

Jerzy Pysiak

# The King and the Crown of Thorns

Kingship and the Cult of Relics in Capetian France



PETER LANG

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In 1239, king Louis IX of France performed the translation of the Crown of Thorns from Constantinople to Paris. The translation celebrations became a splendid religious festivity showing sacral foundations of Saint Louis's authority and the Capetian kingship. However, the translation of the Crown of Thorns to France had already a history under Louis's reign: French hagiographers and

chroniclers affirmed that the first relics of the Crown of Thorns from Constantinople were transferred to Aachen by Charlemagne, then to Saint-Denis Abbey by Charles the Bald. The book discusses Saint Louis's translation of the Crown of Thorns as seen on the background of both Carolingian historical memory in Capetian era and Carolingian and Capetian tradition of the royal cult of relics.

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Translated by Sylwia Twardo



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## Introduction

In 1239, the king of France, Louis IX (r. 1226–1270), brought the Crown of Thorns to Paris and, in 1241–1242, the Holy Cross and many other valuable relics of the Passion. All the relics came from the imperial treasury in Constantinople. All the three translations became splendid religious festivities revealing the sacral foundations of the power of Louis IX and the Capetian dynasty in general. The Passion relics had been interpreted by Christians as the insignia of Christ's royal dignity from the early Christian era. Therefore, their possession by an earthly king could be considered an act of special grace bestowed by God upon the sovereign and his realm. The king as Lord's anointed, who already during the ritual of anointing – modeled after the Biblical one – shared in the royalty of Christ, venerating the Crown of the True King and the Anointed One, and in this very evident way showed that the monarchy has a truly divine origin and he himself resembles Christ. This message was conveyed by a series of symbolic acts: public liturgical rites and gestures of the participating king, justified by the liturgical forms and texts explaining and commenting it, which were readily preserved by the chronicles and artists.

However, the Crown of Thorns had not always been one of the most important Passion relic. During the first millennium, it was seldom mentioned. After the Gospel, the next known mention was made by Paulinus of Nola, in his recounting of the pilgrimage to the Holy Land in ca. 400. The next mention comes from the anonymous pilgrim's account from ca. 570, according to which the Crown was placed in Saint Zion Basilica in Jerusalem. In 680, the Frankish bishop Arculf allegedly visited it in Jerusalem. If this was the case, it would mean that the relic had not been transferred together with the Holy Cross and other Passion relics by the emperor Heraclius to Constantinople in 635. Between the seventh and the eleventh century, there is no mention of the Crown of Thorns as a venerated relic, although its particles were circulating across Byzantine and Latin Europe: single thorns were embedded in *staurothekes*, mentioned as found in the collections of relics or as precious gifts. However, no Byzantine source confirms that the Crown of Thorns was stored in the imperial palace in Constantinople together with the other Passion relics; especially significant in this respect is the fact that no mention of the Crown is made in *De ceremoniis aulae Byzantinae* attributed to emperor Constantine VII Porphyrogenetos (r. 913–959), which lists Christ's relics owned by the emperor.

Then, at the end of the first half of the eleventh century, in Capetian France, in the Abbey of Saint-Denis, there appeared a hagiographic

apocryphon recounting how Charlemagne set out to aid the Holy Land invaded by the Saracens and, having freed Jerusalem, was given as a sign of gratitude for saving the Eastern Christianity the relics of the Passion, including thorns from the Crown of Thorns. Charlemagne translated it to Aachen, the capital of the Kingdom of the Franks and then established there an annual festivity in its honour during which the relics were exhibited to the people (*Indictum*). Several decades later, his grandson, Charles the Bald, after becoming king, moved the Crown of Thorns from Aachen to the Abbey of Saint-Denis and revived the festivity already forgotten in the old capital. Abbot Suger of Saint-Denis testifies in his memoirs that at the end of the eleventh century the public demonstration of these relics attracted large crowds of pilgrims to the Abbey, and it is known that since the turn of the eleventh and twelfth centuries a great fair of Saint-Denis used to open every year, with blessings administered with these very relics. The Saint-Denis fair used to be called *L'Endit*, which is an Old French version of *Indictum*. The legend recounting Charlemagne's expedition to the Holy Land against the Saracens and the translation of the Crown of Thorns (and the nail of the True Cross) to Saint-Denis is called after its first words *Descriptio qualiter Clavum Karolus Magnus et Corona and Constantinopoli Aquisgrani detulerit qualiterque Karolus calvus haec ad Sanctum Dionysium retulerit*, or *Iter Hierosolimitanum Caroli Magni*. The legend appeared almost simultaneously with another account about Charlemagne, also bearing traits of a historical myth, concerning the emperor's expedition against the Saracens in Spain, which quickly gained prestige and influence, becoming for many generations part of the Western European – but especially French – canon of knowledge about the past, referred to in the twelfth and thirteenth universal chronicles, epic poetry, and their prose adaptations. From the times of Louis VI (r. 1108–1137), the Capetian kings used to venerate the Crown of Thorns relics stored in Saint-Denis, regarding them as the main title to the glory and spiritual importance of the Abbey – besides the tomb of Saint Denis – considered to be the ecclesiastical capital of the kingdom. Thus, during the reign of Saint Louis it was commonly known that Charlemagne performed the translation of the Crown of Thorns relics from Constantinople and Saint Louis certainly made use of that knowledge.

However, the translations from 1239–1242 were the result of unforeseen and unforeseeable circumstances. The king of France could not have anticipated the dire military and financial troubles which the Latin Eastern Empire – established by the Crusaders in 1204 – had to face. They forced the emperor Baldwin II and his barons to pawn the Passion relics, stored in the Constantinople treasury, and urgently seek assistance in the West. But when the opportunity to acquire the most precious relics of Christianity unexpectedly arose, Louis IX not only took advantage of it but also – which

will be shown below – did everything he could to shape his times following the model of the apocryphal past and present himself as an imitator of Charlemagne who carries the signs of the Passion of Christ from the East to the West. Soon after the translation, Louis IX set out to aid Jerusalem which, also in his times, was under Saracen rule.

Thus, the main theme of this book is the mutual relationship between two apparently different problems in the history of the medieval kingdom of France: the eleventh-century apocryphal legend of the Carolingian translation of the Crown of Thorns to the Frankish kingdom with its reception in the twelfth- and thirteenth-century writings, and the reconstruction of the actual Capetian cult of relics. In our view, these two phenomena of Capetian spiritual and political culture were connected and – between the eleventh and thirteenth centuries – laid the religious and ideological foundation for the Capetian monarchy.

The first part of the book presents an analysis of the apocryphal Carolingian story of the Crown of Thorns – as it emerged in the mid-eleventh century in the Abbey of Saint-Denis – in order to reconstruct its role in the Capetian literary French culture and the prominence it gained abroad. Equally important is the attempt at finding the sources of this astonishing apocryphon, which is part of a broader cultural phenomenon of the eleventh- and twelfth-century Latin Europe, which may be called ‘the second Carolingian renaissance.’ That is, the longing of Capetian elites for a Carolingian past that was albeit completely reconstructed, thus producing the historical myth of Charlemagne that proved to be more attractive than his actual life story. Inspired possibly by Otto III’s personal fascination with Charlemagne and the idea of *Imperium christianum*, the myth of Charlemagne was initially shaped in the monastic scriptoria of the tenth and eleventh century which, in the times of the struggle with unrest and crisis of the public authority, along with the perceptible threat of Islam, showed the person and legend of Charlemagne as the embodiment of the desired order. The image of Charlemagne’s rule created at that time presented the new institutional and social order a return to which was advocated. Like the slightly earlier *Pax Dei* and *Treuga Dei*, which were to replace the non-existent or not functioning institutions of the public authority, the myth of Charlemagne was meant to play the same part in the world of ideas. The stories and epic poems about Charlemagne’s victories over the Saracens stressed the current need for an expedition against the Saracens. By reconstructing the history of their Abbey – using a legendary Carolingian foundation or the translation of the relics of Christ – the local monks wished to restore in this way the right order of the world in which their monastery was to regain its due status in the kingdom thanks to the foundation myth. Thus, the monastic narrations from Charroux,

Saint-Denis, or Compiègne created an ideal image of the monarch's rule: an ideal king who not only respected and protected the venerable monasteries but also revered the relics, especially the Passion's ones. The success of these legends was naturally a function of the importance of each of the monasteries for the monarchy, in which it originated: in the past, contemporarily and in the future; of its proximity to or distance from the centre of government and of the real power that the monarchy had at its disposal. In the case of Saint-Denis, the seed fell on good soil: from the turn of the eleventh and twelfth century, after several decades ineffective reigns in the preceding century, the Capetians began to consolidate their state and – possibly owing to the 'second Carolingian renaissance' – successfully refer to their Carolingian heritage. The success of *Descriptio qualiter* resulted also from the announcement and success of the First Crusade, whose promoters may have viewed Charlemagne as the archetypical crusader. Therefore, it is *Iter Hierosolimitanum* written in Saint-Denis that was to play – together with the Pseudo-Turpin's Chronicle – a pivotal part among the monastic legends related to Charlemagne. To assess how much this topic influenced the elites of the Capetian monarchy, we will not only assess what place it occupied among the other pseudo-Carolingian monastic narrations – from Reichenau, Monte Soratte, and Charroux – but also its connections with Pseudo-Turpin's chronicle and its reception in the diplomatic sources, chronicles, historical, and hagiographical compilations from the twelfth and thirteenth century; not to mention the iconography of that epoch: the stained glass from Saint-Denis Abbey and from Chartres cathedral. This will allow us to show that Louis IX and his contemporaries must have associated the 1239 translation of the Crown of Thorns with Charlemagne, hence Louis IX consciously referred to that model.

However, the translation of 1239 are not a lonely flower that have grown in a fallow. Like the other Christian kings, the Capetians had for a long time venerated the saints and relics, following the example of the legendary and semi-legendary acts of piety of the Christian Roman emperors. The act of translation – a liturgical ritual of transferring the relic to a new cult place – appears in the descriptions of how the True Cross was found by Saint Helena and deposited in the basilicas in Jerusalem, Constantinople, and Rome, and of how it was ceremonially introduced in Jerusalem by emperor Heraclius, and became an inalienable part of the cult of the relics. The Exaltation of the Holy Cross by Heraclius (629) was compared to the introduction to Jerusalem of the Ark of the Covenant by David and Christ's entry to Jerusalem. The fact that the Christian emperors of Rome participated in these rituals was the best proof for those who wanted to implement the idea of *renovatio Imperii* of the Carolingian kings that the active participation of a king or emperor in the translation is his right or even duty.



Similarly, already in the Merovingian times, the Frankish kings sought to imitate the Byzantine emperors as collectors of relics, like all other monarchs of the romanised Barbarian kingdoms. The Carolingians followed this example as well. The second part of the book will show how the new – usurpation-based – Capetian dynasty was to refer to the existing forms of the cult of saints and relics in order to legitimate their authority.

A very important aspect of the Capetian cult of relics is, as it seems, its relative variability of the forms of worship, its objects; that is, the venerated saints and relics, but also the sovereign's involvement in the liturgical rituals. We will study the formal evolution of the Capetian cult of saints and relics in the eleventh and twelfth centuries especially by examining narrative – hagiographical and chronicle – and diplomatic sources. We will show that similarly to the monastic legends connected with the cult of relics in the preceding century, beginning with the twelfth century, the Capetian cult of relics brought about the reconstruction of the Carolingian past, a reconstruction in which completely new forms were created and 'dressed' in an old historical costume. This happened in the case of the ancient cult of Saint Denis, permeated with new meanings in the early twelfth century in the times of Louis VI and the abbot of Saint-Denis, Suger. Despite changes or innovations in the ritual, these meanings survived until the end of the Capetingians and even longer. Moreover, the twelfth century saw a return to Carolingian practices, forgotten for a hundred years after the death of Robert the Pious, namely king's physical and personal contact with the relics. Interestingly, initially overshadowed by the cult of Saint Denis – the personal patron saint of the king and kingdom – also in the twelfth century do we observe the gradually increasing cult of the Passion relics of the Saint-Denis Abbey brought, according to the apocryphal *Descriptio qualiter* from Constantinople by Charlemagne. The Passion relics were seen, following Saint John the Evangelist, as Christ's royal insignia. So, in the twelfth-century Capetian France, there appeared a reliquary for a thorn from the Crown of Thorns, which will have the shape of a royal diadem which was called the Holy Crown until the end of the Middle Ages.

This is the background on which Saint Louis's translation of the Crown of Thorns and its ideological meaning given to it by the king and his contemporaries will be reconstructed with the use of narrative and liturgical sources. The aim of the reconstruction is to show both the unique features of the new cult and the ones taken over from the old forms, and in particular to prove that – although it was a result of the unexpected coincidence favorable to Saint Louis – the 1239 translation of the Crown of Thorns and its subsequent royal cult (as shaped by Louis IX) became a synthesis of two themes, both very important for building the ideological

foundations of the Capetian monarchy: the legendary Carolingian translation and the religious rituals related to the relic shaped by the Capetians in the twelfth century.

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I dedicate this book to my Master, Professor Henryk Samsonowicz, in the year of his nineteenth birthday.

Warsaw, August 2020



## Part 1: Prehistory of the Translation of the Crown of Thorns to France: Saint-Denis Abbey and the Carolingian Legend of the Translation of the Holy Crown of Thorns

In Capetian France the Passion relics were venerated even before Saint Louis's reign. They comprised the relics of the Crown of Thorns and the Nail of the Holy Cross kept in the Abbey of Saint Denis from the eleventh century. It is known that Saint Louis (Louis IX) greatly venerated these relics. The loss of the Nail of the Cross and its miraculous rediscovery in 1232 were a dramatic experience for Saint Louis.<sup>1</sup> What is important, Saint Louis must have known the Saint-Denis hagiographic legend of the Passion relics according to which Charlemagne had freed the Holy Land from the Saracens and translated the Passion relics from Constantinople to Aachen, from which they were said to have been moved to Saint-Denis by Charles the Bald. We will try to prove that this legend played a crucial part in shaping the cult of the Crown of Thorns by Saint Louis, so an analysis of its meaning is important not only for the interpretation of the sacral and theological policy of Louis IX but – as I will prove later – for the reinterpretation of the ideological program of his reign.

Moreover, this legend had a large impact on the later chronicle writing, hagiographical literature, and epic writing in France, Germany, Italy, England, and even Scandinavia. Thus, it is necessary to analyze it in detail, which I do below.

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1 LE GOFF, *Saint Louis*, pp. 124–127 (abbreviations are explained in the *Bibliography*); cf. GUILLAUME DE NANGIS, *Gesta sancti Ludovici / Vie de Saint Louis*, pp. 320–326 (Latin and French versions).



# Chapter 1. The Founding Narratives on the Translation of the Crown of Thorns from Constantinople to the Kingdom of the Franks

## 1. *Descriptio qualiter Karolus Magnus Clavum et Coronam a Constantinopoli Aquisgrani detulerit qualiterque Karolus Calvus haec ad Sanctum Dionysium retulerit*

The hagiographic legend describing the first translation of the Crown of Thorns relics to France has been preserved in several slightly different manuscript versions. The earliest one has been found in a manuscript from the late eleventh century or the first decades of the twelfth century,<sup>1</sup> which is a compilation of hagiographic texts – mostly the *Lives* of the saints-called *Clavi et corone Domini descriptio, quomodo prima a Karolo magno eorum fuerit ad Aquile capellam delatio, secunda vero a Karolo calvo in ecclesia beati Dyonisii Ariopagitae relatio*.<sup>2</sup> It comes from the Saint-Ouen Abbey in Rouen. If we assume it is the earliest manuscript, then it must be a copy of the Saint-Denis version. The second manuscript, slightly later or contemporary to the Norman one, is a twelfth-century historical compilation written at the Saint-Denis Abbey.<sup>3</sup> It is sometimes (wrongly) called *Descriptio clavi et corone Domini*,<sup>4</sup> even though the incipit in the manuscript has a different

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1 The manuscript from ca. 1100 – MAZARINE, Ms. 1711, fol. 2r<sup>o</sup>-9v<sup>o</sup>, 11r<sup>o</sup>-16r<sup>o</sup>. Cf. BROWN, COTHREN, *The Twelfth-Century Crusading Window of the Abbey of Saint-Denis*, pp. 1–40, here, p. 14, no 63. The description of the manuscript can be found on the website of Calames (<http://www.calames.abes.fr/pub/#details?id=MAZB11603#culture=fr>; April 23, 2020).

2 Its edition was prepared more than thirty years ago by Marc du Pouget in the *École des chartes* Marc du Pouget: POUGET, *Recherches sur les chroniques latines de Saint-Denis. Édition critique de la Descriptio clavi et corone Domini*. I cannot refer to this unpublished edition, as I did not receive access to it at the Bibliothèque de École des chartes.

3 BnF, Ms. Latin 12710; cf. SPIEGEL, *The Chronicle Tradition of Saint-Denis*, pp. 41–44. This manuscript, not being an uniform narrative but a compilation of various texts relating to the history of the Kingdom of the Franks and Saint-Denis Abbey, has been deceptively named *Nova Gesta Francorum* since the 19th century (Jules Lair).

4 See POUGET, *Recherches sur les chroniques latines de Saint-Denis. Édition critique de la Descriptio clavi et corone Domini*.

wording:<sup>5</sup> *Descriptio qualiter Karolus Magnus Clavum et Coronam a Constantinopoli Aquisgrani detulerit qualiterque Karolus Calvus hæc ad Sanctum Dionysium retulerit*. The manuscript was published by Gerhard Rauschen<sup>6</sup> (the Parisian manuscript P+P<sub>2</sub>),<sup>7</sup> who included in it the variants from the fifteenth century Vienna manuscript (V).<sup>8</sup> A later version of the manuscript dated for the first half of the thirteenth century and stored in Montpellier<sup>9</sup> was published by Ferdinand Castets under the title *Iter Hierosolimitanum*.<sup>10</sup> The other preserved manuscripts are: a manuscript from Rouen (R), earlier than that from Montpellier, but unpublished, found in the manuscript written down in the twelfth and at the turn of the twelfth and thirteenth century in the Jumièges Abbey;<sup>11</sup> the unpublished Parisian manuscript P<sub>3</sub> written in Saint-Denis in the fourteenth century;<sup>12</sup> and manuscript K, that is the contents of the second book of the Life of Saint Charlemagne (*De sanctitate Karoli Magni*)<sup>13</sup> written in ca. 1165.<sup>14</sup>

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5 CASTETS, *Iter Hierosolymitanum*, p. 426; RAUSCHEN, *Die Legende Karl des Grossen*, p. 103.

6 *DESCRIPTIO QUALITER*, ed: RAUSCHEN, *Die Legende Karl des Grossen*, p. 103–125.

7 The account P<sub>2</sub> is made up from the marginal glosses in Ms. P.

8 ÖNB, Cod. 3398.

9 MONTPELLIER, FACULTÉ de MÉDECINE, Ms. H.280.

10 *ITER HIEROSOLIMITANUM*, ed: CASTETS, pp. 439–474, in: CASTETS, *Iter Hierosolymitanum*, pp. 417–487. The critical apparatus used by Ferdinand Castets cannot be considered reliable: the variants from other manuscripts are scant and the editor himself admits that he only browsed the BnF, Ms. Latin 12710 (P and P2).

11 ROUEN, BM, Ms. Y.11.

12 BnF, Ms. Latin 2447.

13 *DE SANCTITATE KAROLI MAGNI*, pp. 17–93. Book II of *De sanctitate* is a faithful but only partial repetition of the *Descriptio* (it lacks the last part about Charles the Bald and the Abbey of Saint-Denis, see below) with minimal differences. It has been considered as the earliest known manuscript and it is dated to the third or fourth quarter of the twelfth century, and thus to the same time when the life was written. It can be found in: BnF, Ms. Latin 17656. On the manuscript of *De sanctitate* stored in the National Library in Warsaw see KALISZUK, *De sanctitate meritorum*, pp. 196–214.

14 The detailed discussion of all the manuscripts in: NOTHOMB, *Manuscripts et recensions de l'Iter Hierosolymitanum*, pp. 191–211. Recently on the subject: PYSIAK, *Z legendarnej historii Karola Wielkiego*, pp. 231–252.



## The Content and Dating of *Descriptio*<sup>15</sup>

*Descriptio* begins with a statement that at the time when emperor Charlemagne ruled in the Kingdom of Gaul, the Church had to face numerous adversities. However, being highly devout to the faith and doctrine, Charlemagne took great care of his subjects in order to ensure peace for the Church. He subjected the neighboring peoples to his rule and subordinated them to the Church – by giving them new rights or through war – for he always won his battles, thanks to God’s help. As the fame of his righteousness, piety and power became known around the world, the Romans, impressed (even terrified) by Charlemagne’s tremendous power, offered him the Roman Empire and even the right to elect the pope. At the same time, the pagans invaded the Christians in the Holy Land. Exiled from his capital, the patriarch of Jerusalem went to Constantinople to ask for help, where with tears in his eyes he told the emperors Leo and Constantine about the destruction of the Holy Land, its fields, towns, and castles, about the profanation of the Holy Sepulchre, about the killing or imprisoning of many believers in Christ. As Charlemagne’s fame had already reached the Eastern Christians, they sent to the emperor of the West an envoy composed of two Christians: David, the archpresbyter of Jerusalem, and the priest John of Neapolis (i.e. Nablus, Nābulus), whose task was to deliver to Charlemagne a letter written by the patriarch on his own and emperor Constantine’s behalf, signed by the latter. They were sent along with two Hebrews: Isaack, learned in law, and Samuel, a Jewish high priest, who delivered a second letter, written personally by emperor Constantine. The *Descriptio* quotes both letters: the patriarch’s, in Latin, and Constantine’s (written with the emperor’s own hand), an alleged translation from Hebrew (the author makes pseudo-Hebrew citations). Besides the letters, the envoys brought Charlemagne rich gifts from the patriarch and emperor.

In his alleged letter, the patriarch of Jerusalem complains that the pagans dispossessed him of Saint James’s throne, desecrated the Holy Sepulchre, and killed many Christians. He asks Charlemagne – greeting him as the invincible Caesar and always Augustus – to help the oppressed Church of Jerusalem and convey its cry for help to the bishops of the West. Finally, the patriarch evokes the Judgment Day, when God is going to punish those who were tardy in avenging the offences of the pagans against the Tomb of He who, having become a man, remained in that Tomb for three days to rise again. Emperor Constantine and Leo, his son and co-ruler, also appeal to Charlemagne for military aid, adding that they defeated the pagans by

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15 For more recent works on the subject of *Descriptio qualiter*, see MERCURI, *Corona di Cristo, corona di re*, pp. 51–83.

attacking Jerusalem more than once but this time by God's decree, the Holy City should be liberated by the emperor of the West. It has been proved by a miraculous vision Constantine had one night when he was thinking of how to save Jerusalem and asked God for help. Immersed in prayer ecstasy, Constantine saw a youth who conveyed him God's ruling in a melodious voice: Constantine was to accept the help of Charlemagne, who is the emperor and king of Gaul, and a warrior making God's peace in God's name. Then, the youth showed Constantine a figure of a knight wearing a breastplate and shin guards, wielding a sword with a scarlet hilt, a red shield, a white lance with a flaming head, and holding a golden helmet in his hand. The knight was an old man with a long beard and grey hair, a beautiful face and posture, and his eyes shone like stars. The vision of the knight was for emperor Constantine a sure sign that the revelation he had just experienced was sent to him by God. Thus, knowing Charlemagne as an eager promoter of peace, Constantine appeals to Charlemagne to stop the shedding of the Christian blood and to fulfil the God-given task of saving the Holy Land and Jerusalem. Then, the belt of justice will gird his loins forever, the crown will rest on his head, and the Lord will crown him with glory.

Having arrived in Gaul, the envoys visited Paris, Reims, and Saint-Denis, before they succeeded to get an audience with Charlemagne, who had just returned from a military expedition to Auvergne. The emperor fell in dismay upon hearing about the pagans' invasion of Jerusalem and the Holy Sepulchre but rejoiced upon learning that God had selected him to free the Holy Land. Next, he summoned archbishop Turpin to explain the content of the letters of the patriarch of Jerusalem and emperor of Constantinople to all the mighty of his kingdom, who immediately pledged that they would go with Charlemagne to free the Holy Sepulchre. Having heard the barons' acclamation, Charlemagne ordered to make an announcement in the whole Empire that all men able to carry weapons, old and young, are obliged to follow him against the pagans. Those who will not aid Jerusalem would, together with their male descendants, have to pay a humiliating tribute of four denarii a year, as if they were serfs.<sup>16</sup> As a result, the largest known military expedition was assembled, which soon set off to the East.

Two days away from Jerusalem, Charlemagne's army lost its way in a forest inhabited by griffins, bears, lions, lynxes, tigers, and other blood-thirsty beasts eager to shed the human blood. At night, the emperor began

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16 "ipse in vita sua et filii eius similiter ex regis decreto quattuor nummos de capite quasi servi solverent;" *DESCRIPTIO QUALITER*, p. 108.

to sing the psalms:<sup>17</sup> “Deduc me, Domine, in semitam mandatorum tuorum quia ipsam volui,”<sup>18</sup> and then, “Educ de carcere animam meam Domine; ut confiteatur nomini tuo.”<sup>19</sup> Charlemagne’s prayer was answered by a swan, and the Franks and the inhabitants of the Holy Land considered it as a miraculous event, for this bird had never been heard to sing in a way understandable for humans: Greeks used to know birds that greeted the Byzantine emperor with human voices, yet they did it in Greek, not in Latin. According to the author of the *Descriptio*, the use of Latin by the birds inhabiting the Jerusalem forest was a sure sign that they were sent by the Lord to guide Charlemagne and his army out of the forest, which the emperor had prayed for with the use of the words of the Psalm. The author adds that also in his times pilgrims and peasants who live in this land said that the swans in that forest still sang, showing the lost pilgrims how to find the way. Having returned back on the right track, thanks to the swans singing in Latin, Charlemagne arrived in Constantinople (*sic!*), defeated the pagans, entered Jerusalem, and returned the throne of Saint James the Apostle to the patriarch. The story contains a clear inconsistency as to the towns in which Charlemagne stayed: the initial narration suggests that the events with the swan took place in Jerusalem, but then Charlemagne evidently enters to Constantinople. This is indicated in the incipit itself, according to which the translation of the relics was made from Constantinople (not from Jerusalem) to Aachen and then to Saint-Denis. Slightly later on in the text the author talks about Charlemagne’s return to France from Constantinople, not Jerusalem.<sup>20</sup>

Having done the task assigned by God, Charlemagne intended to immediately return to Paris, but Constantine wanted to shower the Emperor of the West with gifts: he gave him precious colorful clothes, jewels, exotic birds and quadrupeds. Charlemagne did not accept any of these gifts, believing that it was not decent to receive an earthly reward for liberating the Holy Lands. He did not want to be accused that his expedition was not an act of piety but was inspired by greed for new lands or riches. Hence, Charlemagne announced again his intention to return to France, but the emperor of Byzantium still would not let him leave until he expressed a wish

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17 “Sciebat enim litteras;” as specified by the author; *DESCRIPTIO QUALITER*, p. 109.

18 “Lead me in the path of your commandments, for I delight in it;” Psalm 118(119):35.

19 “Bring me out of prison, that I may give thanks to your name!;” Psalm 141(142):8.

20 “At ut pretermittam, in itinere que a Constantinopoli usque perdurato facta sunt, quod hic dei virtute operatrice gestum est, quam verissime potero paucis elicere conabor;” *DESCRIPTIO QUALITER*, p. 118.

that Constantine could make true. Thus, Charlemagne asked Constantine for Passion relics to bring home, so that those of Charlemagne's subjects who had not gone on the pilgrimage to Jerusalem could also see them and make their hearts repent. Constantine called archbishops, bishops, abbots, monks, and barons to learn where the relics were, as he himself did not know where Saint Helena had deposited them. This clearly indicates that the Passion relics were not duly venerated in the East. The clergy knew where the treasury with the Passion relics was, but the fact that the emperor did not is quite surprising.

The holy men advised Charlemagne to prepare for the *inventio* of the relics with a three-day fast. Twelve selected men, who were considered deserving to open the treasury with the relics, were purified in this way. In the set time, the two emperors arrived at the site. In a gesture of prostration, Charlemagne immediately made a confession to archbishop Ebrouin – even though he had done it already at the beginning of the three-day penitential ritual – and ordered his companions to do the same. Both monks and secular priests attending the ceremony began to sing psalms with litanies.

Next, archbishop Daniel of Neapolis opened the reliquary containing the Crown of Thorns. All those present could smell the miraculous scent resembling the ever-blossoming gardens of Paradise: *odor sanctitatis*. Kneeling, Charlemagne said a prayer asking God to allow him to take to France a part of the Passion relics in order to show them to his subjects. The emperor humbly asked God to confirm by miracles the authenticity of the relics so that no sceptic could question their authenticity. In response to this prayer a miraculous mist fell from Heaven on the Crown making its branches and thorns blossom, then the blossoms emitted a marvelous scent. The phenomenon was accompanied with such brightness that those present felt like in Heaven, and all the sick who witnessed it became healed. To celebrate this great miracle, Charlemagne began to sing the psalms and the clergy intoned *Te Deum laudamus*. The wreath of thorns covered with leaves and archbishop Daniel began to cut off the thorns for Charlemagne, one by one. Reluctant to see the miraculously blossoming flowers fall to the ground, where they could have been trampled by the growing crowd of people attracted by the miraculous smell, Charlemagne picked up the blossom and, together with the thorns, wrapped them in a precious fabric and put them into his gloves, which he handed to archbishop Ebrouin. Possibly because of the tears of emotion that blinded the eyes of the two men, their hands did not meet and the gloves containing the holy treasures levitated for an hour. When the emperor decided to take the holy objects out from the gloves, fearing that such a place for storing the relics would not please God, it turned out that the miraculous blossoms became manna which, as the hagiographer adds, together with the manna sent to the Israelis on the

desert, is still stored with the relics of the Crown of Thorns in the Abbey of Saint-Denis. After having sung several psalms with the Emperor and the people, archbishop Daniel returned to the relics of the Passion and handed Charlemagne a nail from the Holy Cross; at that instant, there also appeared a beautiful scent. The scent surrounded the whole town, attracting more and more faithful. Among them were many ill and disabled. Owing to the *virtus* of the Crown of Thorns and the nail from the Holy Cross, all of them were miraculously healed. The clergy sang *Te Deum laudamus* again, Charlemagne prayed, interlacing the psalms with words of joy for having obtained the relics: “da michi intellectum, ut discam mandata tua, que tuis servulis, videlicet meis compatriotis, ostendendo memoria tue passionis et penarum nos liberantium plenissime valeam edisserere;” “quoniam qui timent te videbunt me et letabuntur, quia in verba tua supersperavi.”

After having accomplished all these sublime liturgical ceremonies, Charlemagne returned to France with the following relics hidden in a pouch made of buffalo leather suspended from his neck: a branch of the Crown of Thorns with eight thorns, a Holy Nail and a piece of the Holy Cross, the Lord’s Shroud, Our Lady’s gown, the swaddling clothes of Jesus Child, the arm of Saint Simeon, and many other relics, mentioned, but not named by the author. During his journey to France, especially in the *Ligmedon* castle, there were many healings, and even a resurrection of a deceased young man.

Having arrived in Aachen, Charlemagne ordered to build a magnificent church to deposit the relics, where there happened many more miraculous healings. The emperor sent envoys almost all over the world to spread the news that the populace of the West should arrive to Aachen on the Ides (15th) of June to see the holy relics, which the emperor had brought from Jerusalem and Constantinople.

Countless numbers of the faithful arrived on that day. Following the emperor’s order, all of them had made their confessions earlier. Then, Charlemagne accompanied by archbishops, bishops, abbots, and learned priests climbed a hill near the imperial palace and showed the relics to the populace, in other words, conducted the ritual of *ostensio reliquiarum* known in medieval liturgy. The accompanying clergymen announced to the faithful that the *ostensio* of the Crown of Thorns, the Holy Nail from the True Cross, the Holy Wood, the Holy Shroud, and other relics – henceforth called *Indictum* – will take place every year, always in the second week of June, on the Friday during the summer quarterly fast. After confession, everyone who would take part in the *Indictum* would be granted by pope Leo III, and almost all Charlemagne’s bishops and abbots, indulgences exempting them from up to as much as one third of their Purgatory penance.

After Charlemagne's death, especially during the civil wars among his grandsons, the pious and lofty ritual was forgotten. Finally, one of his grandsons, Charles the Bald, unified four kingdoms and won the emperor's crown. Then, he took the Crown of Thorns, the Holy Nail of the Holy Cross, and the Holy Shroud away from his grandfather's palace in Aachen.

Like his glorious grandfather, Charles the Bald cared greatly about the well-being of the Church. He exceeded all his predecessors and successors in his generosity for the monasteries. He extended it especially to two monasteries: the Saint-Denis Abbey and the Abbey of Our Lady in Compiègne.

The Abbey of Our Lady in Compiègne became part of the palace built by Charles the Bald after Constantinople, which he called *Karopolis*.<sup>21</sup> In order to sanctify his capital, Charles, following the example of Constantine the Great and Charlemagne, deposited the Holy Shroud of Christ in the local church. As to the Crown of Thorns, the Holy Nail, the the Holy Wood, and other relics brought by his grandfather from Constantinople, Charles the Bald gave them to the Abbey of Saint-Denis to make up for the looting of its treasures and pay for the war with his elder brothers. Moreover, in 862, Charles in Saint-Denis the annual *ostensio reliquiarum*, *Indictum*. The legitimacy of the translation from Aachen to Saint-Denis was confirmed by God with miracles: in the year of the first *Indictum*, France was rife with hunger and disease, which stopped after the blessing made with the relics.<sup>22</sup>

One of the first researchers studying *Descriptio qualiter*, Gaston Paris, believes that its actual version is a compilation of two separate texts. One of them would be the story of the translation of the Passion relics from Constantinople to Aachen, while the other was the story of translating the Crown of Thorns and the Holy Nail to Saint-Denis and the establishment of the *Indictum*.<sup>23</sup> Such a claim may seem justified, yet already Gerhard Rauschen rightly notes that both threads of *Descriptio* are coherent in their

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21 In the original version and often in contemporary texts: *Karnopolis*.

22 The literature on the *Descriptio qualiter* is very rich; the most important recent works, where the earlier literature is presented, will be successively quoted. FOLZ, *Le souvenir et la légende de Charlemagne dans l'Empire germanique médiéval* is still an excellent classic work; the myth of Charlemagne as a crusader and the *Descriptio qualiter* are discussed there on pp. 134–142, 179–181. See also the most recent studies of the subject, which are, unfortunately, of cursory character and do not exhaust the subject: BOZÓKY, *La politique des reliques de Constantin à Saint Louis*, pp. 135–137; MONTELEONE, *Il viaggio di Carlo Magno in Terra Santa*, pp. 246–278, about the mythographic tradition of Charlemagne as a crusader in the late Middle Ages: pp. 270–274; MERCURI, *Corona di Cristo, corona di re*, pp. 83–96.

23 PARIS, *Histoire poétique de Charlemagne*, pp. 337–344.

ideology: they present the aspirations of the French monarchy to intercept Charlemagne's heritage, consistently calling him *imperator Gallicus* and treating Paris, Saint-Denis, and Reims as the actual capitals of the Frankish Empire. There are also linguistic arguments suggesting that the author was French.<sup>24</sup>

It is not easy to date this text, so very important for the history of the translation and cult of the Crown of Thorns in France. Whereas the *terminus ad quem* does not cause any difficulties, the *terminus post quem* is a subject of an unfinished debate. Most historians agree that the summer quarterly fast (*quatember, quatuor temporum*) observed in the week following the second Sunday in June, mentioned in the text, dates its creation to the years before 1095, because Urban II announced during the synod in Clermont that this fast should be observed during the week after Whitsunday.<sup>25</sup> Joseph Bédier moves *Descriptio's* date of writing to the early twelfth century, claiming that the reality in the text is intentionally made archaic by the author;<sup>26</sup> this claim was convincingly opposed by Léon Levillain.<sup>27</sup> According to Levillain, the most probable *terminus post quem* of writing *Descriptio* is the date of the ceremonial translation of Holy Shroud to Saint-Corneille church in Compiègne (April 3, 1079). During the translation – in which king Philip I took part – the Holy Shroud was placed in a new reliquary, donated by the English queen Matilda, the wife of William the Conqueror.<sup>28</sup> The Abbey of Saint-Corneille, which was part

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24 RAUSCHEN, *Die Legende Karl des Grossen*, pp. 97–98; see MONTELEONE, *Il viaggio di Carlo Magno in Terra Santa*, pp. 247–277; MONTELEONE, „*Ad liberandum populum christianum*”. *Il viaggio di Carlo Magno in Terra Santa*, pp. 145–169, here: pp. 153–154.

25 LEVILLAIN, *Essai sur les origines du Lendit*, pp. 260. MONTELEONE, „*Ad liberandum populum christianum*”. *Il viaggio di Carlo Magno in Terra Santa*, pp. 159, draws attention, however, that Urban II's decision did not produce an immediate reaction: a proof by the letter of Geoffroi de Vendôme to Hildebert de Lavardin, bishop of Le Mans in 1097–1124. During the pontificate of the latter in his diocese the Ember days were observed at the old date; a similar date of the summer fast is also given in the acts of the synod in Oxford 1222(!).

26 BÉDIER, *Les légendes épiques*, vol. IV, pp. 121–129, here: p. 127.

27 LEVILLAIN, *Essai sur les origines du Lendit*, pp. 260–261.

28 There is no evidence for the date of the translation; based on the available sources Léon Levillain determined it as April 3, 1079, which has been generally accepted; cf. LEVILLAIN, *Essai sur les origines du Lendit*, pp. 261–262. About the relic of the Shroud of Christ from Compiègne see MOREL, *Le Saint Suaire de Saint-Corneille de Compiègne* (Morel suggested 1082; MOREL, *Le Saint Suaire de Saint-Corneille de Compiègne*, pp. 21–22). The foundation charter of the Abbey: ACTES DE CHARLES LE CHAUVE, no. 425, pp. 451–453.

of Charles the Bald's palace complex,<sup>29</sup> consecrated in 877 by pope John VIII and dedicated to Our Lady, claimed that the Holy Shroud and the reliquary made of ivory were donated by Charles the Bald. As the author of *Descriptio* claims that Charles gave the Crown of Thorns and the Holy Nail to the Abbey of Saint-Denis in 862, and the Holy Shroud to the monastery in Compiègne,<sup>30</sup> Levillain concludes that *Descriptio* was written under the influence of the Compiègne translation of 1079 and that is why Levillain dates its origin to 1080–1095.<sup>31</sup>

The debate about the time of writing of *Descriptio qualiter* has been recently taken up by Rolf Grosse<sup>32</sup> who sums up the state of research<sup>33</sup> and – basing on the contents of the legend – moves the datation to the turn of the first and second half of the eleventh century. According to him, the story of Charlemagne's reign presented in *Descriptio* – and especially of granting the emperor the right to elect the pope (“pape electionem ipsi prescriperant”) by the Romans – reveals the political reality of Henry III's reign (1039–1056), who dethroned the conflicted popes Benedict IV, Gregory VI and Sylvester III and nominated a new pope, Clement II, at the synod of Sutri in 1046. Grosse also draws attention to the fact that the legend does not contain any allusions to the conflict about the investiture, which he considers impossible in the last quarter of the eleventh century. Taking into account the absence of references to the conflict between the Roman and Constantinople churches in *Descriptio*, which led in 1054 to mutual excommunication and schism, since the image of the emperor and clergy in Constantinople is presented in *Descriptio* in an unquestioningly positive way, Grosse suggests the year 1054 as the *terminus ad quem*.<sup>34</sup> Grosse's claims are entirely hypothetical, but it cannot be otherwise, since

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29 On Charles the Bald's foundation in Compiègne see MICHAŁOWSKI, *The Gniezno Summit*, pp. 119–120, 186, and DIEBOLD, *Nos quoque morem illius imitari cupientes. Charles the Bald's evocation and imitation of Charlemagne*, pp. 271–300; HERREN, *Eriugena's "Aulae siderae", the "Codex aureus", and the Palatine Church of St. Mary at Compiègne*, pp. 593–608; IOGNA-PRAT, *Le culte de la Vierge sous le règne de Charles le Chauve*, pp. 65–98; STAUBACH, *Rex christianus. Hofkultur und Herrschaftspropaganda im Reich Karls des Kahlen*, pp. 270–281; VIEILLARD-TROÏEKOUROFF, *La chapelle du palais de Charles le Chauve*, pp. 89–108.

30 *DESCRIPTIO QUALITER*, pp. 123.

31 LEVILLAIN, *Essai sur les origines du Lendit*, pp. 261–262.

32 GROSSE, *Reliques du Christ et foires de Saint-Denis au XI<sup>e</sup> siècle*, pp. 357–375.

33 GROSSE, *Reliques du Christ et foires de Saint-Denis au XI<sup>e</sup> siècle*, pp. 360–362, esp. fn. 29.

34 For the above and other arguments, see GROSSE, *Reliques du Christ et foires de Saint-Denis au XI<sup>e</sup> siècle*, pp. 362–364.



they had to be based only on the interpretation of the content of the legend; however, it is impossible to falsify them. Nevertheless, the argument about the absence of the Gregorian conflict may inspire some doubt as the Abbey of Saint-Denis was one of the pillars of the French royal power over the Church and, in the last quarter of the eleventh century, it had just become directly dependent on the king again, which was fully accepted by the monastery, as it is interestingly described by Grosse himself.<sup>35</sup> The role the Abbey played in the Capetian monarchy does not justify searching in the translation legend for traces of the Abbey's involvement in the Gregorian conflict, which the abbots of Saint-Denis avoided at all cost. However, the suggested dating to between 1046 and 1054 seems very interesting for other reasons, which I will discuss below.

Establishing the time when the Passion relics first appeared in the Abbey of Saint-Denis is a separate problem. The *terminus ad quem* for the writing of *Descriptio qualiter* clearly indicates that the relics were in the Abbey in the eleventh century and certainly before 1095. The *terminus post quem* is at the same time, evidently, the *terminus ad quem* for the appearance of the Crown of Thorns and the Holy Nail in Saint-Denis. Michel Bur<sup>36</sup> and Françoise Gasparri<sup>37</sup> consider as reliable the information in *Descriptio* that the relics were in fact donated by Charles the Bald, regardless of the fact that Levillain has already proved that this information in *Descriptio* is self-contradictory. According to *Descriptio qualiter*, Charles seized the relics

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35 GROSSE, *Saint-Denis zwischen Adel und König. Die Zeit vor Suger*, especially pp. 19–130; the repetition of the main claims of the paper: GROSSE, *Reliques du Christ et foires de Saint-Denis au XI<sup>e</sup> siècle* (pp. 42–54).

36 BUR, *Saint-Denis*, col. 1145.

37 SUGER, *Oeuvres*, fn. 12, pp. 180. The content of the quoted fn. is rather astounding: without quoting any literature but only an unidentified monk of Saint-Denis from the ninth century, Haymo (the only author from Saint-Denis named Haymo is the author of the *Liber de detectione corporum Macharii Areopagite*, writing, undoubtedly, at the end of the twelfth century – cf. below; from the ninth century we know only Haymo of Auxerre and Haymo of Halberstadt), Gasparri reproduces the history of the Passion relics in the Carolingian age, identifying and places, where the relics were hidden in the ninth century to protect them the Norman invaders (in fact these were translations of the relics of Saint Denis – cf. *TRANSLATIO S. DIONYSII AREOPAGITAE*, pp. 350). Gasparri goes as far as to claim that it was abbot Hilduin (815–840/841) who deposited the Passion relics in the crypt he had founded; however, there is no Carolingian source which informs that either the relics of the Crown of Thorns or the nail of the True Cross were deposited in Saint-Denis; moreover, it is known from the foundation charter issued by Hilduin (cf. below), that the chapel in question was dedicated to Our Lady.

after having taken Aachen and – at the same time – the first *Indictum* in Saint-Denis honouring the Crown of Thorns and the Holy Nail is dated to 862.<sup>38</sup> It is known that Charles the Bald took Aachen in 869, thus there are no reasons to believe that *Descriptio* presents true information. When dating the translation of the Crown of Thorns to Saint-Denis to the ninth century, neither Gasparri nor Bur, nor Donatella Nebbiai dalla Guarda – who believes that *Descriptio* was written in the ninth century<sup>39</sup> – support their claims with sources external to *Descriptio* or subject literature, so I consider their opinions as groundless and rejected.

Mainly interested in determining when the *Lendit* fairs first took place – whose name derives from the *ostensio* of the Passion relics “Indictum” (“reliquiarum”) and “L’Endit”<sup>40</sup> – Léon Levillain draws attention to the source describing the *ostensio* of the bodies of Saint Denis, Rusticus, and Eleutherius, conducted on June 9, 1053, called *Liber de detectione corporum Macharii Areopagite Dionysii sociorumque eius*, written by Haymo, a monk of Saint-Denis<sup>41</sup> – hence called *Liber Haymonis* – who was active in the late twelfth century, but based on a charter supposedly drawn up when these relics were exposed in public view in 1053.<sup>42</sup> In the ca. mid-eleventh century the Abbey of Saint Emmeram in Regensburg began to boast that it had the body of Denis the Areopagite. In 1052 the monks from Saint-Denis were shaken by the news that pope Leo IX, staying in Regensburg, recognized the authenticity of the relics of Saint Denis allegedly deposited in the Abbey of Saint Emmeram.<sup>43</sup> A convincing dating of *Liber Haymonis*

38 This date was established on the basis of *DESCRIPTIO QUALITER*, p. 124 by LEVILLAIN, *Essai sur les origines du Lendit*, p. 259.

39 NEBBIAI DALLA GUARDA, *La Bibliothèque de l'abbaye de Saint-Denis*, p. 47.

40 LEVILLAIN, *Essai sur les origines du Lendit*, pp. 241–276. About the origins of the Lendit also see LOMBARD-JOURDAN, *Les foires de l'abbaye de Saint-Denis*, pp. 273–338.

41 HAYMO OF SAINT-DENIS, *Liber de detectione Macharii Areopagitae Dionysii* (FÉLIBIEN), pp. clvi–clxxii; after Félibien and after Du Chesne’s edition from the seventeenth century in: RHF, vol. XI, pp. 467–474; edition of fragments: HAYMO OF SAINT-DENIS, *Liber de detectione Macharii Areopagitae Dionysii* (MGH), pp. 371–375.

42 LEVILLAIN, *Essai sur les origines du Lendit*, pp. 267–269; a different opinion: GROSSE, *Reliques du Christ et foires de Saint-Denis au XI<sup>e</sup> siècle*, pp. 371.

43 EKKEHARD, *Chronicon universale*, p. 196. The most important literature about Regensburg’s aspirations to the body of Saint Dionysius and the hagiographic forgeries which the monks from Saint Emmeram used to prove they were right, includes KRAUS, *Saint-Denis und Regensburg*, pp. 535–549; SCHMID, „Auf glühendem Thron in der hölle”. Gebhard III, Otloh von St. Emmeram und die Dionysiusfälschung, passim.

is presented by Levillain.<sup>44</sup> There are all reasons to believe that the Abbot Hugh – to whom the dedicatory letter was addressed – was Hugh V Foucaud (1186–1197) during whose times the reliquaries were reopened (1191), this time in order to reject the claims of owning the Saint’s head – who was the first bishop of Paris – made by the canons of Paris cathedral. It seems quite probable that Haymo wrote his text basing on the document found while opening Saint Denis’s reliquary in 1191, which related the dispute between Saint-Denis and Sankt Emmeram, and, as Haymo says, it was deposited in it after the *ostensio* of 1053.<sup>45</sup>

According to Haymo, the access to the *martyrium* of Saint Denis, Rusticus, and Eleutherius, deposited in the crypt – whose foundation is attributed to Dagobert I – was restricted by a *cryptula*<sup>46</sup> with two locks, in which the relics of the Crown of Thorn and the nail of the Holy Cross were placed. On the basis of Haymo’s rather hazy description it is difficult to reconstruct the layout of the crypt, but one matter is certain: the bodies of the martyrs could not be touched or even seen in any other way than through the *cryptula* in which the relics of the Crown of Thorn and the Holy Nail were stored.<sup>47</sup> Haymo puts the crypt’s description in the mouths of French envoys speaking in front of the emperor in Regensburg in 1052, yet it is not possible to determine whether they concerned the reality from the mid-eleventh century or, rather, from the late twelfth century, when the layout of the sacred crypt in Saint-Denis may have been changed after the redevelopment of the church ordered by Suger.<sup>48</sup> Certainly, this fragment of *Liber Haymonis* is a polemic with the eleventh century treatises from Sankt Emmeram describing the *furtum* of Saint Denis’s body but neglecting to

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44 LEVILLAIN, *Essai sur les origines du Lendit*, pp. 267–270; a similar dating is suggested by Rudolf Koepke: *TRANSLATIO S. DIONYSII AREOPAGITAE*, pp. 349–350.

45 More about the dating of *Liber Haymonis* see below, Part 2, Chapter 3, Subchapter “The Exposure of the Relics of St. Denis to Public View in the Abbey of Saint-Denis in the Twelfth Century.”

46 The understanding of the term *cryptula* used as a name of the place where the Passion relics are stored is not clear; cf. below.

47 “Quin etiam antequam ad corpora sanctorum perveniatur, cryptula quedam aureis gemmis extrinsecus decorata habetur, in qua duabus seris diligenter munita dominici clavi et corone condita servantur pignora, nulloque alio aditu preter hunc scrinia sanctorum videri aut ab aliquo possunt ullatenus tangi;” HAYMO OF SAINT-DENIS, *Liber de detectione Macharii Areopagitae Dionysii* (MGH), cap. 5, p. 374.

48 Cf. LEVILLAIN, *Essai sur les origines du Lendit*, pp. 270–271.

mention the *cryptula* with the Passion relics, which guarded the access to the Areopagite's grave.<sup>49</sup>

The claim that *instrumenta Passionis* were in the crypt already before 1095 – in which Haymo saw them – seems quite probable, but it is based on hypothetical premises. Although he does not consider Haymo's description of the place where the relics were stored as reflecting the eleventh-century reality,<sup>50</sup> Levillain draws attention to a very interesting coincidence of dates: according to *Descriptio*, the first *ostensio* of the relics of the Crown of Thorns and the nail of the Holy Cross in Saint-Denis was said to have been performed on June 10, 862. It was the second Wednesday after the Whitsunday, thus this was the day on which the summer quarterly fast began in 862. As Levillain establishes, a similar coincidence for the eleventh century occurred in 1047, 1052, and 1058 only.<sup>51</sup> The day of June 9, 1053, selected by abbot Hugh IV to celebrate the integrity of Saint Denis's body resting in Saint-Denis also occurred in the week after Whitsunday and at the beginning of the summer fast *ieiunia quatuor temporum*.<sup>52</sup> According to Levillain, this is an indirect evidence that the year 1048 is the most probable date when the Lendit fair in Saint-Denis was first held. This conclusion is derived from Haymo's account, which says that in 1053 – to the dissatisfaction of the pilgrims – at first there were no miracles that usually accompanied the *ostensio*. Although, one miracle did happen on that very day: the prices of cereals and wine suddenly dropped, making the populace happy and the merchants sad.<sup>53</sup> Thus, the year 1053 could not have been the date of the first, but of a successive *ostensio*. Assuming that June 10, 862, is not mentioned in *Descriptio qualiter* as the date of the legendary first *Indictum* established by Charles the Bald randomly but as a retrospective reference to the actual *Indictum* which took place in Saint-Denis in the eleventh century and occurred on the second Wednesday after Whitsunday in June, Levillain concludes that the relics must have been appeared in the Abbey in 1047 and the *Indictum* with the fair accompanying it were held on the first anniversary, in 1048. Basing on the same sacral logic, the Abbey of Saint-Denis is said to have intentionally chosen the same day of the liturgical calendar in 1053 (but it was then June 9, not June 10) as the date of the ceremony of the solemn confirmation of the integrality and also authenticity of Saint Denis's

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49 TRANSLATIO S. DIONYSII AREOPAGITAE, pp. 351–371; HAYMO OF SAINT-DENIS, *Liber de detectione Macharii Areopagitae Dionysii* (MGH), pp. 371–375; OTLOH, *Translatio et inventio Sancti Dionysii*, pp. 824–837.

50 LEVILLAIN, *Essai sur les origines du Lendit*, pp. 270–271.

51 LEVILLAIN, *Essai sur les origines du Lendit*, pp. 262–263.

52 LEVILLAIN, *Essai sur les origines du Lendit*, p. 265.

53 See LEVILLAIN, *Essai sur les origines du Lendit*, p. 266.

body.<sup>54</sup> However, this hypothesis did not persuade Levillain to shift the date of *Descriptio qualiter*'s origin to before 1079–1095 but to make an assumption that the events from the turn of the 1040s and 1050s – including the event in which the author of *Descriptio qualiter* could have taken part (but there is no proof of that) – inspired the anonymous hagiographer and influenced the content of the legend about the translation of the Passion relics.<sup>55</sup> However, this view does not seem to be justified. Whereas the choice of the same day for the *Indictum* and the authentication of Saint Denis' body may be considered as intentional, the proximity of the date of the *Indictum* of 1053 to the date of the legendary (862) and hypothetical actual *ostensio* of the relics of the Crown of Thorns (1047 or, perhaps, 1052<sup>2</sup>) was entirely accidental. However, it may be assumed as probable – but impossible to prove – that the date in the liturgical calendar chosen for the legendary *Indictum* was selected in connection with the actual date when the relics of the Crown of Thorns were deposited in Saint-Denis.<sup>56</sup>

Rolf Grosse questions both Levillain's dating of *Descriptio qualiter* to 1079–1095 and the choice of the year 1047 as the date when the relics were translated to Saint-Denis. Grosse notes that *Liber Haymonis* does not mention the *Indictum* and the information about the presence of the Passion relics in the crypt appears in an apocryphal speech of the French envoys to the emperor, which cannot be considered as proof that the Crown of Thorns and the nail of the Cross were in the Abbey in 1053.<sup>57</sup> However, since Grosse believes that the years 1046–1054 were the most probable time when the first legend about the translation of the Crown of Thorns to Saint-Denis emerged, the relics must have appeared in the Abbey approximately at the time indicated by Levillain. The argument *per analogiam* for either of the datations may be another Christ's relic that appeared in the Empire in the eleventh century: the Holy Blood of the Lord, miraculously discovered in Mantua in 1048; the same relic that had been miraculously discovered in 804, whose part was given to Charlemagne by the pope Leo III.<sup>58</sup> Henry III received a part of the Holy Blood in a crystal reliquary, which he carried with him wherever he went until the end of his life. We cannot deny that the miraculous *inventio* of the Saviour's Blood may have inspired Saint-Denis

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54 LEVILLAIN, *Essai sur les origines du Lendit*, pp. 262–267, 275–276.

55 LEVILLAIN, *Essai sur les origines du Lendit*, pp. 263.

56 Levillain's dating was also adopted by S. McKnight Crosby and P. Z. Blum, cf. CROSBY, *The Royal Abbey of Saint-Denis*, p. 101; BLUM, *Early Gothic Saint-Denis*.

57 GROSSE, *Reliques du Christ et foires de Saint-Denis au XI<sup>e</sup> siècle*, pp. 366–368, 371.

58 See below.

to promote its own alleged Passion relics, which is suggested by the fact that the Crown of Thorns and *Descriptio qualiter* appeared there in the mid-eleventh century. On the other hand, there was a solemn translation of the Holy Blood to the Abbey of Weingarten in 1094, so this event may also be interpreted as a possible inspiration.

One more approach to dating *Descriptio qualiter*, the origins of the text, and – in consequence – also the time in which the Passion Relics appeared in the Abbey of Saint-Denis, is presented by Matthew Gabriele. According to him, the text about the translation, written soon after the translation of the Christ's Shroud of Compiègne in 1079, was inspired by king Philip I, the true author of the Capetians' Carolingian aspirations.<sup>59</sup> I will discuss Gabriele's claims below.

## 2. Sources of Information about Charlemagne's Expedition to the Holy Land<sup>60</sup>

The tale of Charlemagne's expedition to the Holy Land and Constantinople<sup>61</sup> is probably based on the accounts describing the actual diplomatic contacts of the Carolingian court with the patriarch of Jerusalem and the caliph of Bagdad, Harun ar-Rashid, from the late eighth and early ninth century, found in the chronicles written during Charlemagne's reign and soon after his death. The accounts confirm the emperor's interest in the cult of Christianity in the Holy Land and especially those of its aspects connected with the Passion relics.<sup>62</sup> According to some historians, the increased diplomatic activity of the Frankish court toward Jerusalem before 800 was

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59 GABRIELE, *The Provenance of the Descriptio qualiter Karolus Magnus*, pp. 93–118; also: GABRIELE, *An Empire of Memory. The Legend of Charlemagne, the Franks, and Jerusalem before the First Crusade*, pp. 44–51.

60 Recently on the subject: PYSIAK, *Les origines de la légende de la translation des reliques de la Couronne d'Épines en Occident*, and, briefly, GABRIELE, *An Empire of Memory. The Legend of Charlemagne, the Franks, and Jerusalem before the First Crusade*, pp. 33–40, and bibliography.

61 See BOUTET, *Charlemagne et Arthur*, pp. 219–225, 448–461; FOLZ, *Le souvenir et la légende de Charlemagne dans l'Empire germanique médiéval*, pp. 134–140; MORRISSEY, *L'empereur à la barbe fleurie*, pp. 71–102; PYSIAK, *Królewski kult Korony Cierniowej we Francji*, pp. 16–17; about Charlemagne in the East cf. BÉDIER, *Les légendes épiques*, vol. III, pp. 122–175.

62 See BUCKLER, *Harun'ul Rashid and Charlemagne*, passim; JORANSON, *The Alleged Frankish Protectorate in Palestine*, pp. 241–261; KLEINCLAUSZ, *La légende du protectorat de Charlemagne sur la Terre sainte*, pp. 211–233; RUNCIMAN, *Charlemagne and Palestine*, pp. 609–619. Recently on that subject: MONTELEONE, *Il viaggio di Carlo Magno in Terra Santa*, pp. 91–113.

part of a broader political and ideological program closely connected with the later imperial crowning of Charlemagne.<sup>63</sup> According to *Annales regni Francorum* and *Annales Mettenses priores*, the patriarch of Jerusalem in 799 sent Charlemagne the relics from the Holy Sepulchre and the keys to the town and the Imperial basilicas of the Holy Sepulchre, Calvary, and the Mount of Olives. This gesture should be evidently understood as a symbolic submission of the Holy Lands to the protection of the king of the Franks. In the following year, Charlemagne sent the envoys from the Holy Land back to their homeland in the circumstances suggesting that the king of the Franks was the ruler of the West, truly functioning as the emperor. The mission from Jerusalem was sent back from Rome during the debates of the synod held under the leadership of Charlemagne, on the day when pope Leo III made his cleansing oath to Charlemagne and the bishops assembled in Rome. By handing the keys to the town and the basilicas back to the patriarch's envoys, Charlemagne symbolically confirmed his protection over the Holy Lands; he also gave the envoys numerous rich gifts for the Church of Jerusalem.<sup>64</sup> The event is described with the use of the same words in *Annales Fuldenses*,<sup>65</sup> archbishop Ado of Vienne's Chronicle,<sup>66</sup> the so-called *Chronicles* from Jean du Tillet's library,<sup>67</sup> and the so-called *Chronicles* from Loisel's library.<sup>68</sup> Arthur Kleinclausz interprets the "vexillum" mentioned

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63 See especially: BRÉHIER, *Charlemagne et la Palestine*, pp. 277–291; GANSHOF, *The Imperial Coronation of Charlemagne*, passim; GRABOÏS, *Charlemagne, Rome and Jerusalem*, pp. 792–809; FOLZ, *Le couronnement impérial de Charlemagne*, passim; REINDEL, *Die Kaiserkrönung Karls des Grossen*; SCHRAMM, *Kaiser, Könige und Päpste*, pp. 216–220.

64 "Eodem anno [799] monachus quidam de Hierosolimis veniens benedictionem et reliquias de sepulchro Domini quos patriarcha Hierosolimitanus domno regi miserat, detulit .... Eodem die Zacharias cum duobus monachis, uno de monte Oliveti, altero de sancto Saba, de Oriente reversus Romam venit; quos patriarcha Hierosolimitanus cum Zacharia ad regem misit, qui benedictionis causa claves sepulchri Dominici ac loci Calvariae, claves etiam civitatis et montis cum vexillo detulerunt;" ANNALES REGNI FRANCORUM, p. 108, 112, and ANNALES QUI DICUNTUR EINHARDI, p. 109, 113 do not mention handing over the keys to the town or the keys to Mount Zion. The information from ANNALES REGNI FRANCORUM is almost literally repeated in GESTA EPISCOPORUM METTENSIVM PRIORES, pp. 86–87.

65 ANNALES FULDENSES, p. 14.

66 ADON, *Chronicon*, coll. 129. Ado was the archbishop of Vienne in 860–875.

67 CHRONIQUE DITE DE LA BIBLIOTHÈQUE DE JEAN DU TILLET, Vol. 5, p. 23. Jean du Tillet, sieur de La Bussière (dec. 1579), a lawyer, a *greffier* of the Parliament of Paris from 1521, a historian and bibliophile.

68 CHRONIQUE DITE DE LA BIBLIOTHÈQUE DE LOISEL, p. 52. Antoine Loisel (1536–1617) was a Parisian lawyer, bibliophile, and collector.

in *Annales regni Francorum* as a relic of the Holy Cross. Einar Joranson contradicts that claim by stating that the *vexillum* was simply a banner or standard.<sup>69</sup>

Some Carolingian, and, later on, Ottonian and Salian, chroniclers believe that under the agreement concluded by Charlemagne and the caliph, Haroun ar-Rashid – whom they called king Aaron – Charlemagne’s empire embraced the Holy Land. Although the *Annales regni Francorum* confirm only the exchange of gifts between Charlemagne and Haroun,<sup>70</sup> Einhard wrote in *Vita Karoli Magni* that the Persian king Aaron gave Charlemagne the power over the Holy Sepulchre as an expression of his friendship and respect for the emperor of the West.<sup>71</sup> Charlemagne’s diplomatic contacts with ‘king Aaron’ and Jerusalem are mentioned in *Miracula sancti Genesii* written in Reichenau Abbey between 822 and 838, which describe how the relics of Saint Genesius were obtained by that monastery.<sup>72</sup>

Notker the Stammerer (Balbulus), allegedly a monk from Saint Gallen, the author of *Gesta Karoli Magni imperatoris* written during the reign of Charles the Fat (881–887), presents a high dialectic agility when describing how Charlemagne took power over the Holy Land. Namely, the exchange of envoys between ‘king Aaron’ and Charlemagne, and especially Aaron’s gift to Charlemagne of excellent bloodhounds resulted in establishing a brotherhood between the caliph and the emperor; the Holy Land was subjected to the rule of Charlemagne, but Haroun remained the most faithful governor of these territories (“advocatus,” “procurator provintiae”) and their defender against barbarian invasions on Charlemagne’s behalf, because, as the ruler of the East has adjudged, Charlemagne’s Western empire was too

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69 JORANSON, *The Alleged Frankish Protectorate in Palestine*; KLEINCLAUSZ, *La légende du protectorat de Charlemagne sur la Terre sainte*.

70 “legatus regis Persarum nomine Abdella cum monachis de Hierusalem, qui legatione Thomae patriarchae fungebantur ... ad imperatorem pervenerunt munera deferentes, quae praedictus rex imperatori miserat;” *ANNALES REGNI FRANCORUM*, p. 123.

71 “Cum Aaron, rege Persarum, qui excepta India totum pene tenebat Orientem, talem habuit in amicitia concordiam, ut his gratiam eius omnium qui in toto orbe erant regum et principum amicitiae praeponeret, solumque illum honore ac munificentia sibi colendam iudicaret; ac pro inde, cum legati eius, quos cum donarii ad sacratissimum domini ac Salvatoris nostri sepulchrum locumque resurrectionis miserat, ad eum venissent, et ei domini sui voluntatem indicassent, non solum quae petebantur fieri permisit, sed etiam sacrum illum et salutarem locum, ut illius potestati adscriberetur, concessit;” *EINHARD, Vita Karoli Magni*, cap. pp 19–20.

72 *MIRACULA SANCTI GENESII*, p. 170–171.



big and too distant for hi the Holy Land to efficiently protect it.<sup>73</sup> In this way, the monk from Saint Gallen says, the prophecy from Virgil's *Eclogue* 1 came true.<sup>74</sup> Also Poeta Saxo in Book IV of his *Annales de gestis Caroli magni imperatoris* – dedicated to Arnulf of Carinthia (887–899) – mentions for the year 802 that the Persian king Aaron submitted to Charlemagne's eternal rule "locum sanctum Hierosolimorum."<sup>75</sup> Similar rumors probably circulated also in the ninth century Britain: the Northumbrian Annals (*Annales Nordhumbriani*), known from a twelfth-century compilation but written in the early ninth century, say that together with the imperial crown Charlemagne also received in Rome the envoys from Constantinople and the Christians from Jerusalem. Besides the usual gifts, the Greeks offered Charlemagne the imperial power and the Christians from Jerusalem asked him to extend his rule and protection over them and to defend them against the pagan invaders, which Charlemagne agreed to do.<sup>76</sup>

The information given by the Carolingian authors is repeated by the writers from the Salian era: Bernold of Constance (1054–1100), active during Henry IV's reign, noted that in 799 the Patriarch of Jerusalem sent Charlemagne the relics from the Holy Sepulchre and that Charlemagne reciprocated by sending generous gifts to Jerusalem a year later. In 802 and 807, the emperor is said to receive the envoys with gifts from the Persian king

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73 "terram promissam Abrahae et exhibitam Iosuae dederō illi propter longuinitatem locorum non potest eam defensare a barbaris; vel si iuxta magnanimitatem suam defendere coeperit, timeo, ne finitimae Francorum regni provinciae discedant ab eius imperio. Sed tamen hoc modo liberalitati eius gratificari temptabo. Dabo quidem illam in eius potestatem, et ego advocatus eius ero super eam; ipse vero, quandocunque voluerit, vel sibi oportunissimum videtur, dirigat ad me legatos suos et fi delissimum me procuratorem eiusdem provinciae redituum inveniet;" NOTKER, *Gesta Karoli magni*, pp. 64 (edition from 1829, pp. 753).

74 "Hoc ergo modo factum est, ut quo pro impossibili dixit poeta: "Aut Ararim Parthus bibet, aut Germania Tigrim;" Vergilius, *Eclogae* I, 63.

75 POETA SAXO, *Annalium de gestis Caroli Magni*, lib. IV, *Anno DCCCII, Indictione IX*, vol. 80–91, p. 48.

76 "Eo quoque tempore legati Graecorum cum magnis muneribus a Constantinopoli directi, ad eum veniebant, rogantes, ut illorum susciperet regnum et imperium. Similiter legati ab Hierosolimis, a christianis populis ibi manentibus missi, Romamque venientes, vexillum argenteum inter alia munera regi ferentes, clavesque locorum sanctorum dominicae resurrectionis aliorumque ei optulerunt, obnix flagitantes, ipsorum esse susceptorem et defensorem. Rogabant eum, ut christiane religioni subdita sancta coenobia conservaret, regeret ac defenderet et contra insurgentes gentes exurgeret bellica virtute et regali maiestate. Annuit benignissimus rex beatis precibus, qui ad se confluerant, et non solum se paratum esse ad devincendos inimicos in terra, verum etiam in mari, si necessitas compulisset;" *ANNALES NORDHUMBRANI*, p. 156.

Aaron.<sup>77</sup> The author of the *Minor Annals of Saint-Amand-d'Elnone Abbey* (Flanders, today Saint-Amand-les-Eaux) discussed the issue marginally: he says that in year 771 the king of the Franks, Charlemagne, was to set out against the Saxons and “It was the same emperor Charles, the son of Pepin the Short, who extended his kingdom up to Jerusalem.”<sup>78</sup> This short note suggests that for the compiler of the *Annals of Elnone*, Charlemagne was even better known for gaining Jerusalem than for his conquest of Saxony.<sup>79</sup>

The *Earlier Annals of Niederaltaich* (*Annales Altabenses maiores*), contemporary to the *Minor Annals of Elnone*, following *Frankish Royal Annals* (*Annales regni Francorum* and *Annales Mettenses priores*), mention under the year 800 that the envoys from Jerusalem, having arrived to Charlemagne’s court together with the Frankish envoy to the patriarch returning from the Holy Land, offered the king not only the keys to the Basilicas of the Holy Sepulchre, the Mount of Olives, and the Golden Gate but also a banner and a lance. This narration shows even more vividly than the texts of the *Annales regni Francorum* and *Annales Mettenses priores* the gesture submitting the Holy Sepulchre and the whole Jerusalem under the protection of the king of the Franks. The editor of the chronicles adds that this gift was meant to contribute to the liberation of the Christian people.<sup>80</sup>

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77 BERNOLDI, *Chronicon*, p. 419.

78 “Carolus rex Francorum perrexit ad Saxoniam. Hic est Karolus imperator, filius Pippini parvi, qui acquisit regnum usque Hierusolimis;” *ANNALES ELNONENSES MINORES*, p. 18.

79 According to GABRIELE, *An Empire of Memory. The Legend of Charlemagne, the Franks, and Jerusalem before the First Crusade*, p. 97, this is the only case in which the chronicler of Elnone calls Charlemagne an emperor. This makes Gabriele draw a conclusion that the chronicler connected the origins of Charlemagne’s title of an emperor with his conquest, especially with gaining power over Jerusalem, and not with Rome and papacy. This is, however, untrue, what is clear to everyone who has read the whole page of the *Annales Elnonenses* in the MGH edition. Indeed, the chronicler does not mention Charlemagne’s coronation in Rome, but he calls Charlemagne an emperor for the second time when he writes about the death of his son, Charles the Younger (772–811). It would be interesting to know what conclusion Matthew Gabriele would draw from that record (if he read it). The thesis about the connection between Charlemagne’s imperial title and his pilgrimage-expedition to the Holy Land or Constantinople is slightly more convincing with respect to the chronicle of Benedict of Monte Soratte and the narration about founding the Abbey in Charroux. See GABRIELE, *An Empire of Memory. The Legend of Charlemagne, the Franks, and Jerusalem before the First Crusade*, pp. 98–99.

80 The text is partly damaged and not entirely clear for the editor: “Advenere Hierusalem legati cum legato Caroli Zacharia, attulere vexillum, lanceam, duas

This cryptic mention is worth noting, because it allows the reader a certain freedom of interpretation. Although the *Annales Altahenses maiores* do not say that Charlemagne carried out an armed expedition aimed at liberating the Christians in the Holy Land, the note could have been understood in various ways.

