁴⁰

According to the *Chronicon Paschale*, or Easter Chronicle, the prophet Samuel’s body arrived in Constantinople in 406 “with Arcadius Augustus leading the way, and Anthemius, pretorian prefect and former consul, Aemilianus, city prefect, and all the senate.”⁴¹ Unfortunately, few representations have survived to give us a sense of the atmosphere, excitement, and visual splendor of ceremonies associated with the translation and solemn arrival of relics. A sixth-century ivory panel—presumably a fragment of a reliquary—and now preserved in the cathedral treasury at Trier, Germany, is one of the earliest surviving documents of this kind (cat. no. 14). It shows the solemn reception and deposition of relics in the Byzantine capital,

most likely those of the archdeacon St. Stephen, an event that is recorded as having taken place in 421.

While the transfer of the bodily remains of important New Testament saints and Old Testament prophets was at first a matter of prestige and a means to ensure imperial and ecclesiastical control over substances too important and potent to be left unguarded, the Persian conquest of Syria-Palestine in 614 and the Avar and Persian attacks on the capital in 626 created an even more urgent need to safeguard Christendom's most sacred relics in the capital and to fortify the city through the accumulated presence of the empire's powerful supernatural defenders within its walls.⁴²

The Church of the Virgin of the Pharos, or lighthouse, a chapel located "in the midst" of the imperial palace, soon developed into the city's most important repository of sacred relics, containing the Holy Lance, a portion of the True Cross, and other relics of Christ's Passion already by the mid-seventh century.⁴³ In 944 and 945, respectively, the famous Mandylion, an imprint of Christ's face on a piece of cloth (see cat. no. 113) and the relic of the right arm of John the Baptist were likewise deposited there.⁴⁴ Other relics followed as a result of successful military campaigns in the East.⁴⁵ By the end of the twelfth century, the Pharos church was renowned as the home of the most important relics of Christendom and praised as "another Sinai, a Bethlehem, a Jordan, a Jerusalem . . ." by virtue of its sacred content—a *locus sanctus* at the very heart of the Byzantine Empire.⁴⁶

While many of the sacred objects in the imperial relic collection survived the Latin conquest of Constantinople in 1204 unscathed, the most important among them were later gifted, pawned, or sold to Western rulers and potentates in an effort to save the Latin Empire from economic and military collapse. Between 1239 and 1241, King Louis IX of France (r. 1226–70) was thus able to acquire twenty-two precious objects—foremost among them the Crown of Thorns, portions of the relic of the True Cross, and other important relics of Christ's Passion—from his cousin Emperor Baldwin II (r. 1240–61) of Constantinople, who found himself hard pressed for money and resources to defend his weakened realm against Bulgars and Greeks.⁴⁷

To create a fitting home for this sacred treasure, Louis commissioned a splendid relic chapel, the Sainte-Chapelle (fig. 21) within the precinct of his royal palace in Paris and inaugurated it in 1248. Inside this larger architectural reliquary, the precious cache of relics was safeguarded in a magnificent shrine known as the *Grande Châsse*. Made in the early 1240s and placed on a platform behind the chapel's altar, the *Grande Châsse* was decorated on its three principal sides with copper-gilt reliefs depicting the Flagellation, Crucifixion, and Resurrection, while two doors on the rear face, secured with multiple locks, gave access to the shrine's sacred content.⁴⁸

Other important relics from Constantinople, among them, "the gold-mounted, miracle-working cross that Constantine . . . took with him into battle, an ampoule with the miraculous blood of Jesus Christ, the arm of the martyr-saint George, and a fragment of the skull of St. John the Baptist," were allegedly sent to the Church of San Marco in Venice by Doge Enrico



Fig. 21. View of the royal palace and the Sainte-Chapelle, from the *Très Riches Heures du Duc de Berry*, ca. 1411–16. Musée Condé, Chantilly, ms 65, fol. 6v

Dandolo (r. 1192–1205), one of the principal leaders of the Fourth Crusade. Like the arm of St. George, which was later enshrined in a new Venetian container (cat. no. 51), and the hand of St. Marina, whose Byzantine reliquary survives largely intact (cat. no. 50), most relics thus transferred found new homes in the churches and monasteries of Venice, where their cult continued to flourish well beyond the Middle Ages.

The Western Empire

In Western Europe, rulers had long been aware of the Byzantine Empire's distinguished collection of sacred relics, especially its holdings in relics of Christ's Passion. However, similar efforts to concentrate a high-profile collection of relics in a single location were at first limited to the papal court in Rome. In the Carolingian and Ottonian empires, on the other hand,



the concept of itinerant rulership resulted in a somewhat different attitude toward the collecting of sacred matter. While Carolingian rulers had inherited the famous *cappa*, or mantle, of St. Martin of Tours, and other important relics from their Merovingian predecessors, these precious objects were not kept in one particular location, but accompanied the ruler on his travels to grant him protection and victory in battle and thus ensure the safety and stability of the entire realm. The name of the Carolingian court's most prominent relic, namely, the *cappa* of St. Martin, was hence transferred to both the court clergy who guarded it and the physical location where it was kept, making the word *cappella*, or small chapel, a synonymous designation for the relic, its guardians, and the architectural reliquary in which it was housed.⁴⁹ Other relics, no less important, served a similar function. Like the mantle relic of St. Martin, a relic of the True Cross was carried into battle, and oaths were sworn on it.⁵⁰ After Charlemagne's death in 814, his collection of relics—some of which he had received as diplomatic gifts from Pope Hadrian I (r. 772–95) and Leo III, others from the Byzantine court—was divided among his heirs, who later donated them to prominent churches and monasteries, among them the monasteries of Centula and Prüm, and the palatine chapel at Aachen.⁵¹

While the attitude of Western rulers toward the possession and use of relics, especially those that had proven their efficacy in battle or in moments of political crisis, remained largely unchanged during the following centuries, late Carolingian, Ottonian, and Salian rulers tended to donate important relics they had acquired to institutions connected to them by close personal or familial ties.⁵² Religious foundations that functioned as dynastic burial places and/or contained the shrines of important dynastic saints and martyrs—such as the royal abbey of St. Denis, the palatine chapel at Aachen, the collegiate churches of St. Servatius in Quedlinburg and of Sts. Simon and Judas in Goslar, or the cathedrals of Magdeburg and Bamberg, to name only a few prominent examples—were thus able to accumulate very distinguished collections of sacred relics.⁵³

Like the pope and the Byzantine emperor, who regularly bestowed gifts of relics to distinguished foreign rulers and their emissaries, Western rulers did not hesitate to use sacred relics as tokens of royal or imperial munificence and as powerful means to further their own political agenda.⁵⁴ Of particular political and dynastic importance was Henry's acquisition of the Holy Lance, which, according to Liutprand of Cremona, was granted as a gift only after Henry threatened the relic's owner, King Rudolph II of Burgundy (r. 912–37), with the destruction of his entire kingdom "by fire and sword."⁵⁵ It was this important relic of Christ's Passion and the Holy Nails that the later emperor Otto I (r. 939–82) took with him when he faced

Fig. 22. The Holy Lance. Lance: 8th century; silver sleeve: second half of the 11th century; gold sleeve: third quarter of the 14th century. Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, Schatzkammer (SK XIII 19)

Fig. 23. The Imperial Cross (*Reichskreuz*), with the Holy Lance. German, ca. 1024/25, 1325. Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, Schatzkammer (SK XIII 21)

his disaffected brother Henry and Duke Gisibert of Lotharingia at the battle of Birten. Otto's miraculous victory at Birten not only secured his legitimacy as a ruler; it also transformed the Holy Lance—with one of the Holy Nails that was inserted into it already before the year 1000—into one of the Western Empire's most important relics and the first and foremost symbol of imperial rule and power (fig. 22; cat. nos. 128, 129).⁵⁶ Together with a large portion of the wood of the True Cross, the Holy Lance was later inserted into the so-called *Reichskreuz* (fig. 23) of Emperor Conrad II (r. 1027–39) and used in imperial coronations from at least the mid-eleventh century on.⁵⁷

Imperial interest in the political and ceremonial use of relics seems to have gradually increased during the course of the eleventh century. Henry IV (r. 1056–1106), for instance, is known not only to have received fragments “of the sudarium, the True Cross, and the Crown of Thorns” as gifts from the Byzantine emperor; he also ordered the transfer of the remains of several martyrs and confessors—including the head of St. Anastasios the Persian (see cat. no. 55)—from Aachen to his castle on the Harzburg to fortify it against Saxon rebels.⁵⁸ At the end of the reign of Henry's son and successor, Henry V (r. 1106–25), the imperial collection of relics, regalia, and insignia—commonly known as the *Reichskleinodien*—was moved to Trifels Castle in the Palatinate, which served as the first more permanent “imperial treasury” into the late thirteenth century.⁵⁹

The most avid—some would say, fanatical—imperial collector of sacred relics was undoubtedly Charles IV (r. 1355–78). Educated at the Capetian court in Paris, he had a first-hand knowledge of the cult of the relics of Christ's Passion and their ritual veneration at the Sainte-Chapelle. He had also experienced the cult of the recently canonized (1297) St. Louis—i.e., King Louis IX—and was deeply impressed by the pious king's example. As king of Bohemia, Charles endowed his own palace chapel near Prague

with precious relics—among them, a portion of the Crown of Thorns—and liturgical vessels during the 1340s. When he was elected king of the Romans in 1346, his focus shifted to the hoard of imperial relics. These had been kept at Trifels Castle prior, but given the controversies surrounding Charles's election, the treasure did not arrive in Prague until shortly before Easter 1350, on which occasion it was publicly displayed.⁶⁰ Already before the relics' arrival, however, Charles had made preparations to build Karlstein Castle (fig. 24), located about forty kilometers south of the city, as a more permanent home for the imperial collection of relics and insignia.⁶¹ In 1365, when Karlstein was finally completed, the imperial treasure was transferred to its largest and most lavishly decorated chapels: the Chapel of the Holy Cross (fig. 25).⁶² Encrusted with more than two thousand pieces of polished semiprecious stones—among them, agate, carnelian, amethyst, and jasper—gilded stucco, and painted panels featuring inlaid fragments of saintly relics, the sacred content and decoration of Charles IV's relic chapel at Karlstein Castle emulates the preciousness of both Louis IX's Sainte-Chapelle in Paris and the Byzantine emperor's Church of the Virgin of the Pharos. It can be considered the culmination of Western attempts to create a worthy permanent setting for the most sacred relics of Christendom and the insignia of imperial rule, which had meanwhile themselves acquired a relic status. The annual display of these treasures, for which Pope Innocent IV granted indulgences in 1354, followed a strictly prescribed liturgical formula, which Charles himself had helped to draft.⁶³ They continued even after Emperor Sigismund (r. 1433–39), Charles's son and successor on the imperial throne, decided to transfer the imperial treasure of relics, regalia, and insignia to Nuremberg in 1424 and granted the city the right to display them to the faithful in an annual *Heiltumsschau* (cat. no. 125).⁶⁴



Fig. 24. Karlstein Castle, founded 1348



Fig. 25. Karlstein Castle, Chapel of the Holy Cross, founded 1357

Pious Patrons and Princely Collectors

The accumulation of important collections of relics, however, was not exclusively a prerogative of kings and emperors. Distinguished ecclesiastical leaders such as Archbishop Egbert of Trier (r. 977–93), Bishop Bernward of Hildesheim (r. 993–1022), and Abbot Wibald of Stavelot (r. 1130–58), who served as imperial advisors, teachers, and ambassadors, likewise participated in the elite culture of collecting sacred matter, for which they commissioned exquisite containers designed for liturgical use, display, and private devotion (cat. nos. 38, 44).⁶⁵ Members of the empire's leading aristocratic families, such as the Saxon margraves Hermann Billung (r. 936–73) and Gero I (r. 937–65), or Countess Gertrude of Braunschweig (d. 1077), were no less active as collectors of holy relics and patrons of luxury objects. The religious foundations they established at Lüneburg, Gernrode, and Braunschweig were designated to serve as family burial places and were thus endowed with land, relics, and precious liturgical objects, which ensured safety and protection for the foundation, eternal prayer on behalf of

the founder, and lasting commemoration of his or her family's name and fame.⁶⁶ The later renown of such distinguished ecclesiastical treasures as that of the Monastery of St. Michael in Lüneburg or the collegiate church of St. Blaise in Braunschweig, however, depended as much on the arrangements made by the original founders as it depended on the care, devotion, and patronage received by successive generations of family members, friends, and other benefactors.⁶⁷ Countess Gertrude's early donations to the Church of St. Blaise (cat. no. 65), for instance, were augmented considerably a century later by Duke Henry the Proud (r. 1137–39), the first Guelph ruler of Saxony, and his son Henry the Lion (r. 1142–95), who not only rebuilt the church and established it as his family's burial place, but also donated various relics to its treasure, which he had brought from a pilgrimage to Jerusalem in 1172/73 (cat. no. 41). Henry's son, Emperor Otto IV (r. 1209–15), further ensured the prosperity and fame of the Church of St. Blaise and its treasury through a bequest of all but one relic formerly in his and his father's possession.