### The Chronicle of Benedict of Sant' Andrea del Monte Soratte<sup>81</sup>

The earliest known author who describes Charlemagne's expedition to the East was Benedict of Monte Soratte, the author of the chronicle of the Sant' Andrea monastery on Mount Soratte, located to the North of Rome near the Ancient Via Flaminia.<sup>82</sup>

Benedict probably wrote his chronicle in 998–1001, starting with the reign Julian the Apostate and finishing with the end of Otto II's rule. Charlemagne's military expedition to the East plays a very important part in Benedict's narration: he places these completely fictitious events between the solution of the crisis in Rome caused by the conspiracy against pope Leo III and the crowning of Charlemagne as the emperor,<sup>83</sup> in connection with which Benedict presents the latter as the ruler of the world from the west to the east. After winning the wars against the Huns (i.e., the Avars), the Danes, Frisians, Slavs, Normans, and the Moors,<sup>84</sup> and extending his rule over the kings of Ireland and Galicia,<sup>85</sup> Charlemagne announced a great military expedition to the East. He began by collecting a massive fleet composed of ships brought from all the ports of Normandy, Gaul, Italy, and northern Germany, near Otranto or the Strait of Messina.<sup>86</sup> Numerous bridges were

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tabulas duobus atramentariis scriptas, posituris (?) duas discretas, claves sepulcri Christo, de loco calvariae, monte oliveti, de porta speciosa, quae ultro (?) parta (?) Petro aptabant ac omnia Carolo patefecerunt ad liberandum populum christianum;" *ANNALES ALTAHENSES MAIORES AB AVENTINO*, p. 783.

81 BENEDICT OF MONTE SORATTE, *Chronicon*, p. 696–719; about the author see *DIZIONARIO BIOGRAFICO DEGLI ITALIANI*, vol. VIII, pp. 446–451.

About the account of Benedict of Monte Soratte about Charlemagne's expedition to the East see MONTELEONE, *Il viaggio di Carlo Magno in Terra Santa*, pp. 145–169 and GABRIELE, *An Empire of Memory. The Legend of Charlemagne, the Franks, and Jerusalem before the First Crusade*, pp. 41–44.

82 See WATTENBACH, *Deutschlands Geschichtsquellen im Mittelalter*.

83 BENEDICT OF MONTE SORATTE, *Chronicon*, cap. 23, pp. 708–711.

84 Account based on *ANNALES REGNI FRANCORUM*: the years 805, 808, 810, 814.

85 Account drawn from: EINHARD, *Vita Karoli Magni*, cap. 15, 16.

86 *Traversus*; MONTELEONE, *Il viaggio di Carlo Magno in Terra Santa*, pp. 145, proves that it was the Messina Strait.

constructed on the sea (made of ships?) across which the emperor – whom Benedict of Monte Soratte calls the Servant of the Prince of the Apostles Saint Peter<sup>87</sup> – brought across the Greek lands an army composed of the Franks, Saxons, Bavarians, Aquitanians, Gasconians, Lombards, Alemanni, Pannonians, and Avars.<sup>88</sup> When the news of Charlemagne’s crossing the sea reached king Aaron, who ruled the whole East except for India, the Persian king decided to make peace and befriend the king of the Franks.

If we understand Benedict’s text correctly, which is significantly impeded by the specific version of Latin he used, king Aaron considered Charlemagne as a mighty and great ruler deserving the highest honours and rich gifts. Both rulers met in the Holy Land and, after arriving to Jerusalem, Aaron handed over to Charlemagne his power over the Holy Crib and the Holy Sepulchre; *Loca Sancta* were showered with gold and jewels, a golden banner was fixed on the Holy Sepulchre (as a sign of submission to the Franks?),<sup>89</sup> Charlemagne also received rich gifts from the ruler of the East; the Franks and the Saracens became such great friends that they might have been of one blood. Then, Aaron bade Charlemagne farewell and returned to his estates: Benedict clearly assigns him a lower rank than Charlemagne: “Dimissoque est Aaron rex a Karulo Magno in pace; in propria sua est reversus.”<sup>90</sup>

Next Benedict’s chronicle makes its first mention of Byzantium, which Charlemagne visited on the way back to his own kingdom. At first, the emperors Nicephorus, Michael, and Leo received Charlemagne in Constantinople suspiciously. As Benedict writes, they feared the mighty Franks might try to deprive them of their imperial power. The ruler of the West had earlier crossed the Greeks’ territory with his great army, as Benedict says, doing

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87 BENEDICT OF MONTE SORATTE, *Chronicon*, cap. 23, p. 710. Allusion to Otto III’s title of *servus Apostolorum*? Cf. MICHAŁOWSKI, *The Gniezno Summit*, pp. 242–251.

88 BENEDICT OF MONTE SORATTE, *Chronicon*, cap. 23, pp. 710.

89 “Cum audissent Aaron reges Persarum, qui excepta India totum penetrabat Orientem, talem fecit amicitiam et concordiam, ut eis gratia eius omnium qui in toto orbe terrarum erant, regnum ad principium amicitia preponerent, solumque illum honore hac munificentiam sibi colendam iudicaret. Ac deinde ad sacratissimum domini hac salvatoris nostri Iesu Christi sepulchrum locumque resurrectionis advenisset, ornatoque sacrum locum auro gemmisque, etiam vexillum aureum mire magnitudinis imposuit, non solum cuncta loca sancta decoravit, sed etiam presepe Domini et sepulchrum que petierant Aaron rex, potestatis eius ascribere concessit;” BENEDICT OF MONTE SORATTE, *Chronicon*, cap. 23, pp. 710.

90 BENEDICT OF MONTE SORATTE, *Chronicon*, cap. 23, p. 711.

a considerable harm to the locals, since the Greek army was worthless.<sup>91</sup> However, Charlemagne struck an alliance with the emperors of Byzantium, not wishing any “scandalum” to occur between both Christian empires.<sup>92</sup> In return, the king of the Franks received from the *basilei* generous gifts, including a part (“aliquantulum de corpore”) of the body of Saint Andrew the Apostle, which he took back to Italy.<sup>93</sup> In Rome, Charlemagne richly rewarded Saint Peter: he subjected to his apostolic rule the whole Rome, Pentapolis, Ravenna, and Tuscany. Next, having thanked God and Saint Peter, Charlemagne received from the Pope a blessing and the people of Rome called him emperor.<sup>94</sup> The new emperor's of the West first care was to make a pilgrimage to the hermitage of Saint Sylvester on Monte Soratte. The pope Leo III accompanied Charlemagne, and it is at his request that Charlemagne offered the monastery – which needed relics in order to make a canonical consecration of the Abbey church – a part of Saint Andrew's relic. Benedict immediately admits that the current place where the relics are located in the church is unknown.<sup>95</sup> Finally, as a crowned victor,

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91 “molieruntque cuncte nationes terre Grecorum, ut robor eorum pro nichilo computatus;” BENEDICT OF MONTE SORATTE, *Chronicon*, cap. 23, p. 710.

92 “Rex piissimus atque fortis in Constantinopolitano hurbem, Naciforus, Michahel, et Leo, formidantes quasi imperium ei eripere vellet, valde sub sceptu; quo cognito, rex formidine eorum, pactum et fedus firmissimum posuit inter se, ut nulla inter partes cuilibet scandali remaneret occasio. Erat enim semper Romanis et Grecis Francorum suspecta potentia. Unde et illud Grecorum est ad proverbium: ΤΟΝ ΦΡΑΝΚΟΝ ΦΙΛΟΝ ΕΧΙC ΠΙΤΟΝΑ [Einhard: ΠΙΤΟΝΑ] ΟΥΚ ΕΧΙC. Quod Latini dicunt: Francos abeto Amicis;” BENEDICT OF MONTE SORATTE, *Chronicon*, pp. 711.

93 “Qui mox imperator cum quanta donis et munera, et aliquantulum de corpore sancti Andreae apostoli ad imperatoribus Constantinopolim accepto, in Italia est reversus;” BENEDICT OF MONTE SORATTE, *Chronicon*, pp. 711.

94 “Roma veniens, et dona amplissima beato Petro constituit, ordinataque Urbe, et omnia Pentapoli, et Ravenne finibus seu Tuscie, omnia in apostolici potestatibet concessit. Gratias agens Deo, et apostolorum principi, et benedictione apostolica accepta, et a cuncto populo Romano augusto est appellatus;” BENEDICT OF MONTE SORATTE, *Chronicon*, pp. 711.

95 “simul cum ipso pontifi ce usque ad montes Syrapti, in monasterium sancti Silvestri devenit. Deinde ad monasterium sancti Andreae cum pontifice summo adest; qui rogatus imperator ad pontifice, ut aliquantulum reliquiarum de corpore sancti Andreae apostoli in hunc monasterium consecrationis constitueret; cuius loco positus est in hunc monasterium venerabile ecclesie, aput nos incognitum est;” BENEDICT OF MONTE SORATTE, *Chronicon*, pp. 711.

Charlemagne went back to France, where he returned with his former zest to extending his power over the neighboring people and countries.<sup>96</sup>

It is not easy to interpret the fragment of Benedict's of Monte Soratte chronicle devoted to Charlemagne's expedition to the Holy Land, Constantinople, and his meeting with king Aaron.<sup>97</sup> It is not known where Benedict got hold of the information. Was Benedict himself the author of a confabulatory narration describing Charlemagne's expedition to the East or did he find it in another, earlier source? Federica Monteleone finds numerous borrowings in Benedict's chronicle from Einhard's *Life of Charlemagne* and from *Annales regni Francorum*, and she claims that these sources' descriptions of Charlemagne's relations with the Caliphate and the Jerusalem Patriarchate inspired Benedict to add the confabulatory account of Charlemagne's expedition to the East for the relics to his account.<sup>98</sup> The attribution of the origin of Saint Andrew's relics from Monte Soratte as part of Charlemagne's gift seems obvious: the origin of a relic from a Carolingian collection was one of the most effective arguments for its authenticity. Moreover, it is known that Charlemagne did have the relics of Saint Andrew the Apostle: this is proved by the writings of Angilbert, the abbot of Saint-Riquier monastery (Centula), which had an altar dedicated to this saint and containing his relics.<sup>99</sup> The Abbey of Monte Soratte was one of the main centres of the Carolingian power in the Roman Campagna,<sup>100</sup> thus the donation of the Apostle's relics to it was quite natural; it is another matter to suggest that Charlemagne brought them from Constantinople. It is not within the scope of this work to decree why Benedict decided to introduce to his chronicle the story of Charlemagne's expedition to the East or whether Benedict invented the story himself or did it result from his misunderstanding or overinterpretation of earlier texts. The account written up by Benedict in the chronicle of Sant' Andrea del Monte Soratte monastery is part of a larger phenomenon of the growing fascination with Charlemagne and his legend – since the turn of the tenth and eleventh century – clearly noticeable in Western Europe, possibly increased by the personal fascination manifested by Otto III. This fascination increased continually until the turn of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, when it reached its apogee. It is in the eleventh century when the first stories about Charlemagne's expedition to

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96 "Victor coronator et triumphator rex in Francia est reversus. Qui cum tantus in ampliando regno et subiciens esteris nationibus sisteret, et in eiusmodi occupationibus assidue versaretur;" BENEDICT OF MONTE SORATTE, *Chronicon*, p. 711.

97 The main difficulty is caused by the fact that Benedict uses a specific version of Latin.

98 MONTELEONE, *Il viaggio di Carlo Magno in Terra Santa*, pp. 151–162.

99 ANGILBERT, *De ecclesia Centulensi libellus*, pp. 175, 176.

100 TOMASSETTI, *La Campagna romana antica*, pp. 409–413.

the Iberian Peninsula against the Moors appeared both in ecclesiastical and lay texts, and the Emperor was pictured as the archetype of a Crusader. As Benedict's chronicle was hardly known in Europe, it should not be considered as a source of these stories. It was possibly one of the earliest of the known examples of how the stories of Charlemagne's achievements in the Holy Land seeped into historiographic and hagiographic writings.

### Relics from Charroux and Reichenau

One of the signs of the increasing attractiveness of the Carolingian historical myth in the eleventh and twelfth century is the appearance of the hagiographic accounts in a number of ecclesiastical institutions – including the monasteries having Carolingian or pre-Carolingian origins – according to which the Passion relics venerated there had been brought there by Charlemagne himself or had been offered by the emperor. In France, Charlemagne was supposed to have had given the Passion relics to, among other places, the churches in Argenteuil, Cahors, Centula, Charroux, Flavigny, Gellone, Langres, Libourne, Orléans, Sarlat, and Saumur.<sup>101</sup> In the Empire, the Lord's and Passion relics donated by Charlemagne – or at least coming from his imperial collection – were in possession in, among other places, Arles, Verdun, and Reichenau. Whereas the relics coming from the *inventio* of Saviour's Blood in Mantua (804),<sup>102</sup> about which Charlemagne was personally informed by pope Leo III, who came to Aachen for this purpose,<sup>103</sup> were in Bamberg, Cappenberg, Gandersheim, Lucca, and Weingarten.

From our viewpoint, it seems that the most detailed and interesting are the narrations from the Saint-Sauveur Abbey in Charroux and from Our Lady's Reichenau Abbey.

### *Liber de constitutione Karrofensis cenobii*

An important issue in our considerations is the collection of hagiographic legends from the late tenth and mid-eleventh century, written up in the first half of the twelfth century, and concerning Christ's relics from the Saint-Sauveur

101 DOR, *Les reliquaires de la Passion en France du V<sup>e</sup> au XV<sup>e</sup> siècle*, pp. 22–23. On the relics of the Holy Cross in Gellone (Saint-Guilhem-le-Désert): BOZÓKY, *Le comte et la Croix*, pp. 78–85. On Christ's relics and reliquaries in the Sainte-Foy Abbey in Conques see CORDEZ, “Vers un catalogue raisonné des « objets légendaires » de Charlemagne. Le cas de Conques (XIe–XIIe siècles)”, pp. 135–167, and CORDEZ, *Trésor, mémoire, merveilles. Les objets des églises au Moyen Âge*, pp. 105–113.

102 ANNALES REGNI FRANCORUM, p. 119; cf. VINCENT, *The Holy Blood. King Henry III and the Westminster Blood Relic*, pp. 54–61.

103 VINCENT, *The Holy Blood. King Henry III and the Westminster Blood Relic*, pp. 146–147.

Abbey in Charroux in Aquitaine. However, we should first briefly present texts earlier than *Liber de constitutione* and talking about the relic of the Holy Cross in Charroux.

At the turn of the tenth and eleventh century, the Miracles of saint Genou were written up in the Abbey of Saint-Genou in L'Éstrée near Bourges.<sup>104</sup> The initial eight chapters of the text briefly present the history of the Franks starting with the fall of the mythical Troy, their original abode, to the time when the Carolingian empire disintegrated in the mid-ninth century.<sup>105</sup> In the fifth chapter,<sup>106</sup> Charlemagne's deeds are presented. This is the earliest known mention that Charlemagne gave a part of the Holy Cross to the monastery in Charroux.<sup>107</sup> The author of the *Miracula Sancti Genulfi* recalls Charlemagne's contacts with the patriarch of Jerusalem and the king of the Persians known from the Carolingian annals or chronicles, yet he does not say that the emperor made an expedition or a pilgrimage to the Holy Land; neither does he say where the relic of the Holy Cross came from. The chronicle of Adémar of Chabannes contains another mention of the cult of the Passion relics in Charroux. The chronicler says that Charroux was called 'saint' ("sanctus Carrofus"), thus venerating the part of the Holy Cross which Charlemagne had been given by the patriarch of Jerusalem and then donated to the monastery.<sup>108</sup>

Adémar used many chronicles and local archives, possibly also the sources connected with the Abbey of Charroux, most probably he also knew *Miracula Sancti Genulfi*, the content of which may have inspired him to call the Abbey of Charroux "sanctus Carrofus." According to the author of the *Miracula Sancti Genulfi*, Charlemagne sanctified the Abbey ("sacravit") through his gift of relics.<sup>109</sup> Interestingly, when writing about the exchange

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104 *MIRACULA SANCTI GENULFI*, pp. 1204–1213.

105 *MIRACULA SANCTI GENULFI*, cap. 1–9, pp. 1204–1207.

106 *MIRACULA SANCTI GENULFI*, cap. 5, p. 1206.

107 "Tunc ergo Lemovicae urbi Rotherium comitem constituit, qui caenobii Karrofensis fundator extitit; quod postea gloriosus rex Karolus de pretiosi portione ligni salutiferae crucis Christi sacravit, de thesauris quoque ac possessionibus propriis nobilissime ditavit, sicuti privilegia testantur de ipsis rebus facta et anuli eius impressione insignita;" *MIRACULA SANCTI GENULFI*, cap. 5, p. 1206.

108 "Denique hoc Crucis lignum de Cruce dominica extat quod Jherosolimorum patriarcha regi Magno Carolo direxerat, et idem imperator in eandem basilica quam condidit Rotgerius, comes Lemovicensis, in honore Salvatoris, reposuit. Locus autem antiquo sermone Gallorum Carrofus vocitabatur ... et deinceps pro reverentia Crucis sanctum Carrofum appellari placuit;" *ADEMARI CABANNENSIS, Chronicon*, lib. III, cap. 40, p. 161.

109 *MIRACULA SANCTI GENULFI*, cap. 5, p. 1206. Georges Pon asks whether some of the chapters of Book III in Ademar's chronicle were written on the basis of the *Miracula Sancti Genulfi* or both texts were inspired by another, today lost, source; cf. *ADEMARI DE CHABANNES, Chronique*, p. 24.



of the envoys by Charlemagne with the patriarch of Jerusalem and the king of the Orient, Abdella, in Book II of the chronicle,<sup>110</sup> Adémar de Chabannes modeled his account on the *Annales regni Francorum*, but did not make any mention that the patriarch sent to the king of the Franks a relic of the Holy Cross; neither did he do that when mentioning in his chronicle the presence of the relics in Charroux for the first time.<sup>111</sup>

However, most of the information about Christ's relics in Charroux can be found in *Liber de constitutione Karrofensis cenobii*,<sup>112</sup> a compilation from the twelfth century that presents all the narrations about founding the Abbey, the charters made out on its behalf – including the forgeries – a catalogue of relics collected in the monastery, and the miracles made with their use, but also one more narration about Charlemagne's expedition to the Holy Land.<sup>113</sup>

When *Liber de constitutione* was written, the most important relic for the Benedictines of Charroux was the Holy Virtue ("sancta virtus") given to Charlemagne by Jesus himself, who appeared in person during the mass in which the emperor was said to have participated in Jerusalem. However, *sancta virtus* (Holy Prepuce) appeared only in the second narration about establishing the Abbey, written after 1045 and before 1082. There are no earlier mentions of that relic, and the first narration on Charroux's origins considers the relic of the Holy Cross<sup>114</sup> as the founding relic of the Abbey; it also mentions the thorn of the Crown of Thorns as one of the relics sent to Charlemagne by the patriarch of Jerusalem and then given by the emperor to the Abbey.<sup>115</sup> The first account on Charroux's origins found

110 ADEMARI CABANNENSIS, *Chronicon*, lib. II, cap. 15, 19, pp. 97, 103.

111 ADEMARI CABANNENSIS, *Chronicon*, lib. III, cap. 23, pp. 144–145.

112 *LIBER DE CONSTITUTIONE KARROFENSIS CENOBII*, pp. 1–85. Recently on that subject: GABRIELE, *An Empire of Memory. The Legend of Charlemagne, the Franks, and Jerusalem before the First Crusade*, pp. 44–51, with bibliography about the early history of Charroux.

113 Analysis of this find with datings of the respective narrations about founding the Abbey: VIGNERAS, *L'abbaye de Charroux et la légende du pèlerinage de Charlemagne*, pp. 121–128.

114 *LIBER DE CONSTITUTIONE KARROFENSIS CENOBII*, pp. 1–7. The chronology of the three narrations about founding the Abbey has been established by VIGNERAS, *L'abbaye de Charroux et la légende du pèlerinage de Charlemagne*, pp. 124–126. On another relic of the Holy Prepuce, attributed to Charlemagne's gift and kept at Sainte-Foy Abbey in Conques see CORDEZ, "Vers un catalogue raisonné des « objets légendaires » de Charlemagne. Le cas de Conques (XIe–XIIe siècles)", pp. 135–167, esp. 150–155; CORDEZ, *Trésor, mémoire, merveilles. Les objets des églises au Moyen Âge*, pp. 105–113.

115 *LIBER DE CONSTITUTIONE KARROFENSIS CENOBII*, p. 5.

in *Liber de constitutione* was probably written after the Maundy Thursday of 1045, when the inventory of the relics stored in the Abbey was made;<sup>116</sup> the inventory does not mention either the thorn from the Crown of Thorns or *sancta virtus*. The author of the first account about founding the Abbey in Charroux says that Charlemagne gave the Abbey the relics of the Holy Cross but says the emperor obtained them from a Breton pilgrim returning from Jerusalem, and the Abbey was not founded by Charlemagne but by his vassal, Roger, the count of Limoges.<sup>117</sup> The second account about founding Charroux<sup>118</sup> was certainly written before the second synod in Charroux of 1082<sup>119</sup> and contains an account of Charlemagne's expedition to Jerusalem, which runs as follows. After consecrating the church in Charroux – to which Charlemagne gave the relic of the Holy Cross called *Bellator*<sup>120</sup> – the Emperor went with his army to the Holy Land to get more relics. During the mass celebrated by the patriarch of Jerusalem, Christ's right hand appeared over the chalice. It first made the sign of the cross and then placed the Holy Virtue on the paten. Seeing such a miraculous phenomenon, the patriarch called the emperor to assist and then, on the right side of the altar, there appeared Christ in the shape of a benignant little boy (“*parvulus benignissimus*”) who asked Charlemagne to accept ‘this little gift of His true flesh and blood.’<sup>121</sup> On returning to France, the emperor deposited *sancta virtus* on the altar of the church in Charroux and changed the name of the Abbey to Saint-Charroux in order to venerate the relic in the best possible way.<sup>122</sup>

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116 The inventory of the relics from the Abbey of Charroux, dated by the author to Maundy Thursday, 1045, in the *LIBER DE CONSTITUTIONE KARROFENSIS CENOBII* can be found only after the third account about the founding of the Abbey, certainly written between 1088 and 1095 (see below); *LIBER DE CONSTITUTIONE KARROFENSIS CENOBII*, pp. 41–45.

117 *LIBER DE CONSTITUTIONE KARROFENSIS CENOBII*, p. 2.

118 *LIBER DE CONSTITUTIONE KARROFENSIS CENOBII*, pp. 7–9.

119 VIGNERAS, *L'abbaye de Charroux et la légende du pèlerinage de Charlemagne*, p. 125.

120 *LIBER DE CONSTITUTIONE KARROFENSIS CENOBII*, p. 7.

121 “*patriarcha Basilio celebrante Missarum solempnia et imperatori catholico flectente genua apparuit super calicem Christi dextera; signans sacra Christi pocula, posuit sanctam virtutem super sacra vasa. Videns ergo patriarcha vas sigillatum Christi dextera, advocat imperatoris presenciam; cumque sereno vultu conspiceret rex piissimus, astitit parti dextere benignissimus parvulus, et dixit pio ore, a uidentis omnibus: O nobilissime princeps, accipe hoc munusculum ex mea vera carne et sanguine;*” *LIBER DE CONSTITUTIONE KARROFENSIS CENOBII*, p. 8.

122 *LIBER DE CONSTITUTIONE KARROFENSIS CENOBII*, p. 9.

The third account was written between 1088 and 1095, and it develops and enriches the earlier storyline. However, it has the Abbey founded not by Roger of Limoges but by Charlemagne himself and it does not mention the relic of the Crown of Thorns.<sup>123</sup>

Eleventh-century accounts connected with founding the Abbey in Charroux are particularly interesting for several reasons. First, they confirm that in the Western European monastic community there existed a hagiographic tradition connecting the donations of Christ's relics with Charlemagne. Second, two of them are dated to the mid-eleventh century but – importantly – are earlier than 1095, and similarly to Benedict of Monte Soratte's, they know the traditional story according to which Charlemagne undertook a military expedition to the Holy Land; although none of them mentions his visit to Constantinople. Third, the first of the accounts mentions “de spinea corona Domini” among the relics given to Charroux by Charlemagne and the dating of this story to the time after 1045 is remarkable, which shall be proved below. It is also important that in the third account about the establishment of the Charroux Abbey, Charlemagne becomes the founder, thus replacing the count of Limoges.<sup>124</sup>

*Libellus de translatione sanguinis Domini* from the Abbey of Reichenau<sup>125</sup>

The thread of diplomatic contacts between Charlemagne's court and the Islamic rulers of the Near East is also mentioned in the account of the translation of the relics of Saviour's Blood written in the Benedictine Reichenau Abbey of Our Lady. The text, called *Libellus de translatione sanguinis Domini*, was probably written in the mid-tenth century during the time of abbot Alawich I (934–958),<sup>126</sup> but the manuscript comes from the eleventh century, so the dating is uncertain. It is not a typical hagiographic account but rather the history of the relic, starting with the time it arrived to Europe when Charlemagne was emperor until the moment the Holy Blood reached Reichenau in 925, given to the Abbey by a female descendant of a powerful Rhaetian family of the Hunfridings to whom it had belonged before.

123 *LIBER DE CONSTITUTIONE KARROFENSIS CENOBII*, pp. 29–40.

124 On the subject, see VIGNERAS, *L'abbaye de Charroux et la légende du pèlerinage de Charlemagne*, pp. 124–125.

125 *EX TRANSLATIONE SANGUINIS DOMINI* (Reichenau), pp. 446\*–449.

126 BERSCHIN, KLÜPPEL, *Die Reichenauer Heiligblut-Reliquie*, p. 15; Georg Waitz also accepts the mid-tenth century as the date when the work was written, in: *EX TRANSLATIONE SANGUINIS DOMINI* (Reichenau), p. 445. Also see WALZ, *Karl der Grosse. Ein verbinderter Seefahrer*, pp. 234–245.

The year 925 marks the first *terminus post quem*: in a charter issued for the monastery in 950 Otto I alludes to the relic of the Holy Blood stored in Reichenau.<sup>127</sup> The proof that the text was written soon after the relic was translated to the Abbey may appear in the relative similarity of some details from *Libellus de translatione sanguinis* with historical reality, but it is not really certain. According to the *Libellus* from Reichenau, upon hearing about Charlemagne's valor and victories, the ruler of Jerusalem, Azan, wanted to make an alliance with him, so he asked the emperor and the pope to meet him, promising Charlemagne a gift of magnificence exceeding anything that the Franks had ever had. Initially, Charlemagne spurned the proposal but, giving in to the pope's persuasion, he agreed to meet the Saracen ruler of Jerusalem in Rome. Unfortunately, during the sea voyage Azan fell ill and stayed in Corsica, from where he sent an envoy to Charlemagne asking him to come meet him there. Fearing the sea, the emperor decided to send to Corsica his envoys: Hunfrid, the margrave of Istria, and Waldo, the abbot of Reichenau. The ruler of Jerusalem kept his word and, through the intermediation of Waldo and Hunfrid, offered the emperor the most holy of the treasures: the Passion relics. These were an onyx ampoule filled with the Saviour's Blood, a small cross ("crucicula") made of gold and jewels – whose four arms also held the Saviour's Blood – with a piece of the Holy Cross in the centre -, another part of the Cross, a stone from the Holy Sepulchre, one of the nails from the Holy Cross, and the Crown of Thorns.<sup>128</sup> Hunfrid and

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127 *DIE URKUNDEN DER DEUTSCHEN KÖNIGE UND KAISER*, no 116, pp. 198–199. On the relics from Reichenau see KLÜPPEL, *Reichenauer Hagiographie zwischen Walahfrid und Berno*, pp. 106–118; BERSCHIN, KLÜPPEL, *Die Reichenauer Heiligblut-Reliquie*; on the cult of the relic of Savior's Blood in medieval Europe: VINCENT, *The Holy Blood. King Henry III and the Westminster Blood Relic*, pp. 31–81, about Reichenau pp. 53–56; TRÂN-DUC, *De l'usage politique du Précieux Sang dans l'Europe médiévale*, pp. 91–92.

128 "Haec sunt ergo illa dona honorabilia cunctoque orbi optatissima, et haec est illa gaza sacrosancta supraque omnes preciositates dignissima, quae de Corsica insula gloriosissimo imperatori Karolo delata est: Ampulla una ex lapide onichino, de Salvatoris sanguine plena. Crucicula una ex auro et gemulis fabrefacta, continens cruorem Christi per quatuor partes inclusum, et in medio portiunculam ligni Domini. Hanc eadem cruciculam, o bone Iesu, tuis modo Augiensibus ad tutelam et solatium nostri mittere dignatus es. Sit tibi, Christe, gloria lausque! Spinea corona, quae caput amabile Redemptoris nostri complexa est. Unus de clavis, qui delectabiles Christi articulos configebant. De ligno quoque Domini, in quo preciosa Christi membra pendebant. De sepulchro Domini, quod salutifero Christi corpusculo consecratum est;" *EX TRANSLATIONE SANGUINIS DOMINI* (Reichenau), cap. 7, p. 447\*.

Waldo went to Sicily where the abbot remained, guarding the relics, and the margrave went to Ravenna to let Charlemagne know about the gifts he obtained. Charlemagne immediately set off with his court, his lords, and his people, barefoot, to Sicily. The emperor's joy was so great that he promised the envoys to give them whatever rewards they asked for: Hunfrid wanted and received the gold cross, which was a reliquary of the Saviour's Blood and part of the Holy Cross; his ancestors gave the treasure to the Abbey of Reichenau in 925.<sup>129</sup>

Our interest focuses on the fate of the other relics and Abbot Waldo rather than the Holy Blood of Reichenau. Unlike Hunfrid, the abbot appreciated earthly honours and asked the emperor not for relics but for the bishoprics of Pavia and Basel, which he was administering temporarily because of the sedesvacancy,<sup>130</sup> and indeed, Waldo did obtain both these seats. As Waldo was very pious, Charlemagne gave him other church clerical posts, including the abbotship of Saint-Denis, where he remained till his death. As the author of *Libellus de translatione* says, Waldo's grave is still respected in Saint-Denis.<sup>131</sup>

Except for the *crucicula aurea*, all the relics from Jerusalem remained in the emperor's possession, including the Holy Nail and the relics of the Crown of Thorns. Having taken them from Sicily, Charlemagne deposited them in his chapel royal ("in sua capella") but then gave part of them away to various churches. The author of *Libellus de translatione* refrains from presenting the later fate of the remaining relics, saying that too many details may make the reader puke with disgust.<sup>132</sup> Thus, the earliest text that says Charlemagne possessed the relics of the Crown of Thorns contains many ambiguities.

Therefore, it seems that the *Libellus* from Reichenau may be an extremely interesting source recounting the early history of the Passion relics from Saint-Denis and, at the same time, quite a mysterious one. It is undoubtedly

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129 *EX TRANSLATIONE SANGUINIS DOMINI* (Reichenau), cap. 13 and 22, pp. 448, 449.

130 *EX TRANSLATIONE SANGUINIS DOMINI* (Reichenau), cap. 3, p. 447.

131 *EX TRANSLATIONE SANGUINIS DOMINI* (Reichenau), cap. 12, pp. 447\*-448.

132 "Quem maxima cum devotione imperator assumens, de ipso secum loco asportavit. Sed quid de ipsa postmodum sanctitate fecerit, hoc est quantam ex eodem thesauro portionem in sua capella semper habendam eximius Dei cultor reposuerit, seu quantulam partem distribuens ad cetera sanctorum loca transmiserit, modo taediosum est explicare, ne ob morosum opusculum ultra modum protelatum fastidiens lector nauisare compellatur;" *EX TRANSLATIONE SANGUINIS DOMINI* (Reichenau), cap. 8, p. 447\*.

the earliest known source connecting the cult of the relic of the Crown of Thorns with Charlemagne; we shall discuss the reliability of this story, which was not only a subsidiary one in the whole narration but also one intentionally avoided by the author, who limited his interest to one of the two reliquaries of the Saviour's Blood. The topic of the alliance and exchange of gifts between Charlemagne and the Muslim prince of Jerusalem seems to indicate that the author of the *Libellus* drew his inspiration from the Carolingian and later Annals but rooted in the Carolingian tradition. This is confirmed both by the exchange of envoys and gifts between Charlemagne's court and Muslim courts and by Charlemagne's devotional connections with the Holy Land and his obtaining of relics. However, the mention of the Crown of Thorns appeared in the *Libellus* for the first time; we do not know any Carolingian chronicle from which the author could derive this information. Is it from the Reichenau Abbey that the news had spread – later used in Saint-Denis – that, besides other relics, Charlemagne also owned part of the Crown of Thorns and the Holy Nail? The author of *Libellus de translatione* is very brief or even unwilling to elaborate on the Crown of Thorns. Indeed, we only learn that the emperor deposited all the relics, except for the *crucicula aurea* which he gave to Hunfrid, in his chapel royal and that he gave part of them to other churches of the Frankish empire. The words “in sua capella ... reposuerit” certainly mean that the author of *Libellus de translatione* from Reichenau believed that the Passion relics became part of the equipment of the emperor's private chapel, the sacred part of the monarch's treasury he took wherever he went.

### **3. Do the Narrations from Charroux, Monte Soratte, and Reichenau Talk About the Origins of the Cult of Passion Relics in the Abbey of Saint-Denis?**

The story by Benedict of Sant' Andrea del Monte Soratte about Charlemagne's expedition to the East is the earliest known account on this subject, and its dating to the times of Otto III is beyond doubt; the chronicle says that one fruit of the expedition was the translation of Saint Andrew's relics to the monastery on Monte Soratte. Thus, we may assume that the story of Charlemagne's expedition to the Holy Land and Byzantium appeared in Benedictine hagiography in ca. 1000; however, without deciding whether it was born in the monastery on Mount Soratte or Latium. There is even a premise which allows to doubt it: Benedict himself acknowledges that he does not know where the relics were deposited within the Abbey church at his time. Therefore, the story about the relics' arrival from the East and their donation to the monastery by Charlemagne could not have been written in order to authenticate the relic since the lack of knowledge about its

location hindered the aspirations of the Abbey of Monte Soratte to become a centre of the pilgrimage movement. Thus, it is hard to assume that it is on Monte Soratte that the story of Charlemagne's translation of the relics from Constantinople was created, since the relics were not there at that time and thus could not be an object of veneration. Describing the translation of the Apostle's relics to Monte Soratte, Benedict probably wanted to give a testimony of the grand past of the Abbey enjoying a special emperor's and pope's protection, and the story of the translation of Saint Andrew relics must have been inspired by another account which either was written when it was still known where Saint Andrew's relics were stored or it was another story, not about Sant' Andrea del Monte Soratte, alleging that Charlemagne made a translation of some precious relics from the East to a completely different sanctuary and under completely different circumstances.

*Libellus de translatione sanguinis Domini* from Reichenau is undoubtedly the most ancient amongst the analyzed sources. The scholars who analyzed this text have so far presented no premise that could date it to later than the mid-tenth century. Thus, this is the earliest account confirming that Charlemagne owned the relics of the Crown of Thorns, but also the only one which does not connect this fact with the emperor's presumed military expedition to the East.

There arises a question whether the indisputable earlier dating of *Libellus* from Reichenau makes this account reliable in regard of Charlemagne's ownership of the Holy Nail and the relics of the Holy Crown and their deposition in the Aachen palace chapel. It seems that the key to answering this question is the reliability of the account concerning the relic of the Holy Blood. *Libellus de translatione sanguinis* from Reichenau contains a considerable amount of true information: concerning Hunfrid and Waldo, as the latter was indeed the bishop of Pavia and of Basel and the abbot of Saint-Denis (from 806) who died there in 813 or 814. The whole thread about Charlemagne's meeting with the Saracen prince of Jerusalem and the emperor's barefoot pilgrimage from Ravenna to Sicily is pure fantasy, yet it may be a story compiled in the tenth century, derived from the knowledge generally functioning in then intellectual milieu, confabulated to explain the origins of the relics.<sup>133</sup> In 804, in Mantua there took place a miraculous *inventio* of the Holy Blood. Charlemagne was interested in the discovery and asked the pope Leo III to find out if the relic was authentic.<sup>134</sup> Later on,

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133 On the similarity of the accounts about the crossing of the Messina Strait in the *Libellus de translatione sanguinis* in Reichenau and the chronicle of Benedict (in Benedict's chronicle *Traversus*, see above), see MONTELEONE, *Il viaggio di Carlo Magno in Terra Santa*, pp. 148–150.

134 ANNALES REGNI FRANCORUM, p. 119.

many sanctuaries in which the Holy Blood was venerated, made their relics legitimate by claiming they were gifts from Charlemagne's treasury, often indicating that they originated from the Mantuan *inventio*.<sup>135</sup> Although the account in the *Annales Laurissenses* does not say so, the later authors using it may have – as Nicholas Vincent notes<sup>136</sup> – drawn from them a conclusion that Leo III brought the relic himself, having arrived to Aachen with the news that Saviour's Blood was indeed found in Mantua. This view does not match the account of the hagiographer from Reichenau, who authenticated the relic with a narration about a gift of a Saracen king of Jerusalem. Abbot Angilbert wrote in *Libellus de ecclesia Centulensi* that Charlemagne donated in his last will parts of all the relics from the palace chapel in Aachen to the Abbey of Saint-Riquier in Centula and made a detailed list of all the Centulan relics, but he did not include the Holy Blood.<sup>137</sup> This puts in considerable doubt the reliability of the account in *Libellus de translatione* about the onyx ampulla with the Saviour's Blood, which Charlemagne was said to have deposited in the palace chapel. Little help in this respect comes from the historical and artistic analysis of the reliquary, because the cross allegedly containing the Saviour's Blood is today a small central part of a Baroque reliquary (1738–1746), determined as Byzantine work, which can be dated to the tenth century<sup>138</sup> – which may suggest that *Libellus* of Reichenau was compiled in ca. 950 – but also possibly to the twelfth or thirteenth century.<sup>139</sup> Meanwhile, the dating of the reliquary cross to the tenth century supports the hypothesis that *Libellus de translatione sanguinis* is a tenth-century hagiographic story, in which the only reliable element is the information about abbot Waldo and about the forefather of the Hunfrid family, based on the family memory of the donors of the relic, probably drawn from the monastery archive records. Thus, if the dating to the twelfth or thirteenth century is accepted, it means that the artefact cannot be in any way helpful in verifying the data contained in *Libellus de translatione sanguinis Domini*.

Thus, can Reichenau *Libellus* be considered as a reliable source confirming that Charlemagne owned the relics of the Crown of Thorns and at least

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135 VINCENT, *The Holy Blood. King Henry III and the Westminster Blood Relic*, pp. 140–141, 144–147.

136 VINCENT, *The Holy Blood. King Henry III and the Westminster Blood Relic*, pp. 146–147.

137 ANGILBERT, *De ecclesia Centulensi libellus*, pp. 175–176.

138 MANSER, BEYERLE, *Aus dem liturgischen Leben der Reichenau*, pp. 361–378, after: VINCENT, *The Holy Blood. King Henry III and the Westminster Blood Relic*, pp. 56 ff., 83.

139 FROLOW, *La relique de la Vraie Croix*, pp. 205–206, no. 75.



partially authenticate Dionysian account as contained in *Descriptio qualiter*? The quoted above *Libellus* of abbot Angilbert of Saint-Riquier does not confirm the presence of the relics of the Crown of Thorns in Aachen. For the Centulan collection, there is only a mention about the relics sent to Charlemagne from Constantinople and Jerusalem and given by the emperor to Centula,<sup>140</sup> and about the nails from the Holy Cross.<sup>141</sup> They were probably given to Centula by Charlemagne, but Angilbert does not specify that, so this has to remain a hypothesis.<sup>142</sup> Moreover, the attribution of the ninth-century Bible as a manuscript coming from Saint-Riquier made by Samuel Berger is hypothetical.<sup>143</sup> In the final part of the second volume there is an inventory of relics made in the ninth century. Berger notes a striking similarity between the initial part of this list<sup>144</sup> to the inventory of the relics from Saint-Riquier made by Angilbert, which makes him claim that the manuscript and the inventory of relics included in it come from Centula.<sup>145</sup> According to this list “in mediano altari” at Saint-Riquier there was the relic of the Crown of Thorns (“de corone spinea domini Ihesu Christi”).<sup>146</sup> Even if we assume that the Bible originated from Saint-Riquier – which is not obvious<sup>147</sup> – this need not mean that during Charlemagne’s reign the relics of the Crown of Thorns were indeed deposited in Saint-Riquier or Aachen. Contrary to the vague suggestion of Percy Ernst Schramm,<sup>148</sup> the relic “de spinea Corona” is recorded in the inventory of the treasury of the Prüm Abbey (1003) as a the pope Sergius II’s (844–847) gift for abbot Markward,<sup>149</sup> and not a Charlemagne’s or Lothar I’s legacy from Aachen.

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140 “Reliquias de Constantinopoli vel Hirosolimis, per legatos illuc a domino meo directas ad nos usque delatas;” ANGILBERT, *De ecclesia Centulensi libellus*, pp. 175.

141 ANGILBERT, *De ecclesia Centulensi libellus*, pp. 176.

142 On Charlemagne’s Aachen collection of relics: SCHIFFERS, *Karls des Grossen Reliquienschatz*; HEN, *Les authentiques des reliques de la Terre Sainte en Gaule franque*, pp. 71–90; also BOZÓKY, *La politique des reliques de Constantin à Saint Louis*, pp. 135–137.

143 BERGER, *Les reliques de l’abbaye de Saint-Riquier*, pp. 1–8.

144 BnF, Ms. Latin 93, fol. 261v°.

145 BERGER, *Les reliques de l’abbaye de Saint-Riquier*, pp. 4–5.

146 BERGER, *Les reliques de l’abbaye de Saint-Riquier*, p. 2.

147 A comparison of the two lists, made by Berger himself (BERGER, *Les reliques de l’abbaye de Saint-Riquier*, p. 4), has not revealed a great similarity of these two texts, especially in their initial parts.

148 SCHRAMM, MÜTHERICH, *Denkmale der Deutschen Könige und Kaiser*, p. 25.

149 URKUNDENBUCH, *Nachtrag*, no. 3, p. 718. It is worth noting that the inventory of the Lateran Sancta Sanctorum, probably made in ca. 798, during the pontificate of Leo III, despite being known in a – much later – late eleventh

Nevertheless, the mention of the Crown of Thorns relic in the ninth-century inventory from a Frankish abbey is worth remembering. Yet, the Prüm inventory shows that the origins of the parts of the Crown of Thorns need not have had anything to do with Charlemagne, neither in reality, nor in the contemporary imagination.<sup>150</sup>

Thus, although *Libellus de translatione sanguinis* from Reichenau Abbey contains some true information, a large part of it is not confirmed by reliable accounts; while some are completely fantastic, like the whole story of how the relics came to the Frankish Kingdom as a Jerusalem king Azan's gift for Charlemagne. Moreover, the author refrains from saying what happened to the Crown of Thorns, along with the other relics which the emperor was said to have received from the Saracen king Azan of Jerusalem. Therefore, it seems necessary to conclude that *Libellus de translatione sanguinis* from Reichenau, despite its relative apparent factual reliability is a hagiographic confabulation from the tenth century written down to add some Carolingian splendor to the relic of the Lord's Blood from Reichenau and, hence, to authenticate it. Lucille Tràn-Duc makes an apt observation that the handing over of the relic to Reichenau by Swanahilde – a descendant of Hunfrid – should be linked with the beginnings of the imperial ideology of the German king Henry I of Saxony who, having threatened the king of Burgundy in 926, obtained from him the Holy Lance and, in 933, would be called emperor after his victory in the Battle of Riade with the Hungarians.<sup>151</sup> The connection between the cult of the Holy Blood with the Liudolfings' imperial ideology is confirmed by the record from the *Annales Magdeburgenses brevissimi*,<sup>152</sup> according to which bishop Anno of Worms,

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century version does not mention the thorns from the Crown of Thorns, which indicates that the Holy See did not have such relics or perhaps did not feel the need to obtain them; cf. *DICTIONNAIRE D'ARCHEOLOGIE CHRETIENNE ET DE LITURGIE*, vol. VIII, part 2, coll. 1610–1656. I was unable to consult the two main, albeit issued a century ago, works on *Sancta Sanctorum*: LAUER, *Le trésor du Sancta Sanctorum* and GRISAR, *Die römische Kapelle Sancta Sanctorum und ihr Schatz*.

150 According to one of the manuscripts of the chronicle (AIMOIN OF FLEURY, *De gestis Francorum*, p. 69), Saint Germain, bishop of Paris, brought from his journey to the East (565) a thorn from the Crown of Thorns, given by the emperor (Justinian I or Justin II); the bishop deposited the relic in the Basilica of Saint Vincent (Sainte-Croix – Saint Vincent) near Paris, the later Abbey of Saint-Germain-des-Prés.

151 TRÀN-DUC, *De l'usage politique du Précieux Sang dans l'Europe médiévale*, p. 98.

152 “[973] Nonis Iunii. Eodem die preciosissimus thesaurus sanguinis Domini per Annonem episcopum iubente domino Ottone augusto, immo annuente

at the request of Otto the Great's (Henry I's son), brought from Italy the relic of the Holy Blood in 973 for Magdeburg. Even though there is no direct proof, we cannot exclude that Swanahilde's donation for the royal abbey was an enforced or voluntary element in the construction of Henry I's imperial image.

However, this is not the last research problem, for there arises the question of how the topic of the origins of the Crown of Thorn – a relic never mentioned in Carolingian chronicles from the ninth century – appeared in the scriptorium of the Abbey of Reichenau in the mid-tenth century. After all, besides a short period of greater interest in the fifth century, when it suddenly appeared in the Jerusalem sanctuaries,<sup>153</sup> this relic did not play any important part in the medieval Passion devotion. As it seems, the earliest information about the Crown of Thorns in Constantinople can be found in chapter XIII of the Primary Chronicle, which says that emperor Leo VI (886–912) ordered in 912 to show the envoys of the Rus' prince Oleg the Passion relics, including the Crown of Thorns.<sup>154</sup> However, taking into account the date when the Chronicle was written, it is worthy noting that it may rather reflect the reality of the eleventh or twelfth century. In the letter to the army strategoi of the East from 958, the emperor Constantine VII Porphyrogenetos mentioned the Passion relics from the emperor's palace chapel, but he did not list the Crown of Thorn among them,<sup>155</sup> which may indicate that the relic was not part of the emperor's collection of relics in Constantinople at that time. Some researchers believe that the relic was translated from Jerusalem to Constantinople as late as between the last quarter of the tenth and the end of the eleventh century.<sup>156</sup> During the reign of John I Tzimiskes (969–976), a staurotheke with the thorn from the Crown of Thorns was made in Constantinople – from 1204 stored in the Limburg Cathedral – but this is not a sufficient evidence to assume that the Crown of

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domino Iesu Christo ab Italia Magadaburgum translatus est;" *ANNALES MAGDEBURGENSES BREVISSIMI*, p. 750.

153 In ca. 400 the Crown of Thorns was seen in Jerusalem by Paulinus of Nola; in 570 it was in the Church of Zion (Basilica of the Apostles on Mount Zion); see FLUSIN, *Les reliques de la Sainte-Chapelle et leur passé impérial à Constantinople*, p. 22.

154 *THE PRIMARY CHRONICLE*, p. 30.

155 See FLUSIN, *Les reliques de la Sainte-Chapelle et leur passé impérial à Constantinople*, pp. 27.

156 DOR, *Les reliquaires de la Passion en France du V<sup>e</sup> au XV<sup>e</sup> siècle*, p. 226, makes a supposition that it could have taken place in 1063 when emperor Constantine X Doukas ordered to move all the Passion relics from Constantinople to the Sacred Palace.

Thorns was then in Constantinople or that its cult was sufficiently important to inspire *Libellus* from Reichenau. Only during the reign of Constantine X Doukas (1059–1067) it is certain that the relics of the Crown of Thorns were stored in Constantinople imperial chapel. According to bishop Benzo of Alba, whose information was later confirmed by the Byzantine historian Ioannes Zonaras, Constantine Doukas sent German emperor Henry IV the relics “de sudario Domini, de Cruce, de Corona spinea.”<sup>157</sup> Unquestionably, the last quarter of the eleventh century is the time when the mentions of the Crown of Thorns in Constantinople are much more frequent than ever both in the Byzantine and Western writings before. Besides Benzo of Alba and Ioannes Zonaras, two anonymous Latin pilgrims and the apocryphal letter of Alexios I Komnenos (1081–1118) to Robert the Frisian, count of Flanders, mention the relic of the Crown of Thorns. The crusader chronicler of the count of Toulouse Raymond of Saint-Gilles, writes that Alexios I persuaded the leaders of the first crusade to make an oath “super crucem et spineam coronam” that they will hand back to the Empire all the lands and fortresses won from the Muslims, which used to belong to the emperor of Constantinople.<sup>158</sup>

From the twelfth century there are several pilgrimage stories from Constantinople in which the Crown is mentioned.<sup>159</sup> We should note the increased number of mentions that the Crown of Thorns found in Byzantium at the time when the stories from *Descriptio qualiter* were gaining popularity in the West. However, these mentions are certainly too late to assume that they inspired the narrations about the translation of the Crown of Thorns to the West.<sup>160</sup> We may surmise that the stories circulating in the West inspired the growth of interest in this relic and, thus, of its mentions in pilgrimage stories. If this is so, it seems that Constantinople should not be considered as the place from which the direct inspiration for the topic of the Crown of Thorns in the *Libellus de translatione sanguinis* from Reichenau came. Rather, the increasing interest in Western Europe in the Crown of Thorns resulted in the appearance of this relic in Constantinople,

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157 BENZO OF ALBA, *Ad Heinricum imperatorem*, lib. I, cap. 17, lib. VI, cap. 4, pp. 606, 664; cf. IOANNES ZONARAS, *Epitomae historiarum*, lib. XVIII, cap. 8.

158 *LIBER DE RAYMOND D'AGUILERS*, p. 93.

159 So-called Anonymus Mercati oraz Anonymus Tarragonensis 55; cf. FLUSIN, *Les reliques de la Sainte-Chapelle et leur passé impérial à Constantinople*, pp. 32–34.

160 Cf. *BYZANCE ET LES RELIQUES DU CHRIST*, especially: MAGDALINO, *L'Église du Phare et les reliques de la Passion à Constantinople*, pp. 15–30.

on condition that the authenticity of the mention in the Primary Chronicle is excluded.

There are some later, twelfth-century mentions made in English sources about the Crown of Thorns concerning the time when *Libellus de translatione* from Reichenau was written. William of Malmesbury says that when courting king Aethelstan of Wessex' sister in 926 the duke of the Franks, Hugh the Great, offered through the envoys numerous gifts to the English monarch, which included a part of the Crown of Thorns.<sup>161</sup> Half a century later, *Abingdon Chronicle* confirms this information but dates the event to 939; that is, the final year of the king's life.<sup>162</sup> Despite the lively contacts between the Saxon monarchy, the Robertians of West Frankish Kingdom, and the Wessex court, the event was not reflected in any known German or even French sources, so even assuming that the Chronicles of Abingdon and William of Malmesbury are reliable, it is difficult to believe that the sending of the relics of the Crown of Thorns to king Aethelstan inspired the author of *Libellus de translatione sanguinis* from Reichenau to place the Crown of Thorns on the list of relics mentioned in his text.<sup>163</sup>

In other words, it is impossible to find the literary inspiration or event that would precede the rather sudden appearance of the Crown of Thorns' relics in the hagiographic story from Reichenau. Thus, the only possible and convincing explanation is a different one. According to the quite reliable inventory from Prüm Abbey, parts of the Crown of Thorns were among the numerous Passion relics circulating in the West at least until the mid-ninth century. The inventory of the relics written down in the ninth-century

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161 Besides the part of the Crown of Thorns and numerous jewels, Hugh is said to have also sent Aethelstan the sword of Constantine the Great, the lance of Charlemagne, the banner of Saint Maurice, and a fragment of the True Cross; WILLIAM OF MALMESBURY, *Gesta regum Anglorum* (1852), lib. II, cap. 135, pp. 460.

162 CHRONICON MONASTERII DE ABINGDON, vol. I, p. 88, vol. II, pp. 276–277.

163 Laura Hibbard Loomis considers the list of relics handed over by William of Malmesbury as entirely reliable: LOOMIS, *The Holy Relics of Charlemagne and King Athelstan. The Lance of Longinus and St Maurice*, pp. 437–456. Her arguments are discussed in a very convincing paper by Aleksandra Czapelska, in whose opinion William's account is a literary procedure aimed at presenting Athelstan as an Anglo-Saxon equivalent of Charlemagne: CZAPELSKA, *Aethelstan spadkobiercą Karola Wielkiego?*, pp. 158–171. However, Czapelska allows that the chronicle from Abingdon may be reliable (the chronicle mentions the gift of a branch from the Crown of Thorns) because it mentions that Athelstan received the West Frankish envoys; CZAPELSKA, *Aethelstan spadkobiercą Karola Wielkiego?*, p. 165.

Frankish Bible of unknown origin is an additional confirmation. The abbot of Prüm obtained the relic of the Crown from pope Sergius II during his pilgrimage to Rome. Thus, the author of *Libellus* from Reichenau mentioned the Crown of Thorns among the Passion relics Charlemagne obtained from the Saracen ruler. Although, which can be easily seen, the author did not attach much importance to the relic, since other relics such as the Holy Cross and the Holy Blood of the Lord held a much higher reverence at that time and long afterward.<sup>164</sup>

The tenth and eleventh centuries saw a growing interest in the Crown of Thorns. This is clearly visible also in the iconography of the Crucified Christ, whose head began in the eleventh and twelfth century to be crowned with a thorn wreath and sometimes also with an imperial or royal crown.<sup>165</sup> One of the earliest examples is the crucifix from Vercelli, on which Christ is wearing an imperial-like crown, possibly a gift of Otto III to his chancellor Leo, the bishop of Vercelli. If this is so, then the gift was given in order to crown the Crucified Christ.<sup>166</sup> This phenomenon certainly coincided with the spread of stories about the translation of the Crown of Thorns both in hagiographic and lay vernacular literature.

The importance of *Libellus de translatione sanguinis Domini* from Reichenau, like the hagiographic narrations from *Liber de constitutione Karrofensis cenobii*, has other foundations than its factual authenticity.

Besides the similarity of some threads, the hagiographic accounts from Charroux, Reichenau, Sant'Andrea del Monte Soratte, and Saint-Denis have one interesting common feature: they come from Benedictine abbeys which played an important part in the Carolingian and sometimes also Ottonian or early Capetian policy. In the ninth century, the monastery of Sant'Andrea del Monte Soratte, together with the Abbeys of Farfa and San Salvatore in Rieti, was an important imperial foundation and one of the ecclesiastical pillars of the imperial power in Latium. After having been rebuilt after the Saracen destruction in 946 by Alberic, the prince of Rome, the monastery maintained its importance during the reign of Otto III, when Benedict's chronicle was written. Reichenau was one of the main centres of spiritual, intellectual, and artistic life in Carolingian and Ottonian Europe.

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164 According to the first authors who used the information about the translation of Saviour's Blood to Reichenau, Marianus Scottus (MARIANUS SCOTTUS, *Chronicon*, p. 553) and Sigebert of Gembloux (SIGEBERT OF GEMBOUX, *Chronicon*, p. 346), the Holy Blood from Reichenau came from the miraculous *effluviu*m from the icon representing Christ, stored in Beirut.

165 MERCURI, *Les reflets sur l'iconographie de la translation de la couronne d'Épines*, pp. 118–119.

166 SCHRAMM, *Herrschaftszeichen und Staatssymbolik*, tabl. 72, fig. 96, a and b.

In the ninth, tenth, and eleventh century, the Abbey in Charroux was protected by the Carolingian kings, then dukes of Aquitaine, and played an important part in maintaining the spiritual and political identity of this region: its importance is evidenced by a series of Aquitanian synods held in Charroux Abbey in 989, 1028, 1082, and 1086.

The Abbey of Saint-Denis fits in this paradigm very well. Its original, early medieval founder, Saint Geneviève, had been forgotten for very long time and replaced as the Abbey's true founder by king Dagobert I, who retained the prestige of the main benefactor of the Abbey. Saint-Denis played an important role during the early Carolingian era: under the reigns of Charles Martel (717–741) Pepin the Short (741/751–768) – both of them were buried in the Abbey next to late Merovingian kings – Charlemagne (768–814), and Louis the Pious (814–840). The abbot of Saint-Denis, as the royal, then imperial archchaplain, was a personage of greatest political and ecclesiastical importance in the Carolingian court in the eighth and ninth century, which is well exemplified by abbots Fulrad (750/757–784) and Hilduin (814–841). However, it was Charles the Bald who had an especially good record in the memory and history of the Abbey, being considered as one of the greatest benefactors whose contribution was equal to that of Dagobert I. As the palace of Charles the Bald was located close by and the emperor's body – brought from Nantua where it had been originally deposited – was buried in Saint-Denis, the Abbey could aspire to the role of a new Aachen in the West Frankish kingdom. In fact, Charles aimed certainly to establish Compiègne his true imperial capital city, having called it *Karopolis* (Charles's City – a new Aachen, and a Western Constantinople) – but as he died soon after the pope John VIII had consecrated the *Karopolitan* Abbey of Our Lady (modelled on imperial Aachen and Constantinople Our Lady Palace Chapels), and the project was abandoned. In the tenth century, Saint-Denis began to lose its importance, and the process was exacerbated in the mid-eleventh when the count of Vexin – theoretically a liege of the Abbey – became the avowee of the monastery, which underwent the effective mediatisation of the monastery for a short time. Fortunately, when the last count, Simon de Crépy, abandoned lay life in 1077, that king Philip I incorporated French Vexin into his domain. From then on, Saint-Denis became again directly subordinated to the king, and its role in building the religious foundations and creating the historical memory of the Capetian dynasty was soon to grow rapidly; it was decisive in shaping them from the twelfth till the fifteenth century.

In other words, together with Charroux, Reichenau, and Sant'Andrea del Monte Soratte, the Abbey of Saint-Denis makes up the group of Benedictine abbeys with a magnificent Carolingian tradition, whose tenth- and eleventh-century hagiographical or historical narrations – inspired by the Carolingian

annals and chronicles – might have suggested that Charlemagne had initiated or played an important part in the translations from the Holy Land or Constantinople of the relics venerated in each of these Abbeys. The case is slightly different for the Holy Shroud of Compiègne. The monastery in Compiègne did not follow the Benedictine but the Augustian order, existing from the seventh century. In 875, Compiègne became an important foundation of Charles the Bald, making up a single complex with the Charles's imperial palace. After Charles's death (877) and the growing decline of the royal power in the West Frankish Kingdom, Compiègne was slowly, but inexorably, losing its importance, and became rather local sanctuary. And it is in Compiègne that a narration attributing the translation of the important Passion relic (the Holy Shroud) to Charles the Bald first appeared.<sup>167</sup>

Except for the chronicle of Benedict from Monte Soratte, all the narrations mention Passion relics. The accounts from Monte Soratte, Saint-Denis, and the two later ones from Charroux say that Charlemagne went on an expedition to the Holy Land and Constantinople. The lack of mention of this expedition in *Libellus de translatione sanguinis* from Reichenau is probably due to the fact that this narration is the earliest of them all. One cannot overlook the fact that Charlemagne is presented as a crusader to the Holy Land only in the second narration from Charroux, what proves that in Charlemagne's historical memory as created in Saint-Sauveur Abbey the crusade topic was included later than that of the translation of the Passion relics to the Abbey.

The first narration on Charroux's foundation – written between 1045 and 1082 – mentions the part of the Crown of Thorn among the relics venerated in Saint-Sauveur Abbey. The most convincing datings of Saint-Denis *Descriptio* – made by Léon Levillain<sup>168</sup> and Rolf Grosse<sup>169</sup> – suggest the mid- or second half of the 1040s. This date is surprisingly similar with the upper chronological limit for the compilation of the two first narrations

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167 MOREL, *Le Saint Suaire de Saint-Corneille de Compiègne*, p. 21, quotes the F. du Chesne's edition of *HISTORIAE FRANCORUM SCRIPTORES COAETANEI*, vol. III, p. 335, *Fragmentum Historiae Francicae a Ludovico Pio ad regem Robertum*, dated to the eleventh century, where Charles the Bald is presented as the donor of the Holy Shroud. It is impossible to establish whether the alleged Holy Shroud in the Abbey of Saint Corneille in Compiègne appeared earlier than the Holy Nail of the True Cross and the thorns of the Crown of Thorns in Saint-Denis, at the same time, or later; see below. On the importance of Compiègne in the Carolingian tradition cf. SCHNEIDMÜLLER, *Karolingische Tradition*, pp. 101–105.

168 LEVILLAIN, *Essai sur les origines du Lendit*, pp. 241–276.

169 GROSSE, *Reliques du Christ et foires de Saint-Denis au XI<sup>e</sup> siècle*, pp. 357–375.



from Charroux. Therefore, it seems that there were two stories, very likely emerged at the turn of the tenth and eleventh centuries but still separate. One recounted Charlemagne's expedition to the Holy Land and Constantinople, fully outlined in the chronicle of Benedict of Sant'Andrea del Soratte, while the other one ascribed to Charlemagne the translation of the relics of the Crown of Thorns to France, which originated from *Libellus de translatione sanguinis Domini* from Reichenau. The two stories seem to have merged in the mid-eleventh century in France, probably in Saint-Denis.

According to Matthew Gabriele<sup>170</sup> the origins of *Descriptio* should be connected with the incorporation of the county of Vexin into the Capetian royal domain and the resulting king's takeover of the connected advocateship of the Abbey of Saint-Denis, but also the translation of the Holy Shroud stored in the monastery of Saint-Corneille in Compiègne to a new reliquary (1079), in which king Philip I took part. Undoubtedly, the Abbey of Saint-Corneille in Compiègne was important for Philip I. In 1085, he presided over a synod of bishops of Northern France and issued a charter by which the king confirmed that the canons of Saint-Corneille are free from the local bishop's authority.<sup>171</sup> In turn, with a charter of 1092 Philip I granted the Abbey the right to make an annual fair on Mid-Lent Sunday, i.e., on the anniversary of the translation.<sup>172</sup> For Gabriele, the Compiègne fair seems similar to Saint-Denis Lendit fair due to the similarity of the liturgical period in which it is said to take place (spring Ember days) and the way in which its date was established (*festum anniversarium* of the translation of the Abbey's major relics).<sup>173</sup> According to Gabriele, it was Compiègne and the Holy Shroud – allegedly offered by Charles the Bald – that inspired Philip I to create the pseudo-Carolingian tradition of the translation of the Crown of Thorns and the Holy Nail to Saint-Denis, but also of the *ostensio reliquiarum* in the Abbey. Gabriele indicates that it is after the translation of the Holy Shroud from Compiègne that Carolingian names began to appear in the dynasty: that of future Louis VI (born in 1081) and of his alleged younger brother, Charles (who died as a child). It would be an intentional imitation of Charles the Bald who gave his sons the same names in the same

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170 GABRIELE, *The Provenance of the Descriptio qualiter Karolus Magnus*; GABRIELE, *An Empire of Memory. The Legend of Charlemagne, the Franks, and Jerusalem before the First Crusade*; see above.

171 RECUEIL DES ACTES DE PHILIPPE I, no 117; CARTULAIRE DE SAINT-CORNEILLE DE COMPIÈGNE, no. 17, pp. 41–43.

172 RECUEIL DES ACTES DE PHILIPPE I, no 175; CARTULAIRE DE SAINT-CORNEILLE DE COMPIÈGNE, no. 22, pp. 52–54.

173 GABRIELE, *The Provenance of the Descriptio qualiter Karolus Magnus*, pp. 98–102.

order. The other inspiration for Philip I's Carolingian ambitions – besides the Holy Shroud in Compiègne – was supposedly the Carolingian descent of the king's first wife, Bertha of Holland, and his sister in law, Adele of Vermandois. Moreover, the charters issued for the former Carolingian *loca memoriae*, which lost their importance in the eleventh century, such as the monasteries in Charroux, Saint-Maur-les-Fossés, Compiègne, or Senlis, but also the charter confirming the privileges of the Saint-Denis Abbey, in which the king mentioned his Merovingian and Carolingian forefathers but omitted his direct ancestors.<sup>174</sup> According to Gabriele, *Descriptio* could not have been written in Saint-Denis, because it was allegedly unknown in the Abbey before the mid-twelfth century.<sup>175</sup> It would be only Suger's successor, abbot Odo of Deuil (1151–1162) who knew *Descriptio qualiter*. Indeed, it is known that Odo took advantage of the content of *Descriptio* to find out about the origins of the Christ's Tunic, possessed by Saint-Denis's filial church in Argenteuil or to justify the Abbey's claims for the landed property in the province of Berry. Gabriele believes that Suger would find the contents of *Descriptio* rather troublesome for him, because the abbot never claimed that the Abbey possessed a part of the True Cross received from Charles the Bald, but Suger did insist that the Abbey had the arm of Saint Simeon which, as *Descriptio* says, remained in Aachen. Suger and his predecessor, Adam, would not venerate Charlemagne's memory, considering rather Dagobert I and Charles the Bald as the main founders and the greatest benefactors of the Abbey.<sup>176</sup> However, this argument is particularly

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174 GABRIELE, *The Provenance of the Descriptio qualiter Karolus Magnus*, pp. 110–111; *RECUEIL DES ACTES DE PHILIPPE I*, no. 40.

175 GABRIELE, *The Provenance of the Descriptio qualiter Karolus Magnus*, pp. 103–104; similarly, GABRIELE, *An Empire of Memory. The Legend of Charlemagne, the Franks, and Jerusalem before the First Crusade*, pp. 61–62. In fact Matthew Gabriele accepts and repeats the argumentation of BROWN, COTHREN, *The Twelfth-Century Crusading Window of the Abbey of Saint-Denis*, pp. 1–40, especially pp. 26–27. The latter authors do not so much exclude the emergence or even knowledge of the *Descriptio qualiter* in Saint-Denis in Suger's time, as rather raise doubts (considered by Gabriele as the decisive issue) arising from the difference in Suger's account on Carolingian Passion relics of Saint-Denis, and consider the dating as more likely both the acceptance of the *Descriptio qualiter* account in Saint-Denis and the creation of so-called Crusade Window of Saint-Denis (representing Charlemagne as a crusader), to the time of Abbot Odo of Deuil, or more precisely, to ca. 1158.

176 GABRIELE, *The Provenance of the Descriptio qualiter Karolus Magnus*, pp. 103–104; likewise, GABRIELE, *An Empire of Memory. The Legend of Charlemagne, the Franks, and Jerusalem before the First Crusade*, pp. 54, 61, no. 83.

inappropriate: it is *Descriptio* which confirms that Saint-Denis owed the Passion relics to Charles the Bald. Moreover, when mentioning the story of the tunic of Argenteuil, Gabriele himself writes that the abbot Odo of Deuil – who compiled the story about the translation of this relic from the East on the basis of *Descriptio* – failed to recall Charles the Bald.<sup>177</sup> It is true that Suger never alluded to *Descriptio* in his writings, but there are some very important premises that suggest he knew it very well, such as the charter issued in 1124 by Louis VI at the abbot's request, which conveys an open reference to the content of the *Descriptio*.<sup>178</sup> The second, and undoubtedly stronger argument is the charter issued by Suger in ca. 1140, in which the abbot instructs his monks to celebrate an *anniversarium* in honour of Charles the Bald as one of the main founders by explaining that, besides many other valuable gifts, landed property, and jewels, he gave Saint-Denis the Crown of Thorns and the Holy Nail of the Cross (and Saint Simeon's arm).<sup>179</sup> Thus, the argument that – in Gabriele's opinion – Suger did not know *Descriptio* actually answers the question why Suger did not mention the apocryphon: partly because it denies the latter's claims about the relics possessed by Saint-Denis and partly because it had been written much earlier and reflects a different reality, e.g., one in which the Abbey did not possess the relics of Saint Simeon.

However, the claim that *Descriptio qualiter* was not known in Saint-Denis before the mid-twelfth century is of secondary importance in Gabriele's reasoning. His main suggestion is to assign to Philip I – instead of the Abbey of Saint-Denis – the pivotal role in resurrecting the Carolingian aspirations of the Capetian dynasty and merging the new trend in the royal policy. Gabriele seems to be right in stressing these elements of *Descriptio qualiter* that add sacredness to the king: the actual performer of the translation for whom and by whose prayers there occur the miracles authenticating

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177 Unfortunately, this source is only a manuscript: QUEEN'S COLLEGE, MS. 348, fol. 48v°-65v°; see GABRIELE, *The Provenance of the Descriptio qualiter Karolus Magnus*, p. 94; GABRIELE, *An Empire of Memory. The Legend of Charlemagne, the Franks, and Jerusalem before the First Crusade*, p. 61.

178 About this privilege, see below, and also more in Part 2, Chapter 2 "The Participation of the First Capetian Kings in the Cult of Relics (Tenth to Eleventh Centuries)" in this volume.

179 SUGER, *Oeuvres complètes, Chartes*, no X, pp. 349–360, here: pp. 355–356: "Quid est enim quod tantus imperator et tam familiaris, et praecordialis beati Dionysii amicus promereri non valeat, qui ejus ecclesiam tot et tantas possessionibus nobilitavit, tot auri et pretiosarum gemmarum ornamentis declaravit, insuper ad cumulum omnium bonorum insignibus Dominicæ passionis videlicet clavo et corona Domini et brachio sancti senis Symeonis tamquam splendidissimo veri solis jubare irradiantem, celeberrime insignivit?"

the relics and the miraculous healings. Gabriele also aptly notes the differences between *Descriptio* and the other texts that describe the Lord's relics from the East – the chronicle of Benedict of Monte Soratte or the narrations from Charroux – which mainly aim at sanctifying the place to which the translation was made rather than its author, the monarch, as it is done in *Descriptio*. However, in his discussion Gabriele omits certain facts. In the second narration recounting the founding the Abbey in Charroux Christ himself appears in front of Charlemagne and personally offers him *sancta virtus*: can there be a better proof of direct relations of the monarch with the Divinity?<sup>180</sup> It is also not true that no miracles legitimating the place of the translation are mentioned in *Descriptio qualiter*.<sup>181</sup> they happen both in Aachen and in Saint-Denis. During the translation itself, then the first *Indictum* in Aachen, there occurred many healings and, after the translation and the *Indictum* in Saint-Denis, the famine and plague were stopped. To sum up, while we may agree with Gabriele's main claim that the guiding idea of *Descriptio qualiter* is the sanctification of the Capetian royal power – and I will discuss and enrich this topic by new observations elsewhere – we cannot accept the claim that the place of the final translation of the Crown of Thorns, the Abbey of Saint-Denis, was not important in the narration.<sup>182</sup> Gabriele's arguments about the renewal of the Carolingian ideology during the reign of Philip I are important and apt. Nevertheless, they do not the sufficient proof that it was the Capetian royal milieu that inspired Saint-Denis Abbey's claim to possess the Passion relics brought from Constantinople by Charlemagne and given to the monastery by Charles the Bald. Philip I's relations with the Abbey, probably stronger than his father's, were still not strong enough for the king – who, according to Gabriele, tried to become the true successor and continuator of the

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180 In GABRIELE, *An Empire of Memory. The Legend of Charlemagne, the Franks, and Jerusalem before the First Crusade*, pp. 50–51, the author notes this fact but makes no new conclusions.