Following Otto's munificence, it was not until the early fourteenth century that the Church of St. Blaise once again received serious attention from members of the Guelph family, namely, from Duke Otto the Mild (r. 1318–44), who contributed several precious reliquaries to its inventory and had himself and his wife represented on the reverse of the so-called *Plenarium* (fig. 26). During the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, however, it was mainly due to the benefactions of individual members of the local nobility and the chapter of St. Blaise that the church and its treasure continued to prosper (cat. nos. 40, 44). The fame of the "Guelph Treasure," as it is now commonly known, is thus the result not of one but many avid relic collectors and pious patrons.

During the late fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, several prominent new collections of relics emerged in Germany as a result of princely ambition and a heightened awareness of the human need for divine grace, forgiveness, and salvation. Accumulated at first to ensure personal safety and protection, such aristocratic relic collections were commonly transferred posthumously—as had also been the case in previous centuries—to religious foundations. In 1379, for instance, the distinguished Palatine Elector Rupert I (r. 1353–90) donated a collection of more than sixty relics and reliquaries in his possession to the collegiate church he had founded at his residence in Neustadt "for the salvation of our soul and those of our forebears, heirs, and descendents."⁶⁸ The fact that Rupert had decided to be buried in his church at Neustadt only a few years prior to his donation (namely, in 1371), seems to indicate that personal salvation remained the most pressing concern and ultimate motivation for elite patrons to endow churches with sacred relics.⁶⁹

Concern for his own and his family's salvation was also a prime reason for Rudolph I (r. 1298–1356), Elector of Saxony, to ask Pope Clement VI (r. 1342–52) for permission to deposit a relic of the Crown of Thorns in a chapel he had previously founded and dedicated to All-Saints inside his castle at Wittenberg and to establish a chapter of canons there in 1353.



Fig. 26. *Plenarium* of Duke Otto the Mild, back cover, with representation of Duke Otto of Braunschweig-Goettingen and his wife, Agnes of Brandenburg, flanking St. Blaise enthroned. Braunschweig, 1339. Kunstgewerbemuseum, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin (w32)

This precious relic of Christ's Passion, which Rudolph had received from King Philip VI of France (r. 1328–50) during a diplomatic mission in 1341/42, is featured prominently in the *Wittenberger Heiltumsbuch* (fig. 27) an elaborate “relic book” illustrated with woodcuts by Lucas Cranach the Elder and published in two editions in 1509.⁷⁰ It reproduces—in word and image—the extensive collection of sacred relics that Prince Frederick the Wise (r. 1488–1525), Elector of Saxony, had assembled at the All-Saints Church in Wittenberg during the last decade of the fifteenth century and the first two decades of the sixteenth. It was displayed there annually on the second Sunday after Easter from 1503 (or 1504) until 1523, granting those who witnessed the *Heiltumsweisung*, or presentation of relics, generous indulgences.⁷¹ While Frederick's interest in collecting sacred relics may have started before his pilgrimage to the Holy Land in 1493, it certainly intensified as a result of it and grew into an outright passion after his return.⁷² Thanks to a papal brief of 1507, which asked every bishop and prelate in the empire to share relics with the Elector, Frederick's collection started to grow steadily. By 1509, the *Wittenberger Heiltumsbuch* listed

5,005 relic fragments, a number that increased to 5,262 in 1513. It was over the next five years, however, that Frederick's collection started to grow dramatically, partly through personal requests and interventions with foreign dignitaries, partly through the efforts of a staff of “relic hunters” who combed the courts and churches of Europe for relics to satisfy the Elector's appetite for sacred matter.⁷³ By 1518, Frederick's collection had reached the staggering number of 17,443 relic fragments, a number that grew to 19,013 in 1520. The enormous increase of Frederick's collection since 1513 can perhaps best be explained as a result of the rise of yet another passionate collector of saintly relics in Frederick's own territory: Albrecht of Brandenburg.

In August 1513, the death of Frederick's brother Ernst had left the archiepiscopal See of Magdeburg vacant, and Albrecht, youngest son of Prince Johann Cicero, Elector of Brandenburg (r. 1486–99), succeeded him as archbishop the following year. Elected archbishop of Mainz a few months later and appointed cardinal by Pope Leo X (r. 1513–21) in 1518, Albrecht started to enlarge the relic collection he had inherited from his



Fig. 27. Lucas Cranach the Elder (German, 1472–1553). Frontispiece double-portrait (1509) of Frederick III (the Wise), Elector of Saxony, and his brother John (the Steadfast), Elector of Saxony, from the *Wittenberger Heiltumsbuch* (Leipzig: Melchior Lotter, 1514). The British Museum, London (PD 1949,0411.4991).



Fig. 28. Albrecht Dürer (German, 1471–1528), Portrait of Cardinal Albrecht of Brandenburg, from the *Hallisches Heiltumsbuch* (1525). Herzog August Bibliothek, Wolfenbüttel, Cod. T 24.4 Helmst (3), fol. 1v

predecessor almost immediately.⁷⁴ Since the chapel in which Ernst had kept his collection on the Moritzburg in Halle soon proved too small, Albrecht founded a collegiate church in the city and designated it to serve as the new home for his sacred treasure.⁷⁵ Both attested public presentations of Albrecht's collection, however, took place before the relics could be moved to the new church in 1523. On 8 September 1520, the Feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin, 8,133 relic fragments, arranged in nine "passages" were presented to the faithful from a window on the north side of the chapel. As was the case at Wittenberg in 1509, a richly illustrated relic-book—the *Hallisches Heiltumsbuch*—was prepared for the occasion, featuring 237 woodcut prints by Wolf Traut and an engraved portrait of the cardinal by Albrecht Dürer (fig. 28).⁷⁶ A second, more lavish copy of the *Heiltumsbuch*, with 348 illustrations by several artists, was prepared in 1525/26, likely as a presentation copy for the cardinal's personal use. This book, a small number of artifacts, and several fragments of objects (see cat. no. 131) are all that survives of Albrecht's famous collection of relics and reliquaries, large parts of which had already been pawned or sold during the cardinal's lifetime. When the city of Halle adopted Protestantism in 1541, Albrecht dissolved the collegiate church and left the city for Mainz and Aschaffenburg with the remainder of his sacred treasure.

At Wittenberg, Frederick's collection of relics fared no better. The publication of Martin Luther's *Ninety-Five Theses on the Power and Efficacy of Indulgences* in 1517 had changed the climate for public displays of relics once and for all. In 1520, shortly after Frederick's collection had reached a fantastic 19,013 relics, he ceased collecting altogether.⁷⁷ As was the case in Halle, the last *Heiltumsschau* of the Wittenberg relics was held in 1521, but any reference to indulgences was cautiously avoided. While the sacred things and holy bodies Frederick had gathered so passionately from all corners of the world were still displayed annually on the high altar of the Church of All-Saints until the Elector's death in 1525, they were never publicly displayed again. Most of the precious reliquaries that had once been made to enshrine and elevate the bodies of the saints and martyrs are presumed to have found their way to the Electoral mint during the early 1540s. Their sacred content, now considered highly suspect by Frederick's reform-minded successors, was likely scattered, discarded, or destroyed. What remains of Frederick's treasures today is a single beaker of cut glass (fig. 29).⁷⁸ Once venerated for its association with Sts. Hedwig and Elizabeth of Thuringia, it is now cherished for its connection with Martin Luther, who is said to have received the glass from Frederick's grandson, Johann Frederick (r. 1532–54) as a gift.

The story of the formation, growth, and eventual dispersal of the relic collections of Frederick the Wise and Albrecht of Brandenburg may be considered to reflect both the deep-rooted religiosity and extreme uncertainty of an age in which Christian religious traditions and practices started to be questioned more radically than ever before. While the cult of relics had its critics since the fourth century—most famously in Vigilantius of Calagurris (modern St. Martory near Toulouse), Claudius of Turin, and



Fig. 29. Hedwig beaker. Syria or Egypt (?), 10th (?) century. Kunstsammlungen der Veste Coburg (A.S. 652)

Guibert of Nogent—it was the rhetorical force of Martin Luther and other reformers that resulted in a permanent split of Christian attitudes toward the cult of saints and the veneration of relics. Unlike the reformers, however, who strictly distanced themselves from what they considered to be superstitious practices, the Catholic Church kept insisting on the validity of the cult of saints and continued to honor their relics.⁷⁹ Interestingly, it was the "rediscovery" and scholarly exploration of the Roman catacombs from the mid-sixteenth century onward that provided new impulses for the Christian cult of relics.⁸⁰ Still considered "more valuable than precious stones and more precious than refined gold," the bodily remains of the martyrs now served as tangible proof not only for the saints' continued presence and efficacy on earth, but also for the long and unbroken history of the cult and veneration of their relics.

1. Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, 5.1.62–63, in *Die Kirchengeschichte: Eusebius Werke*, ed. F. Winkelmann, GCS, n.s. 6, 2nd ed., 3 vols. (Berlin 1999), 1:426 trans. adapted from Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, trans. K. Lake, 2 vols. (London, 1965), 1:437.
2. *The Martyrdom of Polycarp*, ed. J. B. Lightfoot, in *The Apostolic Fathers* II,3 (London, 2nd ed., 1889; repr. Hildesheim, 1973; 2nd ed., ed. Michael W. Holmes (Grand Rapids, Mich., 1992), 351–403 and 477–87 (trans.). For a more accessible English translation, see B. Ehrman, ed. and trans., *The Apostolic Fathers*, 1, Loeb Classical Library 24 (Cambridge, Mass., 2003), 355–401.
3. Prudentius, *Carmina*, ed. M. P. Cunningham, CCSL 126 (Turnhout, 1966), book 11, 370–78.
4. *The Martyrdom of Polycarp*, ed. Lightfoot (1889/1973, cited in note 2), chap. 18.2, 396 and 484 (trans.). See also Ehrman, *The Apostolic Fathers* (2003, cited in n. 2), 393.
5. Prudentius, *Carmina*, ed. Cunningham (1966, cited in n. 3), book 11, 135–36, 374; trans. adapted from M. Clement Eagan, *The Poems of Prudentius, The Fathers of the Church: A New Translation* 43 (Washington, DC, 1962), 251, and M. Malamud, *A Poetics of Transformation. Prudentius and Classical Mythology* (Ithaca, 1989), 85. On Prudentius, relics, and rhetoric, see also P. Cox Miller, “The Little Blue Flower Is Red: Relics and the Poetizing of the Body,” *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 8, no. 2 (2000): 213–36; eadem, “Visceral Seeing: The Holy Body in Late Ancient Christianity,” *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 12, no. 4 (2000): 391–411; eadem, “Relics, Rhetoric, and Mental Spectacles,” in *Seeing the Invisible in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages*, ed. G. de Nie, K. F. Morrison, and M. Mostert, *Utrecht Studies in Medieval Literacy* 14 (Turnhout, 2005), 25–52.
6. See C. W. Bynum, *The Resurrection of the Body in Western Christianity, 200–1336* (New York, 1995), 21–108.
7. Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, 2.25.7, Winkelmann ed., 1:178, trans. Lake (1965, cited in n. 1), 183. That Christian communities were not generally prohibited or hindered from burying the remains of their martyrs is indicated in the Roman Acts of the Martyrdom of St. Ignatius, chap. 11, ed. J. B. Lightfoot, in *The Apostolic Fathers*, II,2 (London 1889; repr. Hildesheim, 1973), 496–540, at 537–38 and 587 (translation).
8. For early evidence of the commemoration of martyrs in Rome, compare the so-called *Calendar of 354*, in *Chronica minora*, ed. T. Mommsen, MGH ActAnt 9.1 (Berlin, 1892), 13–148. On the lists of martyrs and bishops, see M. R. Salzmänn, *Roman Time: The Codex-Calendar of 354 and the Rhythms of Urban Life in Late Antiquity* (Berkeley, 1990), 44–47.
9. For the relics of the protomartyr St. Stephen and their discovery, see E. D. Hunt, “The Traffic in Relics: Some Late Roman Evidence,” in *The Byzantine Saint*, ed. S. Hackel (Birmingham, 1981), 171–80, at 171.
10. Ambrose, *Letter XXII*, PL 16:1019–25. For an English translation, see *Saint Ambrose, Letters*, trans. M. M. Beyenka, *The Fathers of the Church: A New Translation* 26 (Washington, DC, 1987), 376–84, at 376. On the significance of blood in this context, see G. Clark, “Bodies and Blood: Martyrdom, Virginity, and Resurrection in Late Antiquity,” in D. Montserrat, ed., *Changing Bodies, Changing Meanings: Studies on the Human Body in Antiquity* (London, 1997), 99–115.
11. *Codex Theodosius* 9.17.7 (issued at Constantinople, 26 February 386), in *Theodosiani libri XVI cum Constitutionibus Sirmondianis et Leges novellae ad Theodosianum pertinentes*, ed. T. Mommsen with P. Meyer and P. Krüger, 2 vols. (Berlin, 1905; repr. 1967), I, 2:466. For an English translation, see C. Pharr, *The Theodosian Code and Novels, and the Sirmondian Constitutions*, 2d ed. (New York, 1969), 240.
12. Ambrose, *Letter XXII*, PL 16:1020, trans. Beyenka, *Saint Ambrose, Letters* (1987, cited in n. 10), 376.
13. Paulinus of Milan, *Vita di S. Ambrogio: Introduzione, testo critico e note*, ed. M. Pellegrino (Rome, 1961), 98–100. For an English translation, see B. Ramsey, *Ambrose* (London, 1997), 195–218, at 209.
14. Ambrose, present at the occasion, later described the event in one of his sermons. Ambrose, *De exhortatione virginitatis*, PL 16:335–64.
15. The details are spelled out in the *Passio S. Saturnini*, in *Acta Martyrum*, ed. T. Ruinart (Regensburg, 1859), 175–80, composed presumably a few years after the bishop’s death in or around 410. For an analysis of the context, see D. Hunter, “Vigilantius of Calagurris and Victorius of Rouen: Ascetics, Relics, and Clerics in Late Roman Gaul,” *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 7, no. 3 (1999): 401–30.
16. Paulinus of Nola, *Carmina*, ed. W. von Hartel, CSEL 30 (Vienna, 1894), 19.338–42, trans. after P. G. Walsh, *The Poems of St. Paulinus of Nola* (New York, 1975), 142. The *translatio* of the bodies of Sts. Andrew and Timothy is likely to have occurred on 3 March 357 and also included the remains of the Evangelist Luke. See C. Mango, “Constantine’s Mausoleum and the Translation of Holy Relics,” *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 83 (1990): 51–62 with 434.
17. Paulinus of Nola, *Carmina*, ed. von Hartel, 19.320–24, trans. after Mango, “Constantine’s Mausoleum” (1990, cited in n. 16), 53.
18. For the views of a vocal opponent of the cult of relics, see Hunter, “Vigilantius of Calagurris” (1999, cited in n. 15).
19. Gaudentius, *Sermon* 17, 35–36, PL 20:962, in *Tractatus*, ed. A. Glueck, CSEL 68 (Vienna, 1936); P. Brown, *The Cult of Saints: Its Rise and Function in Latin Christianity*, 2nd ed. (Chicago, 1983), 95; G. Noga-Banai, *The Trophies of the Martyrs: An Art Historical Study of Early Christian Silver Reliquaries* (Oxford, 2008), 138.
20. For relics of places, see B. Reudenbach, “Reliquien von Orten: Ein frühchristliches Reliquiar als Gedächtnisort,” in *Reliquiare im Mittelalter*, ed. B. Reudenbach and G. Toussaint, *Hamburger Forschungen zur Kunstgeschichte* 5 (Hamburg, 2005); J. Elsner, “Replicating Palestine and Reversing the Reformation: Pilgrimage and Collecting at Bobbio, Monza, and Walsingham,” *Journal of the History of Collecting* 9 (1997): 117–30. See also Angenendt herein, pp. 22–23.
21. *Itinerarium Burdigalense*, ed. P. Geyer and O. Cuntz, CCSL 175 (Turnhout, 1965), 16–17, trans. after J. Wilkinson, *Egeria’s Travels*, 3rd ed. (Warminster, 2006), 31.
22. Hieronymus, *Epistulae*, ed. I. Hilberg, CSEL 55, 2nd ed. (Vienna, 1996), Ep. 108.9, 315.4–10, trans. after J. Wilkinson, *Jerusalem Pilgrims before the Crusades*, rev. ed. (Warminster, 2002), 83.
23. *Itinerarium Egeriae*, ed. P. Geyer, CCSL 175 (Turnhout, 1965), 81.16–18. For a translation of the passage, see Wilkinson, *Egeria’s Travels* (2006, cited in n. 21), 155.
24. *Cyrrilli Hierosolymorum Archiepiscopi opera qui supersunt omnia*, cat. 4.10, ed. W. K. Reischl and J. Rupp, 2 vols. (Munich, 1848–60), 1:100.
25. See Krueger and Robinson herein, pp. 12 and 114, respectively.
26. Paulinus of Nola, *Epistulae*, 31, 268.11–19, ed. von Hartel, CSEL 29, trans. after Walsh, *The Letters of St. Paulinus of Nola* (1975, cited in n. 16), 2:126.
27. *Antonini Placentini Itinerarium*, 20, 139.18–23, ed. P. Geyer, CSEL 175 (Turnhout, 1965), trans. after J. Wilkinson, *Jerusalem Pilgrims before the Crusades*, rev. ed. (Warminster, 2002), 139. See also Krueger herein, pp. 11.
28. Elsner, “Replicating Palestine” (1997, cited in n. 20), 119–21. For information on individual objects and the circumstances of their discovery, see G. Celi, “Cimeli Bobbiesi,” *La Civiltà Cattolica* 74 (1923): 2:504–14; 3:37–45, 124–36, 335–44, 423–39; A. Grabar, *Ampoules de Terre Sainte (Monza–Bobbio)* (Paris, 1958), 32–44.
29. See Elsner, “Replicating Palestine” (1997, cited in n. 20), 121–23. See also A. Sepulcri, “I papyri della basilica di Monza e le reliquie inviate de Roma,” *Archivio Storico Lombardo* 19 (1903): 241–62.
30. The content is listed on small labels (*pittacia*) and an accompanying catalogue (*notula*). See *Itineraria Romana*, CCSL 175 (Turnhout, 1965), 286–95.
31. Starting with the apostles Peter and Paul, the *notula* lists the various saints according to the location of their tombs in the cemeteries and shrines outside Rome, thus creating a topographical map of the city’s sacred sites. Elsner, “Replicating Palestine” (1997, cited in n. 20), 122.
32. See C. Leyser, “The Temptations of Cult: Roman Martyr Piety in the Age of Gregory the Great,” *Early Medieval Europe* 9, no. 3 (2000): 289–307.
33. Gregory the Great, *Registrum Epistularum Libri I–XIV*, ed. D. Norberg, CCSL 140, 2 vols. (Turnhout, 1982), 1:248–250. For an English translation, see J. R. C. Martin, *The Letters of Gregory the Great, Medieval Sources in Translation* 40, 3 vols. (Toronto, 2004), 1:310–12. See also J. M. McCulloh, “The Cult of Relics in the Letters and ‘Dialogues’ of Pope Gregory the Great. A Lexicographical Study,” *Traditio* 32 (1976): 145–84; idem, “From Antiquity to the Middle Ages: Continuity and Change in Papal Relic Policy from the Sixth to the Eighth Centuries,” in *Pietas: Festschrift für B. Kötting*, ed. E. Dassmann and K. S. Frank (Münster, 1980), 313–24.
34. Gregory the Great, *Registrum Epistularum*, ed. Norberg (1982, cited in n. 33), 2:810.128–30, trans. after Martin, *The Letters of Gregory the Great* (2004, cited in n. 33), 2:703.
35. Gregory the Great, *Registrum Epistularum*, ed. Norberg (1982, cited in n. 33), 2:1083.35–37, trans. after Martin, *The Letters of Gregory the Great* (2004, cited in n. 33), 3:878.
36. *Liber Pontificalis*, ed. L. Duchesne, 2 vols. (Paris, 1886–1892; repr. Paris, 1981), 1:179, trans. after R. Davis, *The Book of Pontiffs (Liber Pontificalis): The Ancient Biographies of the First Ninety Roman Bishops to AD 715*, 2nd ed. (Liverpool, 1989), 21. On the circumstances of the gift, see S. De Blaauw, “Jerusalem in Rome and the Cult of the Cross,” in *Pratum Romanum: Richard Krautheimer zum 100. Geburtstag*, ed. R. Colella et al. (Wiesbaden, 1997), 55–73; H. A. Klein, *Byzanz, der Westen und das ‘wahre’ Kreuz: Die Geschichte einer Reliquie und ihrer künstlerischen Fassung in Byzanz und im Abendland* (Wiesbaden, 2004), 70.