181 GABRIELE, *The Provenance of the Descriptio qualiter Karolus Magnus*, p. 111.

182 “One could remove the religious houses from the „Descriptio qualiter” and the account would still stand as a story about Charlemagne's legendary journey to the East, with Charles the Bald as continuator of Charlemagne's legacy, and the current patron of Saint-Corneille and Saint-Denis (Philip I) as continuator of that Carolingian legacy. One could not, however, remove the rulers. This narrative tells a story about a ruler, his activities, and his relics;” GABRIELE, *The Provenance of the Descriptio qualiter Karolus Magnus*, p. 110. The same entirely groundless claim, and one probably resulting from careless reading of the source, returns in GABRIELE, *An Empire of Memory. The Legend of Charlemagne, the Franks, and Jerusalem before the First Crusade*, p. 62.

Carolingian tradition through *Descriptio qualiter*<sup>183</sup> – choose Saint-Denis as his burial place, even if he would have rested beside the Christ's relics, whose translation story would be to legitimize Philip's Carolingian aspirations. It seems more probable that some threads of neo-Carolingian myth manifested in several aspects of Philip's reign ideology became part of the ideological climate of the eleventh century – the epoch when the memory about the Carolingians was created anew<sup>184</sup> – and their manifestation in relation to the Abbeys of Compiègne or Saint-Denis seems to be inscribed in the neo-Carolingian model perceptible in the monastic milieu from which the Passion relics narrations we analyzed above originated.<sup>185</sup>

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183 GABRIELE, *The Provenance of the Descriptio qualiter Karolus Magnus*, pp. 110, 112–114; GABRIELE, *An Empire of Memory. The Legend of Charlemagne, the Franks, and Jerusalem before the First Crusade*, pp. 58–70.

184 See e.g. GEARY, *Phantoms of Remembrance. Memory and Oblivion at the End of the First Millennium*, especially pp. 150–169; REMENSNYDER, *Remembering Kings Past. Monastic Foundation Legends in Medieval Southern France*; GABRIELE, *An Empire of Memory. The Legend of Charlemagne, the Franks, and Jerusalem before the First Crusade*, pp. 23–30.

185 The argument for the second most important Matthew Gabriele's theorem, concerning the alleged Norman provenience of the *Descriptio qualiter* (GABRIELE, *The Provenance of the Descriptio qualiter Karolus Magnus*, pp. 105–109) is quite unconvincing. The effective relations of the Capetian kingship under Philip I's reign with the Duchy of Normandy are irrefutable: the founder of the new reliquary for the Holy Shroud from Compiègne, queen of William the Conqueror, Matilda of Flanders, was Philip's niece; one of the most important aims of Philip's policy was to introduce royal control over Normandy and to restore a direct Capetian seniority over the Duchy (especially after Normandy's personal union with England was broken between 1087 and 1106); the French Vexin, freshly incorporated to the Capetian domain, neighbored the Norman Vexin; Philip I tried to establish seniorial relations with the Norman Church which is evidenced by the royal charters for the Abbey of Le Bec of 1069–1092; Philip I succeeded to persuade the archbishop of Rouen to consider him as his senior; finally, property interests of the Abbeys of Saint-Denis and Saint-Corneille in Normandy. Yet, it is very difficult to convincingly connect all these political, ecclesiastical or economical bonds with the effective durability of the Carolingian memories among the Norman elites, although clearly indicated by unquestionable facts: the earliest manuscript of the *Song of Roland* and the only known manuscript of *Pèlerinage de Charlemagne* (lost since 19th century) are of Norman origin. Gabriele's conclusions are not supported by any evidence and cannot be treated as anything but an impressive intellectual proposal. What is the most bizarre in Gabriele's theorem, is that the hypothetical Norman origin of the *Descriptio qualiter* should confirm that the text was written at the inspiration of Philip I (*sic!*), consequently to the king's

All these narrations were created in important royal monasteries and – except for the chronicle from Monte Soratte in which the story of Saint Andrew’s relics is just one of the elements of the history of the Abbey – they all focused on the Passion relics, *ab antiquo* considered in the Christian doctrine as the signs of Christ’s kingship; as evidenced by, among other works, the hymn *Vexilla Regis prodeunt* by Venantius Fortunatus, composed to celebrate the translation of a part of the Holy Cross by emperor Justin II (569?) to a Merovingian queen-nun, Saint Radegund. However, each of these abbeys had its unique character resulting from, among other things, its relations with the monarchy. Certainly, it was the Abbey of Saint-Denis that had the closest links with the monarchy both in the past and at the discussed time; for example, due to its geographical proximity to the centre of the Capetian royal power. The Abbey of Saint-Denis was also the most successful in stressing those links; among other things, thanks to the royal burials *ad sanctos*. Thus, Saint-Denis should be indicated as the place where the narrations connected with the hagiographical legend of the translation of the Crown of Thorns to the West could have been synthesized. Namely, this relic, the most royal of all the holy insignia of Christ, was the most effective in making the Abbey of Saint-Denis the *locus sanctus* of the Kingdom of France, the institutional depository of the sanctity of the monarch as the earthly image of Christ.<sup>186</sup> This is an argument *ex post*, but one we cannot disregard: Saint-Denis made the greatest contribution to spreading the account of the Carolingian translation of the Crown of Thorns and – in the twelfth century – became the forge of the royal historical memory and ideology. In the consecutive years, the Abbey

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relations with Normandy, in turn the alleged Norman origin of the apocryphon is for Matthew Gabriele one of the main arguments for Philip’s political patronage of the *Descriptio*.

186 Noteworthy, there is so-called *Zapiska plocka* about the discovery of a reliquary made of an ostrich egg hidden in the choir during the redevelopment of the Płock Cathedral in 1148. The reliquary contained numerous relics, including a thorn from the Crown of Thorns. The reliquary was described as very old, so it should be connected with the foundation and consecration of the Płock Cathedral in 1075 – the period immediately preceding the coronation of Bolesław II the Bold (the Generous), who could obviously have been the donor of the relics. If this is so, one should ask whether this gift may be connected to the possible reception of a *par excellence* royal cult of the Crown of Thorns or its Carolingian legend, known, as we are aware of, to Benzo, the bishop of Alba, and thus also to the court of Henry IV; cf. KOZŁOWSKA-BUDKOWA, *Płockie zapiski o cudach z r. 1148*, pp. 341–348. I would like to thank Professor Roman Michałowski for drawing my attention to the possibility of the above interpretation.

was to become the ideological pillar of the Capetian dynasty. Saint-Denis also became a broadly acclaimed authority as a Carolingian *locus memoriae*, because *Descriptio qualiter Karolus Magnus Clavum et Coronam a Constantinopoli Aquisgrani detulerit qualiterque Karolus Calvus hæc ad Sanctum Dionysium retulerit* became a direct or indirect source for all the later authors recounting Charlemagne's expedition to the Holy Land and Constantinople, and the translation of the Crown of Thorns to France.





## Chapter 2. The Reception of *Descriptio qualiter* Until the Reign of Saint Louis: *Iter Hierosolimitanum Karoli Magni*<sup>1</sup>

At the turn of the eleventh and twelfth century, the story of Charlemagne's expedition to the Holy Land and Constantinople was becoming generally known in Gaul. Suffice to say that, according to the author of an account of the First Crusade, *Gesta Francorum et aliorum Hierosolimitanorum*, the crusaders from Gaul followed the same route to Constantinople as Charlemagne had before them.<sup>2</sup> Already the pope Urban II described Charlemagne in his speech at the synod in Clermont (1095) as an archetypical crusader.<sup>3</sup> The accounts of Charlemagne's expedition to the East and of the translation of the Passion relics to France – sometimes presented jointly and sometimes separately – began to appear in French courtly literature to be later adopted by other countries. In the early twelfth century, also some of the French chroniclers and hagiographers believed that the

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- 1 From now on, I will use the name *Iter Hierosolimitanum Karoli Magni* to denote an assemblage of accounts depending on or loosely inspired by the account from the *Descriptio qualiter*.
  - 2 *GESTA FRANCORUM ET ALIORUM HIEROSOLIMITANORUM*, lib. I, 2, pp. 4–5. Similarly, PETRUS TUDEBODE, *Historia de Hierosolymitano itinere*, lib. I, cap. 2, pp. 10–11 and ROBERTI MONACHI, *Historia Hierosolymitana*, p. 732. Noteworthy, the rumours that Charlemagne rose from the dead and, following a goose (*sic!*), went with the crusaders to Jerusalem, related by Ekkehard von Aura as *fabulosum confictum*, and spread at the time of the First Crusade; EKKEHARD, *Chronicon universale*, p. 215. See MONTELEONE, *Il viaggio di Carlo Magno in Terra Santa*, pp. 34–36.
  - 3 “Moveant vos et incitent animos vestros ad virilitatem gesta praedecessorum, probitas et magnitudo Caroli Magni regis, et Ludovici filii ejus, aliorumque regum vestrorum; qui regna Turcorum destruxerunt, et in eis fines sanctae Ecclesiae dilataverunt;” ROBERTI MONACHI, *Historia Hierosolymitana*, lib. I, cap. 1, coll. 671. According to the edition *Recueil des Historiens des Croisades. Historiens occidentaux*, vol. III, p. 728 – *regna paganorum* – what may considerably change the meaning of the pope's statement: in that case this would mean the conquest and christianisation of Saxony and an attempt at christianising Denmark. The most recent summary of the discussion of the connection between the legendary history of Charlemagne, constructed in the tenth to eleventh century and the First Crusade: GABRIELE, *An Empire of Memory. The Legend of Charlemagne, the Franks, and Jerusalem before the First Crusade*, pp. 129–159.

story of the translation of the Passion relics to France was credible. The accounts in hagiographical works and in chronicles were usually consistent with the contents of *Descriptio qualiter*, in contrast to *chansons de geste* whose accounts of the Carolingian translation of the Crown of Thorns not only diverge from *Descriptio* but also from each other so much, that it is not even worth trying to reconcile them.<sup>4</sup> Moreover, most of the very important relics stored in major French and foreign churches – not necessarily the Passion ones – begun to be seen as having been brought by Charlemagne from the Holy Land.<sup>5</sup>

As it seems, the first French author to repeat after *Descriptio* that the Passion relics brought from the Holy Land by Charlemagne and given to selected churches of his Empire or to other French churches by Charles the Bald was Hugh of Fleury. In the *Life of Saint Sacerdos, bishop of Limoges*, compiled in ca. 1110, Hugh wrote that Charlemagne had given a large part of the Holy Cross brought from Jerusalem to the local Church of Sarlat.<sup>6</sup> Elsewhere, in the only extant fragment of his chronicle work known as *Historia Fossatensis* (i.e., the History of Saint-Maur-des-Fossés Abbey), probably following *Descriptio qualiter*, Hugh wrote that Charles the Bald – wishing to distinguish Gaul over and above the other parts of his Empire – gave the relics brought by Charlemagne from Constantinople to several important abbeys: Compiègne and Saint-Denis received respectively the Holy Shroud, and the Holy Nail and the Crown of Thorns.<sup>7</sup> He also affirms that Charles the Bald gave the straps used to bind Jesus in Pilate's

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4 Cf. below.

5 E.g., *CHRONICON SANCTI PETRI VIVI*, pp. 62–63, mentions the head of Saint Quiriacus found in the Abbey of Saint-Gervais-Saint-Protais (or Saint-Léon) in Sens: “caput beati Quiriaci martiris, ab Hierosolimis asportatum a Karolo magno et conditum in eadem ecclesia cum magno honore cum reliquiis sanctę dei Genitricis Marię.”

6 “dominus amabilis Karolus Magnus honestavit, imo sanctificavit hanc, de qua loquimur, ecclesiam de Sarlato non modica portione ligni crucis Dominice: quod, ut in quibusquam actibus eius legitur, ipse imperator cum multis aliis reliquiis, detulerat ab Hierosolyma;” HUGH OF FLEURY, *Vita sancti Sacerdotis*, coll. 992.

7 “Cumque universo pene orbi Karolus imperaret, placuit pre ceteris nationibus Gallias honorare, reliquiasque quas patruus suus Karolus Magnus Constantinopoli advectas Aquisgranum posuerat, clavum scilicet et coronam Sanctum Dionysium;” HUGH OF FLEURY, *Historia ecclesiastica*, pp. 372–373. GABRIELE, *The Provenance of the Descriptio qualiter Karolus Magnus*, p. 94, believes this fragment is a summary of an analogous passage from the *Descriptio qualiter*.

court – a relic not mentioned in *Descriptio qualiter* – to the Abbey of Saint-Maur.<sup>8</sup> Then Hugh repeats, in *Liber qui modernorum regum Francorum continet actus*,<sup>9</sup> dedicated to empress Matilda, the daughter of king Henry I of England, that Compiègne Abbey was given by Charles with the Holy Shroud, and Saint-Denis with the Holy Nail and the Crown of Thorns.

The earliest traces of reception of *Descriptio* in France, besides the writings of Hugh of Fleury, appear in the Capetian charters from the first quarter of the twelfth century. In 1124, at abbot Suger's request, king Louis VI issued a charter in favour of Saint-Denis Abbey's Lendit fair following the annual demonstration of the Passion relics (*Indictum*):

as the above-mentioned Indictum was established by an edict of our ancestors, the kings of France in order to honour and venerate the holy relics, namely the Holy Nail of the Cross and the Holy Crown of the Lord, confirmed by the Apostolic authority and accepted by the archbishops and bishops ... we have deemed it right to thank the Lord ... for elevating our kingdom so highly on the day of the Indictum through the relics of His Passion, namely the Nail and the Crown, but also for He placed the sign of His protection over us and our ancestors in the capital of our kingdom [*in capite regni nostri*], namely, in the place where the holy martyrs are resting.<sup>10</sup>

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8 “Compendium vero, quod instar Constantinopoleos suis diebus decreverat fabricari, ut de nomine suo Carnopolim sicut Constantinus Constantinopolim appellaret, sindonem delegavit Porro Fossatensi posuit monasterio corrigias, quibus preside Pilato ligatus est filius Dei;” HUGH OF FLEURY, *Historia ecclesiastica*, p. 373.

9 “Qui cum esset vir gloriosus atque magnanimus valde, edificavit in regno suo Compendium villam, et eam Karnopolim suo de nomine vocari precepit; quam etiam preciosa domini nostri Iesus Christi sindone nobiliter insignivit. Obtulit etiam idem serenissimus rex sancto martiri Dionisio unum de clavis quibus in cruce fuit adfixum corpus dominicum et quandam ligni sanctae crucis portiunculam cum quadam particula spineae coronae nostri Redemptoris;” HUGH OF FLEURY, *Liber modernorum regum Francorum*, cap. 1, p. 377. Georg Waitz's claim that Hugh was also the author of *HISTORIA FRANCORUM SENONENSIS*, pp. 364–369 and *HISTORIA REGUM FRANCORUM MONASTERII SANCTI DIONYSII*, pp. 395–406 (not mentioning) the Carolingian translation of the Crown of Thorns was also disproved. In fact, Hugh used the two historical records only when compiling *Historia moderna (Liber qui modernorum regum Francorum continet actus)*.

10 “quoniam prefatum Indictum honore et reverentia sanctorum reliquiarum, clavi scilicet et coronę Domini, apostolica auctoritate, archiepiscoporum et episcoporum confirmatione, antecessorum nostrorum regum Francię constitutione constitutum est ... dignum enim duximus Domino Deo ... grates referre, quod et regnum nostrum ea indicti die insignibus suę passionis, clavi videlicet et coronę, dignatus est sublimare, et nostram et antecessorum nostrorum protectionem in capite regni nostri, videlicet apud sanctos martyres, dignatus est collocare;”

One cannot doubt that Louis VI – saying in his charter that *Indictum* was established by his predecessors, the kings of France, and approved by the authority of the pope, as well as French archbishops and bishops – clearly refers to the passage of *Descriptio qualiter* describing the *ostensio* of the Crown of Thorns and the Hol Nail, allegedly first performed by Charlemagne in Aachen, then transferred to Saint-Denis by Charles the Bald. For some scholars (Bédier), this connection was so obvious that they used it to date *Descriptio* to the 1120s.<sup>11</sup> Obviously, the content of the royal charter issued at Suger’s request confirms that the abbot must have been familiarised with *Descriptio qualiter*. If the text was compiled in Saint-Denis in the mid-eleventh century – as we have assumed – it is impossible to believe that the abbot did not know about it. Moreover, there are reliably premises evidencing that Suger knew *Descriptio*: the stained glass from the

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MONUMENTS HISTORIQUES. CARTONS DES ROIS, no. 391, pp. 217–218; see also: LUCHAIRE, *Louis VI le Gros*, no. 348, p. 150. According to LEVILLAIN, *Essai sur les origines du Lendit*, p. 247, f. 1, this part of the charter was quoted in the bull of for Louis VI issued by Honorius II in Rouen on May 9, 1131. Levillain also believes that “*protectionem ... collocare*” should be interpreted as a reference to depositing the Passion relics in Saint-Denis. In the light of Charlemagne’s forged charter for Saint-Denis (possibly compiled at the same time as the quoted document of Louis VI; cf. below), in which the emperor allegedly makes the Abbey of Saint-Denis *caput regni Francorum* because of the merits of Saint Denis, whom he considers a special patron of the kings of France, such an interpretation may be considered as possible but not exclusive; cf. MGH, *Diplomatum Karolinorum*, no. 286, pp. 428–430. The dating of this forgery is uncertain, and it does not seem possible to settle the debate about it. BARROUX, *L’abbé Suger*, pp. 1–26, proves (especially on pp. 23–24) that the charter must have been forged during Suger’s times; KIEFT, *Deux diplômes faux de Charlemagne pour Saint-Denis*, pp. 401–432, believes it was done by Suger’s successor, abbot Odo of Deuil, and he dates it to ca. 1156. Despite Cyrille van de Kieft’s sophisticated argumentation, one cannot overlook the similarities in the use of the expression “*caput regni nostri*” with respect to Saint-Denis both in the charter of Louis VI and the forgery.

- 11 BÉDIER, *Les légendes épiques*, vol. IV, p. 127; recently also Carla Rossi who, basing on a superficial reading of a fragmentary bibliographical study claimed, basing on, among others, the above-quoted Suger’s charter of Louis VI (SUGER, *Vie de Louis VI*, pp. 276–277) that it was Louis VI who gave the Abbey the Crown of Thorns (this conclusion is derived from an erroneous interpretation of a fragment of a sentence which was correctly translated by the editor quoted by Rossi) and she also uses the same arguments to claim that the *Descriptio* was written in ca. 1124; cf. ROSSI, *Ja ne m’en turnerai trescque l’avrai trovez. Ricerche attorno al MS. Royal 16E. VIII*, pp. 173–174 and fn. 388. In this context it is surprising that the Faculty of Literature at the University of Freiburg gave this dissertation a *summa cum laude*.

choir of Saint-Denis, destroyed during the French Revolution, and dated by Louis Grodecki to the twelfth century, presented a pictorial version of *Descriptio qualiter*.<sup>12</sup> Yet, surprisingly, Suger never alludes to the contents of *Descriptio qualiter* in his writings and thus to the fact that the Passion relics were brought by Charlemagne from Constantinople, that Saint-Denis obtained them from Charles the Bald, and that their annual *ostensio* was inaugurated by Charlemagne and Charles the Bald. However, granting the *Indictum* to Saint-Denis, which Suger attributes to Louis VI, refers – as it had been demonstrated by Levillain – to the assignment of rights and income, previously belonging to the king, from the Lendit fair to the Abbey – not to *ostensio reliquiarum*.<sup>13</sup> The abbot, presenting his own childhood memories of the demonstration of Passion relics in the church of Saint-Denis (as contained in *Scriptum consecrationis Ecclesiae Sancti Dionysii*) consequently could not accredit Louis VI with the inauguration of this liturgical ritual. Suger's silence on Carolingian tradition of both the translation of the Crown of Thorns and of the *Indictum*, make the historian confused and helpless: it is impossible to explain this fact, still we cannot assume that the abbot did not know about that tradition.

Besides the stained glass from the Abbey church in Saint-Denis,<sup>14</sup> which cannot be precisely dated but are ascribed to Suger, there are literary sources from the twelfth century that prove the broad reception of *Descriptio qualiter*.

First, let us have a look at hagiographic texts.

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12 GRODECKI, *Les vitraux de Saint-Denis*, pp. 118–121 (text), 215–217 (fig. 169–181). BROWN, COTHREN, *The Twelfth-Century Crusading Window of the Abbey of Saint-Denis*, pp. 1–40, also opt for dating both the *Descriptio qualiter* and the stained glass to the times of Suger's successor, Odo of Deuil (1151–1162). For the stained glass from Saint-Denis in Suger's time see also: CAVINESS, *Suger's Glass at Saint-Denis*, pp. 257–272; GRODECKI, *The Style of the Stained-Glass Windows of Saint-Denis*, pp. 273–282.

13 “De Indicto vero, quod Dominus Ludovicus pater Beato Dionisio dedit;” SUGER, *Opus administrativum*, I, 1, pp. 58–59; cf. LEVILLAIN, *Essai sur les origines du Lendit*, pp. 241–276. The latter claims that from 1110–1112 Lendit began with a blessing with the Passion relics, which was meant to be a response to bringing the relics of the Holy Cross to Paris Cathedral in 1109. BRESCH-BAUTIER, *L'envoi de la relique de la Vraie Croix à Notre-Dame de Paris*, pp. 387–397, proves that the translation of the relics of the True Cross took place as late as in 1120 and shifts the beginning of the tradition of opening Lendit with the blessing with the relics of the Crown of Thorns and the Holy Nail to 1121–1124.

14 Cf. below.

## 1. Imperial Hagiography: *De sanctitate Karoli Magni*<sup>15</sup>

The Life of Saint Charlemagne, entitled *De sanctitate meritorum et gloria miraculorum beati Karoli Magni ad honorem et laudem nominis Dei*, was commissioned by emperor Frederick I Barbarossa,<sup>16</sup> who also inspired Charlemagne's canonization by the antipope Paschal III in Aachen in 1165.<sup>17</sup> The author of the Life is anonymous; we may only suppose that he used the scriptorium and the library at the Abbey of Saint-Denis – which in the twelfth century were considered as particularly reliable<sup>18</sup> – since one of the three books into which the Life is divided is entirely devoted to Charlemagne's expedition to the Holy Land and Constantinople and is

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15 Recently on the subject of the place of the *De sanctitate Karoli Magni* in the hagiographic, historical, and literary culture, and the reception of its topics in the sacral art of the twelfth and early thirteenth century, cf. PYSIAK, *Z legendarnej historii Karola Wielkiego*, pp. 231–272. Cf. MERCURI, *Corona di Cristo, corona di re*, pp. 83–87.

16 BnF, Ms. Latin 17656. DE SANCTITATE KAROLI MAGNI, pp. 17–93. According to the editor of the Montpellier manuscript of the *Descriptio qualiter*, CASTETS, *Iter Hierosolymitanum*, pp. 426–428, this manuscript seems to be a newly edited version of the original account (BnF, Ms. Latin 12710 P<sub>1</sub> and P<sub>2</sub> – marginal glosses), which was in a way a draft. If this is the case, Book II of *De sanctitate Karoli Magni* should be considered as the earliest integrated edition of the *Descriptio-Iter* account. The manuscripts of the Life (except for the late medieval ones, i.e., those dated to the fourteenth and fifteenth century) are presented in FOLZ, *Le souvenir et la légende de Charlemagne dans l'Empire germanique médiéval*, pp. 235–237. However, he does not know the manuscript from the National Library in Warsaw: BN, Ms. II 12511.

17 Recently on the subject of Charlemagne's canonisation at the inspiration of Frederick Barbarossa and its ideological understanding in the light of the hagiographic life compiled at that time, which will be analysed below, see SKWIERCZYŃSKI, *De sanctitate meritorum*, pp. 172–195, with literature, including among the most recent works especially: ENGELS, *Des Reiches heiliger Gründer. Die Kanonisation Karls des Großen*, pp. 37–46; PETERSOHN, *Saint-Denis – Westminster – Aachen. Die Karls-Translatio von 1165 und ihre Vorbilder*, pp. 420–454; PETERSOHN, *Kaisertum und Kultakt in der Stauferzeit*, pp. 101–146.

18 BAUTIER, *L'Historiographie en France aux X<sup>e</sup> et XI<sup>e</sup> siècles*, pp. 793–850; BAUTIER, *La place de l'abbaye de Fleury-sur-Loire dans l'histoire française*, pp. 25–34; BAUTIER, *L'École historique de l'Abbaye de Fleury*, pp. 59–72; GUENÉE, *Histoire et culture historique dans l'Occident médiéval*, pp. 175–176, 212, 309, 310; GUENÉE, *Chancelleries et monastères. La mémoire de la France au Moyen Âge*, pp. 5–30; LAIR, *Mémoires sur deux chroniques latines au XII<sup>e</sup> siècle à l'abbaye de Saint-Denis*, pp. 543–580; LEMARIGNIER, *Autour de la royauté française du IX<sup>e</sup> au XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle. Appendice*, pp. 5–37.

almost a verbatim version of *Descriptio qualiter*.<sup>19</sup> The Life was commissioned by the Hohenstaufen emperor in order to sanctify the imperial name and glorify Frederick, who claimed to be Charlemagne's descendant and true successor. One should note the important fact that the Saint Charlemagne's Life presents the latter – similarly to *Descriptio* – as the king of Gaul with main capitals in Paris, Reims, and Saint-Denis; this impression may be only partly alleviated by the importance of Aachen where Charlemagne established the first *Indictum*. Yet, the compiler omitted the translation of the relics from Aachen to Saint-Denis and Compiègne by Charles the Bald.<sup>20</sup> In the times of the rivalry between the Capetians and the Hohenstaufen for the Carolingian heritage,<sup>21</sup> the repetition of Charlemagne's image as the king of France in the latter's hagiographical Life commissioned by Frederick allows for several hypothetical interpretations. Namely, it may indicate that the emperor's commission was executed in haste, which may have resulted in an insufficient adaptation of the Life to the demands of Barbarossa's imperial ideology, but also that presenting Charlemagne as the king of Gaul, what used to serve the Capetians to support their claims to the Carolingian heritage,<sup>22</sup> may have been used by Frederick I to bring forward his own universal claims *à rebours*; finally, what seems to me the closest to the truth, it may have been a proof of the unquestionable authority of the library and scriptorium of the Abbey of Saint-Denis and *Descriptio* itself.

*De sanctitate Karoli Magni* contains the same logical discrepancy as *Descriptio qualiter*: after the emperor and his barons left the forest in which they had lost their way, Charlemagne went to Constantinople, defeated the pagans, and went to Jerusalem; there is no mention of Charlemagne's return to Constantinople. However, the hagiographer is certain that the emperor took the relics from Constantinople: this is indicated by the title of the first chapter of Book II of the Life, used twice: "De peregrinatione

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19 *DE SANCTITATE KAROLI MAGNI*, pp. 44–66.

20 *DESCRIPTIO QUALITER*, p. 123.

21 FOLZ, *Le souvenir et la légende de Charlemagne dans l'Empire germanique médiéval*, pp. 251–266, 277–279; SCHRAMM, *Der König der Frankreich*, pp. 142–176. Charlemagne's expedition to Constantinople and Jerusalem and bringing the Passion relics are also mentioned by Godfrey of Viterbo in a poem about the ancestors of Henry VI and Frederick II: GODFREY OF VITERBO, *Pantheon*, p. 222.

22 Cf. LUDUS *DE ANTECHRISTO*, p. VI and *PLAY OF ANTICHRIST*, p. 12; cf. also HAUCK, *Zur genealogie und Gestalt des staufischen 'Ludus de Antehristo'*, pp. 21–25; KAMLAH, *Der Ludus de Antehristo*, pp. 53–87; KIENAST, *Deutschland und Frankreich in der Kaiserzeit*, pp. 481–484.

beatissimi Karoli in laudem dei facta et qualiter a Constantinopoli apud Aquile Capellam clavum et coronam domini attulerit.”<sup>23</sup>

The main difference between *Descriptio qualiter* and *De sanctitate* is the absence in Charlemagne’s Life of the final part of *Descriptio*, which recount the translation of the Crown of Thorns and the Holy Nail from Aachen to the Abbey of Saint-Denis, and of the Holy Shroud to Compiègne, performed by Charles the Bald. For the author of the Life this information was unnecessary while for his patrons rather awkward. Nevertheless, both the author and the imperial court must have recognized the authority of *Descriptio qualiter* also in this respect: on January 8, 1166, Frederick I issued a charter in which, referring to Charlemagne’s canonization conducted more than a dozen days earlier, he confirmed Charlemagne’s alleged privilege for the City of Aachen (so-called *Pragmatica sanctio*), a forgery also partly included (starting with the disposition) in Chapter XVI of Book I of *De sanctitate Karoli Magni*.<sup>24</sup> In Charlemagne’s forged charter, the dictator mentions eminent relics which, thanks to Charlemagne, were in possession of the Saint Mary Church in Aachen but does it in a very general way: “pignera apostolorum, martirum, confessorum, virginum a diversis terris et regnis et precipue Grecorum collegi, que huic sancto intuli loco.”<sup>25</sup> There is no mention of the Crown of Thorns, of the Holy Nail, or the Lord’s Shroud.

When considering the general acceptance in the imperial milieu of the Carolingian legend as recorded in *Descriptio* and, following it, *De sanctitate Karoli*, one cannot fail to mention Charlemagne’s reliquary made between 1182 and 1215 for Aachen cathedral,<sup>26</sup> commissioned as it seems by Frederick Barbarossa. The reliquary is a large casket decorated with the scenes from Charlemagne’s Life, executed in gold and silver. Two of them reflects two episodes of Charlemagne’s *Iter Hierosolimitanum* known from *Descriptio qualiter* and repeated in *De sanctitate*. One depicts the Byzantine emperor Constantine offering the relics to Charlemagne (the emperor of the East is kneeling in front of an altar on which three casket reliquaries are deposited) and the miraculous blossoming of the Crown of Thorns in Constantinople

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23 *DE SANCTITATE KAROLI MAGNI*, pp. 18–19, 45.

24 *DE SANCTITATE KAROLI MAGNI*, pp. 41–43. We know Barbarossa’s charter and the complete contents of the *Pragmatica sanctio* from the privilege granted by Frederick II to Aachen in Pisa in August 1244: the charter of Frederick I was confirmed and fully transumed; RAUSCHEN, *Die Legende Karl des Grossen*, pp. 154–160.

25 *DE SANCTITATE KAROLI MAGNI*, p. 41.

26 On Charlemagne’s reliquary from Aachen, see *KARL DER GROSSE UND SEIN SCHREIN IN AACHEN*.



when the thorns were being cut off for Charlemagne who was to take them to Aachen. The other represents Charlemagne returning on horseback to the Land of the Franks. The emperor's glove, known from *Descriptio* and Saint Charlemagne's Life as the place in which the miraculous blossoms were collected (they became the manna, also adored as a relic) is shown beside the emperor as floating in the air and supported by sunrays. The presence of these two scenes on Saint Charlemagne's reliquary clearly shows that the expedition to the East and the translation of the Crown of Thorns *ad Francos* – ascribed to Charlemagne in France from the mid-eleventh century – became, in the twelfth-century Holy Empire, notorious elements of Charlemagne's historical memory: they apparently were considered the most important elements of his biography and symbols of his holiness. However, despite the high importance Frederick Barbarossa attached to Charlemagne's heritage, including the translation of the Passion relics to Aachen, the standing of the Abbey of Saint-Denis was so substantial that he did not make any attempts at regaining the relics: it was accepted that they belonged to the Capetian monarchy from the times of Charles the Bald, even if it was not officially recognised.<sup>27</sup>

## 2. Vernacular Literature: *Chansons de Geste* and the Historical Prose in the Twelfth and the Thirteenth Centuries<sup>28</sup>

In the twelfth-century West, vernacular literature saw its first period of heyday and developed a considerable diversity of genres and forms. The

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27 When describing the *Indictum* in Aachen, *De sanctitate* omits the list of archbishops and bishops who allegedly took part in the ceremony (present in the *Descriptio qualiter*). The reason could be the fact that the majority of the listed bishops came from West Frankish Kingdom. According to FOLZ, *Le souvenir et la légende de Charlemagne dans l'Empire germanique médiéval*, p. 181, and MONTELEONE, *Il viaggio di Carlo Magno in Terra Santa*, pp. 221–222 listing them would draw the reader's attention to the contemporary Lendit in Saint-Denis rather than to the old *Indictum* in Aachen. However, the author refers the reader wishing to know which members of the clergy took part in the first *Indictum*, to the *Descriptio: historiam unde hec excerpta sunt perlegat* (*DE SANCTITATE KAROLI MAGNI*, p. 66), which, of course, entails the complete acceptance of its reliability also as to the translation of the Crown of Thorns to Saint-Denis.

28 Recently, on the presence of the topics connected with Charlemagne's expedition to Constantinople and Jerusalem and translation of the Passion relics to the West

most popular were genres based on narrations about the past: all the *chansons de geste*, the first generation of twelfth-century *romans*, and a large part of the prose adaptations of these works – which gained increasing popularity starting from the thirteenth century – actually was historical literature (understood as works that extol the past). According to Gabrielle M. Spiegel, the appearance of vernacular prose at the turn of the twelfth and thirteenth century and the ensuing development of narrative prose were the result of the belief that the narrative prose is veracious trustworthy, whereas the poetic narrative was from then on considered as fiction. This view first appeared in the late twelfth century in the circles of the artistic sponsors and spread quickly,<sup>29</sup> but before that happened, in the twelfth century, poetic epic writings referring to historical subjects were considered as reliable testimonies of the past.<sup>30</sup> Writings' cognitive value was not determined by the formal (poetic or prose) shape of the text but by its contents and style. It seems that it was only the multiplication of narratives unsupported by the authority of monastery chronicles, as well as the introduction of grotesque and fantasy themes that resulted in the dwindling credibility of epic and romance poetry.

### *Pèlerinage de Charlemagne*<sup>31</sup>

The dating of this peculiar *chanson de geste* has not been established.<sup>32</sup> The most recent editor, Jean-Louis Picherit, considers this an unsolvable

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in the twelfth century literary works, see PYSIAK, *Z legendarnej historii Karola Wielkiego*, pp. 260–268; cf. MERCURI, *Corona di Cristo, corona di re*, pp. 87–91 (very briefly).

29 SPIEGEL, “Pseudo-Turpin” – *the Crisis of Aristocracy and the Beginning of Vernacular Historiography in XIII<sup>th</sup> Century France*, pp. 207–223; SPIEGEL, *Romancing the Past*.

30 BOUTET, *Formes littéraires et conscience historique*; DRAGONETTI, *Le mirage des sources: l'art du faux dans le roman médiéval*; MORRISSEY, *L'empereur à la barbe fleurie*, pp. 74–129; SPIEGEL, *Romancing the Past*, pp. 61–69, 290–292; ZINK, *Une mutation de la conscience littéraire*, pp. 3–27. As we shall see below, already in the first quarter of the thirteenth century, Philip Mouskès considered *chansons de geste* as sources reliable enough to use them when writing his *Rhymed Chronicle*.

31 VOYAGE DE CHARLEMAGNE.

32 Paul Aebischer (VOYAGE DE CHARLEMAGNE, pp. 25–29), presenting a specific sense of humour, suggested to date the work calculating the arithmetic mean from all the accepted *termini post quem* and *ad quem* (1060 and 1175), what, in fact yielded an erroneous date: the calculations yield the middle

problem, proposing 1109 as a possible *terminus post quem* and 1205 as the *ad quem*.<sup>33</sup> In 2001, Carla Rossi, the author of a Ph.D. dissertation on the principles of the new edition of the poem, adopted the late twelfth century as the date of the edition of the poem into its form known today.<sup>34</sup> The dating is made more difficult by the loss, in 1879, of the only existing fourteenth-century manuscript containing the text in its integrality – we only have a facsimile made by Francisque Michel in 1832<sup>35</sup> – and by the fact that the English copyist did not know the Anglo-Norman dialect well enough, which had a bad effect on the language of the copy.<sup>36</sup> Starting from the nineteenth century, scholars also discussed whether the title should read *Pèlerinage* or *Voyage de Charlemagne*.<sup>37</sup> The opponents of using *Pèlerinage* in the title argue that *Voyage* was used to stress the mock-heroic style of the work, which indeed contains numerous elements of parody and moral satire. Some also argue that the aim of the Charlemagne's expedition to the East: venerating the Passion relics and collecting some of them in order to bring them to France – would be less important than the actual intention,

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of 1112 (June 30; *sic!*), even though in accordance with the accepted principles of arithmetic he should have obtained 1117. For a brief discussion of literature about the *Pèlerinage de Charlemagne* and all its editions since the times of Francisque Michel (1836) till the 1960s see VOYAGE DE CHARLEMAGNE. FAVATI, *Restauri, lingua e datazione del testo*, pp. 95–130, suggests a dating before 1165. Similarly, more recent literature collected in: ROSSI, *Ja ne m'en turnerai trescque l'avrai trovez. Ricerche attorno al MS. Royal 16E. VIII*, does not settle the problem of the dating, but generally opts for the time before 1165.

33 JOURNEY OF CHARLEMAGNE TO JERUSALEM AND TO CONSTANTINOPLE, pp. i–ix. Noteworthy, Picherit's bilingual edition is a product of collating fragments of various manuscripts presenting different versions of this narrative and different dialect versions, which had never existed in this form. For that reason, the earlier edition by Paul Aebischer (VOYAGE DE CHARLEMAGNE) is used here.

34 ROSSI, *Ja ne m'en turnerai trescque l'avrai trovez. Ricerche attorno al MS. Royal 16E. VIII*, pp. 211–215. Carla Rossi's argumentation is quite surprising.

35 PÈLERINAGE DE CHARLEMAGNE. AN ANGLO-NORMAN POEM.

36 BL (MS. British Museum Old Royal Collection), 16.E.VIII; Cf. VOYAGE DE CHARLEMAGNE, pp. 16–23. Paul Aebischer's is a *sui generis* bilingual edition: besides the reading of the text from the MS. British Museum 16.E.VIII (even pages), it contains a version amended according to the principles of orthography of the Anglo-Norman dialect (odd pages); both versions differ from the classical edition KARLS DES GROSSEN REISE NACH JERUSALEM UND CONSTANTINOPEL.

37 VOYAGE DE CHARLEMAGNE, pp. 11–15; ROSSI, *Ja ne m'en turnerai trescque l'avrai trovez. Ricerche attorno al MS. Royal 16E. VIII*, pp. 215–217.

which was to meet the Byzantine emperor.<sup>38</sup> In my opinion, such a viewpoint is caused by misunderstanding the meaning of the text,<sup>39</sup> which I will prove below.

As indicated above, *Pèlerinage de Charlemagne* substantially differs in its content from the hagiographic narrations. This is due to the difference in genre, meant for a different audience: even when describing events believed to have been authentic, *chanson de geste* was created to amuse the listeners, hence the religious content and edifying *exempla* occupy less place there than the praise of the chivalric system of values interlaced with elements of parody and social and moral satire.

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38 *Pèlerinage de Charlemagne*, v. 69–72, ed. in: *VOYAGE DE CHARLEMAGNE*, pp. 34, 35.

39 Numerous studies interpret *Pèlerinage de Charlemagne* as a comic, parodic or even iconoclastic poem. HEINERMANN, *Zeit und Sinn der Karlreis*, pp. 497–562, proves that the discussed *chanson de geste* is a satire of the participation of Louis VII and Eleanor of Aquitaine in the crusade and the Second Crusade as such. According to WALPOLE, *Pèlerinage of Charlemagne*, p. 182: “Pèlerinage of Charlemagne to the violent and independent reaction of a popular poet to the „Descriptio”, a sanctimonious fraud.” HORRENT, *Le Pèlerinage de Charlemagne* (very briefly about the relics, pp. 40–41), states that the author did not consider the contents of his poem as true or intend to persuade his audience about that (p. 116). Similar conclusions were recently presented by LATOWSKY, *Charlemagne as Pilgrim? Request for Relics in the Descriptio qualiter and the Voyage of Charlemagne*, pp. 153–167: having contrasted the *Pèlerinage* and the *Descriptio qualiter*, she reached the conclusion (p. 164) that *Pèlerinage* presents “an absurdly exaggerated portrait of Charlemagne as accidental victor without battle over the Christian East” and agrees with VANCE, *Semiotics and Power. Relics, Icons, and the Voyage of Charlemagne*, pp. 164–183 (Eugene Vance’s paper is unique in its methodology: the author uses the gender research instrument, but his study does not lead to any serious conclusions, besides one, incidental for his investigations, concerning the possible inspiration of the *Pèlerinage* by the crusade of Louis VII) that the poem contains mostly “subversive meanings upon the abbey’s [Saint-Denis] most prized possessions; undermining the prevailing discourses of theocratic kingship in France.” Besides the presentation of the current state of research and opting for one side in the academic debate, Anne Latowsky’s paper does not, in fact, contribute anything new to the problems of interpreting *Pèlerinage de Charlemagne*. FAVATI, *I valori letterati e strutturali de „Voyage”*, pp. 9–93, considers the *Pèlerinage* as ‘*gab da intendersi come parodia della tematica epica e dei suoi luoghi comuni, dei suoi personaggi più in vista e delle loro gesta*’ (p. 79). Similarly CERON, *Un gap épique. Le Pèlerinage de Charlemagne*, p. 176–191. An exhaustive analysis of the discussion of the subject conducted till the 1990s is presented by COBBY, *Ambivalent Conventions. Formula and Parody in Old French*, especially pp. 82–122.

The poem begins with the scene of the second crowning of Charlemagne in Saint-Denis, his wife being crowned together with him. Responding to Charlemagne's boasting, who rhetorically asked his empress if there was another man who would carry the crown and the sword better, the unwise woman says that Charlemagne cannot be equaled to king Hugh of Constantinople, which makes the Charlemagne angry: he threatens his wife with death if it turns out that she was lying.<sup>40</sup> Having deposited the customary offering on the main altar in Saint-Denis – surely an allusion to Charlemagne's forged privilege for Saint-Denis<sup>41</sup> – the emperor returns to Paris. There, in the presence of his barons and bishops, Charlemagne announces that all of them are setting off to Jerusalem, the Land of God, to venerate the Holy Cross and the Holy Sepulchre. Charlemagne would have received a call to make this pilgrimage in his dreams three times already. The emperor adds that he will meet a king on the way with whom he has things to talk about, meaning, of course, Hugh, the emperor of Byzantium. Soon, Charlemagne assembles his vassals and goes to Saint-Denis Abbey again, where he is given a pilgrim's bag, is blessed with the sign of the Cross, and sets off.<sup>42</sup> In Jerusalem, Charlemagne with his barons first go to the Church of the Pater Noster in which, as it was believed, Jesus with his twelve apostles celebrated a mass; this event was commemorated by thirteen thrones placed in the church, on which they sat to rest. Charlemagne sat first and the twelve barons followed him. Then a Jew, who, for the unknown reasons, looked into the church, saw the emperor and the twelve peers sitting on the seats of Jesus and the Apostles. Noticing Charlemagne's beauty and dignity of, the Jew inferred that God himself had descended on Earth, so he ran to the patriarch of Jerusalem to announce the return of Jesus and the Apostles and ask for a baptism. The patriarch convened a procession of the Jerusalem clergy and everyone went to the Church of Pater Noster, where Charlemagne explained who he was and asked for the relics with which he wanted to adorn France.<sup>43</sup> The patriarch immediately agreed and gave Charlemagne the Holy Shroud of the Lord, the Holy Nail of the Holy Cross, the Crown of Thorns, the chalice and paten used by Jesus during the Last Supper, a knife which served to Christ's circumcision, a hair from the Saviour's beard, His shirt and some milk of Our Lady, the arm

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40 *Pèlerinage de Charlemagne*, v. 1–57, in: *VOYAGE DE CHARLEMAGNE*, pp. 30–33.

41 *MGH, Diplomatum Karolinorum*, no. 286, pp. 428–430.

42 *Pèlerinage de Charlemagne*, v. 58–91, in: *VOYAGE DE CHARLEMAGNE*, pp. 33–35.

43 *Pèlerinage de Charlemagne*, v. 129–161, in: *VOYAGE DE CHARLEMAGNE*, pp. 38, 39.

of Saint Simeon, and the heads of Saint Lazarus and Saint Stephen.<sup>44</sup> After several months in the Holy Land, Charlemagne told the patriarch that he was returning to France. Upon hearing that, the latter offered the emperor all the treasures of Jerusalem, begging him to wage war on the Saracens in return. Charlemagne willingly agreed and promised to invade the pagans in Spain which, as the poet readily adds, he actually did.<sup>45</sup> On the way to Constantinople, where they headed first, the emperor and his peers also visited Jericho, where each of them received a palm, meaning they completed pilgrim vows. During the journey the relics gave numerous proofs of their holy power: every blind, paralyzed, or mute man regained health after having met the emperor's suite.<sup>46</sup> Except for a few verses at the end, almost 260 first verses of the poem seemingly complete the devotional part of this *chanson de geste*, while the remaining ca. 600 verses are devoted only to Charlemagne's visit in Constantinople.<sup>47</sup> As I mentioned above, this is the reason why many commentators and editors of *Pèlerinage de Charlemagne* believe that the subject of the relics is only an excuse, whereas the actual topic of the text is the journey to Constantinople, and therefore it should be so titled. However, this opinion shows a complete lack of understanding not only of the poem but also of the essence of medieval literature, in which the *sacrum*, treated in a very serious way, is often combined with equally seriously treated *profanum*. The juxtaposition of such two contradicting categories was used not only to emphasize the meaning of each but also to amuse. The latter purpose was not intended to prevent the reader from grasping the moral or didactic content. In my opinion, this is so in the discussed case. Even if Charlemagne's decision to set off to the Holy Land was provoked by the queen's taunts, the religious aspect of the expedition is unquestionable: the emperor visited *Loca Sancta*, founded a church, asked for and obtained relics, with which many miraculous healings were performed. Even the comical by design episode with an unwise Jew, scared after mistaking Charlemagne and his peers for God surrounded by twelve

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44 *Pèlerinage de Charlemagne*, v. 162–203, in: *VOYAGE DE CHARLEMAGNE*, pp. 40, 41; the presence of the emperor in Jerusalem drew many merchants who sold their wares near the church Sancta Maria Latina (*la Latanie*) founded by the emperor: is this an allusion to the Lendit fair? Cf. *Pèlerinage de Charlemagne*, v. 204–213, in: *VOYAGE DE CHARLEMAGNE*, pp. 42–43.

45 *Pèlerinage de Charlemagne*, v. 214–232, in: *VOYAGE DE CHARLEMAGNE*, pp. 42–45.

46 *Pèlerinage de Charlemagne*, v. 233–258, in: *VOYAGE DE CHARLEMAGNE*, pp. 44–47.

47 *Pèlerinage de Charlemagne*, v. 262–857, in: *VOYAGE DE CHARLEMAGNE*, pp. 46–85.

Apostles and asking the patriarch to be baptised is an element of contemporary humour that often ridiculed Jews, but it does not have any impact on the image of the emperor's authentic piety presented in the poem.

After presenting Hugh, the king of Constantinople, and all the splendors of the town, the poet outlines a long scene in which the drunk Charlemagne and his twelve peers, unaware of being eavesdropped at Hugh's orders, make boasting bets (*gabs*) as to how they could humiliate Hugh, e.g., by destroying his capital and enjoying his daughter. Offended, Hugh does not want to hear Charlemagne trying to convince him that these *gabs* were not the Franks' hidden threats against the Eastern Empire but were just the way the Franks enjoy themselves when they are drunk. The irate king of Constantinople orders the Franks to fulfil their impossible *gaps* they shall die if fail to fulfil even one of their boastful claims: it will be a due punishment for offending the emperor of the East.<sup>48</sup> Charlemagne calls his peers to a council and orders to fetch the holy relics brought from Jerusalem. A prayer in front of the relics in which the emperor asks God for assistance brings a beneficial result: an angel sent by God appears in front of Charlemagne and in Christ's name forbids him to mock Hugh but at the same time promises to help in fulfilling the tasks.<sup>49</sup> Indeed, the first four tasks are fulfilled,<sup>50</sup> and when God miraculously raises waters which flood Constantinople so that they imprison Hugh in a tower and then draw the blood back – which should be Charlemagne's final task – the emperor of Constantinople finally acknowledges his failure and becomes Charlemagne's vassal.<sup>51</sup>

Having safely and victoriously returned to France, Charlemagne, inspired by his love for the Holy Sepulchre at which he prayed not so long before, mercifully forgives his spouse even though the events in Byzantium belied her unwise words. Then, Charlemagne deposits the Crown of Thorns and

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48 *Pèlerinage de Charlemagne*, v. 435–661, in: *VOYAGE DE CHARLEMAGNE*, pp. 57–71.

49 *Pèlerinage de Charlemagne*, v. 662–678, in: *VOYAGE DE CHARLEMAGNE*, pp. 70–73.

50 The first of the tasks – Olivier has to prove that he has possessed Hugh's daughter one hundred times in one night – is, in fact, a double fraud, because Olivier persuades the princess to lie to her father that the *gap* has been fulfilled, but allows her to preserve her virginity; in return Olivier promises her that she will be his only lady (*druë*); however, in the end, despite the princesse's pleas, he refuses to stay with her in Constantinople or take her to France; *Pèlerinage de Charlemagne*, v. 705–730, 852–857, in: *VOYAGE DE CHARLEMAGNE*, pp. 74, 75, 82–85.

51 *Pèlerinage de Charlemagne*, v. 791–801, in: *VOYAGE DE CHARLEMAGNE*, pp. 80, 81.

the Holy Nail at the main altar in the church of Saint-Denis and distributes the remaining relics among the churches of his kingdom.<sup>52</sup>

Thus, a careful reading of the *Pèlerinage de Charlemagne* indicates that Charlemagne's devotion to the *Loca Sancta* and the Passion relics, for which he had gone to the Holy Land, is in fact the leitmotif of the poem, despite its mock-heroic character. Even if the emperor's decision to visit Constantinople was provoked by his queen's unwise words, the first and foremost aim of the expedition is Jerusalem was the Passion relics, which Charlemagne wanted to venerate; it is the prayer at the Holy Sepulchre which makes Charlemagne forgive his queen. In the Holy Land, the emperor promises the patriarch of Jerusalem to wage war on the enemies of Christ in Spain, which he was to fulfil. The Passion relics given by the patriarch not only miraculously heal the sick encountered on the way back to France but, more importantly, a prayer in front of them allows Charlemagne to avoid the danger caused by his barons' and his own callous behavior in Constantinople (he encouraged his peers to make boasts offending king Hugh). Therefore, we may say that the sacral aspect concentrated around the Passion relics provides a moral commentary to the satirical part of the poem. Thus, *Pèlerinage de Charlemagne* is a tale disseminating the knowledge about Charlemagne's translation of the Crown of Thorns and the Holy Nail to Saint-Denis<sup>53</sup>, directed to the chivalrous audience. Scholars noted quite a long time ago that the person of Charles the Bald underwent in the *chansons de geste* a contamination with the image of his great forefather and namesake.<sup>54</sup> As the text containing many threads, the *Pèlerinage de Charlemagne* also tackled other issues interesting for the readers, such as the drunkenness and often disastrous rodomontade of the French knights. The parodic element certainly amused the listeners and that is why it occupied so much space in

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52 *Pèlerinage de Charlemagne*, v. 858–870, in: VOYAGE DE CHARLEMAGNE, pp. 84, 85.

53 See BÉDIER, *Les légendes épiques*, vol. IV, p. 154: *la chanson du Pèlerinage est essentiellement un récit de translation de reliques*. After him, eg., ADLER, *The Pèlerinage de Charlemagne*, pp. 550–561 and very convincingly GOSMAN, *La propagande politique dans le "Voyage de Charlemagne"*, pp. 53–66. MONTELEONE, *Il viaggio di Carlo Magno in Terra Santa*, pp. 137–139, quotes examples of other *chansons de geste* dated to the first half of the twelfth century (*Aymeri de Narbonne*, *Aiquin ou la conquête de la Bretagne*), in which Charlemagne performs a translation of relics. The author rightly opts for the polysemic meaning of the *Pèlerinage de Charlemagne*, which, in her opinion, contains comical and didactic threads in equal proportions; cf. MONTELEONE, *Il viaggio di Carlo Magno in Terra Santa (Il trionfo del "rex facetus")*, pp. 289–310.

54 BOUTET, *Formes littéraires et conscience historique*, p. 128.



the poem, but one should not fail to note that the author was clearly critical about the knights' faults, showing that only Charlemagne's true devotion and his veneration of the Passion relics allowed the Franks to survive the dangers.

The influence of *Descriptio qualiter* on the *Chanson du Pèlerinage de Charlemagne* seems to be evident.<sup>55</sup> The most important relics brought by Charlemagne were, according to the author of the poem, the Crown of Thorns and the nail of the Holy Cross. At the end of the poem, only these two will be placed on the altar in the Saint-Denis church. Moreover, the Shroud of the Lord is also mentioned, and it appears among the relics obtained by Charlemagne listed in *Descriptio qualiter*. The confusion of Charlemagne with Charles the Bald has already been explained, but it may be added that it is impossible to imagine a *chanson de geste* skipping over two generations in order to be faithful to its hagiographic prototype, especially as the contents of the *chansons de geste* were usually determined mainly by the internal order of the cycle to which they belonged. This lack of fidelity of vernacular texts such as *Pèlerinage de Charlemagne* to the Latin writings – considered then as authentic – was the reason why in the late twelfth century many readers with intellectual ambitions rejected them, and it gave rise to the origin of vernacular prose that dealt with historical topics. The first prose work in French about Charlemagne's expedition to the East and the translation of the Crown of Thorns was written by Pierre de Beauvais, which I will discuss below.

### *Fierabras*

*Chanson de Fierabras* is the second of the twelfth-century *chansons de geste* that contains traces of the legend of the translation of the Crown of Thorns to France.<sup>56</sup>

*Fierabras* is a classical historical *chanson de geste*, focusing on Charlemagne's war with the Spanish Saracens. It is a part of a larger cycle called the cycle of Passion relics, being a continuation of the *Destruction de Rome*, which mainly deals with the invasion of a Saracen knight Fierabras on Rome. It is sometimes treated as an introduction to the *Pèlerinage de*

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55 A very flamboyant, yet deprived of any source base, attempt to derive today known version of the *Pèlerinage de Charlemagne* from some non-existent, hypothetical (allegedly lost) texts, being the common source of the *Pèlerinage* and the *Descriptio qualiter* was made almost 120 years ago by MORF, *Étude sur la date, le caractère et l'origine de la Chanson du Pèlerinage de Charlemagne*, pp. 185–232.

56 FIERABRAS.

*Charlemagne*.<sup>57</sup> The last mentioned claim cannot be accepted if we read both texts: the ending of *Chanson de Fierabras* leads on toward a completely different continuation: *Roland*. The subject of *Chanson de Fierabras* is the expedition Charlemagne undertook against the Saracens in order to take revenge on them for occupying and destroying Rome, murdering the pope, and the robbing of Passion relics. Charlemagne defeats the pagans and retrieves the relics, which he do not return to Rome but distributes to monasteries in his own kingdom. Written soon after 1190,<sup>58</sup> the poem became quite popular; besides the French and Occitan versions, there soon appeared prose and verse adaptations to other languages: Latin (Ireland), English, Dutch, Italian, German, Castilian, and Portuguese.<sup>59</sup>

Fierabras is a mighty ruler of the Saracens he is called the king of Alexandria, but his empire spreads from Spain, across Cairo<sup>60</sup> and the Red Sea, from Rus' to Cologne.<sup>61</sup> Greedy to rule over Rome, he invades the Eternal City, ravages and destroys Saint Peter's Basilica and Roman monasteries, sentences the pope to death, and with his companions rapes the nuns.<sup>62</sup> Then he takes the Crown of Thorns, the Holy Nails and the Wood of the Holy Cross, and the Shroud of the Lord; he also gains power over the Holy Land, Jerusalem, and the Holy Sepulchre.<sup>63</sup> Of course, Charlemagne, called the "king from Saint-Denis," could not allow this to continue so, together with his barons, he sets off to make war against Fierabras.<sup>64</sup> The consecutive 5000 verses are devoted to the heroic deeds of Charlemagne and his peers in their fight against the Saracens. The topic of the relics reappears toward the end of the poem. The bravest of the Franks are besieged by the Saracenes in a tower: Roland, Olivier, Ogier the Dane, duke Naimon of Bavaria, Godefroy of Anjou, and Guy of Burgundy. Charlemagne's peers' situation seems hopeless, still they do not want to disgrace themselves by surrendering the tower. They prefer to die gloriously by undertaking an armed sortie. Then Floripés, the sister of Fierabras, in love with Guy of Burgundy, brings the Frankish knights a casket containing the Passion relics Fierabras had looted in Rome, although she faces death at her father's

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57 *FIERABRAS*, p. 11.

58 *FIERABRAS*, pp. 139–144.

59 *FIERABRAS*, pp. 12–14; also with a discussion of the original French and Occitan version, pp. 23–87; a detailed bibliography of the edition (limited to the French version) and the literature on the subject of *Chanson de Fierabras*: pp. 191–227.

60 Originally: Babylon (a medieval name of Cairo used in Western Europe).

61 *FIERABRAS*, II, v. 50–52, p. 238.

62 *FIERABRAS*, II, v. 54–59, p. 238.

63 *FIERABRAS*, II, v. 60–69, pp. 238–239.

64 *FIERABRAS*, V sq., v. 130–190 sq., p. 238.

hand, emir Balant, for putting him to shame by loving a Frank. Having reverently kissed the relics, duke Naimon shows them from the window to the Saracens climbing the tower; blinded by the miraculous light, the latter fall down.<sup>65</sup> Consequently, the Franks have defeat the Saracens who resolve to convert to the only true religion, having found out that the gods they believed in are false. Fierabras and Floripés are solemnly baptized; then Floripés marries Guy of Burgundy and together with him is granted by Charlemagne the rule over half of the Kingdom of Alexandria; the second one is to be ruled by Fierabras as Guy's vassal.<sup>66</sup> In return for the favours he has granted her, Charlemagne requires Floripés to show him the relics, which were, in fact, the cause of the war and without which the Franks would not have won. The holy treasures are still kept in the tower whose miraculous defense has sealed the Franks' victory. Floripés brings the Crown of Thorns to Charlemagne's palace and the archbishop performs an ostension, during which the relic floats in the air and proves its authenticity through that miracle.<sup>67</sup> The same miracle happens when the archbishop performs the *ostensio* of the Holy Nails and the Holy Shroud; all the relics spread a beautiful aroma.<sup>68</sup> This thread was certainly inspired by the miraculous levitation of the relics obtained by Charlemagne in Constantinople, related by *Descriptio qualiter*; indeed, also the miracle of the emperor's levitating gloves, on which the relics are deposited for a while, is repeated in the next stanza.<sup>69</sup>

Soon, Charlemagne has a dream in which he is called to set off to aid the Christians in Spain defending their country against the Arabs.<sup>70</sup> On his way to Spain, the emperor stops in Saint-Denis and calls the archbishops, bishops, and abbots, along with the barons and all the populace, to show his subjects the relics of Christ.<sup>71</sup> There, on the platform of Lendit ("peron du Lendi") a mass is celebrated and the relics are distributed among the churches of France: part of the Crown of Thorns and one of the nails of the Holy Cross is given to Saint-Denis, the Holy Shroud to Compiègne, and the remaining relics, not listed in the poem in that place, enhance other churches. Then, the emperor establishes in Saint-Denis the fair of Lendit.<sup>72</sup>

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65 *FIERABRAS*, CXXXIX, v. 5397–5444, pp. 403–404.

66 *FIERABRAS*, CLX E, v. 6196–6211, p. 427.

67 *FIERABRAS*, [CLXI E] / CLV A, v. 6224–6258, pp. 428–429.

68 *FIERABRAS*, [CLXII E] / CLVI A, v. 6259–6290, pp. 429–430.

69 *FIERABRAS*, [CLXIII E] / CLVII A, v. 6291–6313, pp. 430–431.

70 *FIERABRAS*, [CLXV E] / CLVIII A – [CLXVII E] / CLXI A, v. 6325–6374, pp. 430–433.

71 *FIERABRAS*, [CLXVII E] / CLXI A, v. 6378–6383, p. 433.

72 *FIERABRAS*, [CLXVIII E] / CLXII A, v. 6378–6383, p. 433.

*Karlamagnús saga*

When analyzing the reception of the topics from *Descriptio qualiter*, we will not neglect the *Karlamagnús saga*,<sup>73</sup> a collection of epic poems about Charlemagne first written in the *langue d'oïl*, compiled in the second half of the thirteenth century and probably adapted from the Anglo-Norman literature in Norway as heroic sagas. The work was likely commissioned by the king Haakon IV of Norway, who held patronage over adaptations or translations of many *chansons de geste* and heroic sagas in Old Norse.<sup>74</sup> Thus, *Karlamagnús saga* is a thirteenth-century *summa* of the narrative topics devoted to Charlemagne, comprised in the vernacular literature of the twelfth century, composed of ten songs, called *branches*. Each song is an adaptation of one or more than one *chanson de geste* but devoted to one topic and belonging to the same cycle; and sometimes of another text (*Turpin Chronicle in prose*) that describes Charlemagne's life and deeds. Thus, the reception of the story of the translation of the Crown of Thorns in the *Karlamagnús saga* is secondary, mediated by other texts.

The topic of the expedition to Jerusalem and Constantinople, where the emperor obtains the Passion relics, appears in *Karlamagnús saga* three times. First, in Song I that describes Charlemagne's life from acceding the throne after his father's death till electing the emperor's twelve peers. In verse XLIX we learn about Charlemagne's marriage and the birth of his son. It is then that Charlemagne makes a vow to go on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem to visit the Holy Sepulchre and obtain the remission of sins.<sup>75</sup> The next stanza mentions the pilgrimage only briefly; it is mainly devoted to the visit in Constantinople.<sup>76</sup> On his way back from the Holy Land, at the request of the Byzantine emperor, Charlemagne defeats the Turks who were at that time at war with the Greeks. Then, the emperor of Byzantium, recognizing the greatness of Charlemagne, decides to become Charlemagne's vassal and to offer him the rule over Constantinople. Charlemagne declines and recognizes the Byzantine rules as the true and legitimate emperor of East, and the head of Christianity (*sic!*). Still, Charlemagne asks the Greek

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73 Not reading the Old Norse, I had to use translations into other European languages; the most recent edition is a translation into French: *SAGA DE CHARLEMAGNE, KARLAMAGNÚS SAGA*. The editor, commentator and translator, Daniel W. Lacroix, compiled a rich bibliography that includes both the literature about the whole saga and its respective *branches*, preserved manuscripts, and other Scandinavian versions of the Saga.

74 AEBISCHER, *Les versions norroises*; KALINKE, *Norse Romance*, pp. 319–363; SKÅRUP, *La matière de France dans les pays du Nord*, pp. 5–20.

75 *SAGA DE CHARLEMAGNE, Karlamagnús saga*, I, 49, pp. 127–128.

76 *SAGA DE CHARLEMAGNE, Karlamagnús saga*, I, 50, pp. 128–129.

emperor to give him the Holy Relics which he would take to France. The emperor of Constantinople gladly agrees, and Charlemagne soon obtains a part of the cloth used to wipe Christ after he spoke to the people; a part of the Holy Cross, the head of the lance which pierced the Saviour's side, and Saint Mercurius's lance. On his return to France, Charlemagne gives the cloth to the Abbey of Compiègne, Christ's shoes to Aachen, the relics of the Holy Cross to Orléans, and has the relics of the both Holy Lances embedded in the hilt of his sword which from then on is called *Joyeuse*.

It is remarkable that, despite the similarity of Verse 50 in Song I of the *Karlamagnús saga* to the contents of *Descriptio qualiter*, the former does not mention the Crown of Thorns or the Holy Nail, and the collection of the relics obtained by Charlemagne in Constantinople is very different from the one known from the French accounts. This fact and the name of the king of the Turks (Miran) mentioned in the saga, whom Charlemagne defeated at the request of the emperor of the East, inspired scholars to hypothesize about a lost *chanson de geste* (called *Miran*), whose only trace was supposed to be found in the Saga of Charlemagne. This presumed *Chanson de Miran*, along with the records in the chronicles from the Carolingian era concerning the exchange of envoys between Charlemagne and the Christians from the Holy Land and the Arabian rulers, were supposed to have been the original source of *Descriptio qualiter*. *Chanson de Miran* was also presumed to have been the original version of the heroic saga recounting Charlemagne's pilgrimage to the East, which would be then parodied in the *Pèlerinage de Charlemagne*.<sup>77</sup> The problem of sources which could be used by the author of the *Karlamagnús saga* has inspired many controversies and arguments. According to the boldest hypothesis made in the early twentieth century, the absence of the Crown of Thorns in Song I of the Saga is a proof that the *Saga* must have been based on a text earlier than *Descriptio qualiter* and thus also earlier than the confirmed presence of the Passion relics in Saint-Denis, hence not later than in the mid-eleventh century.<sup>78</sup> Certain similarities of the *Chronicle* of Benedict of Monte Soratte and the *Karlamagnús saga* were believed to suggest that there had existed a hypothetical lost text, the so-called *Vie romancée de Charlemagne* which was supposed to have been

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77 MORF, *Étude sur la date, le caractère et l'origine de la Chanson du Pèlerinage de Charlemagne*, pp. 209–213, 232.

78 COULET, *Études sur l'ancien poème français du "Voyage de Charlemagne"*. This claim is supported by MONTELEONE, *Il viaggio di Carlo Magno in Terra Santa*, p. 256.

a common source for *Descriptio qualiter* and Song I of the *Karlamagnús saga*.<sup>79</sup>

Song VII is a very accurate but slightly abbreviated adaptation of the *Pèlerinage de Charlemagne*.<sup>80</sup> It repeats the information that Charlemagne obtained the Crown of Thorns in Jerusalem and that it was deposited in Saint-Denis,<sup>81</sup> so there is no need to discuss it further. We will only mention here Song X of the *Karlamagnús saga*,<sup>82</sup> devoted to the miracles and miraculous signs that God showed Charlemagne and his contemporaries, including the archbishop Turpin's vision,<sup>83</sup> in which Charlemagne's companion learns that Saint James snatched from the devil's grasp the soul of the deceased emperor, thus saving it from the punishment in hell. The first three verses of the Song present an abbreviation of *Descriptio qualiter*, starting from the emperor Constantine's vision and ending with establishing the *Indictum* in Aachen in honour of the Passion relics which Charlemagne obtained from the emperor of Constantinople after liberating Jerusalem from the pagans.<sup>84</sup> In this Song, like in *Descriptio qualiter*, Charlemagne obtains the Crown of Thorns in Constantinople. Although there is a mention of giving to the Abbey of Saint-Denis the miraculous manna, which came from the flowers growing on the relic when the thorns were being cut off, there is nothing about offering the Crown of Thorns to Saint Denis.<sup>85</sup>

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79 AEBISCHER, *Les versions norroises*, pp. 58–70 and MONTELEONE, *Il viaggio di Carlo Magno in Terra Santa*, pp. 171–189, especially pp. 180–185.

80 SAGA DE CHARLEMAGNE, KARLAMAGNÚS SAGA, pp. 705–733. Interestingly, the fragment of *Pèlerinage de Charlemagne*, which according to its adherents, is the crucial proof of the claim that this *chanson de geste* was a satire (see above), namely, the episode in which Charlemagne sits on the throne of Christ, and his peers the seats of the Twelve Apostles in the Pater Noster church in Jerusalem, is interpreted here quite seriously: seeing the event the patriarch of Jerusalem predicts that it is a sign that Charlemagne is going to gain power over all the other kings; SAGA DE CHARLEMAGNE, KARLAMAGNÚS SAGA, VII, 2, p. 713.

81 SAGA DE CHARLEMAGNE, KARLAMAGNÚS SAGA, VII, 2 and VII, 19, pp. 713 and 733.

82 Book X has been only preserved in the accounts derived from Manuscript B and, according to SAGA DE CHARLEMAGNE, KARLAMAGNÚS SAGA, pp. 19–20, 846–859, it may be the final part of the original poem, which became Song I of the *Karlamagnús saga*.

83 SAGA DE CHARLEMAGNE, KARLAMAGNÚS SAGA, X, 7, pp. 882–884.

84 SAGA DE CHARLEMAGNE, KARLAMAGNÚS SAGA, X, 1–3, pp. 863–873.

85 SAGA DE CHARLEMAGNE, KARLAMAGNÚS SAGA, X, 3, pp. 870, 873.

## Chronicles and *Gesta*<sup>86</sup>

### Gesta episcoporum Mettensium

In its version compiled in the mid-twelfth century, *Gesta episcoporum Mettensium*<sup>87</sup> may be the earliest Latin chronicle containing a reference to Charlemagne's expedition to the East and to the translation of the Crown of Thorns to France. Very brief in presenting the achievements of the first successive twenty-eight bishops of Metz, when talking about Saint Arnulf (613/614–629, d. ca. 640), the author makes a longer digression about Charlemagne, the descendant of the saint bishop. The account of the *Gesta episcoporum Mettensium* evidently draws information from *Descriptio qualiter* but, in comparison, emphasizes slightly different fragments. These changes are evidently caused by the author's different, twelfth-century worldview. Whereas the author of *Descriptio qualiter* perceived the emperors of the East and West as equally important rulers of two parts of the Christian world, and the precedence of Charlemagne over Constantine was only caused by God's particular protection of the emperor of the West, the author of the *Gesta episcoporum Mettensium* clearly underlines Charlemagne's superiority over the emperor of Constantinople, by saying that the Byzantine monarch revered the ruler of the West as his master ("honoravit ut dominum"). Besides, whereas according to *Descriptio qualiter* it is the Romans who give Charlemagne the title of the emperor and the right to nominate the pope – due to the former's piety, excellent governance, and magnificent victories – according to the *Gesta episcoporum Mettensium* it was the Church in Rome that chose Charlemagne as his protector and defender ("quem ecclesia sibi Romana elegit in advocatum").<sup>88</sup>

These are not the only differences. *Gesta episcoporum Mettensium* clearly indicates that the Crown of Thorns was given to Charlemagne in Constantinople when he was returning from Jerusalem: "the emperor of Constantinople honoured him as his lord, meeting him when [Charlemagne] was returning from Jerusalem and gave him a large part of the Crown of Thorns of the Lord with other apostolic relics as an homage."<sup>89</sup> Interestingly,

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86 Cf. MERCURI, *Corona di Cristo, corona di re*, pp. 87–91 (very briefly).