37. On this church and its collection of relics, see Nagel herein, pp. 219–20.
38. On the reliquary, see most recently *Picturing the Bible: The Earliest Christian Art*, ed. J. Spier, exh. cat., Fort Worth: Kimbell Art Museum (New Haven, 2007), 283–85 (no. 83). See also Klein, *Byzanz, der Westen und das 'wahre' Kreuz* (2004, cited in n. 36), 70, 96, 177; C. Belting-Ihm, "Das Justinuskreuz in der Schatzkammer der Peterskirche zu Rom," *Jahrbuch des Römisch-Germanischen Zentralmuseums Mainz* 12 (1965): 142–66; V.H. Elbern, "Das Justinuskreuz im Schatz von St. Peter zu Rom," *Jahrbuch der Berliner Museen* n.s. 6 (1964): 24–38.
39. For a summary account of the history of the chapel and its treasure, see H. Grisar, *Die römische Kapelle Sancta Sanctorum und ihr Schatz* (Freiburg im Breisgau, 1908), 11–26. On the chapel's decoration, see the contributions in *Sancta Sanctorum* (Milan). On the Sancta Sanctorum and its treasure, see Cornini herein, pp. 69–78.
40. For a summary account of the history of relic translations into Constantinople, see H.A. Klein, "Sacred Relics and Imperial Ceremonies at the Great Palace of Constantinople," in *Visualisierungen von Herrschaft*, ed. F.A. Bauer, Byzas 5 (Istanbul, 2006), 79–99.
41. *Chronicon Paschale*, ed. L. Dindorf, CFHB (Bonn, 1932), 569.12–18. For an English translation, see *Chronicon Paschale* 284–628 AD, trans. M. and M. Whitby (Liverpool, 1989), 60.
42. On the "supernatural defenders" of Constantinople, see N. Baynes, "The Supernatural Defenders of Constantinople," *Analecta Bollandiana* 67 (1949): 165–77.
43. Photios, *Homilies*, Hom. X, 100.24, ed. B. Laourdas (Thessalonike, 1959). For an English translation, see C. Mango, *The Homilies of Photius, Patriarch of Constantinople* (Cambridge, Mass., 1958), 185.
44. *Ioannis Scylizae Synopsis historiarum*, ed. H. Thurn (Berlin and New York, 1973), 231.66–232.72 and 245.27–32. For general information on the Mandylion of Christ, see *Mandylion: Intorno al Sacro Volto da Bisanzio a Genova*, exh. cat., Genoa: Museo Diocesano (Genoa, 2004); A. Cameron, "The History of the Image of Edessa: The Telling of the Story," in *Okeanos: Essays Presented to Ihor Ševčenko on His Sixtieth Birthday*, ed. C. Mango and O. Pritsak, *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 7 (1984), 80–94; S. Runciman, "Some Remarks on the Image of Edessa," *Cambridge Historical Journal* 3 (1931): 238–52.
45. The Holy Keramion, a miraculous imprint of the Mandylion on a brick, and the sandals of Christ entered the collection in 968 and 975, respectively. Leo the Deacon (*Leonis Diakoni Caloensis historiae libri decem*, ed. C. B. Hase, CSHB [Bonn, 1828], 71 and 166), records that the sandals of Christ were brought from Hierapolis in Syria (Mempetze). Matthew of Edessa, on the other hand, reports that this and other relics were found at the city of Gabala. See A.E. Destourian, *Armenia and the Crusades, Tenth to Twelfth Centuries: The Chronicle of Matthew of Edessa* (Belmont, 1993), 32. On the circumstances of the translation, see N. Adontz, *Notes arméno-byzantines, 2: La lettre de Tzimiscès au roi Ashot (Ašot)*, *Études arméno-byzantines* 1965 (Lisbon, 1965), 141–47.
46. See Nikolaos Mesarites, *Die Palastrevolution des Johannes Komnenos*, ed. A. Heisenberg (Würzburg, 1907), 30–31.
47. On the treasure of the Sainte-Chapelle, see *Le trésor de la Sainte-Chapelle*, ed. J. Durand and M.-P. Lafitte, exh. cat., Paris: Musée du Louvre (2001). On the circumstances of the acquisition and translation of the relics, see J. Durand, "Les reliques et reliquaires byzantins acquis par saint Louis," and "La translation des reliques impériales de Constantinople à Paris," in *ibid.*, 52–54, 37–41, respectively; H.A. Klein, "Eastern Objects and Western Desires: Relics and Reliquaries between Byzantium and the West," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 58 (2004): 283–314, at 306–8. On the display of relics at the Sainte-Chapelle, see M. Cohen, "An Indulgence for the Visitor: The Public at the Sainte-Chapelle of Paris," *Speculum* 83 (2008): 840–83.
48. On the Grand Châsse and its contents, *Le trésor de la Sainte-Chapelle* (2001, cited in n. 47), 107–37; R. Branner, "The Grand Chasse of the Sainte-Chapelle," *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* 77 (1971): 6–18.
49. Walafrid Strabo, *Libellus*, MGH Capit. 2, 515.29–31. For an English translation, see *Walafrid Strabo's libellus de exordiis et incrementis quarundam in observationibus ecclesiasticis rerum*, *Mittellateinische Studien und Texte* 19, trans. (with liturgical commentary) A.L. Harting-Correa (Leiden, 1996), 193. See also P.E. Schramm and F. Mütterich, *Denkmale der deutschen Könige und Kaiser: Ein Beitrag zur Herrschergeschichte von Karl dem Grossen bis Friedrich II.* 768–1250, 2nd ed. (Munich, 1981), 24.
50. For the use of the *cappa* of St. Martin, see J.M. Wallace-Hadrill, *The Long-Haired Kings and Other Topics in Frankish History* (London, 1962), 224, with reference to MGH L Form. Marc., book I, chaps. 38 and 40, 68. For oaths taken on the relic of the True Cross and other relics, see Klein, *Byzanz, der Westen und das 'wahre' Kreuz* (2004, cited in n. 36), 83.