87 *GESTA EPISCOPORUM METTENSIIUM USQUE AD 1120*, pp. 534–544; account of the translation of the Crown of Thorns: p. 538.

88 "Huius [Arnulfi] quadrinepos Karolus Magnus extitit, quem ecclesia sibi Romana elegit in advocatum, imperator Constantinopolitanus honoravit ut dominum;" *GESTA EPISCOPORUM METTENSIIUM USQUE AD 1120*, p. 538.

89 "occurrns ei de Iherusalem redeunti, coronamque Ihesu Christi spineam cum aliis apostolorum reliquiis non minimam devote contulit partem;" *GESTA EPISCOPORUM METTENSIIUM USQUE AD 1120*, p. 538.

in the Chronicle of the bishops of Metz – which was part of the Holy Empire – there is no mention about Aachen. The author says that having returned from Constantinople to France, Charlemagne brought the Crown of Thorns to Paris. And it is in Paris where the assemblage of the bishops and abbots of the kingdom took place, during which the emperor and the bishops established the annual fair to honour the relics.<sup>90</sup> More information on the subject, as the author says, can be found in Charlemagne’s *itinerarium*.<sup>91</sup> The latter source is unknown. Whereas omitting Aachen may suggest that the text was compiled in France, the lack of a mention of Saint-Denis seems to exclude the Dionysian inspiration of the author of the *Gesta* of the bishops of Metz.

### *Helinand of Froidmont and Vincent of Beauvais*

Helinand of Froidmont (ca. 1160–ca. 1231) studied in the cathedral school in Beauvais and then became a *trouvère* (*ioculator*). In his mature years, he abandoned worldly pleasures and joined the Cistercians in the Froidmont Abbey in Picardy. Towards the end of his life, Helinand became a professor in the newly founded University of Toulouse (1229). Besides poems – his *trouvère* works are lost, we know only the religious poems – Helinand wrote a universal chronicle continued until 1204, of which only the last books embracing the years 634–1204 have been preserved.<sup>92</sup> The disappearance of the first forty-four books of the chronicle was in fact connected with the renown Helinand enjoyed in the Capetian court as a scholar. Indeed, Helinand’s chronicle was borrowed by Guérin, Philip Augustus’s Keeper of the Seal, who intended to use it when composing historical registries for the royal chancery, a work which he supervised. It was Guérin who lost the part of the text dealing with the history of the world from its creation until the reign of Dagobert I and emperor Heraclius.

Helinand’s chronicle does not contribute anything to the legend about Charlemagne’s translation of the Crown of Thorns. *Descriptio qualiter* has been considerably abbreviated in the chronicle, set in linear time, and ascribed to annual dates.<sup>93</sup> Nevertheless, Helinand’s chronicle is noteworthy,

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90 “Hic Karolus a Constantinopoli digrediens ... in Frantiam feliciter rediit. Qui cum Parisius pervenissent, sui multitudinem regni episcoporum ac religiosorum virorum collegit, eorumque auctoritate constituit, ut dies qui dicitur indulgentiarum singulis frequentaretur annis ob predictarum dignam reliquiarum memoriam;” *GESTA EPISCOPORUM METTENSIIUM USQUE AD 1120*, p. 538.

91 “Quae si quis nosse desiderat, itinerarium ipsius Karoli legat;” *GESTA EPISCOPORUM METTENSIIUM USQUE AD 1120*, p. 538.

92 HELINAND DE FROIDMONT, *Chronicon*, lib. XLV–XLIX, coll. 771–1082.

93 HELINAND DE FROIDMONT, *Chronicon*, lib. XLV, coll. 843–846 [802].



because it is the first universal chronicle that includes the account of Charlemagne's liberation of the Holy Land. Helinand himself confirms this by expressing his surprise that no known to him Latin chronicler writes about Charlemagne's conquest of the Holy Land and the miracles occurring thanks to the power of the relics he had brought.<sup>94</sup>

Helinand of Froidmont has a meticulously critical approach to the sources he uses: he usually gives the author in whose work he found the information. In this case he could not do it, as *Descriptio qualiter* is anonymous. Helinand considerably abbreviated the source text yet preserved its main content: he did not omit any important piece of information and manifested a noteworthy critical discernment. *Descriptio qualiter* and the sources directly dependent on it, such as *De sanctitate Karoli Magni*, call Charlemagne an emperor. Consequently, Helinand includes the information about Charlemagne's expedition to the East in the year 802, thus after Charlemagne was crowned as an emperor, but makes a reservation that the expedition must have taken place earlier, because the emperors Constantine and Leo, mentioned in *Descriptio qualiter*, had been long dead at that time.<sup>95</sup> Without questioning the authenticity of the account, Helinand explains the discrepancy by saying that pope Adrian I offered the imperial crown to the king of the Franks many times, but Charlemagne refused, feeling he did not deserve such an honour. Yet, Helinand says, since the Empire had been offered to Charlemagne, he could have been considered emperor even before being crowned.<sup>96</sup>

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94 "Mirum valde est, quod de toto hoc itinere Caroli Ierosolymitano, in quo tam praeclarum opus factum est, ut est acquisitio terrae Ierosolymitanae et tanta miracula quae per has reliquias facta sunt, nihil omnino apud Latinorum chronographos adnotatum reperitur;" HELINAND DE FROIDMONT, *Chronicon*, lib. XLV, coll. 846.

95 "eo tempore, quo datum est imperium Romanum Carolo, cum uterque istorum, id est Constantinus et Leo filius, eo tempore quod imperium Romanum Carolo datum est iam mortuus fuerit;" HELINAND DE FROIDMONT, *Chronicon*, lib. XLV, coll. 846. According to all analysed texts, the letter was written by emperor Constantine and his son, Leo; Helinand may have meant only Constantine V (741–775) and Leo IV (775–780).

96 "In hoc autem praesens narratio resultare videtur historicae veritatis, quod dicit patriarcham Ierosolymitanum venisse Constantinopolim ad Constantinum imperatorem et filium eius Leonem, eo tempore, quo datum est imperium Romanum Carolo, cum uterque istorum, id est Constantinus et Leo filius, eo tempore quod imperium Romanum Carolo datum est iam mortuus fuerit. Potest tamen intelligi, imperium Romanum illorum tempore datum Carolo, id est oblatum; quia legitur Carolus plusquam triginta annis simplici nomine regis contentus fuisse, ab imperatoria appellatione se temperans, quamvis saepe a Adriano papa invitaretur;" HELINAND DE FROIDMONT, *Chronicon*, lib. XLV, coll. 846.

Besides, Helinand explains the discrepancies of *Descriptio* and the incipit. As we remember, the former may have been understood in such a way that Charlemagne received the relics in the Holy Land, while the latter clearly indicated that he performed the translation from Constantinople to Aachen. The chronicler got rid of this discrepancy in one sentence in which he says that after defeating the pagans, Charlemagne stopped for a day in Constantinople<sup>97</sup> at Constantine's request and, having refused rich gifts offered to him by the Byzantine emperor, asked for the Passion relics.

Helinand positions the part about the translation of the relics from Aachen to the Abbeys of Saint-Denis and Compiègne by Charles the Bald in year 878, before the description of the latter's death. Although this account is very brief, it contains very interesting information about the ideological aspect of the royal cult of the Passion relics. The chronicler says that Charles the Bald wanted to establish the imperial capital "ad instar Constantinopolis" in Compiègne, which he called with his name: Karlopolis,<sup>98</sup> and where he funded the Abbey of Saint Corneille, in which he deposited the Shroud of the Lord. However, Charles gave the thorns of the Holy Crown, the Holy Nail and the Wood of the Holy Cross to the Abbey of Saint-Denis to make it up for depriving the monastery of the treasures that had been given by previous kings. Also the *Indictum* was moved to Saint-Denis. The legitimacy of the translation was confirmed by miracles.<sup>99</sup> Thus, we may understand this that – according to Helinand of Froidmont – one of the major attributes of an imperial capital was the presence of the Passion relics: in this case it was the Holy Shroud, in a church being a part of the emperor's residence. This criterion is also fulfilled by Saint-Denis, the seat of an Abbey, in which the relics of the Crown of Thorns and the Holy Nail are stored and where one of the royal palaces had been located since the Carolingian times.

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97 "Fugatis paganis, et recuperata terra, petivit rex licentiam repatriandi ab imperatore Constantinopolitano et patriarcha Ierosolymitano. Quem per unum diem retinuit imperator apud Constantinopolim;" HELINAND DE FROIDMONT, *Chronicon*, lib. XLV, coll. 845.

98 "Carolus iste Calvus monasterium S. Cornelii apud Compendium fundavit et perfecit. Hoc castrum cogitaverat ipse facere ad instar Constantinopolis et de nomine suo illud appellavit Carolopolim;" HELINAND DE FROIDMONT, *Chronicon*, lib. XLVI, coll. 869.

99 "Hic indictum diem, quem Carolus Magnus apud villam suam Aquisgrani instituerat, instituit apud villam S. Dionysii. Et quoniam ecclesiae S. Dionysii multa rapuerat, quae alii dederant, spineam coronam Domini, et unum de clavis, et de ligno crucis, et alia quaedam ei obtulit. Sudarium vero Compendium reliquit. Antequam autem reliquiae istae ostenderetur populo, tanta fames solebat esse in Galia, ut asinos et caballos comederunt; quod per Domini misericordiam postea cessavit;" *ibid.*

There is one clear discrepancy between Helinand's chronicle and *Descriptio* and other accounts of the Carolingian *Iter Hierosolimitanum*. In Helinand's chronicle the Charlemagne's subjects who would refuse to take part in the war for the Holy Sepulchre rather than being punished with paying four denarii per head similarly to the serfs – become serfs for four years and then the punishment was to end.<sup>100</sup>

The Chronicle of Helinand of Froidmont was not copied into many manuscripts during the later Middle Ages, but became major source for Vincent of Beauvais (ca. 1190–1264) when writing *Speculum historiale*. Vincent was a first-generation Dominican friar. He was closely connected with the court of Louis IX and served as the teacher to the royal family: he taught the king's children, especially the eldest two: Saint Louis's presumed successor, Louis, who died in 1260, and Isabella, later the queen of Navarre. Vincent was also a lecturer in the Cistercian Abbey of Royaumont, founded by Saint Louis and his mother, Blanche of Castile. Louis IX appreciated Vincent's comprehensive knowledge and erudition, which yielded *Speculum maius*, a summa of knowledge from the first half of thirteenth century about nature ("Speculum naturale"), theology and philosophy ("Speculum doctrinale"), and history ("Speculum historiale"). This monumental work was to be composed of four parts ("Opus quadruplex"), as Vincent also planned to write *Speculum morale*, a book about mores, but the work was interrupted by his death. The preserved Vincent's moralistic writings were probably to make up the unfinished book.<sup>101</sup>

*Speculum historiale* is a kind of a universal chronicle, recounting the history of the world from its creation until the end of times. Louis IX did not patronise this work but was interested in its contents and distribution.<sup>102</sup> Vincent was a tutor of the king's children and a lecturer of the royal monastery foundation, which often served as king's private residence. The author of the *Life* of Saint Louis, Guillaume de Saint-Pathus, says that the king willingly and regularly participated in the lessons given to the monks during

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100 "rex edictum proposuit, ut omnes, qui arma possent ferre, irent secum contra paganos; et qui non iret, ipse et filius eius servus quattuor annorum esset;" HELINAND DE FROIDMONT, *Chronicon*, lib. XLV, coll. 844. Was this difference the result of an erroneous reading of the word "nummorum" as "annorum?"

101 SCHNEIDER, *Vincent of Beauvais' Opus uniuersale de statu principis*, pp. 285–299.

102 DUCHENNE, *Autour de 1254, une révision capétienne du "Speculum historiale"*, pp. 141–166.

his stay in Royaumont.<sup>103</sup> Thus the monarch must have known Vincent's writings quite well.

The analysis of the reception of *Descriptio qualiter* in the *Speculum historiale* seems to be unnecessary, since Vincent quotes verbatim fragments of Helinand's of Froidmont chronicle when recounting the liberation Jerusalem from the Saracens by Charlemagne and the translation of the Passion relics from Constantinople to Aachen and then, during Charles the Bald's rule, their translation to the Abbeys of Saint-Denis and Compiègne.<sup>104</sup> The most important thing is that Helinand's account was included in a work which played an important part in shaping the historical erudition of Louis IX but, on the other hand, it should not be overrated. The history of the kings of France, authorized by the monarchy, will not be written by Dominican erudite intellectuals but by the Benedictines of Saint-Denis, for generations experienced in historiographic writings. This role will be played by the *Grandes Chroniques de France*, commissioned by Louis IX and undeniably written under the king's supervision, however finished only after his death, in 1274.

#### Pseudo-Turpin Chronicle: *Historia Karoli Magni et Rotholandi*

The earliest known version of *Historia Karoli Magni et Rotholandi*, called the Pseudo-Turpin Chronicle,<sup>105</sup> was created as Book IV of *Liber Sancti Iacobi*, compiled in the Cluny Abbey between 1140 and 1150 and known in its fullest version from *Codex Calixtinus*. First attested manuscript is known already in 1173, and preserved in the archives of the Santiago de Compostela Cathedral.<sup>106</sup> According to some researchers, the origins of

103 GUILLAUME DE SAINT-PATHUS, *Vie de Saint Louis* (DELABORDE), pp. 52–54.

104 VINCENT OF BEAUVAIS, *Speculum historiale*, pp. 963–964, 977.

105 The basic editions are: *HISTORIA KAROLI MAGNI ET ROTHOLANDI* and KLEIN, *Die Chronik von Karl dem Grossen und Roland*. The literature on *Pseudo-Turpin Chronicle* is very broad and the scope of this study is too small to quote it fully, for that reason only the most important items will be listed here. Two classical and basic works on that subject are PARIS, *De Pseudo-Turpino*, and PARIS, *Histoire poétique de Charlemagne*. Other works that should be quoted are BROWN, *Saint-Denis and the Turpin Legend*, pp. 51–88; BURGER, *La légende de Roncevaux avant la Chanson de Roland*, pp. 433–477; SHORT, *The Pseudo-Turpin Chronicle*, pp. 1–22. Recently on the importance of the cult of Saint James and the actual and legendary history of Charlemagne: JAKOBUS UND KARL DER GROSSE: VON EINHARDS KARLSVITA ZUM PSEUDO-TURPIN.

106 In Early Modern times, the Pseudo-Turpin's Chronicle was taken out from the volumen and bound as a separate manuscript. About the manuscripts of the

*Historia Karoli Magni et Rotholandi* should not be attributed to Cluny, where the Pseudo-Turpin Chronicle would have been only included by a compiler to the corpus of texts, but with the Abbey of Saint-Denis, where Pseudo-Turpin would have been written not later than in the 1120s. Other specialists believe that even if the text was written in Cluny, it was copied and known in Saint-Denis not later than between 1124 and 1135.<sup>107</sup> Nevertheless, this view is hardly an *opinio communis*.<sup>108</sup>

*Liber Sancti Iacobi* is a compilation of five texts, diverse both in their form and content. The only thing that links them is the cult of Saint James the Elder, the patron of Christian Spain. It is his request, expressed in Charlemagne's dream, that made the latter set off in aid to Spanish Christians. One of the emperor's expeditions ended in a defeat in the Roncevaux valley and death of his peers, considered by the author as martyrs, and thus saints; the emperor's nephew, Roland, was one of them. This is the story presented in the *Historia Karoli Magni et Rotholandi*. Noteworthy, both *chansons de geste* describing the translation of the Crown of Thorns to Saint-Denis (*Pèlerinage de Charlemagne* and *Fierabras*) indicated that the continuation of the Charlemagne's story would concern the emperor's wars against the Spanish Saracens. Although the majority of the Pseudo-Turpin's Old French (*langue d'oïl*) adaptations made at the turn of the twelfth and thirteenth century and the first quarter of the thirteenth century<sup>109</sup> are syntheses of

*Liber Sancti Iacobi* cf. HISTORIA KAROLI MAGNI ET ROTHOLANDI, "Introduction," pp. 5–84.

107 BOURNAZEL, *Suger and the Capetians*, p. 63; BOURNAZEL, POLY, *La mutation féodale*, pp. 89–94; MANDACH, *Naissance et développement de la chanson de geste en Europe*, pp. 85–88, 92–99; SHORT, *The Pseudo-Turpin Chronicle*, pp. 1–22; TURPIN FRANÇAIS, pp. XI–II, XV–XVI, believe that a copy of the *Historia Karoli Magni et Rotholandi* was kept in Saint-Denis Abbey as soon as in 1130s. BOURNAZEL, *Louis VI le Gros*, pp. 385–386, believes this work was written in the Cluny milieu in the 1120s and was known in Saint-Denis at that time.

108 These views were opposed by BROWN, *Saint-Denis and the Turpin Legend*, pp. 51–88, who, analysing various the Pseudo-Turpin's versions and their adaptations into historiographic writings composed in Saint-Denis, claims that the actual interest in Pseudo-Turpin in the Abbey began as late as in the first quarter of the thirteenth century.

109 The editions of the Old French versions of Pseudo-Turpin: an account not inspired by and not containing references to the expedition to the Holy Land and Constantinople: ANONYMOUS OLD FRENCH TRANSLATION OF THE PSEUDO-TURPIN CHRONICLE (so-called *Turpin II*, whose editor nevertheless calls it *Turpin I*). The accounts inspired by the *Descriptio qualiter*: PIERRE DE BEAUVAIS, *Descriptio-Turpin*; OLD FRENCH JOHANNES TRANSLATION OF THE PSEUDO-TURPIN CHRONICLE; TURPIN

*Descriptio qualiter* and *Historia Karoli Magni et Rotholandi*, the Latin versions of the *Pseudo-Turpin Chronicle* either do not refer to *Descriptio* or make very brief allusions. Nevertheless, their authors certainly must have known *Iter Hierosolimitanum*, so we may assume that these texts were written later than *Descriptio*.

The *Pseudo-Turpin Chronicle* in the *Codex Calixtinus* version and its most faithful vernacular adaptations – the so-called Turpin I and Master Johannes Turpin – very briefly mention Charlemagne’s expedition to Jerusalem, the liberation of the Holy Sepulchre, and the translation of the Passion relics: “how he became the emperor of Rome and travelled to the Holy Sepulchre and how he brought the wood of the Cross, which he gave to many churches, I will not be able to write. It is due to [my] weak hand and poor pen rather than to his [Charlemagne’s inadequate] story.”<sup>110</sup> Thus, the Crown of Thorns, Saint-Denis and Constantinople, are not mentioned. Saint-Denis appears in the Latin *Pseudo-Turpin* and the two above-mentioned vernacular adaptations in connection with Charlemagne’s forged charter given to the Abbey, in which Charlemagne, in agreement with his bishops, placed France under the protection of Saint Denis, deposited his own crown on the Saint’s altar, proclaimed Saint-Denis Abbey the *caput*

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FRANÇAIS (Walpole resigned here from changing the names of the French-language *Pseudo-Turpin* accounts, suggested in 1979, thus creating an utter chaos, impossible to sort out); *CHRONIQUE DITE DE TURPIN*. A brief, factual, competent discussion of all *Pseudo-Turpin* accounts in the langue d’oïl: SPIEGEL, “*Pseudo-Turpin*” – *the Crisis of Aristocracy and the Beginning of Vernacular Historiography in XIII<sup>th</sup> Century France*, pp. 207–223. The remaining literature (only the most important and recent items): MOISAN, *L’exploitation de la chronique du Pseudo-Turpin*, pp. 11–41; MOISAN, *L’exploitation de l’épopée par le Pseudo-Turpin*, pp. 195–224; SPIEGEL, *Romancing the Past*, pp. 83–92; WALPOLE, *Philip Mouskès and the Pseudo-Turpin Chronicle*, pp. 327–440; WALPOLE, *Prolégomènes à une édition du Turpin français*, vol. X, pp. 199–230, vol. XI, pp. 325–370; WALPOLE, *La traduction du Pseudo-Turpin du Manuscrit Vatican Regina 624*, pp. 484–514.

- 110 “qualiter Romae imperator fuit et dominicum sepulcrum adiit, et qualiter signum dominicum secum attulit, unde multas ecclesias dotavit, scribere nequeo. Magis deficit manus et penna quam eius hystoria;” *HISTORIA KAROLI MAGNI ET ROTHOLANDI*, cap. 20, v. IX–XII, pp. 179. Cf. *Turpin I*: “et comment il fu empereres de Rome, et comment requist le sepulcre Nostre Seigneur, et coment il aporta o lui la veraie croiz dont il mist en plusors eglises par le monde, ce ne puis je pas tot raconter que trop i avroit a dire et trop seroit grande l’estoire;” *TURPIN FRANÇAIS*, cap. 20, v. 48–52, p. 32. This fragment was moved by Master Johannes from the end of cap. 20 to cap. 1; cf. *OLD FRENCH JOHANNES TRANSLATION OF THE PSEUDO-TURPIN CHRONICLE*, p. 8.

*regni*, and ordered all his subjects to pay Saint-Denis an annual capitation of the customary value of four denarii. This levy (*chevage*) was a popular kind of recognition payment due to the senior in medieval France, which meant that the Franks were subjects of Saint-Denis, still it was not a serfdom like in the case of a typical feudal levy. Indeed, the subordination to Saint-Denis made the Franks truly free, liberating them from all temporal subjection except, obviously, that of the king, the first vassal of Saint-Denis. Every unfree man who pays a levy to Saint-Denis shall be liberated. In this way, Gaul changed its name and became henceforth France, the realm of free men (from *Francus* meaning “free”).<sup>111</sup> The levy of four denarii, which was to be paid by the Franks to Saint Denis according to both the forgery from Saint-Denis and Pseudo-Turpin (Philip Augustus<sup>112</sup> and Saint Louis<sup>113</sup> placed four gold bezants on the altar in the Abbey of Saint-Denis), seems to be somehow connected with the four denarii which – pursuant to *Descriptio qualiter* – Charlemagne ordered to pay everyone who evaded participating in the expedition to the Holy Land as a sign of eternal serfdom.<sup>114</sup>

*Descriptio-Turpin by Pierre de Beauvais*<sup>115</sup>  
*The Crown of Thorns and the Miraculous Healing of*  
*Scrofula during the First Indictum in Aachen*<sup>116</sup>

Pierre de Beauvais, a clerk working on commission of William of Cayeux, count of Ponthieu, and a participant in the Third Crusade, was in all

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111 *HISTORIA KAROLI MAGNI ET ROTHOLANDI*, cap. 30, pp. 217–219. Cf. *TURPIN FRANÇAIS*, cap. 30, pp. 44–46.

112 *REGISTRES DE PHILIPPE AUGUSTE*, no. 117, pp. 232; BALDWIN, *Philippe Auguste*, p. 475 and no. 89, p. 646; SPIEGEL, *The Cult of Saint Denis and Capetian Kingship*, pp. 59–61.

113 DELABORDE, *Pourquoi Saint Louis faisait acte de servage à Saint-Denis*, pp. 254–257; MORRISSEY, *L'empereur à la barbe fleurie*, pp. 89–90.

114 *DESCRIPTIO QUALITER*, p. 108; *DE SANCTITATE KAROLI MAGNI*, p. 51.

115 Full text: PIERRE DE BEAUVAIS, *Descriptio-Turpin*, pp. 445–456.

116 Chiara Mercuri (MERCURI, *Corona di Cristo, corona di re*, pp. 181–195) also focuses on the subject of miraculous healing of scrofula by the Capetians, but the chapter in her book devoted to this issue does not reveal a direct connection between this phenomenon and the cult of the Crown of Thorns. Besides a rather repetitive summary of the state of research about the thaumaturgical power ascribed to the Capetian kings, she mentions the representations of the priest-like character of the royal authority of Louis IX in connection with the fact that he animated the cult and performed the *ostensio* of the relics of the Crown of Thorns. However, Mercuri does not convincingly elaborate the claim that the representation of Louis IX as a king and priest (*rex et sacerdos*) – for

probability the first author who abbreviated and translated *Descriptio qualiter* into Old French;<sup>117</sup> several years later, another anonymous author made use of Pierre's adaptation, making it into a prologue of the vernacular (French) version of Master Johannes's Pseudo-Turpin.<sup>118</sup> *Descriptio-Turpin*, as this new version is called today, was highly successful: its successive editions should appear within several years, commissioned by Renald, count of Boulogne, Michel de Harnes, a Walloon nobleman who after the French victory at Bouvines (1214) served as a royal justiciar of Flanders on behalf of Philip Augustus.<sup>119</sup> Another anonymous edition was compiled in Artois,<sup>120</sup> and became part of the earliest chronicles of the kings of France composed in Old French (*langue d'oïl*), i.e., the *Chronique des rois de France*, by the so-called Anonymous of Béthune.<sup>121</sup> In turn, this chronicle was one of the main sources used by the first author of the *Grandes Chroniques de France*, the Primat of Saint-Denis.<sup>122</sup>

In the first sentence of his work, Pierre de Beauvais says that his history of Charlemagne is going to describe how the emperor conquered Spain, the Holy Land and Jerusalem, and how happened the translation of the Holy Crown, with which God was crowned.<sup>123</sup> Next, Pierre explains why he undertook his work: according to the books he read, presenting the deeds of the kings of France, at the request of Saint James, God graced Charlemagne with the privilege according to which his deeds were to be talked about as long as the world exists. However, Pierre continues, there are many people who willingly listen to the stories about Charlemagne and who do not know anything about his expedition to the faraway lands, because the clerks learned in history ("qui les estoires ont en us") do not believe in what

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which Mercuri finds precedents from the Carolingian times – was meant to legitimize the miraculous healing of scrofula by the kings.

117 WALPOLE, *Charlemagne's Journey to the East*, p. 440.

118 In the version completed by Pierre de Beauvais, the work of Master Johannes became the most popular adaptation of Pseudo-Turpin (32 manuscripts); cf. OLD FRENCH JOHANNES TRANSLATION OF THE PSEUDO-TURPIN CHRONICLE, "Introduction."

119 SPIEGEL, "Pseudo-Turpin" – *the Crisis of Aristocracy and the Beginning of Vernacular Historiography France*, p. 210; OLD FRENCH JOHANNES TRANSLATION OF THE PSEUDO-TURPIN CHRONICLE, p. 58.

120 CHRONIQUE DITE DE TURPIN.

121 About the chronicle of the Anonymous of Béthune, see below.

122 SPIEGEL, *Romancing the Past*, p. 232; SPIEGEL, "Pseudo-Turpin" – *the Crisis of Aristocracy and the Beginning of Vernacular Historiography in France*, p. 210.

123 "la sainte coronne de coy Dieu fu coronnés;" PIERRE<sub>DE</sub> BEAUVAIS, *Descriptio-Turpin*, p. 445.



has been written down in three places in France, besides Aachen and Saint-Denis. As it is a great benefit for the body and soul to learn the stories that teach us how to behave in the world and toward God, Pierre queried the library of the Abbey of Saint-Denis and carefully translated from Latin to Romance the account of how Charlemagne, before going to Spain, set off across the sea. Everyone, both the lay and church people, rich and poor, should listen with their ears and hearts to that story, because thanks to Charlemagne's expedition to the Holy Land France gained all its past and present glory. Finally, Pierre begins the story in the name of Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit.<sup>124</sup>

Pierre's story is very close to the *Descriptio's* account. It begins with recalling the adversities the Church encountered during Charlemagne's reign and the actions the king undertook to ensure peace for the Church: by organizing his state properly but also on the battlefield. At the very beginning of his rule, Charlemagne conquered all the countries in the neighbourhood and the lands of the pagans, which is how he returned to the Church everything that was due to it and even more. Seeing how Charlemagne's fame, goodness and knightly virtues spread around the world, the Romans felt fear and – guided by Divine Providence – acclaimed Charlemagne the emperor and gave him the right to elect the pope. This fragment, which is an almost exact translation of the first sentences of *Descriptio qualiter*, shows how faithfully Pierre adapted the Latin original. In the times of Innocent III, when Pierre was writing his text, even the most obstinate anti-Gregorians had certainly abandoned the idea that the popes might be chosen by the emperor. Next, Pierre de Beauvais repeats after *Descriptio* that when – thanks to Divine Providence – Charlemagne became emperor, the Holy Land was invaded by the Saracens, who profaned *Loca Sancta*, killed or expelled many Christians, including the patriarch of Jerusalem,

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124 “Es livres qui parolent des roys de France trovons escript que par la priere monseigneur saint Jaque dona nostre Sires cest don a Charlemaine c'on parleroit de lui tant com le siecle dureroit. Voirs est que plusors qui volentiers oient de Charle ne sevent nient de la voie qu'il fist outre mer. Car li bon clerc qui les estoires ont en us ne cudent mie qu'il soit escrit en.iii. lieux en France fors a Ays la Chapele et a mon seigneur Saint Denis. Et por ce que porfit est au cors et grant biens a l'ame d'oïr les istoires qui enseignent commant on se doit avoir ou siecle et en Dieu, a tant cerchié es livres mon seigneur Saint Denise Pierres, qui l'a mis de latin en romans par grant estuide, comant et par quel achoison Charles ala outre mer devant la voie d'Espaigne. Si doivent clerc et loy, et haut et bas, encliner les oreilles de lor cuers a oïr cestes estoires, car ce fu la voie dont la France ot onques plus d'onor et a encore;” PIERRE DE BEAUVAIS, *Descriptio-Turpin*, p. 445.

and desecrated the Holy Sepulchre. The following part of *Descriptio qualiter* has been considerably abbreviated. Pierre does mention that patriarch John asked the emperor of Constantinople for help and describes the dream Constantine had: an angel showed him the vision of Charlemagne and told him to ask the king of Franks to free Jerusalem, but omits the long letters of the patriarch and emperor Constantine to Charlemagne, which are quoted in *Descriptio*. The following part is also faithful: after having received the four envoys from the East, two Christians<sup>125</sup> and two Jews, and having consulted Turpin, the archbishop of Reims, then his barons, Charlemagne organized an expedition against the pagans, ordering everyone able to carry weapons to take part. Any coward who would evade following Charlemagne and fighting for Holy Land, would be – with his progeny – punished with the capitation of a four denarii, similarly to the serfs. On the way to the East, Charlemagne and his barons lose their way in a forest and are miraculously guided out of it by talking birds. However, Pierre does not support the opinion expressed by the author of *Descriptio* that the birds spoke in Greek, and he specifies two things: after showing to Charlemagne the right way, the birds clearly state that it is the way which the pilgrims should take to get to Jerusalem. Pierre also explains the discrepancy from *Descriptio* where Charlemagne, having left the forest located near Jerusalem, goes to Constantinople and drives out the pagans who, indeed, were not ravaging Byzantium, then comes to Jerusalem and, as it may seem, obtains the Passion relics there, but sets off from Constantinople on his way back. According to *Descriptio-Turpin*, having found the route, Charlemagne comes to Constantinople where he is lavishly received by the emperor Constantine. Then, Charlemagne goes to the Holy Land, defeats the Saracens, brings the Christian cult back in *Loca Sancta*, visits the Holy Sepulchre, and returns to Constantinople.<sup>126</sup> There, at Charlemagne's request, Constantine gives him the Passion relics, especially the Crown of Thorns.<sup>127</sup> Thus, Pierre makes the narrative logical again, in accordance with the title of *Descriptio qualiter*, which he certainly used as a source of his adaptation.

Pierre de Beauvais repeats exactly after *Descriptio* the depiction of the translation of the Passion relics, Charlemagne's way back from Constantinople to Aachen, and the miraculous healings that happened at that time, the *ostensio*

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125 Pierre de Beauvais calls him *Jehan de Naples*.

126 "Quant Charles ot la terre a crestienté rendue, il la laissa seüre et retorna s'en a Constantinoble;" PIERRE DE BEAUVAIS, *Descriptio-Turpin*, p. 447.

127 PIERRE DE BEAUVAIS, *Descriptio-Turpin*, pp. 448–450.

*reliquiarum* in Aachen, the establishment of the *Indictum*,<sup>128</sup> the founding of the palace chapel where Charlemagne deposited the relics, and finally the translation of the Crown of Thorns and the Holy Nail to the Abbey of Saint-Denis by Charles the Bald. Moreover, Pierre adds that Charles the Bald gave the *Sancta Camisia* (the tunic of Our Lady), brought by Charlemagne from Constantinople, to Chartres Cathedral, but does not mention the Holy Shroud of Compiègne.<sup>129</sup>

In the final part of his adaptation of *Descriptio qualiter*, Pierre makes a very important change in comparison to the original. Namely, he adds to the catalogue of miraculous healings, which happened after Charlemagne's return to Aachen, one new category of afflictions, not known from the earlier accounts. This addition is very important: seventy-five people suffering from scrofula were miraculously healed by the virtue of the Passion relics.<sup>130</sup>

Pierre tries to present the contents of *Descriptio qualiter* in the most faithful way. Even when he changes the account of Charlemagne's stay in Constantinople and Jerusalem, he does it in order to make the text logically coherent with its incipit, when the text of *Descriptio* seems to be illogical. Thus, the miraculous healing of scrofula is the only addition to the original content, which makes it the more striking. As it seems, Pierre is the first author to connect healing of scrofula with the sacral activity of a king of France after Guibert of Nogent (c. 1055–1124), who related that Louis VI healed this disease with the touch of his royal hand and added that the latter's father, Philip I, lost this gift because of his sins.<sup>131</sup> Pierre does not say directly Charlemagne healed scrofula: in *Descriptio-Turpin* the emperor does not touch the sick, who regain their health only by the miraculous virtue of the Passion relics. However, the people afflicted with scrofula would not have been saved if Charlemagne had not translated the relics. For that reason, this mention should be considered as crucial for the history of the thaumaturgical power of the kings of France.

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128 The term "L'endit" was not used, but the content and meaning of the account was preserved. Ronald N. Walpole supposes that Peter translated "Indictum" into "cest an." Cf. PIERRE DE BEAUVAIS, *Descriptio-Turpin*, p. 452, fn. 6. This would mean that Peter de Beauvais did not understand the term *indictum*.

129 PIERRE DE BEAUVAIS, *Descriptio-Turpin*, pp. 450–452.

130 "Iluec furent sané par la grace de Dieu. lxxv. qui les escroiles avoient en lor cors;" PIERRE DE BEAUVAIS, *Descriptio-Turpin*, p. 451.

131 GUIBERT DE NOGENT, *De sanctis et eorum pigneribus*, p. 90.

Chronique des rois de France *by the Anonymous of Béthune*<sup>132</sup>

A chronicler from Artois, unknown by name, flourishing in the first decades of the thirteenth century and working probably under the auspices of Robert VII of Béthune – hence called the Anonymous of Béthune<sup>133</sup> – is the author of the *Chronique des rois de France* (before 1226) and of the *Histoire des ducs de Normandie et des rois d'Angleterre*<sup>134</sup> composed slightly earlier. Both are written in the Picard dialect. The aristocratic patronage is well visible in the Anonymous's chronicles:<sup>135</sup> contrary to their titles, they do not praise the kings of England or France; at least not the contemporary ones,

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- 132 Unfortunately, the *Chronique des rois de France* by the Anonymous of Béthune is mostly available in manuscripts. The most complete and the oldest one among them is – decorated with several full page luxurious miniatures – BnF, Ms. Nouvelles Acquisitions Françaises 6295, which also contains the *Histoire des ducs de Normandie et des rois d'Angleterre*; the other ones: BnF, Ms. Français 10130, 12203, 17177, 17203, 24331; BnF, Arsenal, Ms. 3516; PARIS, BSG, Ms. 792; Cambridge, University Library, Ms. II.6.24; BAV, Ms. Reg. Lat. 610. The only published fragment embracing the reign of Philip Augustus till 1217 was issued by Léopold Delisle: ANONYME DE BÉTHUNE, *Chronique des rois de France*, pp. 750–775. I am preparing a critical edition of the whole *Chronique des rois de France* by the Anonymous of Béthune.
- 133 On the Anonymous of Béthune and his works, see DELISLE, *Notice sur la chronique d'un Anonyme de Béthune*, pp. 365–380; DELISLE, *Chronique des ducs de Normandie*, pp. 182–194; DELISLE, *Chronique française des rois de France par un anonyme de Béthune*, pp. 219–234; LABORDERIE, *La conquête de la Normandie vue par l'anonyme de Béthune*; MEYER, *Notice sur le MS.II.6.24*, pp. 37–81; MEYER, *Notice du manuscrit Français 17177*, pp. 80–118; PETIT-DUTAILLIS, *Une nouvelle chronique du règne de Philippe-Auguste*, pp. 98–141; SPIEGEL, *Romancing the Past*, Chapter 5, pp. 214–268; SPIEGEL, *Medieval Canon Formation and the Rise of Royal Historiography in Old French Prose*, pp. 638–658; SPIEGEL, *Les débuts français de l'historiographie royale*, pp. 395–404; STONES, *The Illustrations of the Pseudo-Turpin in the Johannes translation*, pp. 317–330; ANONYMOUS OLD FRENCH TRANSLATION OF THE PSEUDO-TURPIN CHRONICLE. See also PYSIAK, *Anonyme de Béthune*, s.v. (pp. 99–100).
- 134 *Histoire des ducs de Normandie et des rois d'Angleterre*, preserved in BnF, Ms. Nouvelles Acquisitions Françaises 6295 and Ms. Français 12203, was edited in full by Francisque Michel: ANONYME DE BÉTHUNE, *Histoire des ducs de Normandie et des rois d'Angleterre* (SHF); and fragmentarily by Oswald Holder-Egger: ANONYME DE BÉTHUNE, *Histoire des ducs de Normandie et des rois d'Angleterre* (MGH), pp. 699–717.
- 135 SPIEGEL, *Romancing the Past*, Chapter 5, pp. 214–268; see also: SPIEGEL, “Pseudo-Turpin” – *the Crisis of Aristocracy and the Beginning of Vernacular Historiography in France*, pp. 207–233.

as the author is very critical toward Philip Augustus and John Lackland. The true hero of the Anonymous's chronicles is the Franco-Flemish aristocracy: he focuses mostly on family affiliations, the chivalrous glory, and praiseworthy deeds of the lords of Artois, headed by Robert of Béthune. This observation is important for the interpretation of *Chronique des rois de France*, which was a partial adaptation of *Iter Hierosolimitanum*.<sup>136</sup> The version of the Anonymous was not based on *Descriptio-Turpin* by Pierre de Beauvais, which is revealed by certain differences in the text and the structure of the account. The Anonymous is less exact in presenting the contents of the *Descriptio*: the account from the Chronicle of Béthune is rather a summary than a faithful adaptation of *Iter Hierosolimitanum*. After briefly describing the reasons of Charlemagne's expedition to the Holy Land and summarizing his victories over the Saracens,<sup>137</sup> the Anonymous says that Charlemagne then went to Constantinople and asked to be shown the Passion relics and to be given some of them.<sup>138</sup> The emperor's request is fulfilled. Like all his predecessors, the Anonymous of Béthune describes the fasts and prayers that accompany the search for the place where Saint Helena deposited the Passion relics, the ceremonial *ostensio* of the discovered *instrumenta Passionis*, and the miracles God caused when Charlemagne asked for them upon the liturgical presentation of the relics to the emperor, bishops, barons, and the populace. Surprisingly, in contrast to other accounts of *Iter Hierosolimitanum*, the version of the Anonymous excludes the Byzantine emperor from the story of the translation of the relics. He is not mentioned even once, although according to all the earlier authors it is the emperor of the East that takes part in the events as the main representative of Byzantine world.<sup>139</sup> It was Constantine who, wishing to express his gratitude to Charlemagne for liberating Jerusalem, offered to give Charlemagne whatever he wanted, promised to give the relics, and ordered a search for them. However, in Anonymous's version this part is assumed by the patriarch. Moreover, it is not clear whether it is the patriarch of Constantinople or of Jerusalem, or from which town Charlemagne sets off on his way back;<sup>140</sup> several pages later, we read that the relics were brought from Jerusalem, which may explain the absence of emperor Constantine in the narrative. In accordance with the original, Charlemagne obtains the relics of the True Cross,

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136 The so-called Anonymous of Béthune, *Chronique des rois de France*, BnF, Ms. Nouvelles Acquisitions Françaises 6295, fol. 6ro-9ro, 35vo-36ro (further on: The Anonymous of Béthune).

137 The Anonymous of Béthune, fol. 6ro-vo.

138 The Anonymous of Béthune, fol. 6vo.

139 The Anonymous of Béthune, fol. 6vo-8vo.

140 The Anonymous of Béthune, fol. 6vo-8vo

the Holy Nail, the Shroud of the Lord, the Chemise of Our Lady, and half of the Crown of Thorns<sup>141</sup> (according to Pierre de Beauvais, who followed *Descriptio qualiter*, it was only eight thorns). Like the earlier authors, the Anonymous presents numerous miracles, especially healings, which happened by the *virtus* of the relics. Like Pierre de Beauvais, the Anonymous introduces the scrofula, along with gout, in the catalogue of healings made during the *ostensio*<sup>142</sup> in Aachen; but unlike Pierre, who provided a precise number of the healed, the Anonymous is satisfied with saying that there were many.<sup>143</sup> Furthermore, the Anonymous of Béthune does not mention the *Indictum* in the part presenting Charlemagne's reign. It appears later on, when the Anonymous describes the end of the reign of Charles the Bald and ascribes to him the dream known as the *Vision of Charles the Fat*, which may be an indication that the source he used was a miscellaneous historiographic collection from Saint-Denis, known today as BnF, Ms. Latin 12710.<sup>144</sup> Considering that the Anonymous writes that Charles the Bald, influenced by the vision, began a pious life, gave the Abbey of Saint-Denis the relics brought by Charlemagne from Jerusalem – except for the Holy, which he gave to Compiègne – and set up an annual indulgence fair, previously celebrated in Aachen.<sup>145</sup> The chronicler also repeats the information about the miraculous end of the hunger that raged all over France, after the relics were shown to the public during the translation and the people were blessed with them.<sup>146</sup> We should add that the Anonymous of Béthune, like Pierre de Beauvais, clearly did not understand the meaning of the term *Lendit* (*landi*), since he used it not to denote the *ostensio* and the connected indulgence (*Indictum*), but the place at the foot of Montmartre Hill, where the Fair of *Lendit* used to be held after *ostensio* of the Passion relics in the Saint-Denis Abbey. Indeed, I analyze here the chronicle of the kings of France by the Anonymous of Béthune only because of the mention of the healing of scrofula by means of the Passion relics. Pierre de Beauvais and Anonymous of Béthune were contemporaries and probably both represented

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141 “la corone des espines demie;” The Anonymous of Béthune, fol. 8vo.

142 “chaan encontre gote.lii.,” The Anonymous of Béthune, fol. 9ro.

143 “pluisor qui auoient escroeles;” The Anonymous of Béthune, fol. 9ro.

144 The abbreviation of the *Visio Caroli* is the first text copied in this manuscript; The Anonymous of Béthune, fol. 1ro. O BnF, Ms. Latin 12710 see above.

145 “Quant tuit ce ot veu li rois si revint a lui ses esperis. Puis vesqui il moult saintement et aporta a mon signor saint Denis les reliques dais la chapele que Charlemaines avoit aportees de ierusalem ... et fist etablir le pardon qui devant avoit este a ais que on vait querre la tierce semaine Joign de sous montmartre en un lieu que on apele landi;” The Anonymous of Béthune, fol. 35vo.

146 The Anonymous of Béthune, fol. 36ro.

the milieu of minstrels sponsored by the lay aristocracy from the Northern France who – as we know – inspired the origins of the vernacular historiography at the turn of the twelfth and thirteenth century. A comparison of the accounts by Pierre de Beauvais and the Anonymous indicates that the belief in the cause-effect relation between bringing the Crown of Thorns and other Passion relics to France by the Carolingians and healing scrofula by the king of France was quite common among the aristocracy in Northern France in the early decades of the thirteenth century.

### *Gui of Bazoches and Alberic of Trois-Fontaines*

Gui of Bazoches (Guido de Bazochis) was born in a knightly family from Picardy living near Soissons; his uncle was a bishop of Châlons-sur-Marne. Gui studied in Montpellier and Paris in preparation for a church career. He was promoted successively a subdeacon, canon, then cantor of the Châlons cathedral. He participated in the Third Crusade of 1190. Gui pursued a church career but led a rather worldly life and was interested in poetry and chronography. His universal chronicle, continued until 1199, is known thanks to Alberic (Aubry) from the Cistercian Abbey of Trois-Fontaines in Champagne. Alberic copiously quoted Gui in his own universal chronicle until year 1241. Thus, Gui's chronicle was written earlier than the chronicle of Helinand of Froidmont; it is certainly also earlier than Pierre de Beauvais's *Descriptio-Turpin*. However, we analyze it only now because of its source context, i.e., because Gui's account is preserved in Alberic's chronicle.<sup>147</sup>

Alberic of Trois-Fontaines comes from a generation that lived under the reign of Louis IX and at the time when the Crown of Thorns was translated to Paris. As I will show, Alberic briefly describes the event in his chronicle.<sup>148</sup> He was as erudite like Helinand of Froidmont and, when writing

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147 ALBERIC DE TROIS-FONTAINES, *Chronica*, pp. 631–673 (introduction), 674–950 (text). Alberic's chronicle was interpolated in the late thirteenth century (before 1295) by an anonymous Augustinian friar from the Holy Sepulchre and Saint John the Baptist Abbey (Neufmoustiers) in Huy (diocese of Liège). A detailed analysis of the sources used by Alberic and the interpolation in his work was conducted 130 years ago by the editor of the chronicle in the *Monumenta Germaniae Historica*, Paul Scheffer-Boichorst (so far there has been no more recent edition); according to his findings, the elements interpolated in Huy are not numerous and negligible for the subject discussed here, cf. ALBERIC DE TROIS-FONTAINES, *Chronica*, pp. 631–673. On Alberic's account, see a non-innovative analysis in MONTELEONE, *Il viaggio di Carlo Magno in Terra Santa*, pp. 267–270.

148 ALBERIC DE TROIS-FONTAINES, *Chronica*, p. 947.

his universal chronicle, he used the manuscripts of Helinand, Sigebert de Gembloux (with continuations), Hugh of Saint Victor, Otto of Freising, Gui of Bazoches, and *Historia miscella* by Landolfus Sagax – which he considered to have been written by Anastasius the Librarian – *Historia scholastica* by Peter Manducator, but also *chansons de geste*, which he clearly considered as reliable sources of information about Charlemagne’s reign. Other chroniclers did not have so much faith in the writings of that genre. Although less discerning in regard to the choice of sources than Helinand, Alberic equals or even surpasses him in his critical assessment of texts. Alberic’s chronicle of is not a mere compilation: the chronicler not only quotes fragments of texts that he considers reliable by meticulously recording their authors but also juxtaposes sources with information on the same subject, compares the accounts, and even assesses the intellectual attitude of the authors toward their subject of interest, and the sources which they used. Under year 802, besides other pieces of information about the events of that time, Alberic quotes the first fragment of the account of Charlemagne’s expedition to the Holy Land taken from Helinand of Froidmont’s chronicle: from the beginning until the anecdote about the birds which guided Charlemagne and his knights out of the forest where they had lost their way when going to Jerusalem. Next, Alberic summarizes his reflections on the chronological discrepancy between the time of emperors’ Constantine and Leo reign and the year 801 when the expedition is said to have taken place. Alberic suggests his own explanation – unclear or perhaps revealing a lack of understanding of Helinand’s reasoning – that these emperors possibly had two names each.<sup>149</sup> Next, Alberic ironically writes about Gui’s uncritical attitude to the sources, saying: “Guido autem noster se liberat omni questione et ita prosequitur.”<sup>150</sup> However, Gui’s version does not deserve to be treated with irony. Similarly to Helinand, Gui attempted at correlating the information about Charlemagne’s reign, presented in *Descriptio* as the emperor of the West, with the chronology of the reigns of the Byzantine emperors. Helinand of Froidmont was not very consistent in dealing with this discrepancy: on the one hand he tried to explain why Charlemagne was called emperor already during Constantine V’s (r. 741–775) and Leo IV’s (co-emperor from 751, d. 780) reigns – while, on the other hand, he included the account of the liberation of the Holy Sepulchre under year 802, after Charlemagne’s imperial coronation. Gui chose another solution. Assuming it was the name of the emperor of the East that was used erroneously, and retaining the year 802 as the date of the event, Gui of Bazoches suggests

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149 ALBERIC DE TROIS-FONTAINES, *Chronica*, p. 721.

150 ALBERIC DE TROIS-FONTAINES, *Chronica*, p. 721.



that Charlemagne was called to help the Holy Land not by Constantine V, but by Nicephorus I, who ruled in 802–811.

Gui's account<sup>151</sup> is partly a faithful summary of *Descriptio qualiter*, still limited only to the basic facts, e.g., it omits the journey of the envoys of Constantinople to France, the content of the Byzantine emperor's and patriarch's letters to Charlemagne, the description of Charlemagne's counsel with his vassals about the fate of the Holy Land, and the imposition of *chevage* on those who would try to avoid taking part in the expedition. Gui also leaves out the vision seen by the Byzantine emperor, saying only that the ruler of Constantinople had a divine revelation according to which his attempts at freeing the Holy Land from the pagans were going to be futile, because this honour is meant for the emperor of the West. In his narrative, Gui adds some new elements: he is clearly fond of the Byzantines – in contrast to the attitude of Western people of the twelfth century and especially strange in a man who died at the time of the Fourth Crusade – certainly more than the author of the *Descriptio*, which attitude toward the Eastern Empire was friendly, but he clearly stressed the superiority of the West. Gui of Bazoches underlines emperor Nicephorus's declared readiness to extend all possible aid to the expedition, both military and logistic. This passage might be interpreted as an ironic comment to the Franks' complaints about the greedy and double-faced Greeks made during the First and Second Crusade, if not for another addition Gui had made. When Charlemagne rejects the Byzantine emperor's rich gifts, which the latter offers him in return for liberating the Holy Sepulchre, besides mentioning the arguments known from the earlier accounts – that Charlemagne came only for the treasure of redemption, not for worldly treasures – he says: "I haven't come here for the riches but to liberate the Holy Sepulchre; not to loot the Christians but the pagans; and not to take away from the Greeks their property but to return to them what they had lost."<sup>152</sup> When reading these words one can hardly believe that Gui of Bazoches died in 1203, before Constantinople was conquered and spoiled by the Fourth Crusade.

The fragments of Gui's chronicle also indicate that the account about birds speaking Latin was quite well known in the twelfth century and had several variants. The small differences in the plot and references to pilgrims' tales appear in other works, but Gui's account seems to have had another inspiration than the previous texts. He says that the miraculous

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151 ALBERIC DE TROIS-FONTAINES, *Chronica*, pp. 721, 722.

152 "respondet Greco Romanus, non venisse se pro lucro, sed pro sepulchro Domini liberando, non christianos sed spoliare paganos, nec propria Grecis auferre, sed perdita restaurare;" ALBERIC DE TROIS-FONTAINES, *Chronica*, p. 722.

birds were multi-colored and states that they encouraged Charlemagne to repeat the words of Psalm 118: 118, “Deduc me, Domine, in semita mandatum tuorum,” saying “France dic,” not “France, quid dicis?” That is why, as the chronicler says, these birds, discovered by Charlemagne are called *Francidicus*.<sup>153</sup>

Like Pierre de Beauvais, Gui of Bazoches also noticed the discrepancy between the incipit of *Descriptio* and the account of the expedition and, like Pierre, he dealt with it by saying that – after retrieving *Loca Sancta* from the pagans – Charlemagne returned triumphantly to Constantinople,<sup>154</sup> where the emperor of the East gave him the relics of the Holy Cross, the Holy Nail, and the Thorns of the Crown, covered with the crimson Lord’s Blood. Gui briefly describes the most important miracles that happened during the *inventio* and the handing over the relics to Charlemagne,<sup>155</sup> and about creating in Aachen an eternal memorial (“memoriale perpetuum”) both to honour the translation of the relics and – which is a completely new element in the narration about Charlemagne’s liberation of Jerusalem – the emperor’s triumphant return to France that was to be annually celebrated by an universal convention of his subjects (“conventus generalis”) to the imperial capital city.<sup>156</sup> This rather puzzling statement made by Gui of Bazoches requires further analysis devoted to the liturgical setting of the cult of the Crown of Thorns, which I will conduct in the later parts of this book. However, we should note here that until then the issue of commemorating Charlemagne’s military triumph over the Saracens had not appeared in any of the earlier analyzed texts that describe how Charlemagne allegedly initiated the annual celebration in Aachen. Besides, the *conventus generalis* – which according to Gui was to take place in the imperial capital – is not the right name for a liturgical ceremony. The meaning of the above term is quite distinct from that of the *Indictum* or *ostensio reliquiarum*, mentioned in the earlier texts. Indeed, Gui never mentions the *ostensio* in any form, also when describing the translation of Passion relics from the chapel in Aachen to the Abbey of Saint-Denis. Like his predecessors, Gui ascribes it to Charles the Bald, but again expresses his critical attitude toward the sources. Knowing that Charles the Bald occupied Aachen after the death of his nephew, Lothair II, and had to abandon his grandfather’s capital, yielding to Louis the German, Gui comes to the conclusion that Charles the Bald must have plundered the

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153 ALBERIC DE TROIS-FONTAINES, *Chronica*, p. 721.

154 ALBERIC DE TROIS-FONTAINES, *Chronica*, p. 721.

155 ALBERIC DE TROIS-FONTAINES, *Chronica*, p. 722.

156 “Et in memoriale perpetuum, tam adventus sanctuarii pretiosi, quam sui reditus triumphalis, ex tunc annuatim ibidem fieri generalem imperiali proponit edicto conventum;” ALBERIC DE TROIS-FONTAINES, *Chronica*, p. 722.

imperial residence at that time, taken away from the chapel in Aachen the Passion relics brought from Constantinople, and moved them to the Abbey of Saint-Denis. Then, following the example of his grandfather, he ordered all his subjects to come there every year to commemorate the anniversary of the translation.<sup>157</sup> Noteworthy, Alberic of Trois-Fontaines shared Gui's criticism and placed these facts under year 871, even though *Descriptio qualiter* suggests 862.<sup>158</sup> The information about Charles the Bald's connection with the Passion relics occurs again in Alberic's chronicle under year 878. In that place, Alberic faithfully quotes the record from Helinand's chronicle on how Charles the Bald established the imperial residence in Compiègne, modeled after Constantinople, and translated the relics of the Crown of Thorns to Saint-Denis, then moved there the *Indictum* of the Passion relics, which previously took place in Aachen.<sup>159</sup>

Let us now have a look at the overall reception of *Descriptio qualiter* in the chronicle of Alberic of Trois-Fontaines. I mentioned above that Alberic manifested a very critical, almost academical approach to his sources: he juxtaposed and compared them. It is so also in this case. The chronicler interlaces the text of Gui of Bazoches with fragments of other sources, when he thinks it is justified to complement Gui's chronicle or to discuss other authors' statements. The information about Charlemagne's liberation of Jerusalem and translation of the Crown of Thorns is in Alberic's chronicle derived mainly from the accounts by Helinand of Froidmont and Gui of Bazoches. Alberic begins with Helinand's chronicle and continues up to the moment when the Franks lose their way in the forest, then he quotes Gui on the same subject up to the place where Gui, in contrast to Helinand, presents Charlemagne's return to Constantinople after having returned the Holy Sepulchre to the Christians. As the above indicates, Alberic shared Gui's opinion about the issue – and that of Pierre de Beauvais, whom he

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157 “Guido: Regrediens tamen inde Karolus imperialem spoliat Aquisgrani vel Aquilae Capellam hiis, que Karolus Magnus avus eius a Constantinopoli detulerat et ibidem optulerat, pretiosis thesauris et pignoribus sacrosanctis. Quibus in Franciam ad ecclesiam sancti Dyonisii celebri cum honore translatis ad recurrentem annuatim diem translationis istius quot annis ibidem populos de subiectis undique partibus convenire precepit edicto regali, quemadmodum avus eius Karolus Magnus olim fieri constituerat Aquisgrani;” ALBERIC DE TROIS-FONTAINES, *Chronica*, p. 740.

158 Before this very quotation from Gui of Bazoches's chronicle, Alberic cites, among others, the chronicle of Otto of Freising and the Annals of Siegbert of Gembloux (years 869–871), in which the struggle for Lothair II's legacy and the Treaty of Meersen is described, then again Siegbert (year 871) and Helinand of Froidmont (year 872); ALBERIC DE TROIS-FONTAINES, *Chronica*, p. 740.

159 ALBERIC DE TROIS-FONTAINES, *Chronica*, p. 742.

nevertheless does not quote. Next, Alberic adds a piece of information so far not found in the adaptations of *Descriptio qualiter* and drawn from Peter Comestor's (Petrus Comestor or Manducator) *Historia scholastica*, i.e., that when praying in one of the churches in Jerusalem, Charlemagne was given by an angel the Holy Prepuce, which he took to Aachen, then Charles the Bald would give this relic to the Abbey of Saint-Sauveur in Charroux.<sup>160</sup> As we can see, the hagiographic legend of the *sancta virtus* of Charroux, probably due to the increasing popularity of *Descriptio*, evolved outside of Charroux Abbey – where the approved version was the one known from *Liber de constitutione Karroffensis cenobii* – and the donation of the *sancta virtus* was eventually ascribed to Charles the Bald, at least in Peter Comestor's milieu of Parisian intellectuals. This was presumably due to the belief that Charlemagne must have deposited the most magnificent relics in Aachen.

Then, Alberic quotes the well-known passage from Pseudo-Turpin, in which the narrator avoids describing Charlemagne's expedition to help the Holy Sepulchre and then repeats the records of Hugh of Fleury and Sigebert of Gembloux for the year 803 about the Byzantines' defeat in the war with the Saracens by commenting that emperor Nicephorus's defeat must have taken place before Charlemagne regained Jerusalem.<sup>161</sup> Thus, Alberic first completes Gui's records with the information about the relic, which the latter did not mention, then he quotes another source which briefly confirmed Charlemagne's expedition to the Holy Land and conducts a polemic with Hugh and Sigebert so as to finally return to Gui of Bazoches and juxtapose his account of obtaining the Passion relics and the Charlemagne's return to Aachen with a more extensive account of Helinand of Froidmont, which Alberic completes with the information provided by Sigebert of Gembloux.<sup>162</sup> Thus, if the chronicle of Alberic of Trois-Fontaines presents information about miraculous healings made thanks to the power of the Crown of Thorns, the Holy Cross, etc., and about establishing the *Indictum* in Aachen, this is due to the extensive quotations from Helinand's universal chronicle.

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160 "Meminit autem facti huius magister Petrus Manducator in Scolatica historia, videlicet quod Angelus attulit preputium Domini Karolo Magno, dum oraret in templo, et quo Karolus illud attulerat Aquisgrani, sed post a Karolo Calvo delatum est inde et positum apud abbaciam sancti Salvatoris de Caroffio, que sita est in Aquitania;" ALBERIC DE TROIS-FONTAINES, *Chronica*, p. 721.

161 ALBERIC DE TROIS-FONTAINES, *Chronica*, p. 722.

162 ALBERIC DE TROIS-FONTAINES, *Chronica*, pp. 722–723.

## Chronique rimée by Philip Mouskès

Philip Mouskès (Mousket, Mousquet), born in Tournai in Flanders, the author of a rhymed chronicle of the kings of France written in Old French (Walloon dialect),<sup>163</sup> was one of the authors originating from Northern France or from Flanders who adapted *Descriptio qualiter* to the vernacular (ca. 1230). Unlike the prose adaptations written between the last decade of the twelfth century and the 1220s, Mouskès's chronicle is not a poetic rendering of the compilation *Descriptio-Turpin*. Mouskès again separated the two topics: the liberation of the Holy Sepulchre from the Saracens and the translation of the Passion relics are no longer a prelude to the description of Charlemagne's expedition against the Muslim Spain; on the contrary, Charlemagne's journey to the East crown his great deeds. Mouskès's chronicle is very long (more than 31 thousand lines), often rambling and full of digressions. The passage about the expedition to the East has almost 1500 lines and its account is relatively faithful to *Descriptio qualiter*,<sup>164</sup> but in some places there are pieces of information unavailable in *Descriptio*.<sup>165</sup> Thus, we read about the ravaging of the Holy Land, the patriarch's escape from Jerusalem to Constantinople, about emperor Constantine's considerations on how to save *Loca Sancta*, at the end of which an angel shows him a vision of Charlemagne and instructs Constantine to ask Charlemagne for help (because – and this is Mouskès's own contribution – Charlemagne already gained renown as a conqueror of the Saracens in Spain).<sup>166</sup> Then Philippe continues about the Christian and Hebrew envoys to Charlemagne sent by the emperors Constantine, Leo, and the patriarch of Jerusalem, relates Charlemagne's debate with the barons, Charlemagne's indignation at the hardships of the Holy Land and the emperor's decision to set off to its rescue, then continues about imposing a "servage" on all his subjects able to carry weapons who would refrain from participating in the war, finally about the miraculous birds in the forest on Charlemagne's way to Jerusalem, which Mouskès places "en tière d'Esclavonie."<sup>167</sup> Like Helinand of Froidmont and unlike Pierre de Beauvais, Mouskès does not try to rectify the discrepancies between the account in *Descriptio qualiter* and its incipit,

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163 PHILIPPE MOUSKÈS, *Chronique rimée*.

164 PHILIPPE MOUSKÈS, *Chronique rimée*, v. 10040–15000, vol. I, pp. 391–443.

165 E.g., that the Christians in Antioch did not yield to the Saracenes thanks to the massive defensive walls of their town; PHILIPPE MOUSKÈS, *Chronique rimée*, v. 10048–10049, vol. I, p. 391.<sup>354</sup>

166 PHILIPPE MOUSKÈS, *Chronique rimée*, v. 10089–10091, 10244–10246, vol. I, p. 398.

167 PHILIPPE MOUSKÈS, *Chronique rimée*, v. 10344–10346, vol. I, pp. 401–402.

so in his chronicle Charlemagne first comes to Constantinople, then to the Holy Land where he drives the Saracens away, and finally visits the *Loca Sancta* of the Old and New Testament, which Mouskès describes in detail, including in his chronicle a 700-verse-long guide for the pilgrims. Mouskès even gives distances in miles or days necessary to get from one monument to another.<sup>168</sup> Having made the pilgrimage, Charlemagne asks the emperor Constantine and the patriarch of Jerusalem to give him the relics;<sup>169</sup> this clearly indicates that Mouskès believed that the emperor obtained the Crown of Thorns and other relics in Jerusalem and not in Constantinople. Next, Mouskès presents a catalogue of the relics Charlemagne brought to France, in some cases adding the information about where they were actually stored. A half of the Crown of Thorns (like it is said by the Anonymous of Béthune and not eight thorns like in *Descriptio qualiter*), the manna produced from the flowers which blossomed on the thorns, and the Holy Nail were in the Abbey of Saint-Denis, Our Lady's shoe in Soissons, Christ's tear in Vendôme, and Our Lady's milk in Laon. Mouskès lists also the Holy Shroud, a part of the Holy Cross, the Chemise of Our Lady, the strap with which the Holy Child was tied in the cradle, Saint Simeon's arm, Holy Blood that came from the wound made with the lance of Longinus and the Holy Lance itself, the relics of Peter and Paul the Apostles, of the Innocents, martyrs and maidens, the oil produced by the miraculous efflux from the icon of Sartan, and Saint Catherine's miraculous oil.<sup>170</sup> Finally, Mouskès describes the *ostensio* of the relics in Aachen.<sup>171</sup>

The description of the miracles that happened during the *inventio* and the translation is in its majority compatible with the Latin original (*Descriptio qualiter*), but there are two noteworthy details. First, like Pierre de Beauvais and the Anonymous of Béthune, Mouskès includes scrofula among the miraculous healings produced during the *ostensio*.<sup>172</sup> Secondly, Mouskès is the first author or adaptator of *Iter Hierosolimitanum* to describe the Crown of Thorns as the royal insignia of Christ the King.<sup>173</sup> As we shall see, the royalist aspect of the cult of the Crown of Thorns, which appears in the

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168 PHILIPPE MOUSKÈS, *Chronique rimée*, v. 10456–11119, vol. I, pp. 403–430.

169 PHILIPPE MOUSKÈS, *Chronique rimée*, v. 11112–11119, vol. I, pp. 429–430.

170 PHILIPPE MOUSKÈS, *Chronique rimée*, v. 11408–11485, vol. I, pp. 440–442.

171 PHILIPPE MOUSKÈS, *Chronique rimée*, v. 11370–11371, vol. I, p. 438.

172 PHILIPPE MOUSKÈS, *Chronique rimée*, v. 11375–11384, vol. I, pp. 438–439. *Et plusiours autres d'ecroiele*; v. 11384.

173 “Or oiés les dignes viertus / Qu’adont i fist li rois Jhésus / A cele eure que les espines / Furent al démonstrer flories ..., Et tous li peules ki là fu, / Rendi grasses au roi Jhésu;” PHILIPPE MOUSKÈS, *Chronique rimée*, v. 11254–11257, 11279–11280, vol. I, pp. 434, 435.

Mouskès's *Chronicle rimée* in the description of the miraculous blossoming of the thorns, will play a crucial role in Saint Louis's sacral ideology of kingship.

It is interesting to compare the first adaptation of *Descriptio qualiter* compiled by Pierre de Beauvais (*Descriptio-Turpin*), whose influence on the form of the Capetian historical account finally boosted the credibility of the narrative about the Carolingian translation of the Crown of Thorns *ad Francos*, with Mouskès's poetic adaptation. The first observation to be made is that Mouskès not only changes the form of the text from hagiographic prose to a rhymed chronicle but also interprets the contents to follow the demands of his times: at the time of increased interest in pilgrimages to the Holy Land (the emperor Frederick II having regained Jerusalem in 1229), he presents in his chronicle a description so far unknown from the earlier versions of *Iter Hierosolimitanus*: the alleged Charlemagne's pilgrimage to *Loca Sancta*. The description presenting concrete topographic information and distances in miles or days between the consecutive stages of the journey to the Holy Land was certainly a reproduction of an actual contemporary oral account or another guide to the Holy Lands of the Old and New Covenant. The second important observation concerns the fact that Mouskès is the first author to explicitly reinterpret the information from *Descriptio qualiter* in the spirit of crusading. According to him, having decided to liberate the Holy Sepulchre from Saracen oppression, Charlemagne and his barons took the cross, for which the pope gave them crusade indulgences.<sup>174</sup>

### Les Grandes Chroniques de France by *Primat of Saint-Denis*<sup>175</sup>

*Les Grandes Chroniques de France* (*The Great Chronicles of France*) which presented a quasi-official, licensed by monarchy, account of the history of the Kingdom and kings of the Franks or France,<sup>176</sup> were commissioned by Saint Louis. It was the first Capetian royal chronicle written in French and

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174 "Leur conseil ont finé li conte / À Dieu vengier et à sa honte. / Al roi l'ont dit et il fu liés, / Si s'est tot esranment croissies / Et, par grant joie, lués et tos / Si fist Karles crier ses os: / Et tout si baron et si prince / Et bas et haut et povre et rice, / Que par prière que par don / Se sont croissiet à cel pardon, / Quar l'apostoles l'ot tel fait / K'il n'i avoit el que souhait / As avers et as entenciés / De luxure et de tous peciés;" PHILIPPE MOUSKÈS, *Chronique rimée*, v. 10290–11303, vol. I, p. 400.

175 PRIMAT, *Grandes Chroniques de France. Sur les gestes de Charlemagne*, lib. III, cap. 4–12, pp. 269–281.

176 GUENÉE, *Les Grandes Chroniques de France. Le roman aux rois*, pp. 189–214; GUENÉE, *Authentique et approuvé. Recherches sur les principes de la*

the first richly illuminated one. However, the first edition of the work was finished after the death of Louis IX, in 1274, so the chronicler offered it to his successor, Philip III the Bold (r. 1270–1285), which has been recorded in the dedicatory miniature.<sup>177</sup> The monk from the Abbey of Saint-Denis, Primat, performed a selection, compilation, and sometimes reinterpretation of the documents and chronicles stored in the Abbey's library. The description of the reign of Charlemagne can be found in the third book of *Les Grandes Chroniques*, which describes Charlemagne's expedition to Jerusalem and Constantinople as an adaptation of *Descriptio qualiter*, as it was in the case of *De sanctitate Karoli Magni*, the works of Helinand of Froidmont, Vincent of Beauvais, Gui of Bazoches, Alberic of Trois-Fontaines, Pierre de Beauvais, and Philip Mouskès. This account can be found in all the successive editions of *Les Grandes Chroniques de France* which, until the end of the fifteenth century retained the status of the official image of the history of France. Namely, until the second half of the fifteenth century, *Les Grandes Chroniques* were repeatedly re-edited and supplemented with new chapters recounting its recent history.<sup>178</sup> The luxurious, richly illuminated manuscripts, distributed in many copies, especially to the libraries in northern France, written in Old French, and thus easily accessible to less educated readers, had since then become for other authors a basic source of knowledge about the history of France and its kings. As Primat included in *Les Grandes Chroniques* the narrative about Charlemagne's expedition to the Holy Land and Constantinople and about the translation of the Crown of Thorns to France, this story was considered authentic until as late as the sixteenth century. It was only Robert Gauvain (1433/1434–1501) – the founder of the modern historical criticism in French historiography – who successfully questioned the authenticity of *Iter Hierosolimitanum Karoli Magni*.<sup>179</sup>

The contents of *Descriptio qualiter* as presented in *Les Grandes Chroniques de France* seem to be the closest to the original version – obviously, except for the Life of Charlemagne in *De sanctitate Karoli Magni*. An inspection of the third book of Charlemagne's deeds in *Les Grandes Chroniques* clearly reveals that, when writing it, Primat must have seen the original of *Descriptio qualiter*, which seems natural: he worked in the same

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*critique historique au Moyen Âge*; HEDEMAN, *The Royal Image. Illustrations of the Grandes Chroniques de France 1274–1422*.

177 PARIS, BSG, Ms. 782, fol. 1 r°.

178 Cf. GUENÉE, *Les Grandes Chroniques de France. Le roman aux rois*, pp. 189–214; HEDEMAN, *The Royal Image. Illustrations of the Grandes Chroniques de France 1274–1422*.

179 Cf. MORRISSEY, *L'empereur à la barbe fleurie*, pp. 163–167.



scriptorium where *Descriptio* was written and certainly had the manuscript at his disposal, so it is pointless to summarize the account again. However, let us note the few discrepancies from the original: we may be certain that they were made intentionally, so Primat and perhaps also his patron, Louis IX, must have considered them as important.

The first discrepancy is the question which has been already discussed: the inconsistency between *Descriptio qualiter*'s content with its incipit, concerning the sequence of Charlemagne's deeds during the expedition to the Holy Land and Constantinople. Let us remind once again that, according to the *Descriptio*'s incipit, Charlemagne brought the Crown of Thorns and the Holy Nail to France from Constantinople, but when we read the contents we get the impression that the events occurred in Jerusalem. Primat translated this passage faithfully and the reader of *Les Grandes Chroniques de France* may come to the same conclusion.<sup>180</sup> However, later in the text the chronicler from Saint-Denis removes the discrepancy and adjusts the contents of the chronicle to the incipit of the source, but he does it in a different way than Pierre de Beauvais, Gui of Bazoches, and Helinand of Froidmont did, being followed by Alberic of Trois-Fontaines and Vincent of Beauvais. Primat does not add the information that after expelling the Saracens from Jerusalem Charlemagne went back to Constantinople, but first, when describing the emperor's return from the East, Primat says that the emperor came from Jerusalem and Constantinople<sup>181</sup> and then presents how all Franks were called to come to Aachen to the first *ostensio reliquiarum* by adding that the relics were brought from Jerusalem and Constantinople.<sup>182</sup> Thus, Primat opts for an intermediate variant, not rejecting the version according to which the relics came from Jerusalem, represented in *Chanson du Pèlerinage de Charlemagne* and by Philip Mouskès. Is this choice caused by the wish to reconcile various accounts or perhaps a reflection of the translation of the Passion relics to Paris during the reign of

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180 PRIMAT, *Grandes Chroniques de France. Sur les gestes de Charlemagne*, lib. III, cap. 4, pp. 272–274.

181 “A tant prist congié Challemaines li empereres à Constantin l’empereour et au clergié d’Orient en grant amor et en grant devocion: si se remist au retour lui et ses os à grant joie, et vint à un chastel qui a non Ligmedom. Moult merveilles avindrent en celle voie, puis que il [se] partirent de Jerusalem et de Constatinoble;” PRIMAT, *Grandes Chroniques de France. Sur les gestes de Charlemagne*, lib. III, cap. 4, p. 278.

182 “fist crier que tuit venissent à Es la chapele aus Ides de Juing pour veoir et pour aouer les saintes reliques que il avoit aportées de Jerusalem et de Constantinoble;” PRIMAT, *Grandes Chroniques de France. Sur les gestes de Charlemagne*, lib. III, cap. 4, p. 279.

Saint Louis in 1239–1242? It is known that after bringing to Paris the two sets of relics originating from Constantinople in 1239 and 1241, the third transfer of relics to Paris in 1242 came from the Holy Land.

Another, highly important issue, is the miraculous healing of scrofula. The first author to add, following an unknown inspiration, scrofula to the list of diseases miraculously healed thanks to the power of the holy relics during the first *ostensio* in Aachen was Pierre de Beauvais; the second was the Anonymous of Béthune while the next was Philip Mouskès. These three authors added scrofula to the diseases mentioned in the anterior sources. In this case, Primat also made a different decision than his predecessors: the “gutturiosi” and “guttuosi”<sup>183</sup> mentioned in *Descriptio qualiter*, which Pierre de Beauvais probably considered to be suffering from gout,<sup>184</sup> are called by Primat those “suffering from a throat disease called scrofula.”<sup>185</sup> Indeed, one of the symptoms of scrofula is the swelling of cervical lymph nodes, thus of the neck; the supposition that the disease affected the throat may have seemed justified. Therefore, the chronicler tries to reconcile the different versions of *Descriptio* with the original text. What seems the most important is that Primat’s *Les Grandes Chroniques* incorporate into the official monarchic version of the history the view that the kings of France gained their thaumaturgical abilities thanks to the Crown of Thorns and that the tradition of healing scrofula goes back to Charlemagne’s reign. Since the relics finally reached Saint-Denis under Charles the Bald, the Abbey may be considered as an intermediary in conferring this miraculous gift on the kings of France.

### 3. The Reception of *Descriptio qualiter* in the Iconography of Capetian Churches

#### Stained Glass in Saint-Denis and Chartres<sup>186</sup>

There are two iconographic sets dated to the period before 1239, whose contents seems have been inspired by the narrative about Charlemagne’s

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183 *ITER HIEROSOLIMITANUM*, ed. CASTETS, p. 460; *DESCRIPTIO QUALITER*, p. 125.

184 “ceus qui chaioient de goute haïve;” *PIERRE DE BEAUVAIS*, *Descriptio-Turpin*, p. 451. For an elaboration on this important topic, see below.

185 “malade du mal de la gorge, que on apele escroeles, plusour;” *PRIMAT, Grandes Chroniques de France. Sur les gestes de Charlemagne*, lib. III, cap. 4, p. 279.

186 Recently on the subject: PYSIAK, *Z legendarnej historii Karola Wielkiego*, pp. 252–260.

expedition to the East and the translation of the Crown of Thorns and other major relics to France. The former was in the Abbey of Saint-Denis, but it does not exist any longer,<sup>187</sup> while the latter still can be found in Chartres Cathedral.<sup>188</sup> The window from Saint-Denis is known only from eighteenth-century drawings and a description of two scenes; according to Louis Grodecki, the stylistic analysis of the drawings and their comparison with a preserved stained glass presenting scenes from the First Crusade (“First Crusade window”) allow us to date the lost “*Descriptio* window” to the twelfth century. Thirty years ago, Elizabeth A.R. Brown and Michael W. Cothren claimed that the *Descriptio* stained glass was created in the times of abbot Odo of Deuil (1151–1162),<sup>189</sup> the successor of Suger, a companion of Louis VII during the Second Crusade, and the author of its written account.<sup>190</sup> It is possible that the *Descriptio* window, like First Crusade window, was composed of fourteen scenes in fourteen panels. We do not know where the *Descriptio* window was placed exactly besides that it was in the choir of the Abbey church. Possibly, as a representation of “Charlemagne’s crusade,” it was close to the First Crusade window.

The first known panel is said to have represented Charlemagne receiving in Paris the envoys of the emperor of Constantinople. The inscription copied in the eighteenth century is: “NANCII CO[n]STANTINI AD CAROLU[m] PARISIUS” (the missing letters are in the places where the came used to be). Charlemagne is sitting under a rich architectural decoration with three towers, on his right there is a representation of walls of a palace or town, very similar to the depictions of Eastern towns conquered by the crusaders represented in the First Crusade window. On the left, one can see the arrival of the three envoys of Constantine, wearing headgears which may be interpreted as these used by the clergy but, as Louis Grodecki admits, they are not typical. Charlemagne is wearing a closed imperial crown; the face of the emperor must have, as it seems, been reconstructed in the thirteenth century. The second panel represents Charlemagne and Constantine shaking hands. According to the copy, the inscription was: CONSTANTINOPOLIS, at the top, and INP[er]ATORES, to the left of the silhouettes. Also in this panel

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187 GRODECKI, *Les vitraux de Saint-Denis*, pp. 118–121 (text), 215–217 (fig. 169–181); Louis Grodecki presents the description and drawing after MONTFAUCON, *Monumens de la Monarchie*.

188 LAUTIER, *Les vitraux de la cathédrale de Chartres. Reliques et images*.

189 BROWN, COTHREN, *The Twelfth-Century Crusading Window of the Abbey of Saint-Denis*, pp. 1–40.

190 ODO OF DEUIL, *De profectioe Ludovici VII in Orientem*.

the figures are presented at an architectural background, similar to the previous scene, but in a slightly Oriental style (decoration of the gate).<sup>191</sup>

Basing on a comparison with the stained glass from Chartres, Grodecki supposes that *Descriptio* window from Saint-Denis served as a direct inspiration for the so-called “Charlemagne’s window” in Our Lady Cathedral in Chartres,<sup>192</sup> executed about half a century later; it can be found in the side chapel in the North ambulatory (Bay 7).<sup>193</sup> The iconography of the panels is almost entirely inspired by the historical-hagiographic narration of Charlemagne’s myth. Besides the six panels that refer to *Descriptio qualiter*, the window also shows representations of Charlemagne’s expedition to Spain, the life of Saint James the Great, and the Mass of Saint Giles during which an angel presents the Saint a scroll pardoning the emperor’s sin, which Charlemagne owed to Saint Giles’s intercession.<sup>194</sup> The story of *Descriptio* is composed of six scenes: emperor Constantine’s dream in which Charlemagne is shown to him, Charlemagne receiving the envoys of Constantine, Charlemagne’s battle with the Saracens, the meeting of Constantine and Charlemagne, Constantine giving Charlemagne the relics placed in three reliquaries, and Charlemagne placing a reliquary in the shape of a crown on an altar (in Aachen?). However, even if the artistic and narrative inspiration came to Chartres from Saint-Denis, the reception of these ideas is limited to Charlemagne. The Charlemagne’s window does not show Charles the Bald or the translation of the Crown of Thorns to the

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191 We may know two more panels from that window, today stored in Raymond Pitcairn Collection (Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania) and in the Museo Civico in Turin. The first one represents the king with his retinue and the knights, over whom floats a banner in shape of a snakelike monster with a fish head. Louis Grodecki assumes it originally was the bird miraculously guiding Charlemagne out of the forest, only later converted into a battle banner. The second panel shows a triple royal coronation, possibly of the crowning of Pepin the Short and his sons: Charlemagne and Carloman. The attribution of these scenes to the *Descriptio* cycle seems very uncertain; cf. L. GRODECKI, *Les vitraux de Saint-Denis*, pp. 118–121 (text), 215–217 (fig. 169–181).

192 The most exhaustive monographs of the stained glass from Chartres Cathedral are: MANHES-DEREMBLE, *Les vitraux narratifs de la cathédrale de Chartres*; LAUTIER, *Les vitraux de la cathédrale de Chartres. Reliques et images*; LAUTIER, *Le vitrail de Charlemagne à Chartres et les reliques du trésor de la cathédrale*, pp. 229–240.

193 MANHES-DEREMBLE, *Les vitraux narratifs de la cathédrale de stained glass*, gives it no. 7.

194 This sin was too terrible for the emperor to confess: it was an incestuous relationship with his sister, which, as it is said, produced Roland; see RÉAU, *Iconographie de l’art chrétien*, vol. III/2, p. 595.

Abbey of Saint-Denis. Indeed, according to my knowledge, there has never been in Saint-Denis a window representing Charles the Bald and the translation of the relics from Aachen to the Abbey.

It is difficult to interpret Charlemagne's window in the Chartres cathedral or even the reasons why this subject appeared in that stained glass set. Chartres stained glass are an intentional uniform collection completed during the Gothic reconstruction of the cathedral or soon after it was finished. Their dating to 1210–1225 is commonly accepted<sup>195</sup> but there has been a suggestion of an earlier dating with respect to Charlemagne's window, to the times soon after 1204.<sup>196</sup> The set of stained glass from the ambulatory, and of other stained glass windows in the cathedral (almost all of them have been preserved), was in its entirety devoted to illustrating the scenes from the Bible or Lives of the saints. The few lay iconographic representations show some of the founders of the reconstruction of the cathedral – such as Philip, count of Boulogne, or Peter de Dreux, count of Brittany – and never occupy whole windows but only single panels. In the ambulatory, besides the Charlemagne's window, there are stained glass windows representing the lives of the Saints: Germanus of Auxerre, Nicholas, Thomas, Julian the Hospitaller; Savinian, Potentian and Modesta; Chéron, Stephen, and Jude; the Twelve Apostles; Theodore and Vincent; Andrew, Paul, and Remigius; again Nicolas; Margaret and Catherine; Thomas Becket, Martin, Virgin Mary, Anthony, and Paul the Hermit; but also representations of the zodiac and of the monthly labors, presided over by Christ; Madonna with Child enthroned, and scenes from the Wedding at Cana of Galilee. The remaining stained glass from the cathedral, made in the first quarter of the thirteenth century, also illustrate the the Old and New Testament, and hagiographic topics. More than a dozen windows have *en grisaille* stained glass, which do not belong to the original set, although they make up but a small fraction of the whole. Hence, it is rather risky to attempt a reconstruction of the iconographic program of Charlemagne's window,<sup>197</sup> not to mention draw conclusions from the assumption about its uniqueness.

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195 LAUTIER, *Les vitraux de la cathédrale de Chartres. Reliques et images*, passim; MANHES-DEREMBLE, *Les vitraux narratifs de la cathédrale de Chartres*, pp. 9–17; PASTAN, *Charlemagne as Saint? Relics and the Choice of Window Subjects at Chartres Cathedral*, pp. 97–135; MAINES, *The Charlemagne Window at Chartres Cathedral*, pp. 801–823 with the exhaustive discussion of the bibliography of the subject and state of research.

196 MANHES-DEREMBLE, *Les vitraux narratifs de la cathédrale de Chartres*, pp. 258–260. For the controversial questions see below.

197 JORDAN, after MANHES-DEREMBLE, *Les vitraux narratifs de la cathédrale de Chartres*, pp. 524–525; PASTAN, *Charlemagne as Saint? Relics and the Choice of Window Subjects at Chartres Cathedral*, passim.

The stained glass windows representing the saints are believed to be related to the relics, whose collection was stored in the Cathedral and which were liturgically venerated on site. As a result of the Gothic reconstruction, there appeared stained glass with saints absent from the Cathedral breviary until the end of the twelfth century, they only appeared in the next century.<sup>198</sup> Naturally, there arose the question whether the Charlemagne window in Chartres is an evidence that a cult of Saint Charlemagne was adopted there, being promoted in the Holy Empire from 1165, and when the stained glasses in the Cathedral were made in 1215 Charlemagne's remains were translated in Aachen to a new reliquary.<sup>199</sup> Moreover, the window presents the scenes from *Descriptio qualiter*, which became, almost in their entirety, Book 2 of *De sanctitate Karoli Magni*; such scenes are also represented in the relief on the Aachen new reliquary, and the scene from the central panel of Chartres Charlemagne's window – which show Charlemagne depositing the reliquary on the altar – was considered similar to the Aachen reliquary relief representing Charlemagne obtaining relics in Constantinople.<sup>200</sup> However, there is no confirmation about the cult of Saint Charlemagne in France before the reign of Charles V (1364–1380), so this interpretation should be rather excluded.<sup>201</sup> Furthermore, the representation of the monarch on the Chartres Cathedral's stained glass is quite unique: besides Charlemagne, they show only Constantine the Great – on Saint Sylvester's window – and Clovis on Saint Remigius's window; they are rather represented as supporting characters who illustrate the glorious deeds of saints, not as foreground heroes, which is Charlemagne's case. In Charlemagne's window, a patron Saint appears only in one scene: it is the abovementioned Mass of Saint Giles. The suggested dating of Charlemagne's window to the time soon after 1204 and its alleged inspiration by Philip Augustus, who was believed to promote an image of himself as the new Charlemagne (*alter Karolus*), and also a remembrance of the translation of relics from the Constantinople

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198 LAUTIER, *Les vitraux de la cathédrale de Chartres. Reliques et images*, passim; MANHES-DEREMBLE, *Les vitraux narratifs de la cathédrale de Chartres*, pp. 75–113.

199 PASTAN, *Charlemagne as Saint? Relics and the Choice of Window Subjects at Chartres Cathedral*, pp. 97–99.

200 SCHRAMM, MÜTHERICH, *Denkmale der Deutschen Könige und Kaiser*, no. 195, pp. 188–189. About the iconographic similarity of the relief on the Charlemagne's Aachen reliquary and Charlemagne's window in Chartres, especially: STONES, *The Codex Calixtinus and the Iconography of Charlemagne*, pp. 169–203; see also: PASTAN, *Charlemagne as Saint? Relics and the Choice of Window Subjects at Chartres Cathedral*, p. 108.

201 FOLZ, *Aspects du culte liturgique de Saint-Charlemagne en France*, pp. 77–99.

after the city was conquered by the Fourth Crusade<sup>202</sup> has been rejected, because the king offered rather modest donations for the construction of the cathedral.<sup>203</sup> Philip Augustus certainly manifested devotion to one of the most valuable and esteemed cathedral's relics, the *sancta camisia*, i.e., the gown or tunic of Our Lady. In 1210, Philip Augustus visited the cathedral, venerated the relic, and offered 200 livres for the fabric of the church; a huge sum, but not an overwhelming one.<sup>204</sup> According to another interpretation, Charlemagne's window, making up a thematic whole with the adjoining Saint James's window, was to show Charlemagne and Roland as *figurae Christi*.<sup>205</sup> According to Elizabeth Pastan, it is more appropriate to interpret Charlemagne's window using the same interpretative key as for the hagiographic windows: it shows the history of the relics stored in the cathedral, in this case the tunic of Our Lady, according to *Descriptio qualiter* illustrated in the window, brought from Constantinople by Charlemagne.<sup>206</sup> Although *Descriptio* does not say that the *sancta camisia* was given to Chartres, its presence in the cathedral is mentioned already by Dudo of Saint-Quentin, and the information is repeated after him by the twelfth-century Anglo-Norman and English chroniclers: William of Jumièges, William of Malmesbury, and by Wace in *Roman de Rou*.<sup>207</sup> According to William of Malmesbury, the relic was given to Chartres Cathedral by Charles the Bald,<sup>208</sup> in the French literature this topic appears for the first time in ca.

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202 MANHES-DEREMBLE, *Les vitraux narratifs de la cathédrale de Chartres*, pp. 258–260.

203 CARTY, *The Role of Medieval Dream Images in Authenticating Ecclesiastical Construction*, p. 73; CHÉDEVILLE, *Chartres et ses campagnes, XI<sup>e</sup>-XIII<sup>e</sup> siècles*, pp. 505–525; WILLIAMS, *Bread, Wine and Money. The Windows of the Trades at Chartres Cathedral*, p. 32.

204 PASTAN, *Charlemagne as Saint? Relics and the Choice of Window Subjects at Chartres Cathedral*, p. 119. On the visit of Philip Augustus to Chartres Cathedral see below.

205 NICHOLS, *Romanesque Signs*, pp. 138–146.

206 PASTAN, *Charlemagne as Saint? Relics and the Choice of Window Subjects at Chartres Cathedral*, especially pp. 116–122. However, one may doubt whether Elizabeth Pastan's claim that the lower panel of the Charlemagne's window – according to the classical interpretation depicting furriers, or rather clothiers, the alleged founders of the stained glass window – represented in fact *Sancta Camisia*. Not only secular, even merchant clothing of the figures depicted on the panel – but also the open chest on the left hand of one of them, in which other garments or fabrics seem to lie, makes Pastan's claim doubtful.

207 After PASTAN, *Charlemagne as Saint? Relics and the Choice of Window Subjects at Chartres Cathedral*, pp. 117.

208 WILLIAM OF MALMESBURY, *Gesta regum Anglorum* (1998), pp. 200–201.

1200 in the *Descriptio-Turpin* by Pierre de Beauvais and, soon afterward, in the chronicles of the Anonymous of Béthune and Philip Mouskès.<sup>209</sup> At the time when the foundation and the stained glasses were made in the cathedral, ca. 1210, a collection of the miracles of Our Lady of Chartres was compiled, which also contained a mention, taken from *Descriptio*, of the translation of the *sancta camisia* from Constantinople and of the fact that this relic was given to the cathedral by Charles the Bald.<sup>210</sup>

In our opinion, the most interesting of the Charlemagne's window from Chartres seem to be the two panels: the one that presents the handing over of the three reliquaries by the emperor of the East to Charlemagne in Constantinople and the one in which Charlemagne deposits the relics on the altar in Aachen. The casket reliquaries may be a *pars pro toto* illustration of all the relics Charlemagne brought from Constantinople, but perhaps they allude only to the three most important, as it would seem: the Crown of Thorns from Saint-Denis, the Holy Shroud from Compiègne, and Our Lady's tunic from Chartres. We should also remember the claim that this representation is analogous to the relief of Charlemagne's reliquary from Aachen depicting the same scene: it may be an evidence that there existed a *sui generis* dialogue or argument between the Capetian France and the Holy Empire about Charlemagne's sacral heritage in the account of *Descriptio qualiter*, but I will discuss this matter in the context of the Parisian translation of 1239. However, we should note here that the earliest inventory of the Aachen relics – whose majority consists of those mentioned in the *Descriptio* together with the *velum B. Marie virginis* – was made between the late twelfth century and 1238 when, after the consecration of the new apse in the Aachen cathedral, possibly the first *ostensio reliquiarum* was made.<sup>211</sup> The second panel shows Charlemagne depositing the Crown of Thorns on the altar. Charlemagne (recognizable owing to the inscription "CAROLUS") is presented in a gesture of kenosis as kneeling in the orans posture in front of the altar, behind which we can see an abbot and a monk;

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209 See above.

210 *MIRACLES DE NOTRE-DAME DE CHARTRES*, pp. 509–550, no. III, p. 509. LAUTIER, *Les vitraux de la cathédrale de Chartres. Reliques et images*, p. 31, believes that at another stained glass from the (southern) ambulatory of the chancel (so-called la Belle Verrière), Our Lady is wearing the *sancta camisia* and the imperial crown on her head is an allusion to the fact that the relic was given by Charles the Bald. This view should, however, be treated as an overinterpretation, because the representation of Our Lady in an imperial crown is an iconographic type known from the eleventh century.

211 CARR, *Threads of Authority. The Virgin Mary's Veil in the Middle Ages*, pp. 71, 85–86; KÜHNE, *Ostensio reliquiarum*, pp. 179–184.



a lay courtier stands behind the emperor. Holding the crown in both hands, Charlemagne is depositing it on the altar. The crown may be interpreted simply as a reliquary crown<sup>212</sup> or as a symbolic representation of the Crown of Thorns. Another interesting aspect of this panel is the architectural background of the scene, which Claudine Lautier interprets as a reproduction of the actual appearance of the choir of the Chartres Cathedral from the early thirteenth century with an arcaded aedicula supported by small columns and covered with a dome: a tribune-ostensorium for the relics.<sup>213</sup> When visiting the cathedral, Philip Augustus venerated the *sancta camisia*, passing under the arcades of the shrine.<sup>214</sup> This architectural form of the reliquary ostensorium in Chartres will be important in our reconstruction and interpretation of the sanctuary of the Crown of Thorns, which Louis IX's Sainte-Chapelle was going to become toward the end of the first half of the thirteenth century.

### The Gravestone Epitaph of Charles the Bald in Saint-Denis

The bronze gravestone of Charles the Bald with the epitaph inscription in the bordure around the emperor's engraved effigy is known only from drawings: it was melted during the French revolution in 1792 in Paris Mint. The date of its execution is not known. An exact drawing made by François Roger de Gaignières at the turn of the seventeenth and eighteenth century<sup>215</sup> reveals a considerable stylistic similarity to the bronze gravestone of the bishop of Amiens, Évrard de Fouilloy, died in 1222.<sup>216</sup> Richier, a Benedictine monk from the Abbey of Senones in The Vosges, who described this gravestone in his chronicle<sup>217</sup> probably in 1223, saw it with his own eyes in the choir of the Abbey Church of Saint-Denis.

The epitaph inscription is elegant in style and represents Charles the Bald as a ruler who, to make amends to the Abbey for the earlier requisition, gave the monastery numerous new lands, and the Holy Nail and the Crown of Thorns:

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212 So writes LAUTIER, *Les vitraux de la cathédrale de Chartres. Reliques et images*, p. 34.

213 LAUTIER, *Les vitraux de la cathédrale de Chartres. Reliques et images*, p. 35; LAUTIER, *Le vitrail de Charlemagne à Chartres et les reliques du trésor de la cathédrale*, passim.

214 “sub sacrosancto scrinio devote et humiliter transitum faciens;” *CARTULAIRE DE NOTRE-DAME DE CHARTRES*, p. 59.

215 BODLEIAN, Coll. Gaignières, MS. 2, fol. 12ro.

216 ERLANDE-BRANDENBOURG, *Le roi est mort*, p. 153.

217 RICHER OF SENONES, *Gesta Senonensis ecclesiae*, p. 296.

Imperio Carolus Calvus regnoque potitus  
Gallorum jacet hic sub brevitare situs  
Plurima cum villis cum clavo cumque corona  
Ecclesiae vivus hic dedit ille bona  
Multis ablati nobis fuit hic reparator,  
Sequanii fluvii, Ruolique dator<sup>218</sup>

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218 Qtd. after FÉLIBIEN, *Histoire de l'abbaye royale de Saint Denys*, p. 554.

## Chapter 3. Conclusion

### 1. The Ideological Meaning of the Historical Myth on Charlemagne's Expedition to Jerusalem and Constantinople from the Eleventh to the First Half of the Thirteenth Century

An overview of the texts which took up and transmitted the topic of *Iter Hierosolimitanum* in the twelfth and thirteenth century, according to which Charlemagne liberated the Holy Land from the Saracens and translated the Passion relics *ad Occidentem*, clearly indicates that this narrative gained a high degree of reliability and proved to be attractive the audience among the clergy, magnates, and knights. Soon, at the turn of the eleventh and twelfth century, at the time of the First Crusade, Charlemagne's alleged expedition to Jerusalem was interpreted by the chroniclers as a crusade, and in the late eleventh century the crusaders going to the East supposedly followed in the footsteps of Charlemagne.<sup>1</sup> Although it was only in the early thirteenth century that a text inspired by *Descriptio qualiter*, namely Philip Mouskès' chronicle, explicitly states that Charlemagne's military assistance to the Holy Land was tantamount to taking the cross, the association of the war Charlemagne waged against the Saracenes with a crusade was obvious in the twelfth century.<sup>2</sup> This is indicated, among other places, by the close

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1 According to CALLAHAN, *Al-Hākim, Charlemagne and the Destruction of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher*, pp. 41–57, Charlemagne's original image as a crusader *avant la lettre* was created by Adémar of Chabannes. Callahan claims that Ademar treated Caliph Al-Hākim as the Antichrist and – crossing the border between historiography and science fiction – Charlemagne as the emperor of ultimate times, for when describing Charlemagne's body in the grave opened by Otto III, Ademar presents him (the deceased!) as ready for a victorious struggle with the armies of darkness, so also with Al-Hākim, the destroyer of the basilica of the Holy Sepulchre; CALLAHAN, *Al-Hākim, Charlemagne and the Destruction of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher*, pp. 47–48.

2 On the origins of the myth of Charlemagne as a crusader see FOLZ, *Le souvenir et la légende de Charlemagne dans l'Empire germanique médiéval*, pp. 134–142, 179–181; KAMPERS, *Die deutsche Kaiseridee in Prophetie und Sage*, pp. 30–39; *DICTIONNAIRE D'ARCHEOLOGIE CHRETIENNE ET DE LITURGIE*, vol. XIV, pp. 167–174; MARTINI, *La memoria di Carlomagno e l'Impero medioevale*, pp. 256–281; POWELL, *Myth, Legend, Propaganda, History*, pp. 127–141; STUCEY, *Charlemagne as Crusader?*, pp. 137–152. Original and impressive, but completely implausible claims on the origins of the myth of Charlemagne as a crusader are presented in MONTELEONE, *Il viaggio di Carlo Magno in Terra Santa*, pp. 16–45, especially pp. 19–32. These

proximity of the *Iter Hierosolimitanum* window and the First Crusade window in the chancel of the church in Saint-Denis and their stylistic similarity, indicating that they may have been parts of the same foundation.

Paradoxically, only *chansons de geste* deviate from this ‘crusade’ interpretation of *Iter Hierosolimitanum*. *Pèlerinage de Charlemagne* says that God encouraged the emperor in his dreams to make a pilgrimage to the Holy Places, not wage a war against the Saracens. In turn, *Fierabras* does not connect the translation of the Crown of Thorns with the expedition to the Holy Land but with a war against the Muslims invading Europe, who robbed the Passion relics from Rome.<sup>3</sup> *Chansons de geste* differ in one more aspect from the *Descriptio*: unlike all the other accounts, they say that Charlemagne translated the Crown of Thorns to the Abbey of Saint-Denis and not to Aachen, completely neglecting the alleged contribution of Charles the Bald in translating the relics to Saint-Denis and renewing there the annual *ostensio reliquiarum – Indictum*.

Moreover, we should bear in mind the authors’ doubts as to the origin of the Passion relics caused by the discrepancies between the incipit and the content of *Descriptio qualiter*. Besides *Chansons de Fierabras*, which say that the relics were originally located in Rome, all the other texts

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claims are derived from Franz Kampers’s hypothesis that the accounts about Charlemagne’s expedition to the East resulted from the millenarian atmosphere of the tenth and eleventh century: “La “Descriptio” si colloca in un prolungamento delle profezie e della crociata apocalittica, intesa quest’ultima come “cammino verso la parusia”, per cui il dovere di liberare Gerusalemme costituisce la parte di un progetto più ampio, dal momento che tra le speranze vi era quella di vedere realizzata la promessa di secondo avvento di Cristo” (MONTELEONE, *Il viaggio di Carlo Magno in Terra Santa*, p. 32); similarly: VAUCHEZ, *Les composantes eschatologiques de l’idée de Croisade*, pp. 233–243. These claims are amazing: the above-presented analysis of *Descriptio qualiter* itself and of other accounts, chronicles, hagiographies and epic poems of *Iter Hierosolimitanum* disallow finding in them any eschatological references, since there are none. However, there is an opposite influence, that of *Iter Hierosolimitanum* on the distribution of the accounts about the eschatological role of the emperor of the ultimate times, the imitator and follower of Constantine and Charlemagne, in Jerusalem. MONTELEONE’s second claim in *Il viaggio di Carlo Magno in Terra Santa*, pp. 47–90, seeks the origins of the myth on Charlemagne’s pilgrimage to the Holy Land in the interest in pilgrims and protection for pilgrims confirmed, among others, by the Carolingian capitularies; this claim seems to be rather a result of the helplessness than a properly conducted research proof.

3 Despite that, the *chansons de geste* inspired by the *Descriptio qualiter* were also carriers of the crusade ideology; cf. FLORI, *Pur eshalcier Sainte chrestienté. Croisade, guerre sainte et guerre juste*, pp. 171–187; Gosman, *La propaganda de la croisade et le rôle de la chanson de geste*, pp. 291–306.

written before *Les Grandes Chroniques de France* in the second half of the thirteenth century can be divided into those, which treat the narrative from *Descriptio* literally and, thus, assume that the place of the *inventio* of the relics was Jerusalem (*De sanctitate Karoli Magni, Pèlerinage de Charlemagne*, Philip Mouskès's chronicle), and those whose authors preferred to be faithful to the incipit of *Descriptio qualiter* and had to move away from the original and add the information missing in *Descriptio* that, after the victory over the Saracens, Charlemagne went to Constantinople again and then received the Passion relics (*Gesta episcoporum Mettensium*, Pierre de Beauvais, Helinand of Froidmont, Gui of Bazoches, Alberic of Trois-Fontaines, Vincent of Beauvais). The importance of this issue depends on the extent to which it related to a conviction that somewhere in the twelfth and thirteenth-century world there were relics considered to be authentic. In the West people knew well that during the reign of emperor Heraclius (610–641), there happened a kind of “translation of Jerusalem” to Constantinople,<sup>4</sup> which became New Jerusalem because the most important Passion relics were transferred there (the Crown of Thorns is not mentioned). Furthermore, from the eleventh century the imperial palace in Constantinople was known in the whole Christian world as the only original source where the relics of Christ and the Apostles could be obtained. The inaccuracies in *Descriptio qualiter* caused serious problems for its adaptators: not only faithfulness to the incipit or to the text itself but also the text's compatibility with common knowledge. I believe that it is for these reasons that several authors decided to amend or, in fact, clarify the text of *Descriptio qualiter* in accordance with its incipit (relics are brought from Constantinople) by adding the information about Charlemagne's stay in Constantinople after liberating the Holy Land. The others opted for the predominance of narration over the incipit of *Descriptio qualiter* (relics are brought from Jerusalem), which may have been explained by a slight afflux of relics from the Holy Land in the period after the First Crusade. Although the authenticity of the Lance of Longinus – miraculously discovered during the siege of Antioch – was quite commonly doubted, in the twelfth century there appeared Passion relics originating from the Kingdom of Jerusalem, for instance, a particle from Paris Cathedral brought by the canon Anselm in 1120, which had never been questioned, not to mention the Palladium of the Kings of Jerusalem containing a part of the Holy Cross, lost in the battle of Hattin in 1187.<sup>5</sup> The adaptation of *Descriptio* made in *Les*

4 See MANIKOWSKA, *Translatio Jerozolimy do Wroclawia*, pp. 63–75.

5 LIGATO, *The Political Meanings of the Relic of the Holy Cross among the Crusaders*, pp. 315–330. On the relic of the Holy Cross as a battle palladium of the kings of Jerusalem, see MURRAY, ‘Mighty Against the Enemies of

*Grandes Chroniques de France* by Primat of Saint-Denis seems interesting in this respect. As we remember, Primat writes that the relics originated in and were brought from Jerusalem and Constantinople. We should consider whether this interpretation – besides being an attempt at maintaining the highest degree of fidelity to both the incipit and the narrative of *Descriptio qualiter* – was also the result of the influence of the Parisian translations of 1239–1241. Namely, it is known that the first two sets of relics, which arrived in 1239 and 1241 came from the chapel in the imperial Palace of Boukoleon in Constantinople, but the third part of the relics brought to Sainte-Chapelle – the second translation performed in 1241 or in 1242 – came from Palestine and Syria. In such a situation, Primat had no reason to – or even should not – doubt that it was possible to acquire relics from Jerusalem, since the king of France had no such doubts.

At this point, I will briefly mention the subject of *translatio reliquiarum* as a form of *translatio imperii*. Indeed, this topic becomes more prominent – and in a very interesting way – only in the comments in later chronicles concerning the translation of the Crown of Thorns to Paris in 1239.

The majority of works concerning *Iter Hierosolimitanum Karoli Magni* seems to stress the equality of the emperors of the East and West and – although Charlemagne is usually presented as the braver one – the fact that it was him who liberated the Holy Sepulchre is explained by the special grace of God, which the Frankish monarch earned through his devotion and affection to the Church. The strongest emphasis on the equal status of the emperors of the East and West was, as we remember, placed by Gui of Bazoches. However, there are other examples: *Gesta episcoporum Mettensium* and *Pèlerinage de Charlemagne* openly proclaim the inferiority of emperor of the East (Constantine or Hugh) to the emperor of the West. *Pèlerinage de Charlemagne* makes it one of its leitmotifs: on his way back from the Holy Land, Charlemagne goes to Constantinople to make sure if the Byzantine emperor is indeed a grander ruler than him (like his unwise wife said). The relics are very important in solving this argument, because it is owing to the prayer in front of them that Charlemagne obtains a promise of divine assistance in fulfilling his own and his barons' unreasonable drunken bragging promises. It is thanks to divine intervention that Charlemagne can show king Hugh his might and make him swear allegiance to him. This is how the “*translatio Imperii ad Occidentem*”<sup>6</sup> happened. In turn, according to *Gesta*

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*Christ'. The Relic of the True Cross in the Armies of the Kingdom of Jerusalem*, pp. 217–238.

6 BOUTET, *Charlemagne et Arthur*, pp. 448–449, 459; cf. GRISWARD, *Paris, Jérusalem, Constantinople dans le “Pèlerinage de Charlemagne”*, pp. 75–82; MORRISSEY, *L'empereur à la barbe fleurie*, pp. 92–98.

*episcoporum Mettensium*, the Byzantine emperor greeted Charlemagne as his lord ("honoravit ut dominum"), met him halfway, and offered him the Passion relics. In this interpretation, the gift of the Passion relics to Charlemagne is a gesture of acceptance of the suzerainty of the emperor of the West over the East.

Another major theme found in many texts is the interpretation of ownership and giving of the Passion relics as an attribute of imperial power. Certainly, such an approach to the relics was influenced by the example of the emperors of Constantinople, but also by the legend of Charlemagne's collection of relics in Aachen. In all the versions of *Iter Hierosolimitanum* Charlemagne addresses his request for the relics to the emperor of Constantinople – not the patriarch or the bishops, who serve only as the celebrants during the ceremony of the *inventio* or *elevatio* – and then the former becomes a depository of the holy relics. It is Charlemagne to whom the bishops give the relics in Constantinople, who brings them to the West in a pouch suspended from the neck, Charlemagne is asked by the chatelain of *Ligmedon* (where Charlemagne stopped on his way to Aachen) to use the relics to resurrect his recently deceased son. Finally, it is Charlemagne who personally deposits the relics in the chapel of his own palace, establishes the first *Indictum* – the ostension of the relics in Aachen and its annual repetition. Charlemagne does the latter in agreement with the pope and bishops, and with their consent, but there is no doubt that the emperor is the driving force; the same happens in the case of Charles the Bald.

Probably the most important message of the texts elaborating on the thread from *Iter Hierosolimitanum* is the presentation of Charlemagne as a model of a pious ruler who performs the translation of the Passion relics and venerates them. It is further significant for the interpretation of the 1239 translation that – in accordance with *Iter Hierosolimitanum* – Charlemagne deposited the Passion relics in a specially founded chapel in his imperial palace in Aachen and, later on, Charles the Bald did the same with the Holy Shroud in Compiègne, as he wanted to establish the capital of his new empire in that city, following the example of Constantinople and Aachen. Let us add that – according to the forgery from the 1120s, thus written after *Descriptio qualiter* – Saint Denis is called *caput regni* by the charter's alleged granter, Charlemagne. The charter does not mention the Crown of Thorns as Saint-Denis's special treasury, which is understandable, because according to *Descriptio qualiter* the relic was still supposed to have been in Aachen, waiting for the translation by Charles the Bald. However, we cannot overlook the fact that the charter that calls Saint-Denis *caput regni* was written in the Abbey of Saint-Denis, when the Crown of Thorns was already there, venerated both by the faithful and the king of France. This information may be only indirectly confirmed by Helinand of Froidmont's

words presenting Compiègne as Charles's imperial capital, since Saint-Denis fulfills similar criteria and, eventually, Charles the Bald is buried there. Let us also note that Gui of Bazoches says that when Charles the Bald had to give up Aachen to his elder brother, he seized the relics from the imperial palace and then reverently transferred them to Saint-Denis, where he renewed the feast in their honour, initially established in Aachen by his grandfather. In other words, Charles the Bald performed the translation of Aachen to Saint-Denis. The position of Saint-Denis differs both from that of Constantinople or Aachen and Compiègne in that Charles the Bald – despite all the benefactions he extended to the Abbey (although according to Charles's black legend these were not benefactions but compensations) – could be considered neither the founder of the church nor of the imperial residence in Saint-Denis in the way Constantine the Great was the founder of Constantinople, Charlemagne of Aachen, and Charles the Bald, himself, of Compiègne. Thus, when Louis IX founds Sainte-Chapelle – the chapel royal in Paris – as a place designed to store the Crown of Thorns and other relics brought in 1239–1241, he follows the example of Charlemagne, as the Parisian palace chapel is to be new Aachen. We should underline that Louis IX acts differently from his Capetian predecessors who gave the relics they succeeded to obtain either to Paris cathedral, to the Abbey of Saint-Denis, or to their own monastic foundations: Philip Augustus gave the thorn from the Crown of Thorns sent to him with other relics by the Latin emperor Baldwin I to the Abbey of Saint-Denis together with a precious gold reliquary tablet.<sup>7</sup> Louis IX chose a different model than his ancestors, and it is clear that he followed the example of Charlemagne. This becomes even more striking, when we remember that Saint Louis established special liturgical feasts to honour Sainte-Chapelle, during which an *ostensio reliquiarum* was held in the royal palace, similarly to *Indictum* as described in *Descriptio qualiter*. It is thus possible that Louis's involvement to the idea of the crusade and regaining Jerusalem was equally motivated by his wish to imitate Charlemagne.

The hagiographies and chronicles unanimously link Charlemagne's expedition to the East with the Saracen invasion of Jerusalem and the pagans' persecutions of the *Loca Sancta* and Christians in the Holy Land, happened soon after Charlemagne became emperor. The very first words of *Descriptio qualiter*, carefully repeated in the majority of the subsequent texts, indicate that Charlemagne obtained the Empire from God and the Romans at the time when the Church suffered many adversities. Thus, it seems clear that his imperial position predestined Charlemagne in the eyes of these authors

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7 RIGORD, *Gesta Philippi Augusti* (2006), cap. 153, pp. 392, 394.



to undertake an expedition to save the Holy Sepulchre. *Descriptio qualiter* seems to indicate that the expedition to the East was Charlemagne's first deed after his crowning as an emperor. The same interpretation is used by all the chroniclers who followed the annals' model. Only Philippe Mouskès considers the crusade as a crowning of Charlemagne's reign and the most praiseworthy deed of the emperor who soon afterward writes his last will, makes his son an emperor, then dies. This allows to draw a conclusion that Charlemagne's duty to protect the Holy Land is to result from his role of the Roman emperor. However, we should not forget that all the authors – even those connected with Frederick Barbarossa's court (*De sanctitate Karoli Magni*) – strongly emphasized the fact that Charlemagne was a king of France. Starting from the Second Crusade – in which the main part was played by Louis VII (and thus from the mid-twelfth century) – the French adaptors of *Descriptio* certainly believed that the protection of the Holy Sepulchre and readiness to aid it is the duty of the king of France, especially as the twelfth century was an epoch when the Capetians – with the support of the intellectual and ecclesiastical circles (including the popes) – were increasingly bold in their claim that it is the king of France – not the emperor – who is the true heir of Charlemagne. However, let us not forget that the victory over the Saracens and liberation of the Holy Land is not interesting for the authors of most narratives about the translation of the Crown of Thorns, even though they all consider the aim of the expedition, the only exception being *Pèlerinage de Charlemagne*. The authors merely state that Charlemagne liberated the Holy Land and restored Christian faith in the *Loca Sancta*. The authors pay much more attention to the acquisition of the relics by the emperor and his visit to Constantinople, the magnificence of the town, and emperor Constantine's reception of the Franks or – in texts that describe the relics were acquired in Jerusalem – to the pilgrimage to the Holy Lands in Palestine (Mouskès), the miracles that happened thanks to the relics during the *inventio*, during the return to the West, and during the *ostensio* in Aachen. Noteworthy, the relics were found in Constantinople, or in Jerusalem, owing to Charlemagne. To fulfil his request, a special search had to be made because their depositary, the emperor of the East, knew not where the Passion relics were stored. This mention is certainly meant to legitimize the translation: the Byzantines do not deserve to have the Passion relics because they do not treat them with due reverence. The elevation of the relics is accompanied by miracles happening in answer to Charlemagne's prayer, in which he asked God for a sign confirming their authenticity. The miracles are also undoubtable proofs that God favoured their translation to the West; on the way back, there were numerous miraculous healings that had begun already during the solemn elevation in Constantinople.

## 2. The Translation of the Relics of the Crown of Thorns to the Kingdom of the Franks and the Miraculous Healing of Scrofula

We should pay special attention to the fact that Pierre de Beauvais, the Anonymous of Béthune, Philip Mouskès after them, and finally, *Les Grandes Chroniques de France* mention the healing of scrofula among the miracles that happened thanks to the relics, on Charlemagne's way back to France. Two questionable and mutually exclusive standpoints concerning the genesis of the thaumaturgical power of the kings of France appeared in the academic world in the 1980s and 1990s. One of them, by Jean-Pierre Poly, tries to find distant sources of the faith in the miracle-making traits of the French kings already in the mid-tenth century.<sup>8</sup> Jacques Le Goff, with whom Poly disagrees, criticizes the hypothesis of Marc Bloch that the origins of the idea that the Capetians could cure scrofula go back to the reign of Robert the Pious. Le Goff rejects the retrogressive interpretation used by Bloch but simultaneously excludes the reliability of the account of Guibert of Nogent – who claimed that scrofula were cured by Louis VI and that his father, Philip, lost the power because of his sins – according to whom there existed a regular practice of touching scrofula before the mid-thirteenth century.<sup>9</sup> However, Le Goff does not support his claim

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8 POLY, *La gloire des rois*, pp. 167–182. Recently, Éric Bournazel developed Jean-Pierre Poly's hypothesis in a very interesting way, saying that the most probable cause of death of the last Carolingians, in his opinion almost certain in the case of Louis IV d'Outremer (954) and his son, Lothair (986) – was a mycobacterial (tuberculous) cervical lymphadenitis. The death of Louis V (987) was a result of a fall from a horse, this is probably what prevents the author from making a finishing touch and creating an effective and attractive hypothesis, leaving it to the reader. I shall put it in the form of a question: can the origins of the belief on the thaumaturgical power of the Capetian kings be traced to an attempt to legitimize the Capetians as able to heal the disease that killed previous kings?; cf. BOURNAZEL, *Louis VI le Gros*, pp. 392–398.

9 LE GOFF, *Préface*, in: BLOCH, *Les rois thaumaturges*, pp. XIII–XVI. Noteworthy, Le Goff's supposition – repeated after BARLOW, *The King's Evil*, pp. 3–27 – that Guibert de Nogent's account confirms that only Louis VI performed the healing ritual (p. XVI), but not Philip I – since allegedly with regard to Philip we are dealing only with the statement of the loss of this thaumaturgical power., According to Barlow, the only positive information in Guibert's account is that Philip I did not heal scrofula – a conclusion, which should be considered absolutely false. Guibert said explicitly that king Philip used to heal scrofula before he lost his thaumaturgical power because of his misdeeds unknown to the author: “Cuius gloriam miraculi cum Philippus pater ejus alacriter exerceret, nescio quibus incidentibus culpis amisit;” GUIBERT DE NOGENT, *De sanctis*

with any arguments except for the lack of any other accounts of touching scrofula by the Capetians before the reign of Saint Louis. Besides, Le Goff considers Peter of Blois unreliable – who wrote about the healing of scrofula by the king of England, Henry II Plantagenet – because he wrote also that Henry II stopped the inguinal pest (*pestis inguinaria*), which Le Goff interprets as the bubonic plague. Le Goff concludes that since from the early seventh till the mid-fourteenth century there was no epidemic of the bubonic plague in Europe, Peter of Blois must have used as his topos the account derived from the writings of Jehan Belet, which popularized in the twelfth century Europe the hagiographical story about the miraculous stopping of the bubonic plague in Rome thanks to the merits of Gregory the Great.<sup>10</sup> Le Goff presented this view several times, coming to the conclusion that the ritual of touching scrofula could not have become institutionalized earlier than during the reign of Louis IX and that there is no evidence that Louis VII, Philip Augustus, and Louis VIII the Lion healed scrofula, which makes it approximately a century.<sup>11</sup> However, we should recall the account of Geoffroi of Beaulieu, Louis IX's confessor and first hagiographer, according to which the king changed the ancient ritual of touching scrofula by adding to the ancient gesture the sign of the cross. According to Geoffroi's statement, Louis did not create an institutionalized ritual of

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*et eorum pigneribus*, p. 90. In his biography of Saint Louis, Le Goff does not deny that Philip I touched scrofula, see LE GOFF, *Saint Louis*, p. 832.

- 10 LE GOFF, *Préface*, in: BLOCH, *Les rois thaumaturges*, p. XIV–XV. Le Goff rejects the argumentation adopted in BLOCH, *Les rois thaumaturges*, p. 42, of the historian of medicine, Raymond Crawford, (CRAWFURD, *The King's Evil*, pp. 25–26) that Peter of Blois, not being a doctor, could have easily confused the symptoms of bubonic plague with other groin diseases that produce swelling, by saying ironically: if Peter of Blois is not a good witness about the bubonic plague, why should he be a better one about the scrofula. We consider this argument as ill-construed. One cannot simply skip the fact that Peter of Blois mentions scrofula by name, suggesting that it is an affliction tantamount to the bubonic plague (“defectus inguinariae pestis et curatio scrophularum”), while the lymph nodes can be also found in the groin, so tuberculosis-induced ulcers may also appear there. If we assume that Peter of Blois used the topos, it would be a *locus communis* of healing scrofula by the king and its sources should be mentioned, the only possible ones being connected with the legend about healing scrofula by the king of France.
- 11 LE GOFF, *Le mal royal*, pp. 101–109; LE GOFF, *Saint Louis*, p. 832. According to Le Goff, the second half of the thirteenth century is the time when healing scrofula became a common practice among the French and English kings. He supports this with arguments from a British study by BARLOW, *The King's Evil*, according to which the first reliable mentions of healing scrofula by the Plantagenets come from the times of the reign of Edward I (1276).

healing scrofula but rather added to it an innovation. However, we should also note that the innovation Geoffroi of Beaulieu attributed to Saint Louis is untrue, because already Guibert of Nogent wrote that, when touching scrofula, Louis VI marked the sick places with the sign of a cross.<sup>12</sup> Geoffroi of Beaulieu's information about the alleged change in the ritual of touching should probably be interpreted as a wish to assign Saint Louis the efforts to make the healing of scrofula a Christian ritual. The sign of the cross mentioned by Geoffroi of Beaulieu was meant by the king to show that the healing was an act of divine mercy and the power of the Cross, not the merit of the king.<sup>13</sup> As there are no other sources compiled before Saint Louis's death that described the touching of scrofula, it is impossible to reconcile the contradictions between Guibert of Nogent and Geoffroi of Beaulieu. It seems unlikely that the ritual of marking the scrofula with the sign of the cross by the king, as did Louis VI, could have fallen into obscurity to be resumed by Louis IX: this ideological element of the ritual was too powerful and at the same time easy to remember and perform. It is much more probable that Geoffroi, when writing the *Life* of Saint Louis, assigned to him a fictitious merit so as to better prove his piety. Such an attempt had all chances of success: Louis IX reigned for forty-four years and – when Geoffroi of Beaulieu was writing the *Life* of the deceased king – there were few people who remembered the reign of his father.

It is also possible that the thaumaturgical activity of the king of France became considerably intensified in the times of Saint Louis, but the analysis of the changes made by Pierre de Beauvais in the contents of *Descriptio qualiter* allows us to reject the claim that the royal ritual of healing scrofula

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12 “Quid quod dominum nostrum Ludovicum regem consuetudinario uti videmus prodigio? Hos plane, qui scrophas circa jugulum, aut uspam in corpore patiuntur, ad tactum eius, superadito crucis signo, vidi catervatim, me ei coherente et etiam prohibente, concurrere. Quos tamen ille ingenita liberalitate, serena ad se manus obuncans, humillime consignabat;” GUIBERT DE NOGENT, *De sanctis et eorum pigneribus*, p. 90.

13 GEOFFROI DE BEAULIEU, *Vita sancti Ludovici* (RHF), cap. 35, p. 20; GEOFFROI DE BEAULIEU, *Vita sancti Ludovici (Acta Sanctorum)*, cap. VI, 54, p. 554: “In tangendis infirmitatibus, quae vulgo scroalae vocantur, super quibus curandis Franciae regibus Dominus contulit gratiam singularem, pius Rex modum hunc praeter reges caeteros voluit observare. Cum enim alii reges praedecessores sui tangendo solummodo locum morbi, verba ad hoc appropriata et consueta proferrent, quae quidem verba sancta sunt atque catholica, nec facere consuevissent aliquod signum crucis; ipse super consuetudinem aliorum hoc addidit, quod dicendo verba super locum morbi, sanctae crucis signaculum imprimebat, ut sequens curatio virtuti crucis attribueretur potius quam regiae majestati.”

did not exist before that king's reign. The addition of scrofula made during the reign of Philip Augustus by Pierre and by the Anonymous of Béthune to the list of diseases cured thanks to the power of the Passion relics brought by Charlemagne from Constantinople could not have been accidental. I disregard here the chronicle of Philippe Mouskès, although he probably followed Pierre de Beauvais's *Descriptio-Turpin*, because Mouskès wrote during the reign of Saint Louis. Pierre de Beauvais and the Anonymous of Béthune extend the list of miraculously healed diseases – thanks to the *virtus* emanating from the Crown of Thorns and other relics – by developing the term “gutturiosi” into two distinct illnesses: they mention both people suffering from gout (*goute haïve, gote*) and from scrofula (*escroïles, escroeles*). The word “gutturiosi” may have been ambiguous: its origin may be derived from the word “guttur” (throat) or “gutta” (gout). Noteworthy, the earliest manuscript of *Descriptio qualiter*<sup>14</sup> and the edition of *Iter Hierosolimitanum* found in *De sanctitate Karoli Magni*<sup>15</sup> read “gutturiosi,” whereas the manuscript from Montpellier “guttuosi,”<sup>16</sup> which may be an indication that various editors interpreted the disease as gout or swollen neck.<sup>17</sup> The latter manuscript is later than Pierre de Beauvais' *Descriptio-Turpin*, as it was compiled in the first quarter of the thirteenth century. When Pierre mentions people afflicted with gout, he does not specify how many of them were miraculously healed; he says only that there were many,<sup>18</sup> so he is faithful to his Latin source, but when mentioning scrofula, he gives the exact number of the healed – seventy-five – and this information is nowhere to be found in *Descriptio qualiter*. The Anonymous of Béthune does the opposite: he reserved the term ‘many’ for those healed from scrofula and determined the number of miraculously healed people suffering from gout to be fifty-two. Philip Mouskès, who wrote a generation later, is less faithful to the Latin sources than Pierre de Beauvais, possibly because of the poetic character of his chronicle. Mouskès omits some of the diseases listed in *Descriptio-Iter*. He translates “gutturiosi” directly as people suffering from scrofula and uses just as imprecise a term to denote their number as

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14 *DESCRIPTIO QUALITER*, p. 120.

15 *DE SANCTITATE KAROLI MAGNI*, p. 65.

16 *ITER HIEROSOLIMITANUM*, ed. CASTETS, p. 460.

17 According to the editor of the manuscript from Montpellier (CASTETS, *Iter Hierosolimitanum*, p. 427), the Montpellier manuscript is a corrected version of the draft of *Descriptio qualiter* found in the earliest Parisian manuscript (P and P2), independently from the BnF, Ms Latin 17565 (K) (*De sanctitate*). This may explain the change of “gutturiosi,” as interpreted by the twelfth century editor of *De sanctitate Karoli Magni*, into “guttuosi.”

18 PIERRE DE BEAUVAIS, *Descriptio-Turpin*, p. 451.

the Latin texts: “many” (“plusiors”).<sup>19</sup> Thus, we may say that Mouskès prepared a verbatim translation from Latin, like in the case of all the diseases not omitted due to the requirements of the poetic style. Hence, Mouskès has no doubts whether the “gutturiosi” suffered from gout or scrofula because he mentions gout in another place:<sup>20</sup> when describing the resurrection of a deceased boy in the Ligmedon castle. Primat, who lived two generations later than Pierre de Beauvais, created his *Great Chronicles of France* in the Abbey of Saint-Denis, thus in the origin location of *Descriptio qualiter*. Primat followed the same path as Mouskès: he translated “gutturiosi” as “suffering from scrofula,” leaving gout for the son of a chatelain of Ligmedon who died of it and was then resurrected.<sup>21</sup>

The analysis of the terminology used by all the adaptators of *Descriptio-Iter* – those who mentioned the healing of scrofula among the miracles performed owing to the power of the Crown of Thorns and other Passion relics brought by Charlemagne to France – does not allow to draw definite conclusions. Certainly, neither Mouskès nor Primat had any doubt, while both wrote during the reign of Saint Louis and basing on the earliest known manuscript of *Descriptio qualiter*.<sup>22</sup> The account of Pierre de Beauvais is more interesting, as it is different from the later ones and mentions the exact number of the healed. Does it mean that Pierre had access to a source of information unknown to us? Or, maybe the difference was due to the creativity or inquisitive features of the author who wanted to reconcile the two different readings: “gutturiosi” and “guttuosi” from different manuscripts. If we assume that number of seventy-five healed scrofula sufferers mentioned by Pierre de Beauvais is his own interpolation, we should consistently infer that he must have known about the ritual of healing scrofula by the king. That is, by king Philip Augustus, for it cannot be supposed that Pierre changed the contents of *Descriptio qualiter* under the influence of a record

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19 “Et plusiors autres d’ecroiele;” PHILIPPE MOUSKÈS, *Chronique rimée*, vol. I, v. 11384, p. 439.

20 PHILIPPE MOUSKÈS, *Chronique rimée*, vol. I, v. 11310–11314, p. 436. The Latin sources use the terms “podagra” and “cyragra” [chiragra]: *DESCRIPTIO QUALITER*, p. 118; *DE SANCTITATE KAROLI MAGNI*, p. 63; *ITER HIEROSOLIMITANUM*, ed. CASTETS, p. 459. Working on his version of this passage, Pierre de Beauvais used the name “poacre” (“podagra” – gout) and “goute artique” (gout).

21 *Goute caduque*; PRIMAT, *Grandes Chroniques de France. Sur les gestes de Charlemagne*, lib. III, cap. 4, p. 278.

22 Primat obviously worked in the scriptorium of the Saint-Denis Abbey, the manuscript BnF, Ms. Latin 12710 was written and kept there. As NOTHOMB, *La date de la Chronique rimée de Philippe Mousket*, pp. 77–89, shows, Mouskès used the same manuscript (but it was not his only source).

by Guibert of Nogent, written almost a century earlier and with no reflection in contemporary reality (even making a highly unrealistic assumption that he had read *De pignoribus sanctorum*). Neither can we neglect the person who commissioned Pierre de Beauvais to adapt *Descriptio qualiter* in French: it was the count of Ponthieu William of Cayeux one of the pillars of the Capetian party in the borderland region of Picardy and Flanders and king's brother-in-law, a husband of Philip Augustus's sister, Alys.<sup>23</sup> As the chronicles depicting the reign of Philip Augustus – written in the Abbey of Saint-Denis and in the court by Rigord and William the Breton at the same time as Pierre's *Descriptio-Turpin* – do not say that the king healed scrofula even though they do not hesitate to list the other miracles performed by the king,<sup>24</sup> it seems quite probable that the discussed topic appeared in the work of Pierre de Beauvais because of the patronage of the count of Ponthieu.<sup>25</sup>

Yet, the Anonymous of Béthune and his chronicle derive from an opposite political milieu. His patron Robert VII of Béthune did not support Philip Augustus; on the contrary, Robert's grandfather, father, and brothers received from Henry II, Richard, and John major fiefs and ecclesiastical

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23 Alix, Alys or Aelis (Adelaide), daughter of Louis VII was betrothed as a child to Richard the Lionheart (her dowry was Bourges, and after the death of Henry the Young King, the husband of Alix's elder sister, Margaret, also Vexin in Normandy). Even though the Plantagenets took her dowry, she never married Richard, who refused to marry Alix, because of the rumours that Henry II had sexual intercourse with her when she was a girl. Indeed, Henry II avoided both finalizing the marriage between Richard and Alix and returning her dowry to her father. In 1191, Philip freed Richard from the promise of marriage with Alix; the latter came back to France, and in 1195 or 1196 married William of Ponthieu. The Norman Vexin with Gisors were incorporated into the Capetian domain as late as in 1199 and 1204.

24 On that subject, see PYSIAK, *Philippe Auguste – roi de la fin des temps?*, pp. 1174–1180. Noteworthy, Rigord, the chronicler of Philip Augustus, writes in a short summary of the history and deeds of the kings of France, that Charles the Bald gave the Abbey of Saint-Denis the Crown of Thorns and the Nail of the Cross, but completely omits the narrative about Charlemagne's expedition to the East; cf. RIGORD, *Gesta Philippi Augusti* (2006), cap. 41, pp. 204, 205.

25 Another important issue is the reception of the Picardian-Flandrian adaptations of the *Descriptio qualiter* in *Les Grandes Chroniques de France*. According to Gabrielle M. Spiegel, SPIEGEL, *Romancing the Past*, p. 232; SPIEGEL, "Pseudo-Turpin" – *the Crisis of Aristocracy and the Beginning of Vernacular Historiography in France*, p. 210, when compiling his version of *Iter Hierosolimitanum*, Primat based on the *Chronique des rois de France* by the Anonymous of Béthune, of which so far only a fragment about the reign of the Capetians has been so far published (ANONYME DE BÉTHUNE, *Chronique des rois de France*, pp. 750–775).

offices in England, he himself became a vassal of king John, received from him considerable sums of money, and was one of his favorites among the Flemish aristocracy. In 1213, Robert was an envoy to London on behalf of count Ferrand of Flanders to make an armed treaty with the king of England against Philip. Robert partook in the war which soon broke out and, after the Capetians' victory over the English-Flemish-Imperial coalition in 1214, went to England and in 1216 to become king John's constable and count of Clare in Suffolk.<sup>26</sup> The first chronicle of the Anonymous, *Histoire des ducs de Normandie et des rois d'Angleterre* considerably reveals the political loyalties of the lords of Béthune. The reasons why *Chronique des rois de France*<sup>27</sup> was written are not entirely clear. Could the chronicler have been trying to adapt to the new political conditions in which the Plantagenet party in Flanders was completely destroyed and the county became subjected to Philip Augustus? It is hard to believe that the complaints about the tyranny of the king of France<sup>28</sup> could have gained the chronicler the favours of the Capetian and their men in the North – including prince Louis, count of Artois – as the brutality of the war in Flanders was the subject of complaints as long as thirty years later, during the reign of Saint Louis.<sup>29</sup> Noteworthy, similarly to Pierre de Beauvais who came from the Capetian milieu, the Anonymous of Béthune writes about miraculous healings of scrofula in the times of emperor Charlemagne, but like Pierre de Beauvais, he does not mention that Philip Augustus healed scrofula with his touch. The above presented independence of the Anonymous of Béthune's chronicle from Pierre de Beauvais's writings, and the fact that the next known mention of the discussed issue can be found in the chronicle of Philip Mouskès indicate that the miracle of healing scrofula was a topos known among the aristocracy of Northern France at the turn of the twelfth and thirteenth century. Besides Artois and Flanders, we should not forget that the neighbouring region, Picardy, was a homeland both of Pierre de Beauvais, being the first author who he connected the Crown of Thorns with the miracle of healing scrofula, and of the first author who wrote about the miraculous healing of scrofula by the Capetians, Guibert of Nogent.

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26 SPIEGEL, *Romancing the Past*, pp. 227–229; ANONYME DE BÉTHUNE, *Histoire des ducs de Normandie et des rois d'Angleterre* (SHF), p. 161; ANONYME DE BÉTHUNE, *Histoire des ducs de Normandie et des rois d'Angleterre* (MGH), p. 716.

27 SPIEGEL, *Romancing the Past*, pp. 232–236.

28 “en tel servage mist tote la terre de Flandres ... que tot cil ki en orient parler s'en esmerveilloient comet il le pooient souffrir ne endurer;” ANONYME DE BÉTHUNE, *Chronique des rois de France*, p. 770.

29 SIVÉRY, *L'enquête de 1247*, pp. 7–18.



The available sources do not provide irrefutable evidence: none of them says that Philip Augustus healed scrofula with his touch. However, it is difficult to believe that the relatively numerous mentions of miraculous healings of scrofula are accidental – they appeared in the first three decades of the thirteenth century – and I do not doubt that when describing this miracle in the account of the Carolingian *ostensio* of the Crown of Thorns, Pierre de Beauvais, the Anonymous of Béthune, Philip Mouskès, and Primat try to impose an *interpretatio christiana* on the miraculous power of the Capetian kings. It comes from the *virtus* of the Passion relics that acts through the monarch, which Charlemagne brought to France and Charles the Bald deposited in the Abbey of Saint-Denis. That is why Primat could write about it because the relics of the Crown of Thorns allowed the Abbey of Saint-Denis to become an intermediary in conveying this particular divine grace to the monarch.

We should discuss here one more issue, namely the understanding of the word “gutturinosus” used in the earliest manuscript of *Descriptio qualiter* and its different variants (“gutturosus, guttuosus”), which appear in the successive manuscripts. Pierre de Beauvais and the Anonymous of Béthune replaced it with both gout and scrofula. However, the correct adjective derived from “gutta” (gout) is “guttosus.” Since the explanation of the term “gutturosus,” “gutturinosus” as a swelling on the neck, or goiter, made by the well-known in the Middle Ages Juvenal and, after him, by generally acknowledged etymologists such as Isidore of Seville or Huguccio of Pisa – contemporary to the dissemination of *Descriptio qualiter* – we must assume that this is how the author and the successive editors of *Descriptio-Iter* understood this term.<sup>30</sup> Thus, we may assume – although it is unprovable – that already in *Descriptio qualiter* the “gutturinosi” healed thanks to the *virtus* of the Passion relics may mean people suffering from scrofula. If so, *Iter Hierosolimitanum* should be considered as a source that confirms the continuity of the tradition connecting the miracle of healing scrofula with the Capetian monarchs as the heirs of Charlemagne, and the translation of the word “gutturinosus” into French as “suffering from scrofula” was unquestionable for Mouskès and Primat. As we remember, neither of them mentions gout in that context. However, regardless whether the healing of scrofula was ascribed to Charlemagne already in the Latin account of the

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30 Juvenalis (Satire XIII): “Tanquam si in Alpibus homines guttuosos admireris, ubi tales sunt plurimi, nam lata et inflata colla habent;” Isidore: “Gutturinia, gutturis inflatio;” Huguccio of Pisa (d. 1210): “Gutturina, infirmitas gutturis, qui solet inflatione gulae evenire, unde Gutturinosus, illam habent infirmitatem;” CHARLES DU FRESNE DU CANGE, *Glossarium mediae et infimae latinitatis*, pp. 143–144.

*Descriptio-Iter* or this topic is a contribution of Pierre de Beauvais and the Anonymous of Béthune, we must acknowledge that it allowed the Abbey of Saint-Denis – the depositary of the relics obtained thanks to the Carolingian emperors – became a transmitter of the thaumaturgical charisma.

Nevertheless, *The Life of Saint Louis* by Geofroi of Beaulieu proves that the way of legitimizing the royal miracle – by attempting to find the justification of the thaumaturgical power of the Capetians *in virtute* of the Passion relics – was not accepted by Louis IX. The king decided to christianize the royal miracle-making power in a way acceptable for the ecclesiastical hierarchy. In its symbolic sphere it is apparently similar to the idea used by the adaptators of the *Descriptio*. In both cases it is a reference to the Passion, be it in its material (relics) or emblematic (the sign of the cross) form which causes the miracle. However, Louis IX chose the method of the Christian legitimization of the royal miracle, which finds the source of the miracle in divine power but does not leave any doubts that the king of France has been specifically chosen by God *ex officio* and his thaumaturgical power derives from special divine grace granted to each king *ad personam*. The legitimacy of this miracle-making power does not derive from owning even the most holy of relics or even the greatest of personal merits but only from the fact of being anointed the king of France. Philippe Buc shows that Parisian scholastics, like Petrus Comestor or Petrus Cantor, but also some glossators of *Historia scholastica*, believed that the king of France like David used to cure certain diseases with touch by virtue of their royal anointment.<sup>31</sup> This concept, paradoxically present in the scholastic milieu, should be interpreted as a highly archaic understanding of the royal power, deeply rooted in the traditional order of the world and an almost primitive model of monarchy, contradictory to the post-Gregorian order. This is one more premise suggesting that Louis IX, who consciously shaped his spirituality in accordance with the categories of contemporary thirteenth-century piety, supported the ancient tradition of the royal house with respect to the issue of healing scrofula. As a result, the later ecclesiastical writers maintained silence about the royal miracle-making power, broken much later by the hagiographers of Saint Louis.

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31 Philippe BUC, “David’s Adultery with Bathsheba and the Healing Power of the Capetian Kings.”

**Part II. Capetian Politics Towards The Relics,  
Eleventh–Thirteenth Centuries**



# Chapter 1. The Kings of the Franks and Relics in the Early Middle Ages: The Merovingians and the Carolingians. The Heritage of the Carolingian Policy of the Cult of Relics in the Holy Empire in the Ottonian and Salian Era<sup>1</sup>

## 1. Introductory remarks: Constantine's Heritage

The adoption of Christianity by Constantine the Great as the officially recognized religion in the Roman Empire and the imperial confession resulted not only in officially sanctioning the cult of the Passion and of the holy martyrs, their graves, and their mortal remains, which had already been developing within the Christian communities for several generations.<sup>2</sup> Naturally, even having changed their confession, Christian emperors tried to retain – in a modified form – the sacral attributes of imperial power, since the emperor held, among others, the position of *pontifex maximus*<sup>3</sup> – the Roman highest priest. Nor Constantine the Great neither his successors were not keen to give up the prerogatives it offered. On the contrary, he presided over the ecumenical councils of the bishops and expressed interest in the formula of the Christian confession, which reveals his belief that as an

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1 On the royal and imperial cult of saints and relics in Carolingian and early Ottonian era see an excellent synthesis by SMITH, “Rulers and Relics c.750–c.950: Treasure on Earth, Treasure in Heaven”, pp. 73–96.

2 The birth of the cult of the saints in Ancient Christianity and the veneration of them, their mortal remains, and graves in the Ancient Church are mainly discussed by DELAHAYE, *Les origines du culte des martyrs*, and KÖTTING, *Der frühchristliche Reliquienkult und die Bestattung im Kirchengebäude*. More recently, especially SAXER, *Morts, martyrs, reliques en Afrique chrétienne aux premiers siècles*, and BROWN, *The Cult of the Saints*. In Polish literature this phenomenon is discussed analytically, yet cursorily, in: WIPSZYCKA, *Kościół w świecie późnego antyku*, pp. 318–327, and in a simpler, more popular way, in: KRACIK, *Relikwie*, pp. 24–91.

3 The title *pontifex maximus*, interpreted especially as expressing the imperial sovereignty over the traditional Roman polytheistic cult, and the duties connected with it were officially rejected by emperor Gratian, probably in 383; cf. CAMERON, *Gratian's Repudiation of the Pontifical Robe*, pp. 96–102. The origin of addressing the bishops of Rome in this way is a controversial issue: the

emperor he was the head of the Church. Besides, according to official imperial propaganda, the emperor converted after a miraculous vision in which he was promised that the sign of the cross will be leading him to victories (“in hoc signo vinces”). Thus, it is not surprising that the Holy Cross became in the Roman Empire the sign of the emperor’s victory, understood both literally as a military triumph and – within the boundaries of the already increased spirituality – also as the spiritual victory of the emperor and Roman Empire. The accounts from the mid-fourth century – and especially from its end – claimed that Constantine’s mother, Helena, looked for and found in Jerusalem the True Cross, and sent part of it and the nails to her son in Constantinople. Already at the end of the fourth century, part of the Cross allegedly brought to Constantinople by Helena was certainly stored in the imperial palace together with the *labarum* of Constantine the Great, which was to secure victories. According to Saint Ambrose, Helena had one of the nails of the Cross embedded in the bridle of the emperor’s stallion and the other one into Constantine’s imperial diadem.<sup>4</sup> According to Socrates Scholasticus and Hermias Sozomenus, one of the nails was driven not into Constantine’s diadem but his battle helmet.<sup>5</sup> Although such use of the relics of the True Cross seems a to be a logical consequence of the legend related by Eusebius of Caesarea about the vision of the Holy Cross seen before the battle at the Milvian Bridge, and of his other information according to which Constantine had a portable oratory made in his tent where he prayed in front of the cross before each battle, both Ambrose and Theodoret, the bishop of Cyrus, seem right to explain fitting the Holy Nail into the bridle of the emperor’s stallion with the prophecy from Zechariah 14:20:<sup>6</sup> “In that day shall there be upon the bells of the horses: “Holiness Unto The Lord.” According to Ambrose, this was a sign both predicting that successive emperors would take on the Christian faith from Constantine and that they would stop the persecutions.<sup>7</sup> In her wisdom, Saint Helena placed the

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datation ranges between the pontificate of Damasus (366–384) and Theodore I (642–649), but most scholars believe that this title was first used by Gregory the Great (590–604).