51. On Charlemagne's collection of relics, see H. Schiffers, *Karls des Großen Reliquienschatz und die Anfänge der Aachenfahrt* (Aachen, 1951). On the donations to Centula and Prüm, see Schramm and Mütterich, *Denkmale der deutschen Könige und Kaiser* (1981, cited in n. 50), 25, with bibliographic references.
52. On the emergence and growth of the cult of St. Martin, see R. Van Dam, *Saints and Their Miracles in Late Antique Gaul* (Princeton, 1993), 13–28. For a broader analysis of the cult of relics in the early Middle Ages, see H. Fichtenau, "Zum Reliquienwesen im frühen Mittelalter," *Mitteilungen des Instituts für österreichische Geschichtsforschung* 60 (1952): 60–89.
53. See *Le trésor de Saint-Denis*, ed. D. Alcouffe et al., exh. cat., Paris: Musée du Louvre (1991), and Dom M. Félibien, *Histoire de l'abbaye royale de Saint-Denis en France* (Paris, 1706) (Saint-Denis); E. G. Grimme, *Der Aachener Domschatz*, *Aachener Kunstblätter* 42 (Aachen, 1972) (Aachen); D. Kötzsche, ed., *Der Quedlinburger Schatz* (Berlin, 1992) (Quedlinburg); E. Bassermann-Jordan and W. Schmid, *Der Bamberger Domschatz* (Munich, 1914), and W. Messerer, *Der Bamberger Domschatz in seinem Bestande bis zum Ende der Hohenstaufenzeit* (Munich, 1952) (Bamberg).
54. When, in 923, the imprisoned Frankish king Charles the Simple (898–923) sent his ambassador Heribert of Vermandois to King Henry I (r. 919–36) to present him with the right hand of St. Dionysius, it was not lost on contemporary observers that this gift marked an important moment of political and dynastic transition. See K.H. Krüger, "Dionysus und Vitus als frühottonische Königsheilige. Zu Widukind I, 33," *Frühmittelalterliche Studien* 8 (1974): 131–54; J. Oberste, "Heilige und ihre Reliquien in der politischen Kultur der frühen Ottonenzeit," *Frühmittelalterliche Studien*, 2003, 73–97.
55. Liutprand of Cremona, *Antapodosis*, book IV, chap. 25, 112.537–38, in *Liudprandi Cremonensis Opera Omnia*, ed. P. Chiesa, CCCM 156 (Turnhout, 1998), 1–150. For the provenance of the relic, see B. Schwineköper, "Christus-Reliquien-Verehrung und Politik. Studien über die Mentalität der Menschen des früheren Mittelalters," *Blätter für deutsche Landesgeschichte* 117 (1981): 183–281, at 204.
56. For the use of the Holy Lance at the Battle of Birten, see Liutprand of Cremona, *Antapodosis*, book IV, chap. 24, 111.498–506, in *Liudprandi Cremonensis Opera Omnia*, ed. Chiesa, (1998, cited in n. 55), 1–150.
57. For the use of the True Cross and Holy Lance in imperial coronations, see Benzo of Alba, *Ad Henricum IV. imperatorem libri VII*, ed. and trans. H. Seyffert, MGH SRG 65 (Hannover, 1996), 124–27.
58. *Lamperti Monachi Hersfeldensis Opera*, ed. O. Holder-Egger, MGH SRG 38 (Hannover, 1894), 135–36 and 183–84. For the circumstances of events, see C.V. Franklin, *The Latin Dossier of Anastasius the Persian: Hagiographic Translations and Transformations*, *Studies and Texts* 147 (Toronto, 2004), 25–26.
59. D. Leistikow, "Die Aufbewahrungsorte der Reichskleinodien— vom Trifels bis Nürnberg," in *Die Reichskleinodien: Herrschaftszeichen des Heiligen Römischen Reiches, Schriften zur staufischen Geschichte und Kunst* 16 (Göppingen, 1997), 184–213; N. Grass, "Reichskleinodien—Studien aus Rechtshistorischer Sicht," in *Sitzungsberichte der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Philosophisch-historische Klasse* 248/4 (Vienna, 1965), 19–28.
60. K. Otavsky, "Reliquien im Besitz Kaiser Karls IV., ihre Verehrung und ihre Fassungen," in *Court Chapels of the High and Late Middle Ages and Their Artistic Decoration*, ed. J. Fajt, *Proceedings from the International Symposium, Convent of St. Agnes 23.9.–25.9.1998* (Prague, 2003), 129–41; H. Kühne, *Ostensio reliquiarum: Untersuchungen über Entstehung, Ausbreitung, Gestalt und Funktion der Heilumsweisungen im römisch-deutschen Regnum* (Berlin, 2000), 106–32. In 1354, Pope Innocent VI granted Charles permission to display his collection of relics every seventh year on the Feast of the Dormition of the Virgin and allowed him to celebrate a new liturgical feast in his realm: the *festum lanceae et clavorum* (Feast of the Lance and Nails). On the history of the public display of relics, or *Heilumsschau*, see Kühne, *Ostensio reliquiarum* (2000, this note).
61. On Karlstein Castle and its significance, see F. Seibt, "Karlstein," in *Burg- und Schloßkapellen*, ed. B. Schock-Werner (Stuttgart, 1995), 3–8. On the relic chapel and its decoration, see K. Möseneder, "Lapides vivi: Über die Kreuzkapelle der Burg Karlstein," *Wiener Jahrbuch für Kunstgeschichte* 34 (1981): 39–69; J. Fajt and Jan Royt, *Magister Thodericus. Hofmaler Karls IV: Die künstlerische Ausstattung der Sakralräume auf Burg Karlstein* (Prague, 1997).
62. Charles's collection of relics had meanwhile grown considerably through papal, royal, and imperial gifts. On Charles's acquisition of relics, see F. Machilek, "Privatfrömmigkeit und Staatsfrömmigkeit," in *Kaiser Karl IV: Staatsmann und Mäzen*, ed. F. Seibt (Munich, 1978), 87–101, esp. 93–94; P.E. Schramm, F. Mütterich, and H. Fillitz, *Denkmale der Deutschen Könige und Kaiser: Ein Beitrag zur Herrschergeschichte von Rudolf I. bis Maximilian I., 1273–1519* (Munich, 1978), 18–20, with further bibliographic references. See also B.D. Boehm, "Charles IV: The Realm of Faith," in *Prague: The Crown of Bohemia, 1347–1437*, ed. B.D. Boehm and J. Fajt, exh. cat., New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York, 2005), 23–45.