- 4 SAINT AMBROSE, *Oratio de obitu Theodosii*, cap. 47–48, coll. 1401–1402.
- 5 SOCRATES SCHOLASTICUS, *Historia ecclesiastica*, lib. and, cap. 17 (the Greek text and the Latin translation: coll. 119–120); HERMIAS SOZOMENOS, *Historia ecclesiastica*, lib. II, cap. 1 (the Greek text and the Latin translation: coll. 929–934).
- 6 Qtd. after: FLUSIN, *Les reliques de la Sainte-Chapelle et leur passé impérial à Constantinople*, pp. 20–21.
- 7 “Principium itaque credentium imperatorum sanctum est ‘quod super frenum’ [Zechariah 14:20]: ex illo fides, ut persecutio cessaret, devotio succederet;” SAINT AMBROSE, *Oratio de obitu Theodosii*, cap. 47–48, coll. 1401–1402.

relics of the Cross at the top of the Empire (“in capite regnum”) thanks to which the faithful could venerate the Holy Cross and their rulers, which was to bring the mankind closer to Redemption.<sup>8</sup> Placing the relics of the True Cross in the emperor’s diadem was also right, because it would then be possible, thanks to the Lord’s mercy, to talk about the emperor with the same words as when speaking about God: “you placed a crown of pure gold on his head” (Psalm 21:4).<sup>9</sup>

The accounts saying that Helena and Constantine translated the True Cross and the nails of the Cross to Constantinople in 325–326 – although impossible to confirm and difficult to accept – became a binding version of the history of the Church between the late fourth and the fifth century,<sup>10</sup> as an apocryphal account of the earliest translation of the Christ’s relics and of relics as such, performed by monarchs. Owing to the account of Eusebius and the Byzantine historians who followed him, the successive emperors considered the relics of the True Cross to be the palladium of the Roman Empire, which gave rise to the foundations of imperial reliquaries in the shape of staurothekes, considered to be signs and warranties of imperial triumph.<sup>11</sup>

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8 “Sapienter Helena, quae crucem in capite regnum locavit, ut crux Christi in regibus adoretur. Non insolentia ista, sed pietas est: cum defertur sacrae redemptioni;” SAINT AMBROSE, *Oratio de obitu Theodosii*, cap. 47–48, coll. 1401–1402.

9 “Posuisti in capite eius coronam de lapide pretioso.”

10 The most important literature on this subject in the recent twenty years: BAERT, *A Heritage of the Holy Wood*, pp. 15–53; DRIJVERS, *Helena Augusta. The Mother of Constantine the Great and the Legend of her Finding of the True Cross*; KLEIN, *Constantine, Helena, and the Cult of the True Cross*, pp. 31–59, especially pp. 33–39; KLEIN, *Sacred Relics and Imperial Ceremonies at the Great Palace of Constantinople*, pp. 81; WORTLEY, *Constantine the Relic-Provider*, pp. 487–496; MERCURI, *Corona di Cristo, corona di re*, pp. 26–34.

11 On the meaning of the relics as a military palladium of the Byzantine emperors: BOZÓKY, *La politique des reliques de Constantin à Saint Louis*, pp. 96–106; FROLOW, *La relique de la Vraie Croix*, pp. 79–80; FROLOW, *Les reliquaires de la Vraie Croix*, pp. 82–83; HEIM, *La théologie de la Victoire de Constantin à Théodose*; KLEIN, *Constantine, Helena, and the Cult of the True Cross*, pp. 39–41; KLEIN, *Sacred Relics and Imperial Ceremonies at the Great Palace of Constantinople*, pp. 96; KLEIN, *Byzanz, der Westen und das ‘wahre’ Kreuz*, pp. 105–112; MAGDALINO, *L’Église du Phare et les reliques de la Passion à Constantinople*, pp. 23–25. Except for Byzantium, the relics of the Holy Cross were especially used as a military palladium by the kings of Jerusalem: MURRAY, “Mighty Against the Enemies of Christ:” *The Relic of the True Cross in the Armies of the Kingdom of Jerusalem*, pp. 217–238; LIGATO, *The Political Meanings of the Relic of the Holy Cross among the Crusaders*, pp. 315–330.

In fact, an equally important aspect of Constantine's Christian government – but based on more substantial premises – was that he created a model of the emperor's function within the Church, which became a lasting inspiration for his successors in the Eastern Empire, and for the Barbarian kings in the West and the Western emperors following the Byzantine pattern,<sup>12</sup> starting from the Carolingian, then Ottonian *restauratio Imperii*, until the times of the 'Gregorian revolution,' in which the emperor – as the head of the Church – founded the main temples and organized the liturgy together with his bishops. According to Eusebius of Caesarea, Constantine the Great called himself "koinos épiskopos" – the ecumenical bishop (in contrast to local bishops)<sup>13</sup> – while his son, emperor Constantius II, called himself "episcopus episcoporum," the bishop of bishops.<sup>14</sup> In the third book of his *Historia ecclesiastica* and in *De laude Constantini*, Eusebius of Caesarea presents – as Dominique Iogna-Prat believes – the fourth-century theology of the imperial power, presenting Constantine as the head of the Church and builder of temples, especially imperial basilicas which were *memoriae* of the Passion or of the apostles. In the last decade of his reign, Constantine founded the basilicas of the Holy Sepulchre and Resurrection (*Anastasis*), Golgotha, and Bethlehem in the Holy Land.<sup>15</sup> According to the Roman tradition related in sixth-century *Liber pontificalis*, Constantine founded basilicas in Rome in 326–327: the Basilica of the Holy Cross where one of the three parts of the Cross allegedly found by Saint Helena (Santa Croce in Gerusalemme) was deposited and the several basilicas of the apostles and martyrs: Saint Peter, Saint Paul, Saint Agnes, Saint Lawrence, but also

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12 BOZÓKY, *La politique des reliques de Constantin à Saint Louis*, pp. 73–105, 111–118; KAHZDAN, "Constantin imaginaire:" *Byzantine Legends of the Ninth Century about Constantine the Great*, pp. 196–250; LINDER, *The Myth of Constantine the Great in the West*, pp. 43–95.

13 EUSEBIUS, *Vita Constantini*, I, 44.

14 GIRARDET, *Kaiser Konstantius II. als 'episcopus episcoporum'*, pp. 95–128.

15 IOGNA-PRAT, *La Maison Dieu. Une histoire monumentale de l'Église au Moyen Âge*, pp. 64–66. For an interesting study of the Constantine's foundation policy at the example of the Basilica of the Holy Sepulchre, see WHARTON, *The Baptistery of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem*, pp. 313–325. About Constantinism, see especially: FARINA, *L'impero e l'imperatore cristiano*; cf. BOZÓKY, *La politique des reliques de Constantin à Saint Louis*, pp. 76–77. DAGRON, *Empereur et prêtre*, passim; especially pp. 141–148; WIPSYCKA, *Kościół w świecie późnego antyku*; the subject of the interrelations of the imperial power and the Church is discussed in the whole work, but especially on pp. 135–177.



Saints Marcellinus and Peter, and many lesser *memoriae* of martyrs.<sup>16</sup> The monarch's authority over the Church was manifested, among other things, by the fact that he assumed the part of an organizer of the cult by building temples and translating relics. While it is not possible to exactly say when the Passion relics appeared in Constantinople, this issue is of secondary importance from our viewpoint: suffice to accept that the tradition, according to which the True Cross was translated by Constantine and Helena to Rome and Constantinople, existed already in the late fourth century. The earliest imperial translation of relics scholars universally accept the moving of the body of the martyr Babylas by the ruler of the East, Constantius Gallus (351–354), a nephew of Constantine the Great and co-emperor ('Caesar') of Constantius II (337–361) in Daphne near Antioch.<sup>17</sup> Constantius II was to translate the relics of Saint Timothy, Saint Luke, and Saint Andrew to the church of the Holy Apostles – a mausoleum of Constantine the Great (356–357) – only a few years later. However, some sources and studies indicate that Constantine himself translated to that church the relics of Saint Luke and Saint Andrew in 336; in 356 Constantius translated Saint Timothy and, in 357, other relics of Saints Andrew and Luke.<sup>18</sup>

As a result of the supposed Constantine's translations of the Passion and apostles' relics, Constantinople became a holy capital already in the sixth century. In Justinian's times, ecclesiastical authors began to call the capital

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16 *LIBER PONTIFICALIS*, vol. I, pp. 176–182. About Constantinian basilicas and memoriae, see GRABAR, *Martyrium. Recherches sur le culte des reliques et l'art chrétien*; KRAUTHEIMER, CORBETT, FRAZER, *Corpus basilicarum christianarum Romae*. On the beginnings of the cult of relics and saints in the Western temples in Late Antiquity see, besides the above-quoted Brown and Kötting, more recent: IOGNA-PRAT, *La Maison Dieu. Une histoire monumentale de l'Église au Moyen Âge*, pp. 69–82; CLARK, *Translating Relics. Victricius of Rouen and Fourth-Century Debate*, pp. 161–176.

17 JOHN CHRYSOSTOM, *Discours sur Babylas*.

18 The years 356–357 as the date of the first imperial translation of relics to Constantinople are suggested by MANGO, *Constantine's Mausoleum and the translation of Relics*, pp. 51–62, and in the "Addendum" (p. 434); however, Mango indicates the year 336 as the possible date of the first translation of Saint Andrew and Saint Luke to the Church of the Holy Apostles. The topic is also discussed by BURGESS, *The "Passio S. Artemii," Philostorgius, and the Dates of the Invention and Translations of the Relics of Sts Andrew and Luke*, pp. 5–36; KLEIN, *Sacred Relics and Imperial Ceremonies at the Great Palace of Constantinople*, p. 82. Without any reference to the work by Burgess, this dating is rejected by WORTLEY, *The Earliest Relic-Importation to Constantinople*, pp. 207–225.

of the Empire the New Jerusalem.<sup>19</sup> During the reign of emperor Heraclius (610–641), this view became a lasting element of Byzantine political theology, owing to the translating activity of the emperor, for the most part caused by the wars led by the Empire, which resulted in the evacuation of Byzantines from the Holy Land. Due to these wars, the Passion relics, especially the Holy Cross, fell into the hands of the Persians. The True Cross (and other relics) was regained by Heraclius in 629 and solemnly returned, first to Constantinople and then to Jerusalem. In 635, when another Persian invasion was feared, the Holy Cross and other relics were moved to Constantinople.

Until the end of the Middle Ages – both in the Greek and Latin tradition – Heraclius became a symbolic figure of a monarch-translator. Heraclius’s translation was presented as a repetition of the Christ’s entry to Jerusalem or the bringing the Ark of the Covenant by David to Jerusalem, and the emperor himself as a pious ruler who organizes the cult of the Passion and its relics, especially the True Cross.<sup>20</sup> As a result of the loss of the Holy Land (in 637–638), won from the Byzantines by the muslims Constantinople used to be considered to become the New Jerusalem, to which not only Heraclius but also his successors consistently translated new relics. We may risk a claim that, starting with the seventh century, this aspect of Constantine’s ideology connected with the Heraclian legend of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross was forever linked with the memory of Heraclius and thusly became part of the Western tradition. Devoted to the subject of regaining the True Cross from the Persians by Heraclius and its triumphant introduction to

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- 19 BOZÓKY, *La politique des reliques de Constantin à Saint Louis*, pp. 94–96; DAGRON, *Naissance d’une capitale. Constantinople et ses institutions*; DAGRON, *Constantinople imaginaire*; FLUSIN, *Construire une nouvelle Jérusalem: Constantinople et les reliques*, pp. 51–70; KLEIN, *Constantine, Helena, and the Cult of the True Cross*, pp. 31–59; KLEIN, *Sacred Relics and Imperial Ceremonies at the Great Palace of Constantinople*, pp. 88–89; ORSELLI, *Simboli della città cristiana*, pp. 419–450. Cf. MERGIALI-SAHAS, *Byzantine Emperors and Holy Relics*, pp. 41–60; very briefly on the subject of Jerusalem in the ideology of the Eastern Empire and the rulers of the West until the Carolingian times: GABRIELE, *An Empire of Memory. The Legend of Charlemagne, the Franks, and Jerusalem before the First Crusade*, pp. 73–78.
- 20 BAERT, *A Heritage of the Holy Wood*, pp. 133–193; SOMMERLECHNER, *Kaiser Herakleios und die Rückkehr des heiligen Kreuzes nach Jerusalem*, pp. 319–360; both with extensive bibliographies. Moreover, BOZÓKY, *La politique des reliques de Constantin à Saint Louis*, pp. 97–99; FLUSIN, *Les reliques de la Sainte-Chapelle et leur passé impérial à Constantinople*, pp. 20–33; FROLOW, *La Vraie Croix et les expéditions d’Héraclius en Perse*, pp. 88–105; FROLOW, *La relique de la Vraie Croix*, pp. 76–92.

Constantinople and Jerusalem, Rabanus Maurus's Homily LXX confirms the reception of the Byzantine model of the royal translation<sup>21</sup> and evidences the idea of the 'translation of Jerusalem' which was to become a fixture in the Latin West.<sup>22</sup> However, the reception of Constantinian model in the West began earlier: this pattern was imitated by Clovis (r. 481–511) who founded the Basilica of the Holy Apostles in Paris, in which the first Frankish king of Gaul was buried himself later on, similarly to Constantine who was buried in the Church of the Holy Apostles in Constantinople. We should probably interpret in the same way the foundations made by Clovis's sons: Childebert I (Saint-Vincent–Sainte-Croix Basilica in Paris, 541) or Chlothar I, who founded Saint-Médard Basilica in Soissons (ca. 561), which also became the burial places of the Merovingian monarchs.<sup>23</sup> The attribution of sixth-century gold reliquary crosses with parts of the Holy Wood from Tournai Cathedral, the first capital of Clovis and then Chlothar I, is uncertain, but it is probable that these reliquaries, which in the sixth century were one of the forms of manifesting imperial power, should be related to the royal incentive, and thus to Clovis I or Chlothar I.<sup>24</sup>

## 2. The Cult of Relics under the Merovingians and Early Carolingians

In the medieval Latin Europe, kings' interest in relics and the belief that a king's active participation in the cult of relics and saints is an inalienable part of royal sacral prerogatives are known at least from the Carolingian times. Charlemagne, the anointed of God, considered himself as an intermediary between God and his subjects, and was perceived as such by his

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21 HRABANNUS MAURUS, *Homiliae*, coll. 133–134.

22 On the idea of the "translation of Jerusalem" in the medieval West, see MANIKOWSKA, *Translatio Jeruzolimy do Wrocławia*, pp. 63–75 (with literature) and GABRIELE, *An Empire of Memory. The Legend of Charlemagne, the Franks, and Jerusalem before the First Crusade*, pp. 79–84. A good example of such 'translation of Jerusalem' in the Latin Church is a monumental sacral complex of San Stefano in Bologna, erected in that form between the eighth and eleventh century and called "Hierusalem Bononiensis" in medieval sources (in the Church of San Sepulcro there is the only known in the West replica of the Chapel of confession built over the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem, founded by Constantine IX Monomachos). The reception of emperor Heraclius as the model of a ruler-translator in the thirteenth century shall be discussed later in this volume.

23 BOZÓKY, *La politique des reliques de Constantin à Saint Louis*, pp. 120–122.

24 FROLOW, *Les reliquaires de la Vraie Croix*, no. 45, fig. 94, p. 238.

clerical collaborators.<sup>25</sup> It is probably not accidental that he was the founder of the largest in the medieval West – until the reign of Saint Louis – collection of relics which for centuries after his death were a model to imitate by other rulers. I mean here the treasury in Aachen and the equally rich collection of relics in the Abbey of Saint-Riquier (Centula), whose list is known thanks to abbot Angilbert.<sup>26</sup> The dedication to Our Lady of the imperial chapel in Aachen and of the Abbey Church in Centula – boasting of the richest collections of relics in Charlemagne’s empire – seems to be connected with the analogous function of the imperial chapel in the Bukoleon palace in Constantinople where the most precious relics in the East Empire were stored, dedicated to Our Lady of Faros probably as early as in the late seventh century.<sup>27</sup> We should bear in mind that – starting from the Carolingian times – it became a duty in the Western Church to use relics when consecrating churches and altars (initially it was typical of the Gallican rite).<sup>28</sup> The duty to consecrate only such churches and altars which

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25 See R. MICHAŁOWSKI, *Problem języka w zachodnioeuropejskiej ideologii władzy królewskiej*, pp. 35–49, especially pp. 38–40; MICHAŁOWSKI, *Podstawy religijne monarchii we wczesnym średniowieczu*, pp. 3–34, especially pp. 14–20; with extensive literature.

26 On the Centulean collection of relics see MICHAŁOWSKI, *The Gniezno Summit*, pp. 159–164, 169–172 (with bibliography), and RABE, *Faith, Art and Politics at Saint-Riquier*. On the Aachen collection of Charlemagne’s relics, see SCHIFFERS, *Karls des Grossen Reliquienschatz*; HEN, *Les authentiques reliques de la Terre Sainte en Gaule franque*, pp. 71–90. On Charlemagne’s collection of relics see: CORDEZ, “Karl der Große, die Dinge und das Reich: Reliquiensammlungen und Kirchenschätze”, pp. 46–55. On medieval collections of relics see: CORDEZ, *Gestion et médiation des collections de reliques au Moyen Age. Le témoignage des authentiques et des inventaires*, pp. 33–64.

27 The founding of Our Lady’s Church in Faros and its use as a treasury of relics, stressing the sacral Christological character of the imperial power already in the seventh century, is proved by MAGDALINO, *L’Église du Phare et les de la Passion à Constantinople*, pp. 15–23.

28 In 614, at the first synod of bishops of the Kingdom of the Franks (newly reunited by Chlothar II), the consecration of altars in churches where no saints were buried was forbidden (canon II: “Ut altaria alibi consecrari non debent nisi his tantum ecclesiis ubi corpora sanctorum sepulta;” in: *CONCILIA AEVI MEROVINGICI*, p. 193). On the role of relics in the rite of consecration of churches and altars, see IOGNA-PRAT, *La Maison Dieu. Une histoire monumentale de l’Église au Moyen Âge*, pp. 168–173, 266–273; HERRMANN-MASCARD, *Les reliques des saints. Formation coutumière d’un droit*, pp. 150–154, 162–168 (Nicole Herrmann-Mascard’s book should be considered as one of the best synthesis showing the functions and importance of relics in the medieval society, a logically arranged and well-constructed compendium. However, the references made by the author are often highly imprecise and should be approached with caution); CORDEZ, *Gestion et médiation des collection*

held the bodies of the saints or relics remained valid also in the Carolingian and Ottonian era.<sup>29</sup> It seems that the cult of the saints and relics unquestionably resulted in the Carolingian ideology of kingship from the ideological premises of the program of *renovatio Imperii*, according to which *Imperium christianum* and *Ecclesia* should have been and were one.<sup>30</sup>

Already the Merovingian era saw instances of unusual interest of some members of the elite in the bodies of the saints and ownership of relics. In 541, returning from an expedition to Spain, Childebert I brought the body of Saint Vincent – together with other booties – and founded near Paris a basilica dedicated to the saint, which became a necropolis for his family and other Merovingians ruling that city.<sup>31</sup> In ca. 560, Chlothar I ordered to

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*de reliques au Moyen Âge*, pp. 39–41; DURNECKER, *Consécration d'autels et dépôts de reliques*, pp. 189–216; MICHAUD, *Culte des reliques et épigraphie*, pp. 199–212; PALAZZO, *Liturgie et société au Moyen Âge*, pp. 71–77; STARNAWSKA, *Świętych życie po życiu*, pp. 382–394 (especially on the liturgy of consecration in the Polish lands).

29 REMIGIUS OF AUXERRE, *Tractatus de dedicatione ecclesiae*, coll. 862, and the Roman-German pontifical from the tenth century, in: *PONTIFICAL ROMANO-GERMANIQUE*, p. 88. In the late medieval times – despite the vivid debate between the canonists and decretalists from the eleventh century – it was generally agreed that although the relics were not indispensable to consecrate a church, the main altar should not be consecrated if there were no relics in the sepulchrum, or the consecration was invalid. This discussion is summarized by HERRMANN-MASCARD, *Les reliques des saints. Formation coutumière d'un droit*, pp. 162–168. In the thirteenth century, the bishop of Mende, Guillaume Durand (1235–1296), author of the *Rationale divinatorum officiorum*, a work that was to become the most important compendium of the Latin liturgy until the Council of Trent, allowed to deposit in the sepulchrum a fragment of the sacramental bread if there were no relics. On the consecration of altars according to Durand, see HERRMANN-MASCARD, *Les reliques des saints. Formation coutumière d'un droit*, pp. 156–162. On the place of relics in the Carolingian and Romanesque architecture see CAILLET, *Reliques et architecture religieuse aux époques carolingienne et romane*, pp. 169–198, with rich literature.

30 Basing on the interpretation of Carolingian epitaphs, this claim was recently convincingly proved by TREFFORT, *Mémoires carolingiennes, especially in the chapter 'Les pierres de la Cité de Dieu,'* pp. 293–306. On the Carolingian legislation concerning the cult of relics, see FOURACRE, *The Origins of the Carolingian Attempt to regulate the cult of Saints*, pp. 143–163; GEARY, *Furta sacra. Thefts of Relics in the Central Middle Ages*, pp. 28–43; GOODSON, *The Rome of Pope Paschal I*, pp. 218–221.

31 In 565, Germain, the bishop of Paris, gave the church the relic of the True Cross, which he obtained from Constantinople, hence the later name of the church: of the Holy Cross and Saint Vincent. The bishop himself was buried in that church; after Germain was recognized as saint, he became a new patron saint of the basilica; the Abbey which was later founded there is known as the Abbey of Saint-Germain-des-Prés.

move the body of the recently deceased bishop of Noyon, Medard, to the first capital of his kingdom, Soissons, and founded over his grave a basilica, in which he himself was buried later on. In turn, Chlotar I's son, Guntram (r. 561–592) translated the relics of the Theban Legion martyrs to his capital of Chalon-sur-Saône.<sup>32</sup> Radegund, first Chlotar I's queen, then a nun, had a collection of relics in her royal *villae* in Athies and Saix.<sup>33</sup> In 569, emperor Justin II gave her not only a fragment of the True Cross<sup>34</sup> but also a finger of Saint Mammes, according to her biographer Baudonivia, sent by the patriarch of Jerusalem.<sup>35</sup> Owning a part of the body of a martyr did not inspire, as it seems, any controversy among the contemporaries, even though up till the first quarter of the ninth century, the Church condemned infringing on the integrity of the saints' bodies. If Baudonivia's account is true, Gregory's of Tours silence about the relics of Saint Mammes – although he describes Radegund's piety in detail – may have resulted from his disapproval for such practices, if not from his lack of knowledge. Gregory of Tours himself describes an encolpion (*phylacterium*) with parts of relics owned by his father and once used by his mother to extinguish a fire, and by Gregory himself to stop a storm.<sup>36</sup> Thus, lay people could possess fragments of relics, even though in the case of encolpions these were so-called representative (contact) relics or pieces of the True Cross, which were allowed to be shared; Saint Helena allegedly did it too, sending one part to Rome and the other to Constantinople, which became a veritable centre of distribution of the relics of the Cross,<sup>37</sup> while leaving the third one in Jerusalem. According to

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32 After: BOZÓKY, *La politique des reliques de Constantin à Saint Louis*, pp. 121–122.

33 BAUDONIVIA, *De vita sanctae Radegundis*, cap. 14, p. 386; BOZÓKY, *La politique des reliques de Constantin à Saint Louis*, pp. 52–53; HAHN, *Collector and Saint. Queen Radegund and devotion to the relic of the True Cross*, pp. 268–274. The fact that the aristocrats in Southern Gaul used to have in their *villae* oratoria where relics, even collections of relics were kept, is evidenced by the Synod in Epao (517). The canon XXV forbids to deposit the relics in private oratories if there is no *parochia* in the vicinity of which the priests could worship the remains of the saints and sing psalms there. The same canon allows to ordain a priest who would minister such oratories but only on condition that they are provided with maintenance (decent board and garments). See *CANONS DES CONCILES MÉROVINGIENS*, pp. 112–113; BOZÓKY, *La politique des reliques de Constantin à Saint Louis*, p. 31

34 GREGORY OF TOURS, *Libri historiarum* X, lib. IX, cap. 40, p. 464.

35 BAUDONIVIA, *De vita sanctae Radegundis*, cap. 14, p. 386. The casket reliquary for Saint Mammes' finger is believed to be the earliest conserved reliquary in France. Today it is stored in the treasury of the Abbey of Saint-Benoît-sur-Loire.

36 GREGORY OF TOURS, *Liber in gloria martyrum*, cap. 83, pp. 544–545.

37 FROLOW, *La relique de la Vraie Croix*, pp. 81–92.

Baudonivia, Radegund intended the relic of the Holy Cross to ensure to the kingdom of Sigebert I (r. 561–575) prosperity and order – but also redemption for the king and his subjects. Previously Radegund asked Sigebert for permission to send an envoy to Constantinople.<sup>38</sup> The problem of Saint Mammes's finger is ambiguous: the queen-nun received the particle from the patriarch of Jerusalem, thus it was probably thought that a high-ranking hierarch of the Church had the right to infringe on the integrity of the saintly body. The lack of acceptance for dividing the bodies of the saints by lay people was emphatically stressed by Gregory of Tours in his description of the sacrilegious deed of Mummolus, a patrician who did not hesitate to smash the shand of Saint Sergius and steal a bone fragment to give the relic to the royal pretender, Gundovald.<sup>39</sup> Even the kings were not allowed to disturb the peace of the holy bodies, which is confirmed by *Gesta Dagoberti* written in the early seventh century in the Abbey of Saint-Denis. According to the author, Clovis II, king of Neustria and Burgundy, upon visit to the monastery (in 655?) ordered to open the tomb of Saint Denis in his presence and took a bone from the Saint's shoulder, causting with this action a great indignation among the monks. As a result of this sacrilege, Clovis II went mad and was partly cured only after he had made generous donations for the Abbey and returned the bone, decorated with jewels and gold. He died soon afterward (657) what, according to the chronicler, was the punishment for the king's sin.<sup>40</sup> Besides Saint Denis's shoulder, which was handed back, the Neustrian royal family still possessed some relics: the collections of relics from the Abbey of Chelles, founded by the widow of Clovis II, Balthild, probably came from the Neustrian royal treasury.<sup>41</sup> It is also known that the

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38 “Transmisit litteras ad praecellentissimum domnum Sigibertum regem ... ut ei permitteret pro totius patriae suae salute et eius regni stabilitate signum crucis Domni ab imperatore expetere;” BAUDONIVIA, *De vita sanctae Radegundis*, cap. 14, p. 388. On the connection between the cult of the relics and the *stabilitas regni* in the early Middle Ages cf. BOZÓKY, *La politique des reliques de Constantin à Saint Louis*, pp. 50–68; MOREIRA, *Provisatrix optima: Saint Radegund of Poitiers relic petitions to the East*, pp. 285–305.

39 GREGORY OF TOURS, *Libri historiarum* X, lib. VII, cap. 31, p. 351.

40 *GESTA DAGOBERTI*, cap. 52, p. 425. Several generations later the *LIBER HISTORIAE FRANCORUM*, cap. 44, pp. 316–317, also records this event, saying that Clovis II appropriated the saint's arm prompted by the devil (“instigante diabulo”) and flings insults on the king calling him a filthy seducer, fornicator, glutton and drunkard. Clovis II's vices are punished with the plague, which rages in the kingdom of the Franks. However, the author does not mention the king's madness, see WOOD, *The Merovingian Kingdoms*, pp. 157, 200.

41 LAPORTE, *Le trésor des saints de Chelles* (qtd. after: BOZÓKY, *La politique des reliques de Constantin à Saint Louis*, pp. 124–125, no. 18). MCCORMICK,

word *capella*, ‘chapel,’ originated from the fact that Saint Martin’s cloak (*cappa*) – probably added to the Neustrian royal treasury in ca. the mid-sixth century perhaps thanks to Balthild<sup>42</sup> – was kept in royal oratories and handed out in parts to other churches, which began probably already with the Merovingians and was certainly performed, if not continued, by the Carolingians.<sup>43</sup> In 710, a *cappella* was certainly located in the oratory in the palace of Mayor of the Palace Grimoald in Ver and during a lawsuit held before Childebert III the *cappella* was used for taking the oaths of the parties,<sup>44</sup> a custom recorded already in the Formulary of Marculf from the second half of the seventh century.<sup>45</sup> According to Walahfrid Strabo and the Monk of Saint Gall, the Carolingians used to take with them Saint Martin’s *cappa* to military expeditions as a palladium.<sup>46</sup> We also know that the collections of relics from the abovementioned Abbey of Chelles and in Sens Cathedral survived from the Merovingian times and were enriched by new relics during the Carolingian times: for the times earlier than 800, a collection of 139 relics was preserved in Chelles and of ninety-four relics in Sens.<sup>47</sup> Also the burial places of the saints were venerated by the kings in

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*Origins of the European Economy*, pp. 283–318, indicates that the majority of the authenticated relics in Chelles come from the eighth century; he does not deal with the unauthenticated ones, but he does mention the studies of Jean-Pierre Laporte of the earliest collections of relics from Chelles.

42 EWIG, *Le culte de saint Martin*, pp. 1–18.

43 Here one should mention It is necessary to mention the classic and still valid work: LÜDERS, *Die Hofkapelle der Karolinger*, pp. 1–100; see LECLERCQ, *Chape de saint Martin*, coll. 381–390; BOZÓKY, *La politique des reliques de Constantin à Saint Louis*, pp. 124–125. On the cult of Saint Martin in the Merovingian kingdom. EWIG, *Der Martinskult im Frühmittelalter*, pp. 371–392.

44 The charter of Childebert III from December 14, 717, in: MGH, *Diplomata regum Francorum e stirpe Merovingica* (1872), no. 78, p. 69.

45 “in palatio nostro, super capella domni Martini, ubi reliqua sacramenta percurrunt, debeat conjurare;” MARCULFI FORMULARUM, cap. 38, coll. 723.

46 WALAHFRIDUS STRABO, *De exordiis*, cap. 32, p. 515; MONACHUS SANGALLENSIS, *De gestis Karoli Magni*, lib. cap. 4, p. 732.

47 PROU, CHARTRAIRE, *Authentiques de reliques conservés au trésor de la cathédrale de Sens*, pp. 129–172. The authenticating notices for these two collections of relics (from Sens and Chelles) were published in: CHARTAE LATINAE ANTIQUIORES (XVIII) and CHARTAE LATINAE ANTIQUIORES (XIX). See CORDEZ, *Gestion et médiation des collection de reliques au Moyen Âge*, pp. 36–37; MCCORMICK, *Origins of the European Economy*, pp. 283–318. The relics (not listed or described) given to the Sens Cathedral by Charlemagne are mentioned in the late eleventh century in the *CHRONICON SANCTI PETRI VIVI*, pp. 48, 49.



the Merovingian times and were treated as royal necropolis *ad sanctos*. We already know that the basilicas in Paris and Soissons were erected over the graves of Saint Vincent and Germain (Germanus of Paris) or Medard, which date to the mid-sixth century: they became the burial churches for the families of Childebert I and Chlothar I. Despite the traditional view expressed in the chronicles and hagiographies compiled in the Abbey of Saint-Denis and pretending that the Abbey was founded only by king Dagobert I (r. 629–639), it is known that the first church in the place where the basilica is standing today was founded by the Saint Geneviève (d. 502/512) and that the Merovingian kings and queens were buried there already in the sixth century, so also *ad sanctos*.<sup>48</sup> Afterward, in the seventh century, Dagobert I and his widow, Nanthild, as well as their son, Clovis II, were buried in Dagobert's church. In the eighth century, Charles Martel, Pippin the Short and his queen, Bertrada, were successively buried in Saint-Denis.<sup>49</sup> This was certainly a demonstrative imitation of the Merovingian dynasty but possibly also burials *ad sanctos*: already the Mayor of the Palace Pippin II (d. 714) called Saint Denis his special patron in his charters ("peculiaris patronus noster"), which was an imitation of a Merovingian custom known at least since the reign of Chlothar II.<sup>50</sup> The latter also mentions in one of his charters the most important places of the cult of the saints or perhaps the burial places of the most important saints ("praecipua loca sanctorum") in the Frankish kingdom: the Abbeys of Saint-Denis, Saint-Médard in Soissons, Saint-Martin in Tours, and the basilica of Saint-Aignan in Orléans.<sup>51</sup>

During the Carolingian era, we observe a phenomenon of increased translations of relics already in the eighth century, previously not so common. The majority of the relics were obtained in Rome and, to a lesser extent, in the Holy Land and Constantinople.<sup>52</sup> In the Prologue to *Lex Salica*, promulgated by Pippin the Short in 763–764, we read that the saintly bodies of the holy martyrs who had been persecuted by the pagan Romans are

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48 Between 565 and 570, among others, Chlothar I's widow, Arnegunde, was buried there; cf. FRANCE-LANORD, FLEURY, *Das Grab der Arnegundis in St-Denis*, pp. 341–359; LAST, *Arnegunde-Grab*, pp. 426–432.

49 On the burials of the kings of the Franks and France, see ERLANDE-BRANDENBOURG, *Le roi est mort*.

50 EHLERS, *Politik und Heiligenverehrung in Frankreich*, pp. 151–152.

51 EHLERS, *Politik und Heiligenverehrung in Frankreich*, p. 151; KRÜGER, *Königsgraben der Franken, Angelsachsen und Langobarden*, p. 174.

52 HERRMANN-MASCARD, *Les reliques des saints. Formation coutumière d'un droit*, pp. 57–64; SMITH, *Old Saints, New Cults. Roman Relics in Carolingian Francia*, pp. 317–339; SMITH, "Rulers and Relics c.750 – c.950: Treasure on Earth, Treasure in Heaven", pp. 73–96; TINNEFELD, *Formen und Wege des Kontakts zwischen Byzanz und dem Westen zur Zeit Karls des Großen*, pp. 25–35.

now venerated and decorated with gold and precious jewels by the Franks.<sup>53</sup> Also the relics of local saints were venerated. According to an anonymous account from the first half of the ninth century a year after being anointed king by pope Stephen II (755), Pippin the Short, together with the bishops and lay magnates, proceeded to translate the body of Saint Germain of Paris in the church of Saint Vincent and the Holy Cross (Saint-Vincent – Sainte-Croix, the later Abbey of Saint-Germain-des-Prés). Having been anointed together with Pippin, the sons of the king also participated and in the translation and – as the author insists – its description stems from the account of Charlemagne fifty years later, who was seven-years-old when the event occurred.<sup>54</sup> In the final lines of *Libri Carolini* issued in ca. 790 – being a kind of confession of the Frankish orthodoxy – there is an emphatic confirmation of the cult of the saints venerated by the Franks, emulating their ancestors in this respect, through the relics.<sup>55</sup> In 803, Charlemagne ordered in a capitulary complementing *Lex Ribuaria* that all oaths should be sworn in churches or on relics so that the saint present in their earthly remains could help the person taking the oath to tell the truth.<sup>56</sup>

Charlemagne's collections of relics mentioned above and the custom of giving away parts of Saint Martin's cloak are the best proof of the monarchs' increased interest in the cult of relics. However, dividing or even touching the bodies of the saints by other people than the clergymen – although practiced in rare cases – was considered sacrilegious before the ninth century;<sup>57</sup> it did not become a praxis before the pontificate of pope Paschal I (817–824).<sup>58</sup>

### 3. Charles the Bald and the Cult of the Relics

A glaring proof of the change which may be observed in the ninth century is the translation of the body of Saint Germanus, performed by Charles the Bald in 860 in the Abbey of Saint-Germain in Auxerre, where the saint was

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53 PROLOGUS LEGIS SALICAE, cap. 4, pp. 6, 8. BOZÓKY, *La politique des reliques de Constantin à Saint Louis*, pp. 58–59, 142–143.

54 TRANSLATIO S. GERMANI, pp. 5–9; qtd. after BOZÓKY, *L'initiative et la participation du pouvoir laïc dans les translations des reliques*, pp. 49–50.

55 LIBRI CAROLINI, cap. III, 16, p. 411, v. 9–12.

56 MGH, *Capitularia*, no. 41, cap. 11, LXVII, p. 118.

57 HERRMANN-MASCARD, *Les reliques des saints. Formation coutumière d'un droit*, pp. 33–41.

58 HERRMANN-MASCARD, *Les reliques des saints. Formation coutumière d'un droit*, pp. 62–64; GOODSON, *The Rome of Pope Paschal I*, pp. 198–256, 273–278.

buried.<sup>59</sup> The most important for us and possibly the most specific feature of this translation is that it did not concern moving the relic to another sanctuary or a new place of cult, like in the case of other important Carolingian translations, when the existing temple was renovated or a new reliquary was founded – which happened quite often<sup>60</sup> – but only because the monarch believed that such an act of piety toward the Saint will give him the patron saint's protection, for which the king was asking in a time of political danger: betrayal by some of his subjects and the invasion by his elder brother, Louis the German. Roman Michałowski convincingly proves that Heiric, author of the *Miracula sancti Germani* which contains a description of the translation, and master of the school in Auxerre, which was one of the leading intellectual centres of the Carolingian world of the time – and if we consider Heiric's account, also for Charles the Bald and his bishops – believed that the status of a monarch, possibly owing to the anointment, gives him special rights for the personal physical contact with the *sacred*. This view was expressed most emphatically by the way in which Charles performed the translation. The king did with his own hands all the most

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59 The personal participation of Charles the Bald in the translation of Saint Germanus and presiding over the translation ceremony is not a precedent, suffice it to look at, e.g., the translation of Saint Januarius to the Abbey of Reichenau by emperor Lothair I in 838 r.; WALAHFRIDUS STRABO, *Carmina*, no. 77, pp. 415–416, discussed in: MICHAŁOWSKI, *The Gniezno Summit*, pp. 117–119, 124, see also pp. 144–159, with bibliography; more recently: IOGNA-PRAT, *La Maison Dieu. Une histoire monumentale de l'Église au Moyen Âge*, pp. 220–226.

60 E.g., the translation of the Roman relics to Seligenstadt founded by Einhard; see EINHARD, *Translatio et miracula sanctorum Marcellini et Petri*, pp. 238–264; BONDOIS, *La translation des saints Marcellin et Pierre*; SEIBERT, *Die Verfassung der Stadt Seligenstadt im Mittelalter*, pp. 107–184; FLECKENSTEIN, *Einhard, seine Gründung und sein Vermächtnis in Seligenstadt*, pp. 96–121; SMITH, *Einhard: the Sinner and the Saints*, pp. 55–77; SMITH, “Rulers and Relics c.750 – c.950: Treasure on Earth, Treasure in Heaven”, pp. 73–96; SEELIGER, *Einhard's römische Reliquien*, pp. 58–75; LUDWIG, MÜLLER, WIDDRA-SPIESS, *Die Einhard-Basilika in Steinbach*; HEINZELMANN, *Einhard's Translatio Marcellini et Petri*, pp. 269–298. I would like to express my gratitude to Professor Roman Michałowski for pointing the three last items to me. Other translation of Saint Vitus from Saint-Denis to New Corvey is *TRANSLATIO SANCTI VITI MARTYRIS*, of Saint Alexander from Rome to Wildeshausen is *TRANSLATIO SANCTI ALEXANDRI*, pp. 673–681, and KRUSCH, *Die Übertragung des H. Alexander von Rom nach Wildeshausen*, pp. 405–436 (the text of the translation: pp. 423–436), and the above-mentioned translation of Saint Januarius to the Abbey of Reichenau in 838. See RÖCKELEIN, *Reliquientranslationen nach Sachsen im 9. Jahrhundert*; but also BOZÓKY, *Les reliques de la pouvoir des princes territoriaux*, pp. 73–82.

important actions not connected directly with liturgy: he raised the body of the saint from the grave, washed it, and wrapped it in silk cloth. The belief that the king was predestined to deal with the relics personally must have been shared – as the hagiographic account indicates – or at least tacitly agreed upon by the bishops present during the translation, for they stood by when the grave was opened, sang hymns and psalms, and remained at a distance from the body of the saint, with which only the king had a close contact.<sup>61</sup> Besides, already in 841, at the joint order of Charles and Louis the German, the translation of the Saint Germanus's relics was performed in Auxerre;<sup>62</sup> possibly in the same year Charles the Bald, together with bishops, carried on his own shoulders the body of Saint Medard (and many other relics) to the recently renovated basilica of Saint-Médard in Soissons.<sup>63</sup> In 845, Charles the Bald participated in the translation of Saint Cassian in the Abbey of Saint-Quentin in Autun. Although Saint Cassian's body had been deposited in the Abbey five years earlier, the solemn translation was performed only then, in the presence of the king who, accompanied by the archbishop of Sens and the bishop of Noyon, along with numerous clergymen, raised the saintly body from the *sepulcrum*, wrapped it in silk, then buried in a crypt.<sup>64</sup> However, whereas in Soissons and Autun, Charles the Bald performed the translation together with the bishops, he was actually the only performer in Auxerre. Finally, the author of the *Miracula S. Mauri* written in 863–869, Odo of Glanfeuil alleges that the translation of Saint

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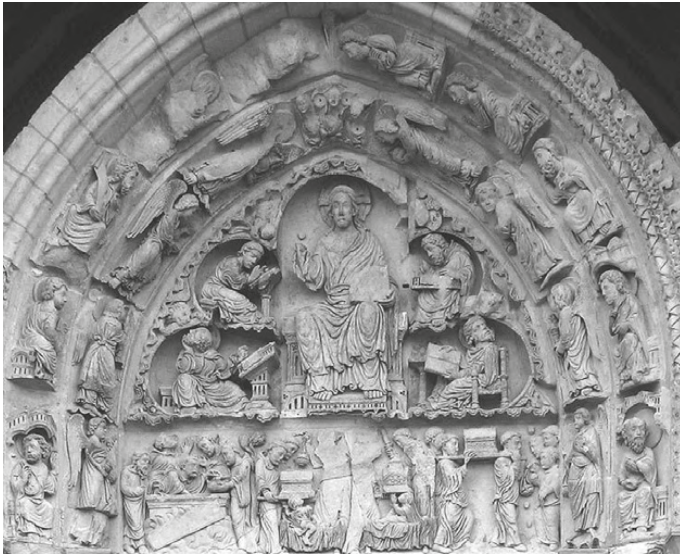
61 For the description of the translation and its political and liturgical circumstances, see MICHAŁOWSKI, *The Gniezno Summit*, pp. 117–119, 124. The Author convincingly establishes the date of the translation to the early 860 and not, as it is usually assumed, to 859.

62 *GESTA PONTIFICUM AUTISIODORENSIUM*, cap. 36, p. 397.

63 *HISTOIRE DES FILS DE LOUIS LE PIEUX*, lib. III, cap. 2, pp. 86–89. Ernst Müller, the editor of Nithard's chronicle in *Monumenta Germaniae Historica*, believes the passage in question was interpolated in the eleventh century; see NITHARD, *Historiarum*, pp. 31–180, Philippe Lauer does not support this view; whereas HERRMANN-MASCARD, *Les reliques des saints. Formation coutumière d'un droit*, p. 180, believes this passage is not only authentic but also has a considerable cognitive value as a first-hand account, since its author was Nithard, a cousin and close political collaborator of Charlemagne, hence a man well-versed in the ruler's activities and intentions. I decline here to discuss the authenticity of this fragment of Nithard's chronicle: it seems to be pointless, since the problem has been sufficiently expounded by other, unquestionably authentic sources, and accepting Müller's claim of interpolation does not change our knowledge about the importance of the translation of relics in Charles the Bald's ideology of power.

64 *HISTORIA TRANSLATIONIS ET MIRACULORUM S. CASSIANI*, p. 68.

Maurus, a disciple of Saint Benedict, in the Abbey of Saint-Pierre-des-Fossés near Paris was conducted at the incentive of Charles the Bald. Later, as Saint Maurus became increasingly more popular patron saint, a new name was adopted for the Abbey: Saint-Maur-des-Fossés. The king did not take part in this translation, but the hagiographer says that he visited saint's grave soon after the ceremony and describes the rich gifts Charles the Bald sent soon afterward.<sup>65</sup>



1. Translation of the relics, portal of the Northern aisle in the Abbey Church of Saint-Benoît-sur-Loire, late twelfth century.

We should also analyze Charles the Bald's collection of relics. As the founding charter of the Our Lady Church in Compiègne indicates, the king who, as we know, aspired to become an emperor, tried to follow Charlemagne's example in this respect by interpreting both the act of founding the palace chapel and of collecting numerous relics of the saints as a manifestation of the imperial standing and an action fostering the well-being of the Empire and its subjects. Charles the Bald also explicitly stated that the palace chapel in Compiègne is a conscious imitation of Charlemagne's chapel in Aachen: the act of founding is both intended *pro anima* – for

65 ODO DE GLANFEUIL, *Ex miraculis s. Mauri*, pp. 464, 472.

the redemption of himself, his wife, children, and ancestors – and for the *stabilitas regni*.<sup>66</sup>

Although the charter mentions Charlemagne's collection of relics from Aachen as a model, it does not state that there existed a similar collection in Compiègne. We should nevertheless interpret it as the manifestation of Charles the Bald's intentions. This is evidenced, for instance, by the translation of Saint Cornelius's body to Compiègne – given by pope John VIII – supervised by Charles himself who together with his bishops carried the relics of the martyr pope on his own shoulders to the new repository. The anonymous poetic description of the translation in a (possibly interpolated)<sup>67</sup> verse calls the emperor a translator, hence the actual author of the translation who – owing to his involvement in the cult and veneration of Saint Cornelius – ensured for himself and his subjects the Saint's intercession that guaranteed Redemption.<sup>68</sup> The translation of Saint Cornelius's body,<sup>69</sup> the allusion to the collection of relics in Aachen,

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66 “Proinde quia divae recordationis imperator, avus scilicet noster Karolus ... in palatio Aquensi capellam in honore beate Dei genitricis et virginis Mariae construxisse ac clericos inibi Domino ob suae anime remedium atque peccaminum absolutionem pariterque *ob dignitatem apicis imperialis deservire constituisse ac congerie quamplurima reliquiarum eundem locum sacrasse* multiplicibusque ornamentis excoluisse dinoscitur, *nos quoque morem illius imitari ceterorumque regum et imperatorum, decessorum scilicet nostrorum, cupientes* [emphasis: JP] ..., in palatio videlicet Compendio, in honore gloriose Dei genitricis ac perpetue semper virginis Mariae monasterium cui regium vocabulum dedimus fundotenus extruimus et donariis quamplurimis Domini juvante ditavimus, atque clericos inibi numero centum, pro statu sanctae Dei Ecclesie, pro genitoribus ac progenitoribus nostris, pro nobis, conjuge et prole totius regni stabilitate jugiter Domini misericordiam implorare decrevimus;” *ACTES DE CHARLES LE CHAUVE*, no. 425, pp. 451–453; BOZÓKY, *La politique des reliques de de Constantin à Saint Louis*, pp. 63–64.

67 *S. CORNELII COMPENDIENSIS TRANSLATIONES*, pp. 237–239. The claim about the interpolation is made by the editor of the text, Paul de Winterfeld, on p. 239.

68 MICHAŁOWSKI, *The Gniezno Summit*, pp.117–120, with bibliography.

69 The gift of the relic seems to have been one of the ways of emphasizing the special relation between the Papacy and the kingdom of Charles the Bald, at least from the beginning of the 870s. According to a relatively reliable account from the eleventh-century chronicle of the Abbey of Saint-Pierre-le-Vif, archbishop Anseghis, the envoy of Charles the Bald to Rome in 870–871, received from pope Hadrian II not only the rank and titles of the pontifical vicar and the primate of Gaul and Germany – related with his position of the metropolitan bishop of Sens – but also numerous relics, among others, of saint martyr popes.

and the consistent efforts aimed at making Compiègne the new and true capital of the Carolingian Empire (the palace church was consecrated in 877 by pope John VIII)<sup>70</sup> indicate that Charles the Bald intended to make Compiègne a sanctuary at least equally rich in relics of numerous saints as the one he had created around the grave of Saint Germanus in Auxerre in 875–876.<sup>71</sup>

This indicates that Charles the Bald must have perceived activities connected with the cult of relics as an area especially appropriate for the monarch, and he became in this respect if not a model for the kings and emperors from the tenth and eleventh century then at least a promoter of the spread – at least in the Capetian France – of the view that the leading of the people and the Church in their kingdoms in venerating the holy relics was the duty of the kings.<sup>72</sup> Indeed, the posterity remembers Charles the Bald as a ruler particularly interested in the cult of the saints and relics: he is not only said to have translated the Passion relics from Aachen to Saint-Denis and Compiègne but is also indicated by the interpolated, possibly in the eleventh century, mention in Nithard's chronicle that in 841 the king carried on his own shoulders the relics of Saint Medard to the new basilica in Soissons dedicated to that Saint.<sup>73</sup>

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These relics were to be added to the collection of relics in the Sens Cathedral; *CHRONICON SANCTI PETRI VIVI*, pp. 60–61.

70 On Charles the Bald's foundation of Compiègne, see MICHAŁOWSKI, *The Gniezno Summit*, p. 117–120, and DIEBOLD, *Nos quoque morem illius imitari cupientes. Charles the Bald's evocation and imitation of Charlemagne*, pp. 271–300; HERREN, *Eriugena's 'Aulae siderae', the 'Codex aureus', and the Palatine Church of St. Mary at Compiègne*, pp. 593–608; IOGNA-PRAT, *Le culte de la Vierge sous le règne de Charles le Chauve*, pp. 65–98; STAUBACH, *Rex christianus. Hofkultur und Herrschaftspraganda im Reich Karls des Kahlen*, pp. 270–281; VIEILLARD-TROÏEKOUROFF, *La chapelle du palais de Charles le Chauve*, pp. 89–108.

71 This issue is exhaustively discussed in MICHAŁOWSKI, *The Gniezno Summit*, pp. 144–159, and IOGNA-PRAT, *La Maison Dieu. Une histoire monumentale de l'Église au Moyen Âge*, pp. 265–273, 278–280.

72 MICHAŁOWSKI, *Depozycja ciała św. Wojciecha w roku 1000*, pp. 45–56, here: p. 48–50; MICHAŁOWSKI, *The Gniezno Summit*, pp. 144–159, 169–182, with a selection of the relevant literature on the subject.

73 On the question of interpolating this information in Nithard's chronicle, see above.



2. Translation of relics. The capital of a column on the facade of the choir of the Benedictine church of Saint-Etienne in Lubersac (Corrèze), Limousin, France, twelfth century.

Following his grandfather just like Charles the Bald had followed Charlemagne, Charles III the Simple (r. 898–922) founded in another Carolingian palace in Attigny the Church of Saint Walpurga whose relics he brought from the East Frankish kingdom. The king explains in the foundation charter – like Charles the Bald had done in the founding charter of the Palace Abbey in Compiègne – that the aim of the translation was to ensure the protection of the virgin saint over his kingdom.<sup>74</sup>

#### 4. The Heritage of the Carolingian Cult of Relics in the Ottonian and Salian Empire

Accepting the above-quoted claims of Roman Michałowski concerning the need of the Carolingian kings and their successors – deeply felt in the tenth-eleventh century – to sacralize their royal power and the kingship itself through the *sacrum* present in the relics and the kings' personal participation in the rituals connected with their cult, we will quote only a few of the many examples about the *longue durée* of this ideological heritage of the Carolingians and its evolution in the Eastern part of the former Carolingian Empire. The kings from the Saxon dynasty – later emperors of the renewed

<sup>74</sup> RECUEIL DES ACTES DE CHARLES III LE SIMPLE, no. 86, p. 194



Empire – and the chroniclers who described their deeds often expressed the belief that the cult of the relics of the saints and Passion relics were the main ideological foundations of the monarchy. Suffice it to mention Widukind of Corvey who, when describing the translation of Saint Vitus from the Abbey of Saint-Denis to newly founded Corvey Abbey (*Nova Corbeia*) in Saxony (836), considered it the reason of the decline in importance of the West Frankish kingdom and the prefiguration of *translatio Imperii* from the Franks to the Saxons.<sup>75</sup> We may also mention the Holy Lance containing the nail of the True Cross which – according to Liutprand of Cremona – allegedly belonged to Constantine the Great and was given to the king of Burgundy, Rudolph I (912–937), along with an invitation to aspire for the throne of the kingdom of Italy, and thus also for the imperial crown. Liutprand also says that the founder of the Saxon dynasty, Henry I (r. 919–936), desired so ardently to possess the Holy Lance that he threatened the king of Burgundy with war if the latter refuse to hand it in. When he finally obtained it, he gave Rudolph in return a large amount of gold and silver together with the County of Alsace.<sup>76</sup> However, the attribution of the lance is unclear: it was called Saint Maurice’s Lance possibly already in the times of Bruno of Querfurt (ca. 974–1009).<sup>77</sup> However, Laurent Ripart notes<sup>78</sup> the opinion of Hugh of Flavigny, who affirmed in the early twelfth century, that Saint Maurice’s Lance was an insignia of the Kingdom of Burgundy and only after Rudolph III’s death (1032) became the property of the German king and emperor Conrad II, who succeeded Rudolph as a new king of Burgundy.<sup>79</sup>

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75 WIDUKIND, *Res gestae Saxonicae*, lib. cap. 33–34, pp. 431–432.

76 LIUTPRAND OF CREMONA, *Antapodosis*, lib. IV, cap. 25, pp. 118–119. For the Holy Lance of the German kings and its status among the imperial insignia – and the symbolic of the so-called Saint Maurice’s Lance of the Polish kings and dukes, and the royal lances in Bohemia and Hungary – see SCHRAMM, *Die ‘Heilige Lanze’*, pp. 492–537; OBERSTE, *Heilige und ihre Reliquien in der politischen Kultur der früheren Ottonenzeit*, pp. 77–79; SCHWINEKÖPER, *Christus-Reliquien-Verehrung und Politik*, pp. 208–211. I would like to thank Marcin Pauk, for drawing my attention to the latter paper; UHLIRZ, *Zur Geschichte der Mauritiuslanze*, pp. 99–112; recently HEILIGE LANZE IN WIEN.

77 “quo modo conueniunt Zuarasiz diabolus et dux sanctorum, uester et noster Mauritius? (qua fronte coeunt sacra lancea et qui pascuntur humano sanguine diabolica uexilla?);” BRUNO OF QUERFURT, *Epistola ad Henricum regem*, pp. 101–102. On the role of the Holy Lance as an insignia of a relic: KÜHNE, *Ostensio reliquiarum*, pp. 92–97.

78 RIPART, *Saint Maurice et la tradition régaliennne bourguignonne*, pp. 211–250.

79 “Rodulfus vero rex absque liberis existens, Conrado imperatori Burgundiae regnum dereliquit, dans ei lanceam sancti Mauricii, quod erat insigne regni Burgundiae;” HUGH OF FLAVIGNY, *Chronicon*, cap. 29, p. 401.

According to Widukind's account, Henry I owned part of Saint Denis's arm, which he would have received as a gift from the dethroned king of the Western Franks, Charles the Simple. The latter would have sent the relic to Henry in 923 as a sign of the eternal alliance and love.<sup>80</sup> Despite the questionable credibility of this account, revealed by several historians,<sup>81</sup> Widukind's account reflects the idea that the well-being of one's reign and kingdom was directly connected with owning and venerating the relics of the patron saints by the king. According to the chronicler, king Charles himself said that since Saint Vitus's relics had been moved from Francia to Saxony, Saint Denis became the only consolation of the Franks in Gaul, whose Kingdom began to fall into decline from then on.<sup>82</sup> Thus, it seems justified to believe that Charles's gift was meant – at least according to Widukind – as an attempt at forging an alliance in which Henry I would help Charles to regain his throne. There is also the tempting hypothesis of Lucille Trân-Duc that Swanhilde's gift of the Holy Blood – a relic which was the property of Hunfrindings family from the time when it was allegedly given in 802 to Charlemagne by Azan, the Saracen king of Jerusalem, then by the emperor to Hunfrid – to Reichenau Abbey may be connected with the beginnings of Henry I's imperial ideology.<sup>83</sup> Especially as Otto I provided his imperial foundation in Magdeburg with a similar relic, brought from Italy in 973 by Anno, the bishop of Worms, at the emperor's request.<sup>84</sup>

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80 “‘Karolus, regia quondam potestate predictus, modo privatus, misit me ad te demandans, quia nichil ei ab inimicis circumvento iocundius, nichil dulcius esse possit quam de tui magnifici profectus gloria aliquid audire, fama virtutum tuarum consolari. Et hoc tibi signum fidei et veritatis transmisit; protulitque de sinu manum preciosi martyris Dionisii auro gemmisque inclusam. ‘Hoc’ inquit ‘habeto pignus foederis perpetui et amoris vicarii. Hanc partem unici solatii Francorum Galliam inhabitantium, postquam nos deseruit insignis martyr Vitus;’” WIDUKIND, *Res gestae Saxonicae*, lib. cap. 33, pp. 45–46; EHLERS, *Politik und Heiligenverehrung in Frankreich*, p. 152.

81 Cf. LUSCOMBE, *Denys the Pseudo-Areopagite in the Middle Ages*, pp. 133–152.

82 “hanc partem unici solatii Francorum Galliam inhabitantium;” WIDUKIND, *Res gestae Saxonicae*, cap. 33, p. 46. The belief that there existed a connection between the loss of precious relics and the loss of political welfare was well-fixed in the medieval political theology. A similar conviction was not alien to Frederick Barbarossa and the Annalist from Disibodenberg describing Frederick's efforts in 1157 to regain the hand of Saint James the Apostle lost by the emperors (brought to England by empress Matilda in 1125); cf. LEYSER, *Frederick Barbarossa, Henry II and the Hand of St James*, pp. 481–506.

83 TRÂN-DUC, *De l'usage politique du Précieux Sang dans l'Europe médiévale*, p. 98.

84 “[973] Nonis Iunii. Eodem die preciosissimus thesaurus sanguinis Domini per Annonem episcopum *iubente domino Ottone augusto* [emphasis: JP],

The involvement of Otto I and the members of the Liudolfing elite in collecting relics for the churches of the Ottonian Empire is well known.<sup>85</sup> The key part of the relics in Otto III's religious policy has been recently convincingly presented by Roman Michałowski.<sup>86</sup> In 961, Otto I gave to his foundation in Magdeburg, the Abbey of Saint Maurice, pieces of the the relics of the Saint, which he had recently received from the king of Burgundy.<sup>87</sup> In 1004, Henry II gave the Magdeburg Cathedral (i.e. former Abbey church) the remaining part of Saint Maurice's relics,<sup>88</sup> which till then had belonged to the chapel royal in Magdeburg.<sup>89</sup> The translation was performed by the king in person, as he led the procession with the relics barefoot, from the suburban monastery of Saint John the Baptist in Berg to the Magdeburg Cathedral and then deposited the holy relics along with rich gifts on an altar. As the author of *Gesta archiepiscoporum Magdeburgensium* affirms, the king established an anniversary feast of the translation, although formally this must have been a decision taken by the archbishop.<sup>90</sup> An account

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immo annuente domino Iesu Christo ab Italia Magadaburgum translatus est;" ANNALES MAGDEBURGENSES BREVISSIMI, p. 750; TRÂN-DUC, *De l'usage politique du Précieux Sang dans l'Europe médiévale*, p. 98.

85 DUPRÉ THESEIDER, *La grande rapina dei corpi santi*, pp. 420–432; OBERSTE, *Heilige und ihre Reliquien in der politischen Kultur der früheren Ottonenzeit*, pp. 74–98. Recently a truly excellent paper by BERTRAND, *Le trésor des reliques de Magdebourg*, pp. 177–218.

86 MICHAŁOWSKI, *Depozycja ciała św. Wojciecha w roku 1000*, pp. 45–56; MICHAŁOWSKI, *The Gniezno Summit*, pp. 136–144, 180–182.

87 THIETMAR, *Chronicon*, lib. II, cap. 17(11), p. 58

88 On the cult of the saints with particular attention paid to the cult of Saint Maurice in the Ottonian Empire: BEUMANN, *Laurentius und Mauritius*, pp. 139–176; BRACKMANN, *Die politische Bedeutung der Mauritius-Verehrung*, pp. 211–241; OBERSTE, *Heilige und ihre Reliquien in der politischen Kultur der früheren Ottonenzeit*, pp. 74–98.

89 Recently on the cult of Saint Maurice in the tenth and eleventh centuries, see WAGNER, *Le culte des martyrs de la Légion thébaine dans l'Empire ottonien*, pp. 405–417. Recently on the collection of relics from the Magdeburg Cathedral and their origins, see BERTRAND, *Le trésor des reliques de Magdebourg*, pp. 177–218.

90 "ipse in Domino magne devotionis rex, de capella sua sumens non modicam partem reliquiarum beati Mauricii, hyeme tunc forte redivivo frigore seivente terramque glaciali asperitate et nive cooperiente, a Monte sancti Iohannis baptiste, ubi servabantur, nudis pedibus, ut fertur, calore pietatis illum animante, tricesimo die depositionis archiepiscopi Giselharii in civitatem detulit, cunctis festivo ritu, ut par erat, eas susipientibus; quas et sancto altari cum predictis donariis obtulit ipsumque diem in honore prefati martiris eius ecclesie celebrem, quemadmodum adhuc habetur, instituit;" *GESTA ARCHIEPISCOPORUM MAGDEBURGENSIUM*, p. 393; cf. ALTHOFF, *Die Macht der Rituale*,

preserved in the manuscript of Stavelot Abbey describes Henry III (r. 1039–1056), who took part in the translation of Saint Remaclus to the Abbey, to have performed it himself (“idem prefatus rex transtulit”) but obviously accompanied by the bishops, princes, and the populace. This description looks very similar to the narratives presenting Charles the Bald’s participation in solemn translations.<sup>91</sup>

The Carolingian policy towards the relics, continued in the Empire by the Saxon and Salian dynasties, seems to have been concentrated more on the Christological relics. It is not my intention to claim that this thread did not exist in the Carolingian cult of relics: one example is the miraculous *inventio* of the Christ’s Blood in Mantua (804),<sup>92</sup> the confirmed presence of Passion relics in the Charlemagne’s collections in Saint-Riquier<sup>93</sup> and Aachen, or the foundation of the Cross of Lothair. The Carolingian liturgical thought also focused on the cult of the Holy Cross and connected it with the royal and imperial power, which is well evidenced by the iconography from the Gelasian Sacramentary from Gellone – given to pope Adrian I by Charlemagne, the Prayer Book of Wessobrunn, the *Canones conciliarum*<sup>94</sup> from Milan, or Rabanus Maurus’s *De laudibus sanctae crucis* with a representation of the emperor holding the Cross<sup>95</sup>, eventually the votive mass compiled by Alcuin

pp. 113–114; cf. a slightly different but complementary approach by SCHREINER, *Nudis pedibus. Barfüßigkeit als religiöses und politisches Ritual*, pp. 53–124.

91 “peracta sacerdotali benedictione, rex cum memoratis episcopis atque proceribus sursum se obvium sancti exhibuit, ad excitandam gloriam Dei in plebem sermonem episcopo facere precepit. Subinde quatenus regali munificentia donaretur benigna largitate providit. ... His ita gestis, ministris loculum patroni nostri ferentibus, auxilio sese gerendo mancipavit, sicque cum clero debita processione vacando ac plebe immensa ad locum, ubi nunc reconditum est, cum magna devotione idem prefatus rex transtulit;” *RECUEIL DES CHARTES DE L’ABBAYE DE STAVELOT-MALMÉDY*, no. 103, p. 217.

92 *ANNALES REGNI FRANCORUM*, p. 119; cf. VINCENT, *The Holy Blood. King Henry III and the Westminster Blood Relic*, pp. 54–61, 144–147.

93 It is worth noting the discussion inspired by an iconoclastic controversy, present also in the Carolingian Empire, between abbot Lupus (later the abbot of Ferrières) and Einhard about the cult of the Holy Cross. Namely, Lupus asked Einhard whether one should venerate the Cross, and the latter answered him (836) with a theological argument based on the exegesis of the Bible and the Fathers of the Church; see EINHARD, *Quaestio de adoranda Cruce*, pp. 146–149.

94 On the iconographic aspects of the cult of the Holy Cross and the legend of its finding by Saint Helena especially in these three artefacts, see BAERT, *A Heritage of the Holy Wood*, pp. 54–80.

95 HRABANUS MAURUS, *In honorem sanctae crucis*; FERRARI, *Il ‘Liber sanctae crucis’ di Rabano Mauro*.

to venerate the True Cross.<sup>96</sup> However, the above examples do not refer to the cult of the relics *sensu strictiori*. It also seems that in the restored Empire the cult of Christ's relics gains intensity in the tenth and eleventh century. If we assume that this ideological base of the Liudolfing and Salian kingship arose in the tenth century from the veneration of the Holy Lance and its inclusion in the treasury of the imperial insignia, then the consistent development of the Christological thread should be equally important. Henry II not only became greatly involved to provide the relics for the Bamberg cathedral but also carefully shaped the sacral topography of Bamberg, arranging the churches and sanctuaries, which ensured the intercession of the saints in such a way that the imperial foundation symbolically assumed the shape of a cross.<sup>97</sup> Henry's II pious approach to the True Cross and its relics is well evidenced.<sup>98</sup> It is also clear that in the tenth and eleventh century the Western Empire was inspired by the Byzantine model. The best example is Henry II's founding of a stau-rotheke: a reliquary of the True Cross as the sign of the emperor's victory over his enemies.<sup>99</sup> We should also mention the placement of the cross at the top of Otto I's imperial crown or of Henry II's imperial orb, the latter having been

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96 Issued in DESHUSSES, *Le Sacramentaire grégorien*, vol. II: *Spicilegium Friburgense*, p. 44.

97 "ecclesiis et patrociniis sanctorum in modum crucis undique munitus;" ADALBERTI, *Vita Heinrichi II*, cap. 7, p. 794.

98 SCHWINEKÖPER, *Christus-Reliquien-Verehrung und Politik*, pp. 212–221. From the reign of Henry II (1002–1024), a crucifix of Bernward, bishop of Hildesheim (993–1022), already at that time considered to be miraculous and worshipped in Saint Michael's Church in Hildesheim is conserved (today in the Dom-Museum Hildesheim, inv. no. DS L 109); see FROLOW, *Les reliquaires de la Vraie Croix*, no. 270, fig. 98, p. 246. However, its present form comes from 1140–1150, while Bernward's original crucifix has been preserved only in part in this artefact, including, possibly, a fragment of the True Cross; cf. PIPPAL, *Vortragekreuz*, sog. *Bernwardkreuz*, p. 588. The so-called Cross of Henry II (Kunstgewerbemuseum, Staatliche Museen Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Berlin, inventory no. 17.79) comes from the twelfth century. The Imperial Cross, which is a reliquary cross (*Crux Imperii*, *Reichskreuz*, ca. 1032–1033), probably founded by Conrad II became, in the eleventh century, one of the insignia of the Empire (today stored in the imperial treasury in Vienna: Schatzkammer, inv. no. XIII 21); PIPPAL, *Vortragekreuz*, sog. *Bernwardkreuz*, no. 199, fig. 96, p. 245.

99 SUCKALE-REDLEFSEN, *Goldener Schmuck für Kirche und Kaiser*, pp. 78–92; FILLITZ, *Das Kreuzreliquiar Heinrichs II.*, pp. 15–31. For the Byzantine inspirations of the Western cult of the True Cross, see SCHWINEKÖPER, *Christus-Reliquien-Verehrung und Politik*, pp. 224–247; recently KLEIN, *Eastern Objects and Western Desires. Relics and Reliquaries between Byzantium and the West*, pp. 283–314, refers to earlier studies to claim that Henry II's Limburg Staurotheke is the earliest and only reliquary of the Byzantine type from the

made on commission of pope Benedict VIII (r. 1012–1024). Rodulfus Glaber and – as this chronicler says – Henry II himself interpreted this new imperial insignia as a symbol of power over the whole world, decorated with jewels representing the virtues necessary for maintaining *Imperium christianum* and enhancing properly executed imperial power. The cross at the top of the orb was meant both to symbolize the protection of the Holy Cross over the Empire and the fact that the emperor should necessarily follow the example derived from the Holy Cross.<sup>100</sup> Another example of combining the cult of the True Cross with imperial power was *Crux Imperii* founded by Conrad II as the new monarch's insignia<sup>101</sup> or Henry III's cult of the Holy Cross. The latter gave Speyer Cathedral a reliquary of the True Cross in the shape of a cross, and two large fragments of wood and nails from the True Cross to the palatial Abbey of Saint Simon and Saint Juda in Goslar, which he had founded.<sup>102</sup> Having defeated the Hungarians in 1044, Henry III performed an adoration of the relics of the True Cross, which may be interpreted as a continuation of the Constantinian tradition of venerating the Cross as the palladium and a sign of emperor's military triumphs.<sup>103</sup> It seems that Henry

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Ottonian times and the considerable growth of imports not only of Byzantine reliquaries but also of the reception of the artistic patterns to the Western Empire, and that it should be connected with the later Salian dynasty, for there are no unquestionable confirmation of this phenomenon in times before the first quarter of the eleventh century.

100 RAOUL GLABER, *Histoires*, lib. I, cap. V, 23, p. 78.

101 For the role of the Imperial Cross and the Holy Lance in the German coronation ritual during the Salian times, see SCHRAMM, *Der 'Salisches Ordo' und Benzo von Alba*, pp. 389–407.

102 SCHWINEKÖPER, *Christus-Reliquien-Verehrung und Politik*, pp. 243–244, 261.

103 “Denique caesar discalciatus et laneis ad carnem indutus ante vitale sanctae crucis lignum procidit, idem que populus una cum principibus fecit, ipsi redentes honorem et gloriam, qui illis dederat tantam victoriam, tam mirificam, tam incruentam, sed et pro divino munere omnes omnibus dimiserunt, qui quippiam in se committentes eis debitores fuerunt;” *ANNALES ALTAHENSES MAIORES*, p. 37. ALTHOFF, *Die Macht der Rituale*, p. 116, notices in this description an act of a kenotic self-humiliation of the Emperor, possibly caused by the wish to make amends to God also for the bloodshed during military actions. The thanksgiving celebrations after a victory performed by Henry III are doubtless part of the tradition known from the times of the Saxon dynasty from the tenth century; cf. ALTHOFF, *Adels- und Königsfamilien*, p. 226. A recent interpretation of the royal kenosis as elevation by humiliation (which is discussed in earlier studies and also in: ALTHOFF, *Die Macht der Rituale*); ALTHOFF, *Humiliatio – exaltatio*, pp. 39–51.

III was also interested in the rediscovery of the Holy Blood in Mantua in 1048 and obtained a part of it. It was allegedly the same relic whose *inventio* happened in 804 and inspired the interest of Leo III and Charlemagne.<sup>104</sup> Interestingly, the account of this event also says that pope Leo IX, who would be afraid Mantua to become a ‘new Rome’ thanks to the newly discovered relics and related miracles, decided to move the Holy Blood to the See of Saint Peter. However, Leo IX had to face the steadfast refusal of the Mantuans who did not hesitate to take up arms against the pope in defense of the relics they considered as belonging to them, and finally win.<sup>105</sup> However, the Mantuans yielded to Henry III’s pious pleas and, respecting the emperor’s majesty, did give him a particle of the Holy Blood.<sup>106</sup> The emperor placed the relics in a crystal reliquary decorated with jewels and gold and took it with him wherever he went. The rest of the discovered Christ’s Blood was deposited in a crypt under Saint Andrew’s altar in the eponymous church – in which the Lord’s Blood had been miraculously rediscovered – expanded and redeccorated at Henry III’s order and at his expense. At the emperor’s request, the humiliated pope and fifty-two bishops consecrated the church.<sup>107</sup>

Such examples of emperors’ pious approach toward relics seem convincing enough to support the claim of Jörg Oberste that Ottonian sovereigns’ involvement in the translation policy served to manifest and legitimate their power;<sup>108</sup> and of Berent Schweineköper that the cult of the

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104 900 JAHRE HEILIG-BLUT-VEREHRUNG IN WEINGARTEN.

105 The pope failed to get the relics even though he waged war against the Mantuans taking advantage of the absence of the emperor and Boniface of Lombardy, in Italy. “Cernens autem apostolicus quod dominus tantas virtutes ibi operarentur timensque ne Mantua novella Roma efficeretur nisus est omni ingenio ut inde asportaret sanguinem Domini. Sed Dominus non affuit tali voluntati. Nam habitatores civitatis idem experti resisterunt totis viribus quamvis rari et pauci essent et Deo auxiliante acceperunt victoriam. Nam dominus papa cum eis commiserat bellum. ... Et occasione accepta putavit sibi licere quod non licebat;” *DE TRANSLATIONE SANGUINIS DOMINI* (Mantua), p. 922.

106 “Imperator vero partem aliquam eiusdem sanguinis et devota petitione et imperiali auctoritate obtinuit, quam, prout regiam dignitatem decuit [emphasis: JP], auro gemmisque inclusam, christallo perlucida opere artificioso polita, sicut hodie consideratur, secum abduxit et quousque vixit, ubicumque veniens, summa cum reverentia in suo comitatu deportari voluit;” *DE TRANSLATIONE SANGUINIS DOMINI* (Mantua), p. 922.

107 *DE INVENTIONE SANGUINIS DOMINI* (Mantua), p. 922.

108 “In der politischen Symbolsprache des 10. Jahrhunderts konnten Reliquientranslationen auf diese Weise freundschaftliche Bindungen und Hegemonialansprüche sowie ebenbürtige Würde, Integrität und Legitimität der ottonischen Herrschaft zum Ausdruck bringen;” OBERSTE, *Heilige und ihre Reliquien in der politischen Kultur der früheren Ottonenzeit*, p. 98.

Lord's relics manifested by the Ottonian and Salian emperors<sup>109</sup> was the outcome of the belief that the emperor is the true representation of Christ on Earth (*vicarius Christi*).<sup>110</sup> The account about the *inventio* of the Holy Blood in Mantua in 1048, probably compiled in the early years of the twelfth century in Weingarten Abbey, which obtained the relic in 1094, seems to stress these claims: the emperor confirms his sacral standing of a ruler whose competences extend also over the cult of relics. The Mantuans recognize his imperial rights to possess the relics, which they have refused the pope. Thus, it may initially seem that this narrative not only presents the sovereign rights of the emperor to wield control – as an attribute of the empire – over the relics but even their priority over the church, namely bishops' or even the pope's authority over them, though inscribed in liturgical texts.<sup>111</sup> However, the rest of the text describes how the relics of the Holy Blood came to Weingarten and casts doubt on these conclusions or at least makes them relative. Namely, it turns out that Henry III did not take the opportunity to make the Mantuan relic of Holy Blood an imperial attribute permanently owned by the emperors. During his lifetime, he carried the valuable reliquary wherever he went, yet he did not bequeath it to his son and successor but – upon his death – gave it with other gifts to the count of Flanders, Baldwin V of Lille (r. 1035–1067). The latter gave the relic to his daughter, Judith, married off to England. After being widowed, Judith married the duke of Bavaria, Welf I (r. 1070–1077 and 1096–1101), thanks to what the relic returned to the Empire. After Judith died, Welf, upon setting off to the Holy Land, gave all his wife's relics, including the Holy Blood, to Weingarten Abbey.<sup>112</sup> Thus, we learn that the Lord's Blood – which seemed to be a relic *par excellence* imperial as suggested by the story of how it was obtained by Henry III – not only was given by the emperor to one of

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109 SCHWINEKÖPER, *Christus-Reliquien-Verehrung und Politik*, pp. 183–281, especially starting from p. 208.

110 BEUMANN, *Die sakrale Legitimierung des Herrschers*, pp. 1–45; KELLER, *Herrscherbild und Herrschaftslegitimation*, pp. 290–311; SCHWINEKÖPER, *Christus-Reliquien-Verehrung und Politik*, pp. 269–280.

111 See *Introduction*.

112 Judith was married off first to Tostig Godwinson, the earl of Northumbria, whom the author of the translation text calls the king of England. After Tostig's death in the battle of Stamford Bridge (September 25, 1066), Judith left England, taking with her, according to the hagiographer, her husband's chapel: the liturgical paramenta and precious relics, among others, of Saint Oswald. All these items were given to Weingarten Abbey during her marriage to Welf IV or the latter gave them to the Abbey after Judith's death. *DE TRANSLATIONE SANGUINIS DOMINI* (Mantua), p. 923; TRÂN-DUC, *De l'usage politique du Précieux Sang dans l'Europe médiévale*, pp. 91–92.



his princes but was even moved outside the Empire. Had the history of England, and thus of Judith of Flanders, been different, the relic may have remained oversea. What is more, the Mantuan relic of the Holy Blood was ultimately sent to Weingarten as a gift of a local prince. Thus, whereas the Holy Blood of Reichenau and its legend served to reconstruct the historical memory in order to justify the royal patronage of the Ottonian dynasty over the monastery together with the relic – earlier a family palladium in the Hunfridings' *Eigenkloster* – and the apocryphal history of how it had been obtained from Jerusalem by Charlemagne was used not only to support the authenticity of the relic by imperial authority but also the monastery's ambitions to play the part of an imperial abbey,<sup>113</sup> the legend of the Christ's Blood of Weingarten – which similarly warranted the authenticity of the relic by proving that it came from the imperial chapel royal – tells a story *à rebours*, supporting the standing of the Bavarian Welf's *Eigenkloster*.

In other words, although the text of the Mantuan *inventio* and *translatio* shows, on the one hand, the imperial prerogative toward the Christ's relics used by Henry III, on the other hand, it illustrates the drawbacks and an inconsistency (what first appeared, possibly, during the reign of the last Salian emperors) of the German imperial 'relics policy', which will be described below, along with their consequences.<sup>114</sup>

Furthermore, we should mention, even if very briefly, the influence of the Cluniac spirituality and liturgy on the development of the cult of the Holy Cross in ca. 1000 and the first half of the eleventh century. The close ties between Cluny and the Empire lasting from the times of empress Adelaide (queen, then widow of Otto I, d. 999) till the Henry IV's reign (1056–1106) certainly enhanced the influence of the model of piety developed and advocated by the Cluniacs. In the Abbey church of Cluny II, consecrated in 981, among other innovations at the disposal of the liturgical space, the

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113 See the sub-chapter "*Libellus de translatione sanguinis Domini* of the Abbey of Reichenau" in Part 1, Chapter 1.

114 The gift of the reliquary with Lord's Blood to Baldwin V, made "pro recompensatione amiciciarum et obsequie" (*DE TRANSLATIONE SANGUINIS DOMINI* (Mantua), p. 923), was thus a form of paying for the liege's fidelity or perhaps for the loyalty to the successor of Henry IV and may have been an evidence that the emperors were getting rid of the imperial attributes, in this case – surprisingly – sacral ones, in favour of the dukes in return for their loyalty toward the dynasty. TRÂN-DUC, *De l'usage politique du Précieux Sang dans l'Europe médiévale*, p. 102, interprets this rather as a religious guarantee of the pact established by the emperor and the vassal, analogous to the peace pacts guaranteed with an oath on the relics, but also notes that the royal act of making a gift too magnificent to be reciprocated obliges the recipient to unwavering loyalty and fidelity to the donor.

sanctuary of relics draws particular attention. According to the *Liber tramitis* by abbot Odilon (ca. 1040), it was constructed “ad imaginem sancti Petri,” modeled after Saint Peter’s Basilica in Rome.<sup>115</sup> On the list of relics stored there, the True Cross is mentioned on the first place; then a fragment of Our Lady’s gown and Saint Peter’s corporal relics. We do not know when the True Cross relics became the property of the Abbey yet, for instance, in Monte Cassino Abbey it is mentioned for the first time in 975, so it may have been moved to Cluny already during the consecration of Cluny II or soon afterward, or, at the latest, under the abbot Odilo (994–1049),<sup>116</sup> who was undoubtedly an eager promoter of the cult of the Cross, as the author of *Oratio ad crucem adorandam* and *Sermo de sancta cruce* written to celebrate the Finding of the Holy Cross (*Inventio Sanctae Crucis*, May 3) and Exaltation of the Holy Cross (*Exaltatio Sanctae Crucis*, September 14).<sup>117</sup> One of the leitmotifs of *Sermo de sancta cruce* is the interpretation of the Holy Cross as a symbol of *Imperium christianum*.<sup>118</sup> Following Saint Ambrose, Odilo says that Saint Helena, like Our Lady, was visited by the Holy Spirit in a similar soteriological scheme. Namely, the Holy Spirit inspired Helena to find the Holy Cross so that she could convert and redeem emperors and empires, thanks to which Constantine the Great disseminated the Christian faith around the world and, together with the imperial diadem, passed it on to the future emperors and kings. Thus, the monarchs should imitate the true worshippers of the True Cross – Constantine and Heraclius. The latter is considered by Odilo the founder of the feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, similarly to the Carolingian martyrologies of Ado of Vienne and Usuard of Saint-Germain.<sup>119</sup> Thus, according to Odilo, the veneration of the Holy Cross was the historically and theologically supported duty and calling of emperors and kings.

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115 ODILO, *Liber tramitis*, cap. 189, p. 260.

116 IOGNA-PRAT, *La Croix, le moine et l'empereur*, pp. 75–76.

117 IOGNA-PRAT, *La Croix, le moine et l'empereur*, pp. 77, 80–85.

118 IOGNA-PRAT, *La Croix, le moine et l'empereur*, pp. 80–85, especially p. 81; also: SCHIEFFER, *Von Mailand nach Canossa. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der christlichen Herrscherbusse von Theodosius dem Grossen zu Heinrich IV.*, pp. 333–369.

119 IOGNA-PRAT, *La Croix, le moine et l'empereur*, pp. 82–83. About the martyrologium of Usuard and Ado see MARTYROLOGE D’USUARD and IOGNA-PRAT, *Les martyrologes du moyen âge latin*.

## Chapter 2. Participation of the First Capetians in the Cult of Relics (Tenth to Eleventh Century)

### 1. The Capetians and Saint Walaric's Prophecy

There is no doubt that the Carolingian model of the ideology of kingship was the main point of reference for the new dynasty begun in 987 by Hugh Capet, just like in the case of the Liudolfings in the Eastern Kingdom and in their renewed Empire. This also applies to the cult of the saints and veneration of the relics performed by the new kings, especially as these activities were soon used to legitimate the dynasty or to form its founding myth, which first happened at the latest in the eleventh century. This does not only concern the sacral symbolism of the kingship, manifested during the translation liturgy or liturgical adoration of saints, the acts of the royal piety confirmed in the hagiographies or charters directed toward a saint and his relics or to Christ. All these activities were performed at the king's incentive derived from the belief that such actions are part of royal or imperial sacral prerogatives and duties, as they were understood by Charles the Bald, the Liudolfings, or the Salians. In the case of the Capetians, besides the habitual royal policy toward the relics – whose examples are known from the Carolingian and Ottonian or Salian Empire – there appeared a kind of hagiographic narrative in which the interaction between the saint, his relics, and the ruler which shows an opposite process than the one previously described, as it will be illustrated on the example of Capetian kings. This time it is not the king who confirms and sanctifies his power by asking the saint for intercession and venerating his relics but the saint himself demands that his mortal remains should be worshipped and promises the performer of this *opus pietatis* the royal crown for himself and his descendants. Therefore, a new dynasty would emerge. Here, we mean a peculiar translation, namely the returning in 981 of the bodies of Saint Walaric and Saint Richarius to their original places of cult by Hugh Capet – that is, the Abbeys of Saint-Valéry in Leuconay and Saint-Riquier in Centula. Saints' bodies had been robbed and taken to Flanders by Count Arnulf the Great in 939.<sup>1</sup>

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1 On the policy of collecting the relics by the counts of Flanders, see BOZÓKY, *La politique des reliques des premiers comtes de Flandre*, pp. 271–292; BOZÓKY, *La politique des reliques de Constantin à Saint Louis*, pp. 180–181 and 182–184. On regaining the relics of Saint Walaric and Saint Richarius by Hugh Capet: BOZÓKY, *Le recouvrement des reliques des saints Valéry et Riquier*,

Possibly the earliest source describing the return of Richarius's and Walaric's relics to their native monasteries is the account of Angelramnus, the abbot of Saint-Riquier (1022–1045), who assigned the incentive of regaining the relics to Hugh Capet, the Duke of the Franks. To this aim, Hugh Capet is said to have gathered a large army of the Franks and invaded Flanders. However, Angelramnus does not say that Hugh Capet was inspired or asked by the saint. His motivation was to return the Church of Gaul to its proper state and order.<sup>2</sup> The saint's intervention is mentioned in the slightly later, anonymous *History of the translation of the body of Saint Walaric*, written in Leuconay Abbey.<sup>3</sup> According to the monk of Saint-Valéry, Hugh had a vision in his dream in which Saint Walaric ordered him to regain his and Saint Richarius's bodies – stored at that time in the Abbey of Saint-Bertin in Flanders – and give them back to the monasteries in which they had been venerated after their death and burial. In return, thanks to the intercession of the two saints, Hugh would get the crown of the Franks which will remain in his family for seven generations.<sup>4</sup> One cannot find a better example for the logical connection between the royal status and the devotion to the saints and their relics, existing in the minds of the eleventh century people. Up until the late twelfth century there is no direct proof that Saint Walaric's prophecy was used in the Capetian royal ideology, but there is indirect evidence indicating that the translation was interpreted in the eleventh century France as closely connected with gaining royal power by the Capetian family.<sup>5</sup> This interpretation was not forgotten. On the contrary,

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pp. 1–13; BOZÓKY, *La politique des reliques de Constantin à Saint Louis*, pp. 48–49, 153–157; BOZÓKY, *Les reliques et le pouvoir des princes territoriaux*, pp. 82–83.

2 ANGELRAMNUS, *Historia relationis Sancti Richarii*, p. 460.

3 *HISTORIA RELATIONIS CORPORIS SANCTI WALARICI*, pp. 694–696.

4 “inclitus dux Hugo gubernabat strenue partem Francigenae patriae, in divino cultu devotus, Dei et sanctorum cultor humillimus. ... Ego nempe sum abbas Walaricus, quondam vivus et post defunctus, incola super maris litus; nunc quoque, mutata patria, in alia terra cum sancto sacerdote Richario detineor captivus. Sed nunc annuente Deo advenit tempus, ut ad proprias sedes et carissimas soboles redeamus. ... Per nostras enim orationes rex efficieris Galliae, et postea heredes tui usque ad septimam generationem possidebunt gubernacula totius regni;” *HISTORIA RELATIONIS CORPORIS SANCTI WALARICI*, p. 695. Noteworthy, the saint recommends that Hugh should also perform another pious and par excellence royal task, i.e., the reform of the Abbey in Leuconay by expelling the lay priests and bringing back the monks: “Et cum me in meam reduces ecclesiam, proice ab ea clericorum spurcitiam et aggrega in ea regularem catervam.”

5 According to the Life of Burchard (French: Bouchard), the count of Vendôme, Corbeil and Paris (956/967–1005/1007), written in 1058 in the Abbey of

it slowly gained some acceptance, for example, by Hariulf of Oudenburg, the chronicler of the Abbey of Saint-Riquier, active at the turn of the eleventh and twelfth century. Hariulf's *Chronicon Centulense* tried to merge the Centulean and Valerian tradition. Like Angelramnus, Hariulf ascribed to Hugh Capet the incentive of regaining the relics and other ornaments of the Gaul churches, robbed by the rebellious and rapacious princes, in order to return them to their rightful places, whereas the vision and prophecy of Saint Walaric – not mentioned or unknown to Angelramnus – is the divine response to the pious intentions of the duke of the Franks<sup>6</sup> (according to the monk of Saint-Valéry it was the vision which inspired Hugh to act). Hariulf presented Saint Walaric's prophecy in a slightly different version than the previous one, it nevertheless did not change the ideological meaning of the translation in any way: "If you do this [return the bodies of Saint Walaric and Saint Richarius to Leuconay and Centula], I promise that, on God's order and owing to the pious merits of Saint Richarius and my own prayers,

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Saint-Maur-des-Fossés and depicting Burchard as a saint, it was Burchard who brought the relics of Walaric and Richarius back; however, he did it at the request of Robert the Pious, asked for an intervention by the monks from Leuconay, after the Abbey was robbed of the relics by the rebellious count of Flanders. In other words, although Burchard's Life delays the translation in time and significantly changes its interpretation – in order to show Burchard as a true pillar of the Capetian Kingdom – the meaning of the account is similar even if not as strong as the original. Saint Walaric's prophecy is not mentioned (it cannot be, since the events take place during Robert's reign): the restoration of the sacral order proper for the cult of Saint Walaric and Saint Richarius, even if not done by the ruler personally, is still considered as a royal prerogative. See Eudes de Saint-Maur-des-Fossés, *Vita Burchardi venerabilis comitis*, RHF, vol. X, pp. 356–357. Burchard's participation, as a companion and collaborator of Hugh Capet in restoring the relics of Saint Walaric and Saint Richarius to their mother shrines, still not as an actual performer of the translation, is also mentioned in *Historia relationis corporis Sancti Walarici*, RHF, vol. IX, p. 148 (this fragment cannot be found in the edition: *HISTORIA RELATIONIS CORPORIS SANCTI WALARICI*).

- 6 "Qui cum graviter ferret patriam hostili acerbitate demolitam, nec minus indignaretur, quod et sanctorum corpora, et caetera quae ecclesias venustant fraude factiosorum sublata forent propriis locis, et ad haec in melius commutanda animum sedulo praeparet, quadam nocte quiescenti ei affuit visio ex praecepto caelesti;" HARIULF, *Chronique de l'Abbaye Saint-Riquier*, lib. III, cap. 23, pp. 153–154. Moreover, Hariulf affirms that the Saint – besides retranslation – requests Hugh to reform the two monasteries, i.e., to expel the lay canons and restore the monks and the monastic Rule (of Saint Benedict?): "locaque nostra clericis aufer, atque in ea, ut prius erant, monachos stude sub regulari norma unire."

you will become king and your children and your family will obtain the Kingdom of the Franks for seven generations.”<sup>7</sup>

According to Angelramnus’s and Hariulf’s accounts, the compatibility of Hugh’s action with God’s will was confirmed by a miracle. Although Hugh’s army – waiting overnight with the Duke of Franks the body of Saint Richarius to be returned by Arnulf of Flanders – destroyed the fields belonging to Corbie Abbey, so that no harvest should be collected in that year, it turned out to unexpectedly rich owing to the merits of Saint Richarius.<sup>8</sup>

Saint Walaric’s prophecy – in the eleventh and twelfth century being one of the elements of legitimation for the new dynasty – became a source of anxiety for the Capetians in the late twelfth century with the accession to the throne of the seventh and thus, according to the literal interpretation of the vision, the last of the kings who owned his throne to Hugh Capet’s services toward Saint Walaric and Richarius and their intercession.<sup>9</sup> The enemies and rivals of Philip II Augustus (1179–1223) began to claim that the Capetians were going to lose power and the house of Charlemagne would return to the throne: “reditus regni Francorum ad stirpem Karoli.”<sup>10</sup> This is

7 “Quodsi haec imples, promitto tibi ex Dei iussu per sancti pia merita Richarii, et mea prece, te fore regem, prolemque tuam Francigenarum, stirpemque tuam regnum tenere usque ad septem successiones;” HARIULF, *Chronique de l’Abbaye Saint-Riquier*, lib. III, cap. 23, p. 154. However, it is debatable whether the change of the word “generationes” to “succesiones” is important for the continuation of the Capetian dynasty; cf. LEWIS, *Royal Succession in Capetian France*, pp. 106–109; WERNER, *Die Legitimität der Kapetinger und die Entstehung der reditus regni Francorum ad stirpem Karoli*, pp. 208–218 and below.

8 ANGELRAMNUS, *Historia relationis Sancti Richarii*, p. 460; HARIULF, *Chronique de l’Abbaye Saint-Riquier*, lib. III, cap. 24, p. 157. As Édina Bozóky remarks, this is a hagiographic topos connected with the narratives concerning translations of relics, known, e.g., from the translation of Saint Omer (Audomar); cf. BOZÓKY, *La politique des reliques des premiers comtes de Flandre*, pp. 289–290; BOZÓKY, *La politique des reliques de Constantin à Saint Louis*, pp. 47–50.

9 LEWIS, *Royal Succession in Capetian France*, pp. 106–109; WERNER, *Die Legitimität der Kapetinger und die Entstehung der reditus regni Francorum ad stirpem Karoli*, pp. 208–218.

10 On the *reditus*, especially: SPIEGEL, *The ‘Reditus Regni ad stirpem Caroli Magni’*, pp. 145–171; LEWIS, “Dynastic Structures and Capetian Throne-Right: The Views of Giles of Paris”, pp. 225–252; WERNER, *Die Legitimität der Kapetinger und die Entstehung der reditus regni Francorum ad stirpem Karoli*, pp. 203–225; also BROWN, *Vincent de Beauvais and the ‘reditus regni Francorum ad stirpem Caroli imperatoris’*, pp. 169–196; EHLERS, *Kontinuität und Tradition als Grundlage mittel alters Nationsbildung im Frankreich*, pp. 27–36; WERNER, *Andreas von Marchiennes und die Geschichtsschreibung von Anchin und Marchiennes*, pp. 407–414, 435–440.

the first time when we can see the Saint Walaric's vision to be known and pondered in the Capetian court and royalist milieu. In ca. 1200, a clerk in the chancery of Philip Augustus, Étienne de Gallardon, combined Saint Walaric's vision with the Sibylline Oracles. According to his new interpretation of the Vision, interpreting number seven as a symbol of infinity, the translation of the bodies of Saint Walaric and Richarius was meant to let the Capetians rule till the end of the world.<sup>11</sup>

It is impossible to establish with certainty whether the Capetians knew about Saint Walaric's prophecy in the later years of the eleventh and in the twelfth century, until the rumours about "reditus regni Francorum ad stirpem Karoli" began to spread. It was certainly not used in the official royal ideology, which seems quite understandable, as it was very easy to draw a troublesome conclusion, on which the enemies or rivals of the Capetians fastened during Philip Augustus's reign: that the reigning family was to meet soon a preordained end. We do not know if the reinterpretation of Walaric's vision in ca. 1200 appears only in order to challenge those who reminded the Capetians about Walaric's prophecy or the French court remembered about the prophecy, albeit tacitly. However, it is quite certain that the consecutive successors of Hugh Capet, starting from Robert the Pious – with or without connection with the translation of Saint Walaric and Richarius – usually attached a considerable importance to the cult of relics, but to a seemingly different extent.

## 2. The Cult of Relics during the Reign of Robert the Pious

Besides the translation of Saint Walaric and Richarius, we do not know any other examples of Hugh Capet's special involvement in the veneration of the relics. Helgaud, a monk from Fleury (Saint-Benoît-sur-Loire) Abbey, the author of the hagiographic *Life of his son and successor, Robert the Pious*, says that Hugh believed the reigning family to have special "friends" (*amici*)<sup>12</sup> in persons of Our Lady and the Saints Benedict, Martin, Aignan,

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11 BROWN, *La notion de la légitimité et la prophétie à la cour de Philippe-Auguste*, pp. 77–110; PYSIK, *Philippe Auguste – roi de la fin des temps?*, pp. 1165–1189, especially pp. 1174–1189; PYSIK, *Sakralizacja władzy królewskiej w ideologii monarchicznej Kapetyngów*, pp. 262–273.

12 HELGAUD DE FLEURY, *Epitoma vitae regis Roberti*, cap. 14, pp. 82–85. From 866, the Robertians and the Capetians were secular abbots of the monastery of Saint-Martin in Tours. As late as in 1202 Philip Augustus was also a secular abbot of the monastery. About the political role of the Abbey of Saint-Martin in the Capetian times, see GRIFFITHS, *The Capetian Kings and St. Martin of Tours*, pp. 83–133. Unfortunately, the author does not show any interest in the issues of the religious importance of the Abbey for the Capetian monarchs.

Cornelius and Cyprian, Denis and Geneviève (the hagiographer mentions them in this particular order). This is certainly an allusion to the monasteries in which the king was a lay abbot and other ones, which played an important part in the royal ecclesiastical domain – enjoying special royal protection – where the bodies or relics of these saints were kept.<sup>13</sup> This supposition is confirmed by the words Hugh uttered on his deathbed – according to Helgaud – addressing Robert. The king asked his son to look after and protect all the abbeys which he left under his royal, second only to God's, authority, ("que tibi post Deum perpetualiter delego").<sup>14</sup> Though, he especially obliged Robert to venerate Saint Benedict. It may be explained by Hugh's particularly strong links with the Fleury Abbey where, as the Frankish Church used to affirm, the body of the 'father of the monks' was resting. Still, Benedict's preeminence (after Our Lady) on the list of patron saints of the Capetian kings may have been made up by Helgaud, who came from the eponymous Abbey.

Helgaud also noted the great piety of Robert's mother, queen Adelaide of Poitiers, who reformed and re-founded the monasteries of Saint-Frambourg in Senlis and of Our Lady in Argenteuil. The hagiographer does not mention any relics in that context, but I shall return to the relics stored in these monasteries when discussing the Capetian monarchy in the second half of the twelfth century. Moreover, as a votive offering for Robert's recovery, Adelaide gave the Orléans cathedral a gold crucifix. This gift seems to be typical of the Christocentric piety of the tenth-eleventh century post-Carolingian Europe, which I mentioned above, when discussing the veneration of the relics by the Ottonian kings and emperors. Furthermore, Robert the Pious (996–1031) seem to intentionally support the theme of the royal Passion piety to some extent.<sup>15</sup>

Namely, during the reign of Robert the Pious, a relic of the Holy Cross was brought to France. It was a present from emperor Constantine VIII brought by Odolric, bishop of Orléans, whom the king had sent to Constantinople with gifts for the emperor: a sword with a gold hilt and a gold reliquary decorated with precious stones.<sup>16</sup> The description of the

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13 The Abbeys of Compiègne (dedicated to Our Lady, Saint Cornelius and Saint Cyprian), Fleury (Saint-Benoît-sur-Loire), Saint Martin in Tours, Saint-Aignan in Orléans, Saint-Denis of Saint Geneviève in Paris; possibly one an another Abbey dedicated to or keeping the relics of the Virgin Mary, difficult to be identified.

14 HELGAUD DE FLEURY, *Epitoma vitae regis Rotberti*, cap. 14, pp. 84–85.

15 On pious deeds of queen Adelaide see HELGAUD DE FLEURY, *Epitoma vitae regis Rotberti*, cap. 14–15, pp. 82–85.

16 RAOUL GLABER, *Histoires*, lib. IV, cap. VI, 19, pp. 256, 258: "cui isdem rex miserat per eundem episcopum spatam, capulum habens aureum, tecamque auream cum gemmis preciosissimis" (pp. 258–259). The editor and translator



exchange of the gifts between the monarchs, as related by Rodulfus Glaber, indicates that one of the aims of the envoy – if not the only one – was certainly to obtain the relic of the True Cross, which the king then deposited in Orléans Cathedral dedicated to the Holy Cross. Robert's successful efforts to obtain the relic directly from Byzantium are probably an evidence of the veneration of the True Cross, analogous to that typical of the Saxon and Salian dynasty in the eleventh century, and possibly also of the monarch's interest in the Passion relics, inspired by the Ottonian examples. However, the gift of the relic of the True Cross to the Cathedral of the Holy Cross in Orléans seems to have been meant to crown a larger and well-thought-out ideological project linked to Robert's royal political theology. It seems to be connected with the sacral topography of Orléans, implemented by the king and the successive bishops. In 989 Orléans was in fire, and the most of the city and its churches, including the cathedral, dedicated at that time to Saint Stephen, were destroyed. The reconstruction of the city, the cathedral and the collegiate church was begun by bishop Arnulf (972–1003), a close advisor of Hugh Capet and Robert the Pious. Arnulf would decided to give the cathedral back its primitive dedication to the Holy Cross, as Rodulfus Glaber claims.<sup>17</sup> This and the consecutive disasters (the Orléans heresy from 1022–1023) were foreshadowed by signs: the crying icon of Jesus in the monastery of Saint-Pierre-le-Puellier and a wolf who ran into the cathedral and began to ring the bell.<sup>18</sup> Glaber believes that these were warnings not only against the fire which was to destroy the Orléans Church in the material understanding but also against the destruction of the Temple – *eversio templi* – the appearance of heretics in Orléans. At the same time, what may be most important for us, Glaber saw in the events in Orléans a parallel to the destruction of the Basilica of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem in 1009.<sup>19</sup> As Rodulfus affirms, bishop Arnulf restored Orléans to a much greater splendour than they enjoyed before the fire: the rebuilt cathedral and the churches in the city were much more beautiful than before the catastrophe. But there was more. The uniqueness of the Orléans *ecclesia* was also

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interprets the word “teca” as referring, like “capulus,” to “spata,” i.e., the scabbard of a sword, what is highly probable, but not evident. IOGNA-PRAT, *La Croix, le moine et l'empereur*, p. 88, interprets “teca” as a reliquary.

17 RAOUL GLABER, *Histoires*, lib. II, cap. V, 9, pp. 108, 110.

18 RAOUL GLABER, *Histoires*, lib. II, cap. V, 8, pp. 106, 108.

19 RAOUL GLABER, *Histoires*, lib. III, cap. VII, 24–25, pp. 182–186. This parallel is noticed by Mathieu Arnoux (RAOUL GLABER, *Histoires*, pp. 108–109, no. 24). On the history of how the Orléans heresy was discovered and its followers punished: RAOUL GLABER, *Histoires*, lib. III, cap. VIII, 26–31, pp. 186–201.

indicated by the fact that, as Glaber says, the divine worship in the churches in Orléans was henceforth far more opulent than anywhere else.<sup>20</sup>



3. The crypt of Saint-Aignan Collegiate Church in Orléans, foundation of Robert the Pious, ca. 1028.

Whereas Glaber's account, as Matthew Gabriele rightly notes, presents a vision of Orléans as a New Jerusalem – if not of the entire West then at least of the Kingdom of the Franks<sup>21</sup> – that interpretation misses the essential part

20 “Sicque preterea factum est ut et domus ecclesie, videlicet sedis pontificalis, priore elegantior reformaretur, ipsoque suadente pontifice, ceterarum que in eadem civitate deperierant basilicarum sanctorum quorumque meritis dicatarum edes anterioribus potiores construerentur atque divinatorum operum cultus in eisdem excellentior haberetur pre omnibus;” RAOUL GLABER, *Histoires*, lib. II, cap. V, 9, pp. 108, 110.

21 GABRIELE, *An Empire of Memory. The Legend of Charlemagne, the Franks, and Jerusalem before the First Crusade*, p. 79. It is a rather risky conclusion that bishop Arnulf is seen as a new Constantine who returns the glory of Jerusalem after it was torn down by Titus, based on the notion of the *eversio templi*, which Glaber uses with reference to the destruction of the Basilica of the Holy Sepulchre in 1009, seeing in it a similarity to the Orléans heresy. In his description of the tearing down of the basilica and the massacre of the Jews in the Holy Land, despite its evident analogies to the events from the year 70, Glaber considers the events of 1009–1010 as a punishment meted out to the Jews for shedding Christ's blood – similarly to how the Church interpreted the destruction of Jerusalem by the Flavians – there are no such direct references. However, Glaber does not notice that the originator of the act of fundamental importance for creating a

played by the king of the Franks, which has to be unraveled from Glaber's chronicle. Even if the chronicler treated Robert the Pious with greatest respect and veneration, he does not provide many details about the king or his reign. Glaber views Robert as a Man of Providence sent by God to lead the Christian Church in the difficult times of misfortune, the king who, with God's help and thanks to his own piety and wisdom preserved the Church of Christ from the dangers present in those times.<sup>22</sup> Nonetheless, Glaber passes over Robert's active participation in the reconstruction of the churches in Orléans, about which we know from other sources, or king's involvement in the more opulent than elsewhere (in Gaul? in the whole West?) divine worship; this will be proved below. However, we obtain a picture of a planned action intended at making Orléans a centre of the cult of the True Cross if we put together (1) what Glaber says about the reconstruction of Orléans and rededication of the Orléans Cathedral to the Holy Cross with (2) the information about the translation of the relics of the True Cross from Constantinople by the bishop of Orléans sent to Byzantium by Robert and (3) that the relic was deposited by the king in person in the new Orléans Cathedral. We may assume that the plan was a joint enterprise of the king and the successive bishops. If we add that during the reign of Robert the Pious Orléans was one of the most important capitals of the of the West Frankish Kingdom the conclusions will be slightly different than those suggested by Gabriele. Robert was elected and anointed king in Orléans in 987<sup>23</sup> and – as Glaber says – after the fire the city retained its ancient function of the main royal capital (“regum Francorum principalis sedes regia”).<sup>24</sup> Robert II's sacral policy toward Orléans is an indication of his wish to imitate Constantinople, the imperial capital considered from Heraclius's times to have been the ‘New Jerusalem’ in the East, and as we have shown, this

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new Jerusalem in the eleventh-century Orléans – by depositing the relics of the True Cross in the Holy Cross Cathedral – was king Robert the Pious. Possibly because Glaber writes about it in a completely different place, as it happened only later, during the episcopate of Odolric, the second successor of Arnulf, and does not specify that the relic went to Orléans Cathedral; RAOUL GLABER, *Histoires*, lib. IV, cap. VI, 19, pp. 256, 258.

22 “Erat namque Rotbertus rex tunc iuvenis, ut diximus, prudens atque eruditus dulcisque eloquio ac pietate insignis. Sed divina providente clementia huiusmodi virum ad catholice plebis regimen omnium Dominus illo precipue in tempore dignatus est destinare. Nam diebus regni ipsius, elementorum etiam signis preuentibus, non modicę clades incubuere Christi ecclesię; quibus nisi isdem rex sapienter, Deo se iuvante, restitisset, seviendo multipliciter in longinquum processissent;” RAOUL GLABER, *Histoires*, lib. II, cap. I, 1, p. 90.

23 RAOUL GLABER, *Histoires*, lib. II, cap. I, 1, p. 90.

24 RAOUL GLABER, *Histoires*, lib. II, cap. V, 9, p. 110.

belief was adopted in the Carolingian West in the ninth century. This interpretation may be supported by Rodulfus Glaber's claim that Orléans had the most opulent liturgy. If we accept the hypothesis on Robert's intentional ideological imitation of Constantinople in Orléans, consequently the thesis about deliberate imitation of the example of Charles the Bald, who had wanted to establish his own Constantinople in Compiègne need to be adopted. Orléans was a good place to realize such intentions, for the anointment of Charles the Bald in 848 was well known. The status of *principalis sedes regia* assigned to Orléans by Glaber resulted from that fact to the same extent as from its Merovingian past. The cult of the True Cross – whose relics' most reliable source until 1204 was Constantinople – was the best way of making the capital of the Frankish kingdom similar to the imperial capital.

Except for the case of Orléans, little is known about the cult of the relics of the True Cross during the reign of Robert the Pious. Helgaud of Fleury, a biographer or, by intention, hagiographer of the king, wrote only about his great veneration of the Passion. According to him, Robert devoted every Holy Saturday to the adoration of the Cross.<sup>25</sup> We know much more about Robert the Pious's cult of the relics of the saints venerated in the main centres of Capetian power in the first half of the eleventh century. Helgaud of Fleury and Odorannus, a chronicler from the Abbey of Saint-Pierre-le-Vif in Sens, provide quite a detailed description of the great adoration with which the king surrounded the relics of the saints. In 1028–1029, Robert the Pious took part in two solemn translations: of Saint Savinian in Sens and Saint Aignan in Orléans. The monarch founded gold reliquaries decorated with precious stones for both these saints,<sup>26</sup> but also a new reliquary for the

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25 HELGAUD DE FLEURY, *Epitoma vitae regis Rotberti*, cap. 21, p. 105.

26 See the fn. above and *DE CONSECRATIONE BASILICAE SANCTI ANIANI*, pp. 458–471 (comment on pp. 458–466, the edition of the source on pp. 466–471); HELGAUD DE FLEURY, *Epitoma vitae regis Rotberti*, cap. 22, pp. 106–114. The first known translations of Saints Savinian, Potentian, Altinus, Eodaldus and Serotinus were conducted in 847 by archbishop Wenilo, and the king did not take part in it (as well as the translations of Saint Colomba and Saint Lupus in the eponym Abbeys, also in the absence the king); *CHRONICON SANCTI PETRI VIVI*, pp. 56, 57. The author of the chronicle says that Savinian's relics were moved to the Abbey of Saint-Pierre-le-Vif but does not specify where the bodies of the saints were taken from; he possibly meant Saint-Savinien Church, the legendary place where Saint's remains were deposited; according to the account of the Chronicle of Saint-Pierre-le-Vif Abbey (second half of the eleventh century), the reliquary and relics of Savinian, Potentian and Eodaldus were found during the works in the ruined church, conducted in 1068 (*CHRONICON SANCTI PETRI VIVI*, Appendice V, pp. 317–327).

second bishop-martyr from Sens, Saint Potentian.<sup>27</sup> However, according to Odorannus, Robert decided to do so at the very end of his life and did not survive to see its completion.<sup>28</sup>

Considering Robert the Pious's purpose in domain of political theology, to be fulfilled in Orléans (as a main royal capital city), we should emphasise king's participation in the translation of Saint Aignan in 1029<sup>29</sup> having already been a subject of numerous analyses. Aignan (Anianus, ca. 358? – ca. 453) was the bishop of Orléans in the fifth century and a legendary defender of the town against Attila. The basilica dedicated to the Saint was in the first quarter of the seventh century announced by Chlothar II to be one of the four main sanctuaries of the Frankish Kingdom, besides the basilicas of Saint-Denis, Saint-Martin in Tours, and Saint-Médard in Soissons. Over the grave of Saint Aignan – famous for its miracles<sup>30</sup> and an important regional pilgrimage centre in the eleventh century<sup>31</sup> – a monastery was built after Aignan's death (Saint-Aignan Abbey). From the seventh to the beginning of the ninth century the monks used to obey a mixed monastic rule (*regula mixta* combining elements of Benedict's and Columban's rule), then, under Theodulf's episcopate (c. 798–818), the monastery is erected to a collegiate church and the monks are replaced by canons. No later than in the tenth century Saint-Aignan Abbey was controlled by the Robertians and after Hugh Capet's accession to the throne, it became a part of the ecclesiastical Capetian royal domain. The Abbey Church burned in the city fire of 989. In 1029, a newly built Romanesque basilica was consecrated,<sup>32</sup> founded by Robert the Pious, according to the account of Helgaud of Fleury.<sup>33</sup> The

27 HELGAUD DE FLEURY, *Epitoma vitae regis Rotberti*, cap. 15, pp. 88, 89.

28 ODORANNUS DE SENS, *Opera omnia*, cap. 2, p. 110. On Robert the Pious's policy toward sanctuaries of saints and relics see also: IOGNA-PRAT, *La Maison Dieu. Une histoire monumentale de l'Église au Moyen Âge*, pp. 523–527.

29 MICHAŁOWSKI, *Depozycja ciała św. Wojciecha w roku 1000*, pp. 50–52; MICHAŁOWSKI, *The Gniezno Summit*, pp. 121–122, with bibliography.

30 *DE CONSECRATIONE BASILICAE SANCTI ANIANI*, Chapter I, pp. 458–466 (comment), pp. 466–471 (text), here pp. 466–467.

31 HEAD, *Hagiography and the Cult of Saints, the Diocese of Orléans*, 800–1200, pp. 7, 21–22, 27, 162–163, 167–169.

32 According to MICHAŁOWSKI, *The Gniezno Summit*, p. 121, fn. 132, who refers to OTTAWAY, *Collégiale Saint-Aignan*, p. 257–259, it was a massive structure with a large transept (forty-eight-meters-long and seventeen-meters-wide). Its description can also be found in Helgaud of Fleury's *Life of Robert the Pious*: the church had nineteen altars, three of which were in the choir (the main altar dedicated to Saint Peter and Paul and two over the grave of Saint Aignan: at his head and feet), more than 120 windows were knocked out; HELGAUD DE FLEURY, *Epitoma vitae regis Rotberti*, cap. 22, pp. 106–109.

33 HELGAUD DE FLEURY, *Epitoma vitae regis Rotberti*, cap. 22, pp. 106–107.

participants in the consecration were the king and eminent hierarchs of the Capetian Church: the archbishops of Sens and Tours, the bishops of Orléans, Chartres, Meaux, Beauvais, and Senlis, and the great abbots of Robert's reign: Odilo of Cluny and Gauzlin of Fleury, Robert's natural brother who was also the archbishop of Bourges. To the joy of the crowd of the faithful ("laetantes populi") who came assist to the translation Robert carried Saint Aignan's relics on his own shoulders and deposited it in the new reliquary made of gold, silver and precious stones, executed on the king's command and founded by him, like the entire basilica.<sup>34</sup>

An anonymous account of the consecration of the basilica and Helgaud's Life of Robert the Pious talks about the great reverence that the king had toward the saint, considering him not only his first protector, defender and help after God but also a protector of the entire Kingdom and all the groups of his subjects.<sup>35</sup> According to the words quoted or perhaps only attributed to him by the author, the Robert called Aignan the giver of strength to those working in the fields, solace of the worried, protector of the kings, defender of princes, and joy of the bishops; for the clergy, monks, orphans, and widows, Saint Aignan was said to have been the best and the most gracious father.<sup>36</sup> During the translation, Robert performed a symbolic act, confirming in the language of gestures that the saint was to become a particular protector of the monarch and the Kingdom of the Franks through an act of public self-humiliation (*kenosis*) in front of the relics. The king took off his purple royal gown, knelt on the floor of the newly consecrated basilica, and said a prayer in which he asked God to take into account the merits of Saint Peter and Saint Aignan (the newly consecrated altars in the choir were dedicated to both saints) so as to rule, govern, and protect the kingdom entrusted to Robert through this mercy and grace for His own and Saint Aignan's glory. The monarch emphasised Aignan's particular protection over the kingdom, calling the Saint with the ancient Roman name of "pater

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34 HELGAUD DE FLEURY, *Epitoma vitae regis Rotberti*, cap. 22, pp. 110–111.

35 "Qualem ergo circa hunc sanctum amorem pie devotionis [Rotbertus] habuerit, nullus edicere cupit, quia illum suum semper post Deum adiutorem, protectorem et defensorem habere voluit;" *DE CONSECRATIONE BASILICAE SANCTI ANIANI*, cap. 3, p. 467. Very similarly HELGAUD DE FLEURY, *Epitoma vitae regis Rotberti*, cap. 22, pp. 106–107.

36 "Quis est Anianus? [Robert the says] Anianus, Anianus est vera pro certo mes-torum consolatio, laborantium fortitudo, regum protectio, principum defensio, pontificum exultatio, clericorum, monachorum, orphano[rum], viduarum egregius et pater piissimus;" *DE CONSECRATIONE BASILICAE SANCTI ANIANI*, cap. 3, p. 467; HELGAUD DE FLEURY, *Epitoma vitae regis Rotberti*, cap. 22, pp. 106–107.

patriae,” father of the fatherland. The author of the account himself used the same name to talk about Robert.<sup>37</sup> It is hard not to agree with Roman Michałowski that Robert the Pious, “By saying a prayer of intercession, he acts, in a way, as the main liturgist,”<sup>38</sup> in the same way as Charles the Bald used to do in his time. Moreover, the king gave the saint opulent gifts and – in his last will – bequeathed this church the equipment of his own chapel, including a gold altar front (or an altarpiece), six Evangeliaries, two gold and four silver ones, a “foreign” (English?, Byzantine?) missal decorated with silver and ivory, three gold crosses, an altar mensa of gold and silver with an onyx in the centre eighteen liturgical vestments, and many other valuable objects.<sup>39</sup>

The translation of Saint Savinian, the first bishop and patron of Sens, occurred on August 25, 1028, in the Abbey of Saint-Pierre-le-Vif, at the incentive of Constance of Arles, Robert the Pious’s queen, as the translation legend contained in the *Chronicle of Saint-Pierre-le-Vif* by Odorannus of Sens says. According to Odorannus, both the chronicler of Saint-Pierre-le-Vif Abbey and the goldsmith who made Saint Savinian’s new reliquary founded by Robert the Pious, the intercession of this very saint was believed to have prevented the breakup of the royal marriage. Constance had a vision in which Saint Savinian ensured her that she would not be dismissed by Robert, which she had feared. Hence, the founding of the new reliquary and the translation – to which the queen persuaded her husband – was a manifestation of her gratitude.<sup>40</sup> Thus, Saint Savinian played to a certain

37 “Domine ... Tempora nostra prospice, regnum t[uum] quod tua pietate, misericordia, bonitate nobis datum est, rege, dispone, custodi, ad laudem et gloriam [nominis tui, sancti Aniani virtute mirabili, patris patriae, ab inimicis mirabiliter liberate],” *DE CONSECRATIONE BASILICAE SANCTI ANIANI*, cap. 6, p. 470; the missing fragments of the handwritten text were completed by Louis Auvray according to the manuscript of HELGAUD DE FLEURY, *Epitoma vitae regis Rotberti*, cap. 22, pp. 112–113; see also: MICHAŁOWSKI, *Depozycja ciała św. Wojciecha w roku 1000*, pp. 50–51.

38 MICHAŁOWSKI, *The Gniezno Summit*, p. 122. Very similarly but analyzing rather the narrative than the facts in the account, IOGNA-PRAT, *La Maison Dieu. Une histoire monumentale de l’Église au Moyen Âge*, p. 527: “Véritable maître des cérémonies, le souverain finit par s’adresser au seul Dieu. ... C’est, en quelque sorte, à l’initiative du saint roi, ou plutôt par l’intermédiaire de deux saints, Robert et Aignan, que Dieu est invité à agir dans le monde.”

39 HELGAUD DE FLEURY, *Epitoma vitae regis Rotberti*, cap. 22, pp. 112–115.

40 Constance of Arles was Robert the Pious’s third queen; ca. 1003/1004 the king sent away his previous wife, the Burgundian princess Bertha (widow of Odo I of Blois-Champagne); the marriage was childless; there were also canonical reasons for not sanctioning the it. In 1010, when the king had already had sons with Constance, Bertha began to make efforts to obtain the canonical acceptance for

extent the part of a patron saint of the royal family of Robert the Pious. The reliquary was decorated with cameos with representations of Robert and Constance, and its translation to the new confession chapel was performed by the king with his youngest son, Robert.<sup>41</sup> Regardless of the vision of queen Constance, another important reason of Robert the Pious's interest in the cult of the patron saint of Sens was politics. In 1015 the king, during a war for the succession of the Duchy of Burgundy, occupied Sens and drove out the count from the town and for some time took over the power over the county. However, the king could not keep the conquered lands, so the County of Sens was returned to his vassal. Ultimately, Sens was included in the royal domain by Henry I in 1055. According to Odorannus, he was asked to make the reliquary in 1019. It may thus be assumed that Robert's translation of Saint Savinian in 1028 was a *sui generis* manifestation of the royal sovereignty in Sens. A similar interpretation of the deposition of Saint Adalbert's body in Gniezno was presented several years ago by Roman Michałowski.<sup>42</sup> Odorannus's account brings another important piece of information. The bones of the Saint were taken out from the old lead reliquary<sup>43</sup> and put in the new one by the archbishop of Sens, Leotheric, whereas Robert the Pious moved the relics in the reliquary founded by himself and performed its deposition into the altar. However, there is no

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her union with Robert. According to Odorannus, when Robert the Pious went on a journey to Rome, Bertha followed him in the hope that her cause will be supported by the Roman Curia, what scared queen Constance. The latter found consolation in a vision: the queen saw a man in pontifical vesture (Savinian) who ensured her that her marriage was safe; ODORANNUS DE SENS, *Opera omnia*, cap. 2, pp. 100–111; MICHAŁOWSKI, *The Gniezno Summit*, pp. 122–123. Cf. DUBY, *Le chevalier, la femme et le prêtre*, pp. 83–93.

41 ODORANNUS DE SENS, *Opera omnia*, cap. 2, pp. 108–111; MICHAŁOWSKI, *The Gniezno Summit*, pp. 122–123. Overview of the reliquary and reconstruction of the inscription: ODORANNUS DE SENS, *Opera omnia*, *Introduction*, pp. 16–25.

42 MICHAŁOWSKI, *Depozycja ciała św. Wojciecha w roku 1000*, *passim*.

43 In fact, the lead coffin where the bones of the saint Savinian were deposited seems no to be so ancient. According to the account of Clarius, the author of the Chronicle of the Abbey of Saint-Pierre-le-Vif, the current archbishop of Sens, William – in the face of the Hungarians' invasion in 937 – ordered to move the relics of Saint Savinian, Saint Potentian, and other saints to the fortified church of Saint-Pierre-du-Donjon outside of the city Sens; *CHRONICON SANCTI PETRI VIVI*, pp. 74–75. The relics probably remained there until the early eleventh century, when archbishop Leotheric (999–1032) had them rediscovered; they were deposited then in lead coffins; *CHRONICON SANCTI PETRI VIVI*, pp. 108–109.



information that the king touched the relics,<sup>44</sup> like Charles the Bald used to do in Autun or Auxerre. Apparently, at that time the king's hands were not considered the most appropriate to touch the relics, so the king only "deposited the reliquary with his own hands in the place where [Saint Savinian] is venerated."<sup>45</sup> As regards the description of successive acts performed during the translation in which Robert the Pious participated, the chronicle of Odorannus seems to give the most accurate account.<sup>46</sup> Other accounts omit such details, presenting only the information that the king carried the feretory with the shrine. Thus, we do not know whether the archbishop of Sens or perhaps Robert himself assumed that the relics should be touched by a bishop but not by a king, or whether other translations in which Robert the Pious took part proceeded in the very same way. Moreover, from the eleventh century France there is no known hagiographic account, which would show the monarch to act exactly analogically to the gestures of Charles the Bald in Auxerre – i.e. to touch not only the saint's shrine, but the very saint's body. Thus, it is worthwhile to record this difference.

According to Helgaud of Fleury, the bishops and abbots present during the translation of Saint Aignan came to Orléans bringing – at king Robert's written request – the relics of other saints venerated in their dioceses or monasteries. Then they were gathered in the Orléans Church of Saint Martin, around the reliquary of Saint Aignan placed in the centre, accompanying the Saint waiting for the consecration of his new shrine and the translation. The all night adoration in the form of hymns and *laudes* sung to venerate the gathering of saints provided a spiritual preparation for the translation.<sup>47</sup> This 'convention' of the saints in Orléans at the translation of

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44 ODORANNUS DE SENS, *Opera omnia*, cap. 2, pp. 108–110.

45 "reposit cum manibus suis illo ubi in presenti veneratur;" ODORANNUS DE SENS, *Opera omnia*, cap. 2, pp. 108–110.

46 Interestingly, *Chronicon Sancti Petri Vivi* ignores the translation of 1028 and Robert the Pious's participation in it.

47 According to Helgaud, the relics of Saints Euspicius, Monitor, Flosculus, Baudelius, Scubilius, Agia and Lupus were then brought to Orléans; HELGAUD DE FLEURY, *Epitoma vitae regis Roberti*, cap. 22, pp. 110–111. The territorial princes used to do the same: in 1065 the count of Flanders, Baldwin V, ordered the bishops and abbots of Flanders to come to assist the consecration of the Collegiate Church of Saint Peter in Lille which he had founded, and to bring with them the relics stored in their churches (*FLANDRIA GENEROSA*, p. 319). In 1070 the Abbey Church of Hasnon – renovated by the count of Flanders Baldwin VI – was solemnly consecrated; at the request of the count the hierarchs of Flanders brought to Hasnon twenty-six reliquaries of saints from all over Flanders (*AUCTARIUM HASNONIENSE*, pp. 441–442; [*SECUNDUS TRACTATUS TOMELLI*], cap. 17, pp. 156–158).

Saint Aignan resembles another, equally interesting topic in the Capetian policy toward the relics. Namely, there are other examples proving that Robert the Pious perceived the cult of relics as a way of including the saints' power into the life of his Kingdom not only in the spiritual aspect but also – to use modern language – social and political ones. The saints could participate, in their reliquaries or reliquary statues (*maiestates*), in the conventions of the monarch with princes, barons and vassals, possibly playing the part of the most eminent participants and guarantors of peace pacts they all signed (*Pax Dei*).<sup>48</sup> Robert the Pious did not act in a particularly unique or unprecedented manner. Already in the late tenth century in Aquitaine, where the synods of peace appeared and developed first, duke William IV Fierebras together with the bishop of Limoges and Godfrey, the abbot of Saint-Martial in Limoges, convened in 994 a synod at Limoges – preceded by a three-day fast – at which all the bishops of Aquitaine assembled. Aquitainian hierarchs brought from their churches to Limoges the relics and bodies of the saints and a liturgical elevation from the grave (*elevatio*) of Saint Martial's body was performed in the Abbey of Saint-Martial, where the synod was gathered. According to Adémar of Chabannes, the immediate reason for convening the synod and assembling the relics was to prevent an epidemic (of ergotism);<sup>49</sup> when the disease subsided, the duke of Aquitaine and his vassals made a mutual pact of peace.<sup>50</sup> Other princes and bishops often did the same.<sup>51</sup> In 1030, after the end of the civil war with his own son, Baldwin IV, the count of Flanders, convened in Oudenaarde a

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48 On *Pax Dei* in France, see especially BARTHÉLEMY, *L'an mil et la paix de Dieu; PEACE OF GOD*; also COWDREY, *The Peace and the Truce of God*, pp. 42–67.

49 So-called Saint Anthony's Fire (*mal des ardents*), ergotism: a disease caused by intoxication due to the consumption of grains, seeds and cereals (also bread) contaminated with ergot (*Claviceps purpurea* fungus).

50 “Tunc omnes Aquitaniae episcopi in unum Lemovice congregati sunt, corpora quoque et reliquiae sanctorum undecumque sollempniter advectae sunt ibi, et corpus sancti Martialis, patronis Galliae, de sepulchro sublatum est, unde leticia immensa omnes repleti sunt et omnis infirmitas ubique cessavit, pactumque pacis et justicia a duce et principibus vicissimo foederata est;” ADEMARI CABANNENSIS, *Chronicon*, lib. III, cap. 35, p. 157; see AUGRY, *Reliques et pouvoir ducal en Aquitaine*, pp. 261–280; BOZÓKY, *La politique des reliques de Constantin à Saint Louis*, pp. 184–186.

51 HERRMANN-MASCARD, *Les reliques des saints. Formation coutumière d'un droit*, pp. 223–225; BOZÓKY, *La politique des reliques de Constantin à Saint Louis*, pp. 69–72; BOZÓKY, *Voyage de reliques et démonstration du pouvoir*, pp. 267–280; BOZÓKY, *La politique des reliques des premiers comtes de Flandre*, pp. 271–292.

peace assembly to which he called all his vassals and demanded his bishops and abbots to bring with them all the relics of Flanders, at which all those present swore mutual peace.<sup>52</sup> In 1025, the bishop of Rodez convened a peace synod in Anse to which were brought statues-reliquaries (*maiestates*) of Saint Marius, Amantius, and Saturnin, as well as many other relics.<sup>53</sup> There are many similar examples,<sup>54</sup> but we do not need to mention them all. Our aim is only to present the right context for the peace assembly convened by Robert II in Héry in 1024, aimed at making peace in the Duchy of Burgundy after the long-lasting war for succession after the king's uncle, duke Odo-Henry. Robert the Pious ordered all the bishops and abbots from Burgundy to come to the assembly with all the relics stored in their churches so that those who would refuse accepting and maintaining the peace required by the king did that through fear of God and the Saints present in the relics.<sup>55</sup> Interestingly, we can read in *History of the Bishops of Auxerre* that Hugh, the bishop of Auxerre, flatly refused to give the body of saint Germanus<sup>56</sup>, thus he did not appear at the synod in Héry. I do refrain from explaining the bishop's opposition with an unnoticed earlier general change of views on the sacral essence of the royal authority and the resulting revaluation of attitudes toward the royal rights to personal participation

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52 ANNALES ELMARENSES, pp. 89–90.

53 LIBER MIRACULORUM SANCTE FIDIS, lib. I, cap. 28, pp. 132–133; BOZÓKY, *Voyage de reliques et démonstration du pouvoir*, p. 274 (erroneously says that the synod took place in Agen); cf. PYSIAK, *Gest monarchy i wizualizacja symboliki rytuałów związanych z kultem relikwii*, pp. 171–172; PYSIAK, *The Monarch's Gesture and Visualisation of Rituals*, p. 34; PYSIAK, *Teatralizacja kultu relikwii w średniowieczu*, p. 36–37.

54 A rich anthology of similar cases can be found in the above-quoted works by Édina Bozóky.

55 CHRONICON SANCTI PETRI VIVI, pp. 114–117; HISTORIA EPISCOPORUM AUTISSIODORENSIUM, cap. 49, pp. 171–172; CHRONICON AUTISSIODORENSE, p. 275; MIRACULA S. BERCHARII, cap. 27, p. 859; BARTHÉLEMY, *L'an mil et la paix de Dieu*, p. 432; cf. RICHES, *The Peace of God, the 'Weakness' of Robert the Pious, and the Struggle for the German Throne*, pp. 202–222. ACTA S. VEROLI PRESBYTERI (Antwerp-Brussels), cap. II, 6, p. 385: “religiosus princeps Rotbertus nitens pacem ... jussit cunctos valentes episcopos occurrere et abbates apud Airyacum ... et cum sanctorum pignoribus adesse; quatenus si malitiae amatores minus libenter pro terreni principatus districtione pacificari vellent, saltem pro Dei et sanctorum ejus, quos praesentes seque quoddammodo expectantes viderent, timore, pacis concordiam et promptius firmandam exciperent; et sanctorum, in quorum praesentia firmasset, semper memores, irruptam arctuis conservarent.” See also KOZIOL, *Begging Pardon and Favor*, pp. 125–128.

56 HISTORIA EPISCOPORUM AUTISSIODORENSIUM, cap. 49, p. 172.

in the *sacred* of the cult of relics. Instead, it seems that bishop's of Auxerre refusal was rather due to the weakness of Robert's power in Burgundy or possibly to the bishop's resentment toward the king who did not hesitate to besiege Auxerre during the war.<sup>57</sup> The relics present at peace synods or assemblies were probably meant to give a sacral sanction to the oaths made by the participants in order to preserve the peace. Breaking the oath on the relics<sup>58</sup> would not only result in perjury but also sacrilege. It is a well-known and described in detail aspect of the medieval religious mentality, so we do not need to dwell on this matter. The important observation is that this element of the cult of relics with the most literal political character was present in the religious policy of Robert the Pious, who may have drawn it from his mighty vassal, duke William V the Great of Aquitaine (r. 990–1030), and the bishops of *regnum Aquitanorum*. The inspirations of the Aquitanian model of religiosity of the political elites are well known in historiography and have still been investigated, along with the religious policy of William the Great and the cult of relics and saints in Aquitaine on shaping the spirituality in Gaul in ca. 1000, as exemplified by the peace movement. However, it seems that the studies on the issue are far from completion. When talking about the princely cult of relics in Aquitaine, we should mention the *inventio* of the head of Saint John the Baptist in the Abbey of Angély in 1010. As we know from the account by Adémar of Chabannes – who questioned the authenticity of the relics – the duke of Aquitaine gave the event a very high religious and political rank. He ordered to place the relics in public view (*ostensio reliquiarum*),<sup>59</sup> certainly aiming to spread the news about the *inventio*, and he indeed succeeded to get it widely renowned. Angély was visited by Robert the Pious with his queen Constance, the king of Navarre, Sancho III, the duke of Gascony, Sancho, and the count of Blois and of Champagne, Odo II. This clearly shows the prestige of the duke of Aquitaine, whose princely authority authenticated the relics (*authentificatio*), but for us the most important is the fact that

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57 The bishop's statement quoted by the chronicler does not concern the sacral attributes of the king's power at all. Bishop Hugh merely says that it is unheard of for the body of Saint Germanus to leave its sanctuary for any reason: "Absit ut ossa incomparabilis viri pro quacunqua re aliquando commoveatur;" *HISTORIA EPISCOPORUM AUTISSIODORENSIUM*, cap. 49, p. 172. See also KOZIOL, *Begging Pardon and Favor*, pp. 125–128.

58 The bibliography on the subject is very rich, see the already quoted BARTHÉLEMY, *L'an mil et la paix de Dieu*, p. 497, and a detailed discussion of the phenomenon in HERRMANN-MASCARD, *Les reliques des saints. Formation coutumière d'un droit*, pp. 235–270.

59 ADEMARI CABANNENSIS, *Chronicon*, lib. III, cap. 56, pp. 175.

Robert the Pious decided to undertake a journey to the distant periphery of his Kingdom where he actually did not have any power, to venerate the rediscovered relics of the saint. The king offered the Abbey of Angély – that is, to Saint John the Baptist – a pure-gold thirty-pound *conca* (a cup or a bowl) and rich liturgical vestments.<sup>60</sup> We should probably interpret this as an intention to fulfil his royal duty toward the saint rediscovered in his kingdom.

The hagiographic writings seem to indicate that Robert the Pious may have had at his disposal at least part of the relics collected in the Abbey of Saint-Denis, which is suggested by his gift to the church of Saint-Denis in Fleury-sur-Loire, founded by Helgaud, the relics of Saint Denis, Rusticus and Eleutherius.<sup>61</sup> In an anonymous booklet describing the relics preserved in Saint-Denis and how they are worshipped, there appears a mention about Robert's special veneration of Saint Hippolytus. Every year, the king participated in the officium held in Saint-Denis in Saint Hippolytus's honour by singing in the choir together with the cantor, dressed in the royal cape, and holding the sceptre.<sup>62</sup> Robert's devotion to Saint Hippolytus is also confirmed by Helgaud who affirms that the king used to spend the second week of Eastertide in Saint-Denis, when the feast anniversary of Saint Hippolytus's translation (764) was annually celebrated.<sup>63</sup> Besides, Helgaud writes that Robert the Pious was a protector and a special founder of the Abbey, but he does not offer specific examples. We know that the king issued only several charters for the monastery – very important indeed because they restored immunity to the Saint-Denis – and invited Odilo of Cluny to reform the Abbey.<sup>64</sup> However, Helgaud does not mention Saint Denis among the saints whom Hugh Capet considered as the special *amici* of the dynasty and ordered Robert the Pious to venerate in particular. Still, when commenting on the gift of a magnificent chasuble made by Robert's mother, queen Adelaide, to the Abbey, Helgaud writes that the queen considered Saint Denis as one of the closest *amici* among the saints and herself as his servant, which conviction she passed to her offspring. The queen also hoped that – thanks to her devotion to Saint Denis – she would receive the same grace of God as the Saint enjoyed according to his hagiography, namely that God would never refuse any supplication made through his intercession.<sup>65</sup>

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60 If Adémar's information is true, the vase weighed almost ten kilograms.

61 HELGAUD DE FLEURY, *Epitoma vitae regis Rotberti*, cap. 24, pp. 116–119.

62 *Ex Libro ms. de reliquiis Ecclesiae S. Dionysii*, RHF, vol. X, p. 381.

63 HELGAUD DE FLEURY, *Epitoma vitae regis Rotberti*, cap. 14, pp. 82–83.

64 WALDMAN, *Saint-Denis et les premiers Capétiens*, pp. 193–194.

65 HELGAUD DE FLEURY, *Epitoma vitae regis Rotberti*, cap. 14, p. 83.

Furthermore, in the mortuary roll of abbot Vitalis of Savigny, compiled in ca. 1122–1123, Robert the Pious and Henry I are quoted as the benefactors of Saint-Denis, together with Dagobert and Charles the Bald. In 1109, abbot Adam of Saint-Denis established an anniversary liturgy (*anniversarium*) to commemorate the kings considered as founders of the Abbey, and Robert the Pious was recollected together with Dagobert and Charles the Bald as one of the Abbey's main benefactors.<sup>66</sup> Despite all that, Saint Denis's cult does not seem to be a leading cult during the first Capetians.

A late tradition, written down in the twelfth century and developed later, connects both Robert the Pious and his father and grandfather with the cult of Saint Magloire, whose relics were worshipped in the chapel royal of the Palais de la Cité in Paris and who was the patron of one of the Parisian abbeys.<sup>67</sup> According to *Auctarium Maglorianum*,<sup>68</sup> an appendix to the abbreviated version of *De modernis Francorum regibus* by Hugh of Fleury, the monks from the Abbey of Léhon in Brittany brought to Paris the body of Saint Magloire and many other Breton saints to preserve the relics from the Norman invasions. Then, Robert's grandfather, the Duke of the Franks, Hugh the Great, presented in the text as the actual ruler of the Kingdom, ordered to deposit the holy relics in Saint Bartholomew's oratory in the Palais de la Cité where they were venerated since then.<sup>69</sup> When peace returned to Gaul, Normandy, and Brittany, the Breton monks asked for Hugh's permission to disperse across Gaul in order to preach the Word of God or to return to Brittany. Hugh unwillingly allowed them to do that, but he kept a part of the relics and deposited them in the Abbey of Saint-Magloire, which he had founded in Paris. The author of *Auctarium* confuses the figures of Hugh the Great and Hugh Capet when he mentions the rich gifts he gave to the abbey with his wife, Adelaide – a descendant of Charlemagne (Adelaide of Poitiers, the wife of Hugh Capet).

The Duke of the Franks is shown in *Auctarium Maglorianum* as he would be the actual king, since its author says that Hugh "tam regali quam sacerdotali auctoritate," thus had actual authority both in the ecclesiastical and lay sphere. We read in *Auctarium* that the duke gave the monks freedom to choose their abbot among themselves, and he ordered a charter

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66 On the relations of the first Capetians with Saint-Denis see WALDMAN, *Saint-Denis et les premiers Capétiens*, pp. 191–197.

67 DEUFFIC, *L'exode des corps saints hors Bretagne (VII<sup>e</sup>-XII<sup>e</sup> s.)*, pp. 355–423.

68 AUCTARIUM MAGLORIANUM, "Appendix 1," pp. 415–419 (fragments).

69 AUCTARIUM MAGLORIANUM, cap. 1–3, pp. 415–417. Besides the body of Saint Magloire, these were the relics of Saints Samson of Dol, Machutus (Maclovius, Malo), Senator, Léonor (Lunarius), Gwenhael, Briomaglus (Brieuc), Corentin, Leuthern, Levin, Ciferianus, Paternus, Scubilion, and Budoc.

to be issued for the Saint-Magloire Abbey in the names of kings Lothair and Louis V, which was confirmed by the royal seal.<sup>70</sup> As for Robert the Pious, he obtained from Breton monastery located by his grandfather in Orléans the relics (*membra*) of Saint Samson in return for granting the Breton monks the permission to return to Brittany. Then the king gave the relics to the church of Saint Symphorian in Orléans. At the request of the monks of Saint-Magloire Abbey in Paris, Robert also urged the count of Brittany to yield them the deserted church and monastery of Saint Magloire in Léhon. Redecorated and reconsecrated, it became a filial monastery of the Saint-Magloire Abbey in Paris.<sup>71</sup>

Noteworthy, there are two major ideological aspects in the story of the Breton saints worshipped by the Robertians and the first Capetians, complementing each other yet coming from two different orders: rhetoric and the pragmatics of power. What is most striking in the rhetorical layer is that the progenitor of the dynasty is presented as a prince in fact fulfilling the functions of the king, a king *de facto*, even if not *de iure*. He looks after the Church of the Kingdom of the Franks and provides protection for the sanctuaries of the saints endangered by wars and invasions. Thus, he is worth of the crown, although – as far as we know – such a claim never explicitly appears in the source text.<sup>72</sup> However, the ideological meaning of Hugh the Great's (or Hugh Capet's) portrait presented in *Auctarium Maglorianum* is similar to that from the story about Saint Walaric's and Saint Richarius's prophecy. Importantly, such an account is found in a twelfth-century manuscript, thus one written when the Capetians had already reigned for generations and being an appendix to an epitome from Hugh of Fleury's book on the history of the recently ruling kings of France. Certainly, the author of *Auctarium* considered the veneration of Magloire and other Breton saints as an important contribution in explaining the road the Capetians had to cover to achieve royal power. The narrative presents several generations of a princely family consistently venerating the relics of the saints transferred from Brittany to Paris and Orléans; they did the same after having gained

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70 *AUCTARIUM MAGLORIANUM*, cap. 5, p. 418. The foundation most probably took place in 930; thus, during the reign of Louis IV d'Outremer and during the lifetime of Hugh the Great, who died in 956; the charter for Saint-Magloire on behalf of Lothair and Louis V may have been issued after the crowning of the latter and during Lothair's and Hugh Capet's lifetime (979–986); DEUFFIC, *L'exode des corps saints hors Bretagne (VII<sup>e</sup>-XII<sup>e</sup> s.)*, pp. 362–363, 378–379.