63. Details about the public display of Charles's relic collection are known from five surviving "relic lists" in Prague and Munich. See Otavsky, "Reliquien im Besitz Kaiser Karls IV" (2003, cited in n. 60), 135, with references.
64. On the Nuremberger *Heiltumsschau*, see Kühne, *Ostensio reliquiarum* (2000, cited in n. 60), 133–52; J. Schnellbögel, "Die Reichskleinodien in Nürnberg 1424–1523," *Mitteilungen des Vereins für Geschichte der Stadt Nürnberg* 51 (1962): 78–159.
65. On Egbert of Trier, see T. Head, "Art and Artifice in Ottonian Trier," *Gesta* 36, no. 1 (1997): 65–82; H. Westermann-Angerhausen, *Die Goldschmiedearbeiten der Trierer Egbertwerkstatt*, Beiheft zum 36. Jahrgang der Trierer Zeitschrift (Trier, 1973). On Bernward of Hildesheim, see *Bernward von Hildesheim und das Zeitalter der Ottonen*, ed. M. Brandt and A. Eggebrecht, exh. cat., Hildesheim: Roemer- und Pelizaeus-Museum, 2 vols. (Hildesheim, 1993). On Wibald of Stavelot, see S. Wittekind, *Altar—Reliquiar—Retabel: Kunst und Liturgie bei Wibald von Stablo* (Cologne, Weimar, and Vienna, 2004).
66. H. Westermann-Angerhausen, "Die Stiftungen der Gräfin Gertrud: Anspruch und Rang," in *Der Welfenschatz und sein Umkreis*, ed. J. Ehlers and D. Kötzsche (Mainz, 1998), 51–76.
67. For an important later donation at St. Michael's in Lüneburg, made by Duke Berhard I of Braunschweig-Lüneburg on 29 June 1432, see W. von Hodenberger, *Archiv des Klosters St. Michaelis zu Lüneburg*, Lüneburger Urkundenbuch 7 (Celle, 1861–70), nos. 1046–47, 641–42. For a comprehensive analysis of the history and inventory of the Treasure of the "Goldene Tafel," see F. Stuttmann, *Der Reliquienschatz der Goldenen Tafel des St. Michaelisklosters in Lüneburg* (Berlin, 1937).
68. Karlsruhe, Generallandesarchiv, no. 67/807 (15 March 1379). See C. Fey, "Reliquienschatze deutscher Fürsten im Spätmittelalter," in *Ich armer sundiger mensch: Heiligen- und Reliquienkult am Übergang zum konfessionellen Zeitalter*, ed. A. Tacke (Halle, 2006), 11–36, at 11. For further information on Rupert's collection of relics and his motivations, see *ibid.*, 19–24.
69. A similar motivation can be cited for the Palatine Elector Ludwig III (r. 1410–36) and his wife, Mechthild, who are known to have donated a number of relics to the church they had chosen as their burial place in Heidelberg. See Fey, "Reliquienschatze deutscher Fürsten im Spätmittelalter" (2006, cited in n. 68), esp. 15–17, 21.
70. For the date and the circumstances of this gift, see G. Wentz, "Das Kollegiatstift Allerheiligen in Wittenberg," in *Das Bistum Brandenburg II, Germania Sacra I, III/II*, ed. F. Büniger and G. Wentz (Berlin, 1941), 75–164, at 82–83. For the *Wittenberger Heiltumsbuch*, see L. Cárdenas, *Friedrich der Weise und das Wittenberger Heiltumsbuch. Mediale Repräsentation zwischen Mittelalter und Neuzeit* (Berlin, 2002).
71. On the dates and the amount of indulgences, see H. Kühne, "Heiltumsweisungen: Reliquien—Ablaß—Herrschaft: Neufunde und Problemstellungen," *Jahrbuch für Volkskunde* n.s. 26 (2003): 42–62, at 61; Cárdenas, *Friedrich der Weise* (2002, cited in n. 70), 111; P. Kalkoff, *Ablaß und Reliquienverehrung an der Schloßkirche von Wittenberg unter Friedrich dem Weisen* (Gotha, 1907), 65.
72. From his journey to the Holy Land, Frederick brought back a number of holy souvenirs, including coins that had been brought into contact with holy sites, water from the river Jordan, and a thumb of St. Anne, which he had acquired at Rhodes. In 1502, Frederick received another thumb, that of St. Corona, from his aunt Hedwig, abbess of Quedlinburg. I. Ludolph, *Friedrich der Weise: Kurfürst von Sachsen 1463–1525* (Göttingen, 1984), 355–56, with further literature.
73. On Frederick's "relic hunters," see S. Laube, "Zwischen Hybris und Hybridität. Kurfürst Friedrich der Weise und seine Reliquiensammlung," in Tacke, ed., *Ich armer sundiger mensch* (2006, cited in n. 68), 170–207, at 182, with further literature. See also E. Bünz, "Zur Geschichte des Wittenberger Heiltums: Johannes Nuhn als Reliquienjäger in Helmarshausen und Hersfeld," *Zeitschrift des Vereins für Thüringische Geschichte* 52 (1998): 135–58; E. Bünz, "Die Heiltumssammlung des Degenhart Pfeffinger," in Tacke, ed., *Ich armer sundiger mensch* (2006, cited in n. 68), 125–69.
74. U. Timann, "Bemerkungen zum Halleschen Heiltum," in *Der Kardinal: Albrecht von Brandenburg, Renaissancefürst und Mäzen*, ed. T. Schauerte and A. Tacke, exh. cat., Halle: Stiftung Moritzburg, Kunstmuseum des Landes Sachsen-Anhalt, 2 vols. (Regensburg, 2006), 2:255–83.
75. K. Merkel, "Die Reliquien von Halle und Wittenberg. Ihre Heiltumsbücher und Inszenierung" in *Cranach: Meisterwerke auf Vorrat. Die Erlanger Handzeichnungen in der Universitätsbibliothek*, ed. A. Tacke (Erlangen, 1994), 37–50.
76. L. Cárdenas, "Albrecht von Brandenburg—Herrschaft und Heilige. Fürstliche Repräsentation im Medium des Heiltumsbuches," in Tacke, ed., *Ich armer sundiger mensch* (2006, cited in n. 68).
77. Ludolph, *Friedrich der Weise* (1984, cited in n. 72), 454.
78. H. Kohlhaussen, "Fatimidischer Glasschnitt, 11. Jahrhundert. Hedwigsglas," in *Kunstwerke der Welt aus dem öffentlichen bayerischen Kunstbesitz*, 6 vols., ed. R. Netzer (Munich, 1960–66), 2:49–50.
79. See H.J. Schroeder, trans., *Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent* (Rockford, 1978), 215–17.
80. On the "rediscovery" of the Roman catacombs, see most recently I. Oryshkevich, "The History of the Roman Catacombs from the Age of Constantine to the Renaissance" (Ph.D. diss., New York, Columbia University, 2003). For medieval visitations of the catacombs, see J. Osborne, "The Roman Catacombs in the Middle Ages," *Papers of the British School in Rome* 53 (1985): 278–328. For an overview history, see W.H.C. Frend, *The Archaeology of Early Christianity: A History* (London, 1996), 1–40.