71 *AUCTARIUM MAGLORIANUM*, cap. 7–8, pp. 418–419.

72 I used a partial edition of *Auctarium Maglorianum*, the entire text is available only in the manuscripts quoted by DEUFFIC, *L'exode des corps saints hors Bretagne (VII<sup>e</sup>-XII<sup>e</sup> s.)*, p. 415.

the throne. It is also important that queen Adelaide – the mother of the new dynasty – reappears there in the context of the cult of the saints practiced by the first Capetians. The *virtus* and *amicitia* of the saints, helpful for the dynasty, was ensured by its both parents. The mention that the queen was a descendant of the Carolingians certainly served as additional legitimation of the new kings' rights. The aspect of the pragmatics of the royal power expressed in the *Auctarium Maglorianum* is a slightly paradoxical illustration of the Robertians' approach toward the relics. It seems to be very similar to that typical of the territorial princes, who in the tenth and eleventh centuries were taking over royal prerogatives and sacral competences hitherto reserved to the king in order to extend their power and build the identity of territorial principalities using the cult of saints and relics. The best example of such policy are probably the counts of Flanders, but this phenomenon can be also easily noticed in Aquitaine and Normandy.<sup>73</sup>

### 3. Philip I, the Holy Shroud of the Lord of Compiègne, and Other Translations during his Reign

Until the early twelfth century, among Hugh Capet's successors it was Robert the Pious who showed the greatest sensitivity to and involvement in the cult of saints and relics. Robert's two consecutive successors, especially Henry I (1031–1060), seem to have attached less importance to this form of piety, as there are no records of their participation in the adoration of the saints and their relics. It is especially surprising that Henry I did not participate personally in the solemn ostension of the relics of Saint Denis and his companions, Rusticus and Eleutherius, in 1053 in the Abbey of Saint-Denis, which was a response to the alleged discovery of Saint Denis's body in the Abbey of Saint Emmeram in Regensburg. According to the account of the monk of Saint-Denis, Haymo, Henry was represented by his younger brother Odo during the ostension made in order to prove that the

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<sup>73</sup> Generally on the participation of the French princes in the cult of relics, see BOZÓKY, *La politique des reliques de Constantin à Saint Louis*, pp. 178–201; with quite exhaustive bibliography referring to the French principalities, including works by Edina Bozóky. It is worth mentioning several works about Flanders: BOZÓKY, *La politique des reliques des premiers comtes de Flandre*, pp. 271–292; Normandy: EHLERS, *Politik und Heiligenverehrung in Frankreich*, pp. 155–160; TRÂN-DUC, *Les princes normands et les reliques (X<sup>e</sup>-XI<sup>e</sup> siècles)*, pp. 525–561; TRÂN-DUC, *De l'usage politique du Précieux Sang dans l'Europe médiévale*, pp. 93, 94, 99 et passim; Aquitaine: AUGRY, *Reliques et pouvoir ducal en Aquitaine*, pp. 261–280; EHLERS, *Politik und Heiligenverehrung in Frankreich*, pp. 162–174.



relics from Regensburg were spurious. Henry I is said to have considered himself to be too sinful to see with his own eyes the glorious body of the holy martyr. The king only sent as a gift to the saint a red purple cloth to wrap the saintly body. It is all the more surprising because Haymon earlier wrote that after the monks of Saint Emmeram had announced the *inventio* of Saint Denis's body, the king of France together with the abbot of Saint-Denis sent envoys to emperor Henry III in order to lodge a protest against the Regensburg usurpation.<sup>74</sup>

After the ostension had been accomplished and the integrity of saintly bodies and Odo informed the king about the positive result of opening the reliquaries, Henry I went barefoot to the Abbey and, bearing in mind his own sinfulness, asked the saints for intercession, then left as a gift the above-mentioned purple cloth, which had already been offered in his behalf by his younger brother.<sup>75</sup> Thus, the king was not particularly generous. Moreover, Henry seem have doubted that the ceremony would be successful, perhaps having given credence to the claims of Regensburg, even if Haymo said otherwise. Nonetheless, in Haymon's opinion, the king's gift meant that the king believed without seeing.<sup>76</sup>

We also cannot ascertain that Philip I was as interested in the cult of relics as Robert the Pious. We do know about Philip's attachment and devotion to the alleged resting place of the body of Saint Benedict, that is, the Abbey of Fleury (Saint-Benoît-sur-Loire) which then enjoyed an intellectual and artistic heyday and where Philip decided to be buried, contrarily to his Capetian predecessors, all having chosen Saint-Denis as their restplace. The only example of a translation ideologically important for the Capetian monarchy in which Philip I partook was that of the Shroud of the Lord stored in the Abbey of Saint Corneille in Compiègne to a new reliquary which most probably took place in 1079.<sup>77</sup> Still, one cannot overlook the fact that the new reliquary was not founded by the Capetian, but by the queen Matilda of England, William the Conqueror's wife. We have information about the translation only from indirect sources: the charter issued by Philip I in favour of the Abbey only in 1092 and the Life of Simon of

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74 RHF, vol. XI, pp. 467–474. On the alleged *inventio* of Saint Denis in the Abbey of Saint Emmeram in Regensburg, see above “The content and dating of the Descriptio” in Part 1, Chapter 1.

75 HAYMO, cap. 8, RHF, vol. XI, p. 473.

76 HAYMO, cap. 7, RHF, vol. XI, p. 472.

77 LEVILLAIN, *Essai sur les origines du Lendit*, pp. 261–262; GABRIELE, *The Provenance of the Descriptio qualiter Karolus Magnus*, pp. 99–101; VIEILLARD-TROÏEKOUROFF, *La chapelle du palais de Charles le Chauve*, p. 102.

Crépy (after 1109), count of Valois, Amiens, Bar and Vexin, who abandoned his earthly position and took the vows in 1077. The Life of Simon of Crépy, recognized as a saint, only says that Philip I was present at the translation.<sup>78</sup> We learn more from the royal charter in which the canons of Saint-Corneille are given the right to organize an annual fair in the Mid-Lent.<sup>79</sup> The document briefly relates the translation of the Holy Shroud and its circumstances. According to charter's narrative, the king announced that the privilege to organize a fair was given to the canons to commemorate the translation which had been conducted on the *Laetare* Sunday, which is exactly in Mid-Lent. As Matthew Gabriele rightly notes, establishing the fair has an analogy in establishing Lendit in Saint-Denis: it also takes place on the day of a *festum anniversarium* of the translation and of the *ostensio reliquiarum*.<sup>80</sup> In the charter, Philip I states that he decided to conduct the translation, in view of the favours God extended to him, and in response to the supplications of the canons from Saint-Corneille, and sollicitations of the queen of England. The introductory part of the narrative suggests that the deposition of the relics was performed by the king himself: "we decided that we should [or, literally: we were pleased to] place the relics of our Lord and Saviour – which had been aforesaid piously deposited in a vessel of ivory in the revered royal palace in Compiègne by emperor Charles, a great Christian man, and a magnificent monarch of the entire world – in another vessel, decorated with gold, intaglios, and precious stones, given by the said queen of England to the church in Compiègne."<sup>81</sup>

However, the next part of the charter suggests that Philip may not have taken part in the translation personally. Its interpretation is difficult due to its next syntactic structure, very complicated and inconsistent with the earlier part of the narrative but, as it seems, used intentionally. In the light

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78 *VITA BEATI SIMONIS*, cap. 11, coll. 1219.

79 *RECUEIL DES ACTES DE PHILIPPE I*, no. 175; *CARTULAIRE DE SAINT-CORNEILLE DE COMPIÈGNE*, no. 22, pp. 52–54; MOREL, *Le Saint Suaire de Saint-Corneille de Compiègne*, pp. 22–26.

80 GABRIELE, *The Provenance of the Descriptio qualiter Karolus Magnus*, pp. 98–102.

81 "Ammonitus divina Dei propitiatione et fratrum Compendiensis ecclesie supplici commonitione et precipue creberrima flagitatione christianissime Mathildis, Anglorum regine, *placuit nobis, ut* [emphasis: JP] Domini et Salvatoris reliquias, quas imperator Carolus, vir christianissimus, et totius orbis monarcha magnificus, Compendii in loco regio et venerabili posuerat et cum summa devotione in vase eburneo considerat, inde in aliud vas quod predicta Anglorum regina auro gemmis et preciosissimis lapidibus mirifice ornatum et decoratum ecclesie Compendiensi transmiserat, *deponeremus* [emphasis: JP];" *CARTULAIRE DE SAINT-CORNEILLE DE COMPIÈGNE*, no. 22, p. 53.

of the meaning of the preceding sentence, the succeeding one should be interpreted as follows: after the clergy had established the date of the translation on the Mid-Lent Sunday and fasted for three days, the relics were exposed on the altar, then the king placed the Holy Shroud in the new reliquary. What is surprising and puzzling is that the consecutive actions are described with the use of a structure contrasting to the explicit expression of the will of the founder from the first part of the charter (“placuit nobis ut ... deponeremus”), that is, the passive voice (“exposita ..., in ... vase aureo deposita”), which may mean that the king did not perform them himself.<sup>82</sup> Thus, both the date of the translation of the Holy Shroud to the new reliquary and the translation itself seems to have been established by the bishops, while the king merely accepted it and appeared at the ceremony; after all, the undertaking referred to the royal palace abbey located in the royal estate (*locum regium*). Noteworthy, the Life of Simon of Crépy devotes one of its fourteen chapters to Simon’s stay in Compiègne during the translation ceremony, and it does not mention any important part played by the king: the text only states that the king was present and talked with Simon. Let us note that when the translation of the body of Saint Helena was to be conducted in the Abbey of Hautvillers at the incentive of its abbot, Notcher (or Nocher), in 1095,<sup>83</sup> the date was established by the archbishop of Reims and his three bishop suffragans during the consecration of the new bishop of Châlons, Philip of Champagne. However, because a synod of the bishops of Northern France from the provinces of Reims, Sens, and Tours was to be held during the week after the consecration, at which also Philip I was to be present,<sup>84</sup> the archbishop and his suffragans came to the conclusion that such an important decision (the translation was intended to confirm the authenticity of the body of Saint Helena, which, as Notcher says, many Franks

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82 “Factum est igitur hoc sicut ordinatum et dispositum fuerat ab episcopis et Christi fidelibus die dominica Letare Iherusalem que est media Quadragesime et peractis triduanis jejuniis exposita sunt illa sacrorum sacra Linteamen videlicet in quo Dominicum corpus in sepulchro jacuisse perhibetur quod Sindonem secundum Evangelistam nominamus et ex eburneo in supradicto vase aureo deposita cum gratiarum actione et votis fidelium congregata innumerabili et infinita christianorum multitudine;” CARTULAIRE DE SAINT-CORNEILLE DE COMPIÈGNE, no. 22, p. 53. The punctuation marks added arbitrarily by the editor have been removed.

83 “ut revelatio corporis sanctae Helenae digna translatione fieret, et dubitantibus Francigenis certae fidei testimonium appareret;” NOCHER, *Epistola super translationem s. Helenae*, p. 607–611.

84 “Verum quoniam pro negotiis regni statuendis octavo die occursuri erant glorioso regi Philippo cum aliis Galliarum coepiscopis;” NOCHER, *Epistola super translationem s. Helenae*, p. 607.

used to question) should be confirmed by a joint acceptance of the princes, bishops and abbots in the presence of the King in Majesty and announced in a circular royal edict.<sup>85</sup> Contrary to many claims,<sup>86</sup> there is no evidence that Philip I took part in the translation of Saint Helena. Notcher does not even say that Philip ever had such an intention.<sup>87</sup> According to Notcher's account the king's main occupation at that time was the visit of pope Urban II to his kingdom and the synod in Clermont, where Philip allegedly went to meet the pope, and on the day of the translation he met the archbishop of Reims in Chalon-sur-Saône in order to deal with this very issue. The only lay princes present at the ceremony of translation in Hautvillers were the count of Champagne and Blois Stephen-Henry and his brother, the count of Troyes Hugh, together with their wives: Adele of England, William the Conqueror's daughter, and Constance, daughter of Philip I. The absent archbishop of Reims was represented by his first suffragan, the bishop of Soissons, and the newly consecrated bishop of Châlons-en-Champagne, Philip of Champagne, Stephen-Henry's and Hugh's younger brother.<sup>88</sup> The royal *placet* for the translation, confirmed at the synod or rather during *curia coronata* attended by the bishops from Northern France was aimed at increasing the prestige of the ceremony and of the House of Champagne, apparently drawing the major benefits of the translation. Thus, it is possible that Philip I was present in Compiègne in 1079 only because the event took place in his royal palace church in his royal domain, just like Hautvillers was in the land of the House of Champagne. However, this does not mean that Philip I did not attempt at giving the Compiègne translation of the Holy Shroud an ideological meaning, creating a specific link between the monarchy and the *sacred*. Indeed, the king lusted to draw all possible political

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85 "placuit ut tantae rei consensus in conspectu regis et procerum eius referrentur et edicto ipsius, sive omnium aulicorum, et episcoporum, qui venturi ibi erant, authentica confirmatione corroborentur. Omnes unanimi concordia consenserunt, Rex cum optimatibus et palatinis et totius regiae dignitatis fascibus, archiepiscopi cum suffraganeis et abbatibus, et reliquis ecclesiastici ordinis gradibus;" NOCHER, *Epistola super translationem s. Helenae*, p. 607.

86 HERRMANN-MASCARD, *Les reliques des saints. Formation coutumière d'un droit*, p. 179; BOZÓKY, *La politique des reliques de Constantin à Saint Louis*, p. 84.

87 There is no confirmation in the sources (yet quoted to support this claim) that Philip I was present at the reconsecration of the Abbey Church in Hasnon; cf. BOZÓKY, *La politique des reliques de Constantin à Saint Louis*, p. 186. In both cases, the sources quoted by the authors only state that the described events took place during Philip's reign (AUCTARIUM HASONIENSE, pp. 441–442; SECUNDUS TRACTATUS TOMELLI, cap. 17, pp. 156–158).

88 NOCHER, *Epistola super translationem s. Helenae*, p. 608.

and religious benefits of it even though he did not even command or found the reliquary. It is also possible that the king tried later to cover up the actual circumstances of the translation and pretend that it was performed at his own initiative. This is suggested by the strange, unclear syntax of Philip's charter for Compiègne Abbey and the references made in it to the heritage of Charles the Bald, to whom Philip liked to make references and present him as his role model, which has been convincingly proved recently by Matthew Gabriele also in respect to the translation of the Holy Shroud in 1079.<sup>89</sup> There are at least four more charters issued by Philip for the canons from Compiègne in which the king refers to the heritage and memory of Charles the Bald, even if the Holy Shroud is not mentioned in its contents; all of them come from the time after 1079.<sup>90</sup> The most interesting of them seems to be the privilege issued at the synod in Compiègne in 1085, exempting the Chapter of Compiègne Abbey from the bishop's authority, and thus submitting it to the exclusive authority of the king.<sup>91</sup> Thus, it is possible to conclude that the Compiègne Abbey was important for Philip I rather as an old centre of the Carolingian power and that was the predominant aspect of the king's ideological attitude toward the monastery. Issuing a charter recalling the translation performed thirteen years earlier aimed rather at giving more prestige to the fair organized by the Abbey, and the relic stored in the monastery was meant to be a magnet that would draw the public to the event. As there are no other known references to the Holy Shroud in Philip's charters<sup>92</sup> contrarily to the frequent royal pretensions to present himself as Charles the Bald's true successor and heir, it suggests that Philip I was not particularly interested in the relic itself. It seems Philip I considered the translation of 1079 as a good opportunity to remind once again that he was the successor of the emperors and, thanks to the clever discourse of the charter of 1092, to make an impression that – like Charles the Bald – Philip controlled the sphere of the sacred through his alleged involvement with the cult of relics.

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89 GABRIELE, *The Provenance of the Descriptio qualiter Karolus Magnus*, pp. 93–118.

90 *CARTULAIRE DE SAINT-CORNEILLE DE COMPIÈGNE*, no. 17, pp. 41–43, no. 19, pp. 46–48, no. 21, pp. 49–50, no. 27, pp. 58–60.

91 *CARTULAIRE DE SAINT-CORNEILLE DE COMPIÈGNE*, no. 17, pp. 41–43.

92 It should not be forgotten that the complete collection of Capetian charters from before 1194, including those of Philip I, has not been preserved.



## Chapter 3. Revival of the Royal Cult of Relics in Twelfth-Century France: The Cult of Saints and Relics during the Reigns of Louis VI, Louis VII, and Philip Augustus

### 1. The *Ostensio* of the Relics of the Crown of Thorns and the Nail of the True Cross in Saint-Denis

The reign of Louis VI (1108–1137) was a turning point for the Capetian monarchy for many reasons, both politically and in relation to the ideology of royal power.<sup>1</sup> This change concerns the cult of relics as well, and it seems to have been engendered especially by the activity of Suger, Louis's friend since their childhood and the abbot of Saint-Denis from 1122. However, before we present the royal involvement in the cult of relics in the twelfth century, we must shed some light on the *ostensio* of the relics of the Crown of Thorns and the Nail of the Holy Cross in the Abbey of Saint-Denis that we know from Suger's description. This text is Suger's childhood (*pueritia*) memoir – so of the period between the age of eight and thirteen – thus probably between 1088–1094.<sup>2</sup> It is included in a booklet written by Suger in 1144–1148 and describing the consecration of the Abbey Church in Saint-Denis newly rebuilt in Gothic style under his direction.<sup>3</sup> Suger used the description of the public demonstration of the Passion relics as an argument to justify the need to expand the church, too small to house the crowds of pilgrims. The best example were the shocking scenes which happened during the ostension. The pilgrims who came to see and kiss *insignia Passionis* could not move because the church was so crowded, and they had to stand still like marble statues. Women fainted and, trodden by the pushing crowd, cried as if they were in labour. Sometimes the pressure of the crowd was so

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1 For the most recent and very reliable political biography of Louis VI, or rather a monograph of his reign, and at the same time a synthesis of the history of the Capetian monarchy in that period, see BOURNAZEL, *Louis VI le Gros*. The only disappointing aspect of this work is the scope of research on the religious foundations of the ideology of the royal power, which does not exceed the earlier findings and well-known issues.

2 See ARNOLD, *Kind*, coll. 1142.

3 SUGER, *Scriptum consecrationis Ecclesiae Sancti Dionysii*, cap. 2, pp. 8–10.

intense that the monks had to save their lives and the integrity of the relics by jumping out from the church through the window.

Sometimes one could see an amazing thing: the crowding people entering [the church] to venerate and kiss the holy relics of the Nail and the Lord's Crown were so squashed by those already present inside that nobody of the countless thousands of people could move a leg; they could do nothing but stand dumbfounded like marble statues; what they could only do was loudly scream. Women were in a particularly difficult situation: crushed in the crowd by strong men, as if squashed in a press, with horribly pale faces, they cried as if in labour. Many, pitifully trodden, were lifted and carried above the heads of the crowd with the charitable help of the men standing next to them, as it was impossible for them to walk on the floor. Many of the women breathed their last on the monks' meadow, to the despair of all present. The monks who were showing the signs of the Passion, having lost their hearts at the sight of the confusion and discord among the faithful, many times saved themselves by jumping with the relics out of the windows.<sup>4</sup>

The quoted fragment is the earliest preserved description of a public presentation of the Passion relics in the Abbey of Saint-Denis, besides the apocryphal account from *Descriptio qualiter* of the alleged *ostensio* conducted in 862 at the request of Charles the Bald. However, the latter is a hagiographic fiction that does not aspire to be an eye-witness account like Suger's memoir. Let us remember that we agreed with the claim of Léon Levillain and Rolf Grosse that the origins of the *Indictum* in Saint-Denis – a public demonstration of the Passion relics – should be related with the alleged public presentation of these relics in the mid-eleventh century, when they probably accompanied the bodies of Saint Denis, Rusticus and Eleutherius,

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4 “Videres aliquando, mirabile visu, quod innitentibus ingredi ad venerationem et deosculationem sanctarum reliquiarum Clavi et Corone Domini tanta congeste multitudinis opponebatur repugnantia, ut inter innumera populorum milia et ipsa sui compressione nullus pedem movere valeret, nullus aliud ex ipsa sui constrictione quam sicut statua marmorea stare, stupere, quod unum supererat vociferare. Mulierum autem tanta et tam intolerabilis erat angustia, ut in commixtione virorum fortium sicut prelo depresso, quasi imaginata morte exanguem faciem exprimere, more parturientium terribiliter conclamare, plures earum miserabiliter decalcatas, pio virorum suffragio super capita hominum exaltatas, tamquam pavimento abhorreres, incedere, multas etiam extremo singultantes spiritu, in prato fratrum cunctis desperantibus anhelare. Fratres etiam insignia Dominice passionis advenantibus exponentes, eorum angariis et contentionibus succumbentes, nullo divertere habentes, per fenestras cum reliquiis multoties effugerunt. Quod cum scholaris puer inter fratres erudirer audiebam, extra juvenis dolebam, maturus corrigi affectuose appetebam;” SUGER, *Scriptum consecrationis Ecclesiae Sancti Dionysii*, cap. 2, pp. 8–11.



shown at that time (because of the dispute between the Abbeys of Saint-Denis and Saint Emmeram), so it would date back to the early 1050s.

However, Suger's description suggests one surprising conclusion: to persuade the readers – probably mostly the monks from Saint-Denis but possibly also from other monasteries – that it was necessary to provide funds for redeveloping and extending the church, Suger used an example of the tragic crowding of the faithful during the ostension of the Passion relics and not, for instance, during Saint Denis's festivities, even if he affirmed before that the intercession of the martyrs was one of the main reasons – besides the splendours of the church – of the massive turnout of the faithful to Saint-Denis. Thus, we may risk a claim that the relics of the Holy Nail and the Crown of Thorns and their annual demonstration were in the second half of the eleventh century the main assets of the Abbey that drew to it popular devotion. The second observation seems to be no less interesting: so far, until the beginning of the reign of Louis VI, there was no indication of the royal interest in these relics and participation in their cult.

## 2. Participation of Kings in Translations or Authentications of Relics during the Reigns of Louis VI and Louis VII (1108–1180)

As far as we know, Louis VI took part in two conventional liturgical ceremonies connected with the cult of relics. In 1108, in the Abbey of Fleury (Saint-Benoît-sur-Loire), just before the death of Philip I (who may have been too infirm to come despite of his notorious devotion to the Saint and the Abbey), Louis was present at the translation of the body of Saint Benedict.<sup>5</sup> After all, already from 1100 Louis acted as *rex designatus* and to a large extent shared the power with his father. However, if we were to believe the preserved sources, Louis VI probably did not play any important role during the ceremony.<sup>6</sup> In 1135, toward the end of his life, Louis VI took part in the elevation and authentication of the relics of Saint Vigor in the Collegiate

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5 The translation of the body of Saint Benedict was connected with the redevelopment of the Abbey Church: on March 21 (Saint Benedict's), 1102, the body of Saint Benedict was taken from the *sepulchrum*, located in the choir, which was to be rebuilt, and moved to the nave. The solemn translation to the *sepulchrum* in the new chancel took place on March 21, 1108. Philip I died in Melun between July 29 and 31, 1108.

6 “Ad hunc conventum venit et interfuit Ludovicus, rex designatus, cum multis proceribus regni Francie, et communi leticie suam conjuxit. Adfuerunt quoque [in blanco] episcopus Aurelianensis, Hunbaldus, episcopus Autissiodorensis;” *CHRONICON SANCTI PETRI VIVI*, pp. 150–151.

Church of Saint Frambourg in Senlis. Founded soon after the coronation of Hugh Capet by his queen, Adelaide of Poitiers, as a royal oratory with a college of twelve secular canons<sup>7</sup> – whose duty was to pray for the royal family – Saint-Frambourg still served the dynasty as a royal church in Senlis in the twelfth century.<sup>8</sup> The name of *regalis ecclesia* was given to Saint-Frambourg in the charters of Louis VI and Philip Augustus issued in 1129 and 1190 in favour of the Abbey of Saint-Vincent near Senlis and in the confirmation of the previous royal privilege issued by pope Callixtus II in ca. 1120.<sup>9</sup> The importance of Senlis during the reign of Louis VI is proved by the fact that the king built a new palace in the city and, not surprisingly, took part in the liturgy connected with venerating the relics stored in Saint-Frambourg, which was also used as the chapel royal.<sup>10</sup> On this occasion Louis issued a short charter, deposited in the reliquary afterward, in which the king affirmed that the deposition of the relic was performed because of his will, and confirmed with his royal authority the authenticity of the holy relics of Saint Vigor and other saints, not mentioned in the charter by name, whose relics were then stored at Saint-Frambourg. My attention was drawn by the use of the term “mausoleum” as the place where the relics were deposited. We do not know if this means the entire Collegiate Church of Saint-Frambourg or only its crypt. The sentence seems however to indicate

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7 HELGAUD DE FLEURY, *Epitoma vitae regis Rotberti*, cap. 14, pp. 80–83.

8 On the church of Saint-Frambourg until the twelfth century see BIANCHINA, *Saint-Frambourg de Senlis. Étude historique et archéologique*, pp. 5–16.

9 The legal status of the Collegiate of Saint-Frambourg was used as a model in the charters issued in favour of Saint-Vincent Abbey; *GALLIA CHRISTIANA* (X), *Appendix ad Ecclesiam Silvanectensem*, no. LXIII, coll. 428, no. LXXXVII, coll. 443–445, *Ecclesiae Silvanectensis instrumenta*, no. XIV, coll. 210.

10 Even though the Collegiate Church of Saint-Frambourg enjoyed the status of a chapel royal, it was not exactly a palace chapel, since it was not part of the royal palace of Louis VI in Senlis. The area of the palace adjoins to the north-western part of the city walls, while the Collegiate Church is located next to their South-Eastern section. In their charters, Philip I and Louis VI call the Collegiate Church a royal and ‘free’ church, which the canons understood as being exempt from the power of the local bishop and subordinated to the king and pope. In the early twelfth century, the king nominated the dean, and when Louis VI ascended the throne, the chapter paid a recognition fee of one ounce of gold; in 1109, Louis gave the chapter the canonical privilege to elect the dean, although retaining the right to grant the dean the investiture in temporalibus. The treasurer of the chapter was also the king’s chaplain. In 1163, Alexander III confirmed the direct subordination of the Collegiate Church to the Holy See, taking it under his patronage. Cf. BIANCHINA, *Saint-Frambourg de Senlis. Étude historique et archéologique*, pp. 8, 15, 16; BOURNAZEL, *Louis VI le Gros*, pp. 349–352.

that the royal sanctuary was intentionally meant to have been deliberately designed as a necropolis of many saints who would succour Frambourg as a royal patron saint in Senlis.<sup>11</sup> There are no sufficient sources or studies that would allow to analyze this case in a convincing way, but we should note that – before the second half of the twelfth century – the church of Saint-Frambourg was a rather modest structure, as the large investments began there in the late 1170s, during the reign of Louis VII. In 1169, Ansellus Teoberti, until then the treasurer of the Chapter of Saint Frambourg, elected abbot of Foigny, was to hand over the treasury of the Collegiate Church to the king. Louis VII came to Saint-Frambourg and – as it is said in the charter issued at that time – visited the church and contemplated the relics stored there.<sup>12</sup> The king found that the church was insufficiently lit and ordered to cover the costs of two additional candles in the service of the altar during daily service from the income of the treasurer and four candles during holy days, along with a lamp that was to be eternally lit in front of the relics (“ante reliquias”).

This very visit of the king to Saint-Frambourg resulted in the beginning of the reconstruction and extension of the church<sup>13</sup> which – previously modest – was to be transformed into a monumental structure executed in the Gothic style.<sup>14</sup> Five stone niches have been preserved in the Gothic apse, which quite certainly served as armaria for the relics stored in the church.<sup>15</sup>

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11 “Ego Ludovicus Dei misericordia in regem Francorum sublimatus, posterorum memoriae commendare dignum duximus, quod tempore Petri venerabilis Silvanectensis episcopi corpus B. Vigoris Bajocensis episcopi & confessoris & aliorum sanctorum reliquias in mausoleo isto reponi fecimus;” *GALLIA CHRISTIANA* (X), *Ecclesia Silvanectensis*, coll. 1399; LUCHAIRE, *Louis VI le Gros*, no. 556, p. 253. For the list of relics kept at Saint-Frambourg in the last quarter of the twelfth century, see below.

12 Fragments of the charter are published in *GALLIA CHRISTIANA* (X), *Ecclesia Silvanectensis*, coll. 1479, and RHF, vol. XIV, p. 484.

13 BIANCHINA, *Saint-Frambourg de Senlis. Étude historique et archéologique*, pp. 14–16; BIANCHINA, *Saint-Frambourg de Senlis. II<sup>e</sup> partie: l'édifice gothique*, pp. 13–31.

14 After the new Saint-Frambourg was completed in the first quarter of the thirteenth century, it was a ca. fifty-meters-long church composed of a single nave of four double bays and a single-bay choir with a pentagonal apse, without transept nor ambulatory; the nave, vaulted at fourteen meters (the top of the roof at twenty-two meters), had three portals on the South, North, and West, and a bell tower on the Northern side of the first Western bay of the nave; see BIANCHINA, *Saint-Frambourg de Senlis. Étude historique et archéologique*, pp. 14–16.

15 BIANCHINA, *Saint-Frambourg de Senlis. Étude historique et archéologique*, p. 15.

The charter issued in 1177 by Ebroin, the dean of Saint-Frambourg, Hilduin, the treasurer, and Odo, the cantor, tells that – looking to renovate and redecorate the church – the canons asked the king for permission to take the relics of Saint Frambourg out from the treasury and exhibit them to the public view (*revelatio*): “seeing that our church is bent to the ground like an old man and the meanness of the old building is deplorable, trusting in God’s help in renovating and expanding [the church] we have decided to dare to [take out] from the treasury the marvelous relics, having obtained permission to show them from our lord, the King.”<sup>16</sup>

The quoted fragment of the charter clearly indicates that the king was the direct superior of the church of Saint-Frambourg. It was a royal church *par excellence*: the king’s power over the church embraced not only its assets – evidenced by the fact that when the previous treasurer of the chapter was leaving his post in 1169, he returned the treasury to the king – but also extended over the strictly ecclesiastical, sacral, and ritual issues concerning the relics stored in the church. Only the king had the relics deposited in the collegiate church at his disposal. Not only did they belong to the monarch, but he also was the one who decided whether they could be taken out of the treasury and shown to the faithful. Thus, the king is perceived here as someone competent in the sphere of extraordinary liturgy. Called “dominus noster et ecclesiae patronus pater,” Louis VII praised the intention but decided that the relics had to be authenticated first, which was to take place in the presence of the representatives of the clergy as witnesses (“sub testimonio religiosorum”).<sup>17</sup> The king sent letters to the abbots of Charlieu, Longpont, and to the already mentioned abbot of Foigny – a former treasurer of Saint-Frambourg – asking them to come to Senlis in order to authenticate the relics. Moreover, there also came the bishop of Senlis, Henry, and of Meaux, Simon; most probably also invited by the king.

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16 “videntes ecclesiam nostram vetustatis quodam senio acclinantem & structurae veteris ignobilitatem despicabilem, in Domini confidentes subsidio renovando causa ampliandi ausuri sumus de thesauro sanctarum reliquiarum tantum a Domino rege percepta licentia revelandi eas;” *GALLIA CHRISTIANA* (X), *Ecclesia Silvanectensis*, coll. 1474 and RHF, vol. XIV, p. 484 (after LABBÉ, *Novae Bibliothecae manuscriptorum librorum*, vol. II, pp. 559–560); cf. HERRMANN-MASCARD, *Les reliques des saints. Formation coutumière d’un droit*, p. 208; about placing the relics in public view during the collection, see HERRMANN-MASCARD, *Les reliques des saints. Formation coutumière d’un droit*, pp. 296–304.

17 “Dominus quidem noster & ecclesiae patronus pater Ludovicus superlaudavit propositum, & reliquias videri voluit sub testimonio religiosorum;” *GALLIA CHRISTIANA* (X), *Ecclesia Silvanectensis*, coll. 1474 and RHF, vol. XIV, p. 484.

The king, the bishops, the abbots, and the three abovementioned canons performed an inventio of the relics with the use of the documents (“chartulae”), finding them more numerous and precious than they had expected:<sup>18</sup> there were the bodies of Saint Frambourg, Saint Bertha, Saint Baumirus, Saint Gerbold (Gereboldus), Saint Laudovena, and the shoulder of Saint Ebrulf.<sup>19</sup> Surprisingly, there is no mention of Saint Vigor, whose deposition took place forty years earlier yet in presence of Louis VII’s father. Happy with the results of the *inventio*, Louis VII decided that he would come again to Senlis on May 15 to honour the church and venerate the holy relics. He also had it announced that – at that time – the relics would be shown to the public.<sup>20</sup> On the set day, accompanied by the two abovementioned bishops, the barons of his Kingdom, and the populace, the monarch personally

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18 “Regiis ergo literis evocatos abbatem Caroliloci, abbatem Longi-pontis, abbatem Fusciniaci, qui fuit noster thesaurarius, ad diem habuimus, & in quodam secretario, sub praesentia etiam domini episcopi Silvanect[ensis] Henrici, Simonis Meldensis episcopi & attestatione chartularum per singulas invenimus reliquias sanctas multo plures & digniores quam sperabamus;” *GALLIA CHRISTIANA* (X), *Ecclesia Silvanectensis*, coll. 1474 and RHF, vol. XIV, p. 484.

19 Saint Bertha of Avenay (d. ca. 690); a Frankish aristocrat, the founder of the Abbey of Val d’Or – and wife of saint Gombert (Gondelbert), the founder of the Senones Abbey (d. ca. 676), martyred as a missionary in Frisia – was murdered by his late husband relatives after having bequeathed her family estates to her Abbey and thus considered a martyr; venerated in the Carolingian Church on April 28, then on May 1 or May 2. Saint Baumirus (Baumard/us, Baomirus, Boamadus, Baumez), was an eremite and abbot living in Maine under Childebert I (511–558), venerated on November 4. Saint Gerboldus (Gereboldus, Gerebauld, Gerbold, Gerbaud) – bishop of Bayeux ca. 689–691, venerated on September 7. Saint Laudovena (Laudowenna, Laudoveva, Landoveva, Laudouenne, Louève – was a queen of the half legendary king Eusebius of Bro Waroch (Bro Gwened, in French: Pays Vannetais) in Lower Brittany (472?-490?), allegedly converted to Christianity by saint Melaine (Melanias or Mellanus, attested 511). Under the Ancien Régime Laudovena was thought by the Church of Senlis to be the wife of a king of the Franks of Senlis. Venerated on October 29. Cf. „De S. Laudoveva seu Laudovena et de S. Amando episcopo Silvanecti in Gallis Commentarius criticus,” *Acta Sanctorum. Octobris tomus duodecimus*, 2nd edition, Bruxelles 1884, pp. 907–911. Saint Ebrulf (Eberulf, Eberwulf, Évroult, Eberulfus, Evroldus, Evroul, Evrou, Yvrou), was a Frankish aristocrat serving in the court of Childebert I (511–558) or Childeric II (662–675), then a monk in Deux-Jumeaux Abbey in Lower Normandy, he finally founded and became the first abbot the Abbey of Ouche (*monasterium Uticus*), called after Ebrulf’s death Abbey of Saint-Evroul or Saint-Evroul-sur-Ouche; venerated on December 29.

20 “Rex autem plurimum laetus super hoc effectus est & constituit diem Idus Mai, quo posthabitis aliis negotiis destinavit venire, suaque praesentia ecclesiam & reliquias honorare; sed & tanti seminarii ostensionem generaliter cuicumque

took the relics out of the town to the nearby hill, with great reverence and piety.<sup>21</sup> There, the papal legate for France and Normandy, cardinal Peter of San Crisogono, delivered the homily, then granted everyone present the indulgence and absolved them from one-seventh of the penance. Soon afterward, the king's brother-in-law (brother of Louis VII's third queen, Adele of Champagne), William White Hands, archbishop of Reims serving as a permanent papal legate in France, absolved the participants from one-fifth of their penance.<sup>22</sup>

The charter issued by the canons of Saint-Frambourg presents an event of great importance, although the saints whose relics were discovered and authenticated in 1177 in Senlis were not the leading ones or especially important for the Capetian monarchy. Most of them were the ancient, half-legendary local bishops or abbots, and the one saintly woman was a half-legendary Breton queen, wrongly identified as a non-existing Frankish queen. Thus, it seems that the status of the event was determined by the status of the temple or, more precisely, of its earthly patron, the king of France, for the charter itself says that until then the church did not have any special architectural or artistic value, dimensions, or opulence, which has been confirmed by archaeological excavations. This quite poor architectural and artistic condition of Saint-Frambourg church was certainly partly due to the fact that – although it was founded by the first Capetian queen Adelaide after the coronation of Hugh Capet – it was located quite far away from the royal palace in Senlis<sup>23</sup> and was one of the many royal foundations of the first Capetians in the city.

Senlis was one of the main royal residences from the mid-ninth century. Charles the Bald often stayed there and the county of Senlis was taken over

praecepit interim denunciari;" *GALLIA CHRISTIANA* (X), *Ecclesia Silvanectensis*, coll. 1474 and RHF, vol. XIV, p. 484.

21 "die praefixa cum Domino rege affuerunt episcopi, dominus Henricus episcopus Silvanectensis, dominus Simonus episcopus Meldensis, & cum his & magnatibus viris & populo copioso dominus Rex reliquias extra civitatem devote & cum magna reverentia deportans usque ad locum eminentem sequutus est; *GALLIA CHRISTIANA* (X), *Ecclesia Silvanectensis*, coll. 1474 and RHF, vol. XIV, p. 484.

22 *GALLIA CHRISTIANA* (X), *Ecclesia Silvanectensis*, coll. 1474 and RHF, vol. XIV, p. 484.

23 The archaeological excavations have revealed that Adelaide's church was a nineteen-meters-long one-nave structure. Its distance from the palace is relative: the Collegiate Church is indeed located at the other end of the early medieval Senlis, but the distance is less than 500 meters; however, one should add that it is in the vicinity of the Senlis cathedral; BIANCHINA, *Saint-Frambourg de Senlis. Étude historique et archéologique*, pp. 10–13.

by Hugh Capet in ca. 981. In 987, Hugh was made king in Senlis and his queen's foundation of the Collegiate Church of Saint-Frambourg was certainly connected with his royal accession. In the late tenth century, works began on the Romanesque cathedral. Robert the Pious founded in Senlis the Church of Saint-Aignan (1024–1029?) which should be linked with the intentional promotion of the Saint of Orléans whom Robert considered as the special patron of the Capetian kingdom. During Robert's reign a simultaneous redevelopment in the Romanesque style of the Churches of Saint Peter and Saint Regulus (Saint-Rieul) was begun; in ca. 1000 also Saint-Nicolas Abbey was founded. In 1059–1065, Saint-Vincent Abbey for the Regular Canons was founded by queen Anne of Kiev together with her husband, Henry I (r. 1031–1060), and their son, Philip I (as a votive memorial to commemorate the latter's birth). Judging from the preserved royal charters, among all the ecclesiastical institutions in the city, during the following 100 years Saint-Vincent Abbey was the focus of interest of the Capetian kings. In 1062 Anne, at the time the queen mother, founded in Senlis a monastery for the Benedictine nuns: Saint-Rémi Abbey. Finally, Louis VI, the builder of the new royal palace in Senlis, founded there a palace chapel dedicated to Saint Denis. Although Louis participated in the deposition of Saint Vigor's body in Saint-Frambourg, it does not seem that he was particularly interested in the Collegiate Church. The ceremony of 1135 was possibly intended by the canons to draw the monarch's attention to the neglected church, but to no avail. The year 1153 saw the beginning of the Gothic redevelopment of the cathedral, which lasted till 1191. It probably was only Louis VII's visitation of Saint-Frambourg in 1169 which yielded some results, but the documents only say that the king criticized the treasurer for insufficiently lighting the church.<sup>24</sup>

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24 Basing on archeological and stylistical data, Nicole Bianchina claims that the works on the development of the Collegiate Church began in 1169/1170; BIANCHINA, *Saint-Frambourg de Senlis. II<sup>e</sup> partie: l'édifice gothique*, pp. 17–21. As there are no written records, an attempt at such a precise stylistical and artistic dating of the *fabrica ecclesiae* seems to be highly dubious, but I have no instruments for polemic.





The duties connected with managing the sphere of the *sacred* – understood literally – were equally important for the king and, what is crucial, they were accepted by the clergy.<sup>25</sup> It was the king's prerogative to make decisions about the relics stored in the royal church. The king gave permission to take them out of the treasury, and his presence during the authentication is self-evident, the bishops and abbots witnessing the procedure do it *sub testimonio*, but it is the king who plays the main part in the procedure. It is him who determines the course of the special liturgy: decides if the relics are going to be exposed publicly (*ostensio*), establishes the date and circumstances of the event, has the ceremony announced to his subjects, finally he personally demonstrates the relics to the populace and ensures the ceremony the highest possible rank by asking the papal legate to participate. Bearing in mind the fact that the saints whose relics were exposed enjoyed only a local cult – largely problematic, possibly limited to one church, or almost nonexistent – we must conclude that it was the king's involvement in the affair that determined the prestige of the event. The king's status legitimated not only the relics but also their cult.

The claim that the royal patronage may have had a certain influence on the course of the liturgy of the relics may be supported by the events of 1156 when Louis VII participated in the authentication and public demonstration of the tunic of Child Jesus in Argenteuil. This monastery, founded in the royal manor in 656 as a filial monastery of Saint-Denis Abbey, boasted the possession of the relics from the times of Charlemagne. According to the monastic legend, Byzantine empress Irene sent the tunic of Child Jesus to Charlemagne who allegedly gave it to Argenteuil, where his daughter, Theodrada, was the abbess. The relic was allegedly hidden in one of the church walls during the Norman invasion and, in 1156, a liturgical *inventio*<sup>26</sup> was conducted. However, the preserved description of the

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25 This sheds some light on the meaning of a very brief charter of Louis VI, authenticating the relics of Saint Vigor in 1135. In the charter the king's part in the ritual is suggested only by the use of the first person "fecimus reponi." Thus, it is possible to interpret this record as follows: like Louis VII in 1177, Louis VI in 1135 was the only disposer of the relics and the whole course of the liturgical ceremonies depended on his decisions.

26 The Abbey of Argenteuil, founded in the third quarter of the seventh century, was refounded by Adelaide of Poitiers, Hugh Capet's queen. Adelaide's foundation was connected with the removal of the lay abbot and a reform of the monastery (Saint Benedict's Rule was restored); HELGAUD DE FLEURY, *Epitoma vitae regis Rotberti*, cap. 14, pp. 80–83. In 1119, Heloise found shelter in Argenteuil, but her presence resulted in an unhealthy excitement and laxity among the nuns – at least from the point of view of the abbot of Saint-Denis. As a result, in 1129 abbot Suger expelled the female convent and introduced the male one.

authentication of the tunic of Argenteuil taken out of the wall clearly indicates that both the authentication and demonstration of the relics in front of the congregation was performed by the members of the clergy, the king was present there but probably with a less important role than in Senlis twenty years later.<sup>27</sup> This description does not differ from the account of the translation of Saint Benedict in 1108, during which Louis VI was present and, as it seems, did not play an important part in the ceremony either; at least the source does not indicate that. Thus, possibly the king's actual involvement in the liturgy of relics depended to a large extent on the legal status of the individual relation between the monarch and the sanctuary in which it took place. It seems that a good place to analyze this issue is Saint-Denis, which in the twelfth century regained its status (lost toward the end of the Carolingian rule) of the leading royal ecclesiastical centre also in the sphere of the cult of relics, and even, as I shall try to prove, in collaboration with the kings, a new model of royal veneration of the relics was developed there. I shall reconstruct the origins and course of this process below and now I begin my analysis with the case of an ordinary liturgy of relics; that is, the translation which was a consequence of the need to consecrate a choir in a redeveloped abbey church in Saint-Denis in 1144. The situation will thus be entirely analogical to the translation of Saint Benedict in 1108.

The participation of Louis VI and Louis VII in the cult of the saints' or Christ's relics is an important issue, which should be studied in detail especially in comparison with the seemingly meager activity in this respect of the successors of Robert the Pious in the eleventh century. Especially important is the proclamation of Louis VII who, calling his subjects in 1177 to come to the ostension of Saint Frambourg's relics in Senlis, acted as the organizer of the cult. We cannot overlook the fact that in this way he acted like Charlemagne who, according to *Descriptio qualiter*, would have called his subjects to the *Indictum* of the Passion relics in Aachen. However, especially important for the development of the cult of relics in the context of the sacral foundations of the Capetian royal power was the renaissance of

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27 "Cappam pueri Jesu, qua in Ejusdem Ecclesiae Thesauris a temporibus antiquis cum honore condigno reposita erat ad fidelium salutem fideliter inspeximus, & palam eduximus, & veneratione solemnī debitam magnificentiae ejus exhibentes reverentiam, illam devotioni, ac venerationi populorum studio pietatis obtulimus. Aderat ibidem supereminens, et sublimis praesentia illustri Regis Francorum Ludovici cum proceribus & optimatibus palatinis, maxima consistente frequentia vulgi;" qtd. after MORETTI, *De ritu ostensionis sacrarum reliquiarum*, no. XVIII, pp. 31–32, who quotes a report from the authentication of the relics by the bishops in Argenteuil. Cf. HERRMANN-MASCARD, *Les reliques des saints. Formation coutumière d'un droit*, p. 207.

the cult of Saint Denis which in a very short time gained a momentum equal to that observed in the early Carolingian period, and ultimately exceeded it. We shall also see how the development of the cult of Saint Denis, which was ultimately to lead to a takeover of the spiritual guidance of the Capetian monarchy by the Abbey of Saint-Denis, was to make the Passion relics stored there – allegedly connected with Charlemagne and Charles the Bald – play a leading part in the sacralization of royal power in France.

### 3. The Public Demonstration of the Relics of Saint Denis in the Abbey of Saint-Denis in the Twelfth Century

A new situation arose in the 1124 century, when France was threatened by emperor Henry V's invasion – the Abbey of Saint-Denis performed a solemn elevation of the bodies of Saints Denis, Rusticus, and Eleutherius from the sepulchre to the high altar (*elevatio*), then the public demonstration (*expositio*, *ostensio*), and the adoration of the relics. The account of this event can be found in the charter of Louis VI issued on August 3, 1124.<sup>28</sup> In the arenga of the charter, Louis VI expresses his conviction that the prosperity of his kingdom is based on the generosity of God's mercy and, thus, the duty of the royal majesty is to take constant and utmost care of the Lord's temples, giving them continual proof of the royal munificence. In this way the king seeks to make his reign full of glory and, when it is over, he shall acquire eternal reward for his worldly gifts to God and shall be received to Heaven.<sup>29</sup> Louis VI wishes to especially venerate – besides the other churches – “the noble monastery of thrice holy Saint Denis and his companions.” Especially because this saint, having taken apostolate (in this country) brought the entire Kingdom of France to God through the sacrifice of his own blood, that is, his martyrdom (and conversion of Gaul/France to Christianity).<sup>30</sup> Moreover, Louis VI goes on to say that his predecessors, the

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28 *MONUMENTS HISTORIQUES. CARTONS DES ROIS*, no. 391, pp. 217–218.

29 “Quia Dei omnipotentis larga miseratione regnum nostrum stare, et nunquam terrenum nisi per celestem veraciter proficere manifeste cognovimus, summa sollicitudine, continua cura, instandum nobis est circa ecclesiarum Dei cultum ex regie majestatis munificentia benignitatis opera impendere, terrenis celestia felici commutatione commercari, ut per hęc regni nostri administratio temporaliter fiat gloriosa, et, istis deficientibus, illa nos recipiant in eterna tabernacula;” *MONUMENTS HISTORIQUES. CARTONS DES ROIS*, no. 391, pp. 217.

30 “Nos igitur, cum et aliis longe lateque ecclesiis, tum precipue nobili monasterio ter beati Dyonisii sociorumque ejus, propensius attendentes, eo primum affectu quo totum regnum nostrum sorte apostolatus suscipiens Domino Dei proprii sanguinis effusione restituit;” *MONUMENTS HISTORIQUES. CARTONS DES ROIS*, no. 391, pp. 217.

kings, were bound by a faithful alliance with Saint Denis who gave them the gift (“beneficium”) of both spiritual and carnal help (“auxilium”).<sup>31</sup> That is why, having learned that the German king was planning to invade France, Louis VI, like his ancestors, hurried to the basilica of Saint-Denis. There, in the presence of the notables of the kingdom (“optimates regni”), guided by his devotion and love of the patron saints, Louis elevated the bodies of Saint Denis and his companions to the high altar (*elevatio*), in order to defend the kingdom.<sup>32</sup> Moreover, in order to show the basilica of Saint Denis, decorated and enriched by the earlier kings, his own love and devotion, and to make it exalted in the presence of abbot Suger and the nobles of the kingdom, Louis VI took the banner (“vexillum”) from the altar of the holy martyrs, becoming an ensign of Saint Denis. The king supposedly imitated in this way the ancient custom of his predecessors. This used to be done by the counts of Vexin, and now that the king of France obtained Vexin as his fief from the holy patrons of Saint-Denis, Louis did the same.<sup>33</sup> In the next sentence the king mentions the privileges which he gave, due to his love to Saint Denis and his sanctuary, to the Abbey and adds that he did so not only for the salvation of his soul but also for the sake of (good) government of his kingdom, its defense, and the welfare of his queen and children. The holy martyrs are in turn king’s protectors and guides, or perhaps rather the

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31 “eo etiam quo ei antecessores nostri tam spritualis quam corporalis auxilii beneficio confoederati sunt satis devoti;” *MONUMENTS HISTORIQUES. CARTONS DES ROIS*, no. 391, pp. 217. The enigmatic expression “corporalis auxilium” is – as it seems – explained in the later part of the charter and in the *Gesta Ludovici Grossi* by abbot Suger (cf. below).

32 “cum ad aures nostras pervenisset Alemannorum regem ad ingrediendum et opprimendum regnum nostrum exercitum preparare, communicato cum palatinis nostris consilio, ad ipsam sanctissimorum martyrum basilicam more antecessorum nostrorum festinavimus, ibique, presentibus regni nostri optimatibus, pro regni defensione eosdem patronos nostros super altare eorundem elevari pio affectu et amore effecimus;” *MONUMENTS HISTORIQUES. CARTONS DES ROIS*, no. 391, p. 217.

33 “Unde nobis, ut par erat, placuit gloriosissimorum martyrum basilicam antiquorum regum liberalitate et munificentia amplificatam et decoratam, nostris temporibus omni dilectione amplexari et sublimare. Presente itaque venerabili abbate prefate ecclésię Sugerio, quem fidelem et familiarem in consiliis nostris habebamus, in presentia optimatum nostrorum vexillum de altario beatorum martyrum, ad quod comitatus Vilcassini, quem nos ab ipsis in feodum habemus spectare dinoscitur, morem antiquum antecessorum nostrorum servantes et imitantes, signiferi jure, sicut comites Vilcassini soliti erant, suscepimus;” *MONUMENTS HISTORIQUES. CARTONS DES ROIS*, no. 391, p. 217.

actual commanders of the royal army (“duces”) and the king is only their ensign (“signifer”).<sup>34</sup>

Among all the legal and economic privileges granted to Saint-Denis Abbey by Louis VI,<sup>35</sup> the most important from our point of view seems to be the ban and immunity for the Lendit fair organized by the Abbey every year between June 11 and 24 (*Indictum*)<sup>36</sup>, granted to Saint-Denis,<sup>37</sup> “because the Indictum was established by the ordinance of our ancestors, the kings of France, to show their respect and veneration of the holy relics, namely the Nail and the Crown of the Lord, and confirmed by the apostolic authority and the permission of the archbishops and bishops ... we thought it decent to thank the Lord ... both for raising our kingdom so high through the signs of His Passion, namely the Nail and the Crown, on the day of this Indictum, and for declaring His protection over us, our ancestors and successors in the capital of our kingdom [*in capite regni nostri*], namely in the place where the holy martyrs are resting.”<sup>38</sup>

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34 “ipsis sanctis martyribus, ducibus et protectoribus nostris, tam pro salute anime nostre quam pro regni administratione et defensione, conjugis et liberorum conservatione;” *MONUMENTS HISTORIQUES. CARTONS DES ROIS*, no. 391, p. 217. BOURNAZEL, *Louis VI le Gros*, pp. 156–160, translates “ducibus et protectoribus nostris” into “guide et protecteur du roi,” which is linguistically correct; however, it is worth considering whether in the case when Louis VI called himself, a banner bearer (“signiferi jure – [vexillum] suscepimus”) of Saint Denis during the war, the word “ducibus” should perhaps be translated into its military meaning, as the heavenly leaders of the royal army.

35 The king granted the Abbey legal and economic privileges: the government, justice (ban), and immunity (“vicariam ... et omnimodam justiciam plenariamque libertatem”) in the area extending from the town of Saint-Denis, the mill Baiard on the Seine and the town of Aubervilliers up to the borders of Paris; *MONUMENTS HISTORIQUES. CARTONS DES ROIS*, no. 391, p. 217.

36 On the origins of the Lendit fair, see especially LEVILLAIN, *Essai sur les origines du Lendit*, pp. 241–276, and Part 1 of this volume entitled “Prehistory of the Translation of the Crown of Thorns to France: Saint-Denis and the Carolingian Legend of the Translation of the Crown of Thorns.”

37 “omnimodam potentatem omnemque justiciam atque universas consuetudines nundinum Indicti;” *MONUMENTS HISTORIQUES. CARTONS DES ROIS*, no. 391, p. 217.

38 “quoniam prefatum Indictum honore et reverentia sanctarum reliquiarum, clavi scilicet et coronę Domini, apostolica auctoritate, archiepiscoporum et episcoporum confirmatione, antecessorum nostrorum regum Francię constitutione constitutum est ... dignum enim duximus Domino Deo ... grates referre, quod et regnum nostrum ea indicti die insignibus sue passionis, clavi videlicet et coronę, dignatus est sublimare, et nostram et antecessorum successorumque nostrorum protectionem in capite regni nostri, videlicet apud sanctos martyres, dignatus est collocare;” *MONUMENTS HISTORIQUES. CARTONS DES ROIS*, no. 391,

In this fragment of the charter, Louis VI certainly refers to the account from *Descriptio qualiter*, which says that the *Indictum* was established for the first time by Charlemagne in Aachen and confirmed by pope Leo III and archbishops, bishops, and abbots of France,<sup>39</sup> and then was moved to Saint-Denis by Charles the Bald, equally supported by his archbishops and bishops, who allegedly would attended the renewed *Indictum*.<sup>40</sup> The context of the statement that it was God's will to make Saint-Denis the place where God's protection over the kings of France was located may seem unclear or intentionally ambiguous ("nostram et antecessorum successorumque nostrorum protectionem dignatus est collocare"). Léon Levillain believes that "protectionem ... collocare" should be understood as a reference to the deposition of the Passion relics in Saint-Denis: that the source of the protection over Louis VI and his predecessors and successors were in fact the Crown of Thorns and the Holy Nail.<sup>41</sup> However, if we confront this fragment with the earlier part of the charter's narrative and the other sources, then the above interpretation of this passage may be considered as possible but not necessarily right and not the most important. Among other sources is the forged Charlemagne's charter for Saint-Denis (possibly written at the same time as the quoted Louis VI's charter),<sup>42</sup> in which the

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pp. 217–218; see also: LUCHAIRE, *Louis VI le Gros*, no. 348, p. 150. As we may read in LEVILLAIN, *Essai sur les origines du Lendit*, p. 247, fn. 1, this part of the charter was transumed in the bull of Honorius II in favour of Louis VI, issued in Rouen on May 9, 1131. Levillain claims that from 1110/1112 Lendit was opened with a blessing with the Passion relics, which was meant to be a response to bringing the relics of the True Cross to the Paris Cathedral in 1109. BRESCH-BAUTIER, *L'envoi de la relique de la Vraie Croix à Notre-Dame de Paris*, pp. 387–397, claims that the translation of the relics of the Cross took place as late as in 1120, and he shifts the beginning of the tradition of opening Lendit with a blessing with the relics of the Crown of Thorns and the Nail of the True Cross to 1121–1124; this view has been later adopted in the French historiography.

39 *DESCRIPTIO QUALITER*, pp. 120–123.

40 *DESCRIPTIO QUALITER*, p. 124.

41 Levillain translates this fragment as follows: "placer en ce lieu qui est la capitale de notre royaume, c'est-à-dire auprès des saints martyrs, ces reliques qui nous protègent, comme elles ont protégé nos prédécesseurs, et protégeront nos successeurs;" LEVILLAIN, *Essai sur les origines du Lendit*, pp. 246–247.

42 MGH, *Diplomatum Karolinorum*, no. 286, pp. 428–430. The dating of this forgery is uncertain, and it seems impossible to solve the argument. BUCHNER, *Das fingierte Privileg Karls des Großen für Aachen*, pp. 179–254 (especially p. 242 f.) and BARROUX, *L'abbé Suger*, pp. 1–26 (especially pp. 23–24) claim that the charter must have been forged in Suger's times; KIEFT, *Deux diplômes faux de Charlemagne pour Saint-Denis*, pp. 401–436 (key arguments

emperor allegedly established the Abbey of Saint-Denis the “caput omnium ecclesiarum regni nostri,” the head of all the churches of the Kingdom of the Franks, and thus the ecclesiastical capital of the kingdom, justifying this decision by the merits of Saint Denis, him being the special protector and patron saint of the kings of France.<sup>43</sup> It is impossible to exclude that Louis VI wanted to express in his charter his conviction that the Passion relics from Saint-Denis were the source of God’s special protection over the kings of France, but the interpretation of the entire Louis’s charter and Charlemagne’s forgery rather suggests that – like at the beginning of the narrative – it is the protection given to the kings of France by Saint Denis.<sup>44</sup> For it seems obvious that the capital, the “caput regni,” was established in the place where the *locus memoriae* was, the memorial place and the cult site of the saint who was also the apostle of the Franks. The very saint whose evangelizing activity and martyrdom ensured the Franks a place among the

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on pp. 432–435), sharing the opinion of Max Buchner, ascribes it to Suger’s successor, Odo of Deuil, dating it to 1156–1165. Despite Cyrille van de Kieft’s brilliant argument, one can not overlook the similarity of how the expressions “caput regni nostri” / “caput omnium ecclesiarum regni nostri” are used both in the charter of Louis VI and the forgery, with respect to Saint-Denis and offering the Saint the royal insignia, similarly to Louis VI, who gave the Abbey his father’s crown. On another argument, which seems to be decisive, i.e., Saint Denis as the war patron of the Franks’ kingdom, see below. On the dating of that charter, adopting the view that Suger was the author or the ordering party of the forgery, see also: GROTEN, *Die Urkunde Karls des Grossen für St.-Denis von 813*, pp. 1–36; POUGET, *La légende carolingienne à Saint-Denis*, pp. 53–60; CLAUSEN, *Suger, faussaire de chartes*, pp. 109–116. Ehlers does not make a definitive stand: EHLERS, *Politik und Heiligenverehrung in Frankreich*, pp. 153–154. Bournazel, in turn, BOURNAZEL: *Suger and the Capetians*, pp. 61–72, brilliantly refutes Cyrille van de Kieft’s claims and puts forward a hypothesis that a forgery was compiled in Suger’s times but in 1144–1146, particularly in order to justify the nomination of the Abbot of Saint Denis to the position of the Vicar of the Apostolic See, what gave ground for the abbot’s taking over the rule in replacement of Louis VII who was to set off to the Crusade (the Crusaders’ property was under the protection of the Pope); Bournazel supports this dating: BOURNAZEL, *Louis VI le Gros*, p. 388.

43 “peculiaris patronus noster;” MGH, *Diplomatum Karolinorum*, no. 286, p. 429.

44 BOURNAZEL, *Louis VI le Gros*, p. 386, notices the similarity between the charter of Louis VI of 1124, the expression “caput regni,” and the expression “caput omnium ecclesiarum” from Charlemagne’s forged charter and the words used in the charter of Louis VI issued for Saint-Denis in 1113 (*MONUMENTS HISTORIQUES. CARTONS DES ROIS*, no. 358, p. 206): “ecclesie beati Dionysii, quę aliis ecclisiis de regno nostro preminet, et precipue debet a regibus Francorum honorari.”

Christian nations was the heavenly protector of the kingdom, kings, and all the Frankish people. We should add here a very important detail from the forged Charlemagne's charter: it presents the etymology of the ethnonym 'Franks' by saying that they became freemen – hence Franks – because they were subjects of only God and Saint Denis. The emperor freed from serfdom and ordered to call Franks all those who – having followed his example – would pay four gold coins to Saint-Denis Abbey every year ("chevage") to confirm their acceptance of Saint Denis's sovereignty.<sup>45</sup> One cannot find a more prominent indication that the Abbey of Saint-Denis was the capital not only for the French kingship but also for all the Franks. Finally, the forgery contains the only confirmation of the antiquity of the opinion founded on the alleged experience, according to which the merits and intercession of Saint Denis and his co-martyrs were in fact a war palladium for the Kingdom of the Franks. Namely, Charlemagne declares in the forged charter not only his belief that he gained the royal power and the emperor's position owing to the merits and intercession of Saint Denis and his companions but also confesses that it is thanks to them that he could overcome the numerous dangers, blows struck by enemies and enjoy numerous war victories.<sup>46</sup> Thus, Charlemagne turns out to be the monarch who owed his battlefield triumphs to the protection of Saint Denis, and it is his example – derived from the forged charter – that Louis VI had to recall in the narrative of his own document, and so did abbot Suger in his account on the year 1124 events,<sup>47</sup> as presented below. The discussed forgery, however, was compiled

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45 "a deo solo et a te regnum Franciae teneo ... obsecrans atque obtestans omnes successores nostros reges, ut annuatim simile faciant et in oblatione submitendo ac tangendo caput illos quatuor supradictos bysancios offerant non proinde astricti humanae servituti, sed potius divinae, quae summa libertas appellari debet, quippe deo servire sit regnare, sed etiam omnes regni nostri proceres et obtimates pro quali cumque domo sua eidem ecclesiae memoratae quatuor singulis annis aureos persolvant nummos ...; similiter omnes homines servituti addictos emancipans et eos imperpetuum faciens liberos tam praesentes quam et futuros, qui libenter eosdem quatuor aureos nummos daturi sunt, quos beati Dionysii Francos proinde vocari volo et appellari iubeo;" MGH, *Diplomatum Karolinorum*, no. 286, pp. 428–429.

46 "eiusdem sanctissimi martyris ac praecellentissimi sociorumque eius Rustici et Eleutherii meritis et intercessionibus nos ad summa regni imperiique fastigia conscendisse confidimus et fatemur, sed et quam plurima vitasse pericula ac inimicorum nostrorum superasse tela, infinitas et victorias de ipsis illorum sanctorum protectionum alis evecti reportasse credimus;" MGH, *Diplomatum Karolinorum*, no. 286, p. 428.

47 This is the part of the forgery that seems to contain the argument for its dating to the times of Suger's abbotship rather than of Odo of Deuil's.



in close connection with the tradition of the Frankish monarchy preserved in the archives of Saint Denis. In the eighth century, the majordomos and the first Carolingian kings were buried there. Although Charlemagne and Louis the Pious were not, the tradition was reestablished by Charles the Bald whose body, as it seems according to the wish the emperor expressed in his lifetime, was brought to Saint-Denis from the Abbey of Nantua where he had been originally buried. Charles's grandsons were buried there: Louis III and Carloman; later king Odo (r. 888–898) initiated the tradition of the Robertian and Capetian burials in Saint-Denis interrupted as late as in 1108, when Philip I was buried in Saint-Benoît-sur-Loire. There is no doubt that these were burials *ad sanctos*, thus ones expressing the special veneration of the relics of Saint Denis deposited in the Abbey and the strong belief in his patronage over the kings of France. Moreover, also the documents issued by the king of the Franks confirm this patronage, starting from the seventh century at the latest. The formula “*peculiaris patronus noster*,” included in Charlemagne's forgery, occurred already during the reign of Chlothar II<sup>48</sup> and then in the charters of Chilperic II, Pippin II, Carloman, Pippin the Short, and finally Charlemagne himself.<sup>49</sup> In other words, its inclusion in the forgery is only seemingly a falsification. Similar, even if not identical formulas are abundant in the charters of Charles the Bald: “*pretiosissimus patronus noster*,” “*post sanctam Dei genitricem et sanctos apostolos patronus noster*,” “*specialis protector noster magnus*,” “*patronus ac senior noster*.”<sup>50</sup> Thus, although the charter is a forgery, the falsification was made with respect for and using the memory of information stored in the archives of the Abbey, by quoting authentic charters and creatively reinterpreting their content.

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48 EHLERS, *Politik und Heiligenverehrung in Frankreich*, p. 151; KRÜGER, *Königsgraben der Franken, Angelsachsen und Langobarden*, p. 174.

49 MGH, *Diplomata regum Francorum e stirpe Merovingica* (2001), no. 22 (Chlotar II, between 584 and 628), pp. 62–64; no. 28 (Chlothar II, 625), pp. 75–78; MGH, *Diplomatum Karolinorum*, no. 26 (Pippin the Short, 768), pp. 36–37; no. 44 (Carloman, 769), pp. 63–64; no. 94 (Charlemagne, 775), pp. 135–136; no. 101 (Charlemagne, 775), pp. 144–145; no. 120 (Charlemagne, 778), pp. 167–168. The documents listed after Joachim Ehlers, who also established their filiations, but he gives a wrong address for the charter of Chlotar II; cf. EHLERS, *Politik und Heiligenverehrung in Frankreich*, p. 152, fn. 20. Similarly, e.g., Dagobert I (624): *gloriosus patronus noster*: MGH, *Diplomata regum Francorum e stirpe Merovingica* (2001), no. 27, pp. 73–75, Chilperic II (716), MGH, *Diplomata regum Francorum e stirpe Merovingica* (1872), no. 82, p. 73 f.

50 They were collected by EHLERS, *Politik und Heiligenverehrung in Frankreich*, p. 152, fn. 21–24.

A similar interpretation is suggested by the account of the events in the Abbey of 1124 written by abbot Suger in the *Life of Louis VI* (*Vita Ludovici Grossi regis*) more than a dozen years later.<sup>51</sup> The abbot describes how the king, facing the emperor's invasion, took the *vexillum* of Saint Denis and raised to the altars the relics of the three martyrs. According to this account, Louis VI hastened to Saint-Denis considering Saint Denis as the kings' of France special patron and the first after God protector of the kingdom, which is allegedly proved not only by the words of many people (not mentioned by name) but also numerous experiences from the history of the kingdom (not described specifically). Therefore, Louis VI went to Saint-Denis in order to persuade the Saint with his prayers and gifts to "defend the kingdom, preserve the king and, as it was the custom, fight off the enemies." As the French enjoyed the grace imparted by the Saint, namely in the case when another kingdom dared attack France, that "noteworthy defender" together with his companions (in martyrdom and cult) "was raised to his altar as if for defense," the king ordered ("fit") to do this in his presence, in a pious and glorious way.<sup>52</sup> Next, Louis took from the altar the banner of the county of Vexin, owing to which he was a vassal of the Church of Saint-Denis and – "having accepted it [from the saint] like from his senior – set off against his enemies, calling the whole France to follow him."<sup>53</sup> From the time the feudal levy in mass ("ost") was called by the king until the end of the war, the silver reliquaries containing the bodies of the

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51 SUGER, *Vie de Louis VI*, cap. 28, pp. 218–231, especially pp. 220, 221, 226–229. There is rich literature about the political and ideological significance of this ceremony and its consequences for the Capetians' ideology of power, but also about the relations between the royal power in France, the cult of Saint Denis and the Abbey of Saint-Denis. The more recent works comprise: SPIEGEL, *The Cult of Saint Denis and Capetian Kingship*, pp. 43–69; WALDMAN, *Saint-Denis et les premiers Capétiens*, pp. 191–197; BOURNAZEL, *Louis VI le Gros*, pp. 156–160, 167–171, 386–388, with the selection of basic literature.

52 "Et quoniam beatum Dionysium specialem patronum et singularem post Deum regni protectorem et multorum relatione et crebro cognoverat experimento, ad eum festinans, tam precibus quam beneficiis precordialiter pulsat ut regnum defendat, personam conservet, hostibus more solito et, quoniam beatum Dionysium specialem patronum et singularem post Deum regni protectorem et multorum relatione et crebro cognoverat experimento, ad eum festinans, tam precibus quam beneficiis precordialiter pulsat ut regnum defendat, personam conservet, hostibus more solito resistat et, quoniam hanc ab eo habent prerogativam ut, si regnum aliud regnum Francorum invadere audeat, ipse beatus et admirabilis defensor cum sociis suis tanquam ad defendendum altari suo superponatur, eo presente fit tam gloriose quam devote;" SUGER, *Vie de Louis VI*, cap. 28, p. 220.

53 SUGER, *Vie de Louis VI*, cap. 28, p. 220.

saints were exposed at the main altar of the Church of Saint-Denis, while the monks continuously celebrated the liturgical office in their honour, day and night. According to Suger's account, the faithful participated in the liturgy together with the convent, supporting the royal army with a prayer for victory. Thus, they were witnesses and participants of the ostension, which became a religious ritual unifying the monarchy and the subjects around the cult of Saint Denis and his relics.<sup>54</sup> Arranging his troops,<sup>55</sup> the king decided that he would be fighting in the cohort of Saint Denis. Suger quotes the very interesting words of Louis VI: "In these ranks, he said, I will fight bravely and safely thanks to the protection of our saints but, at the same time, because I am their compatriot and household member [from the times when] they raised me, which is why they help me when I am alive or they will save me and accompany [to Heaven] when I am dead."<sup>56</sup> Thus, Louis VI – or perhaps Suger who assigned these words to him – expressed a belief that the king could count on the holy martyrs' help not only because of a special patronage of Saint Denis and his companions over the kingdom and the kings of France: Louis himself belonged to the *familia* of the saints, was their compatriote and household member, for he had studied in the monastery school of Saint-Denis as a child. However, we should add that earlier, in 1120, when he gave the crown of Philip I to the Abbey,<sup>57</sup> Louis VI

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54 "Sacras etiam venerabiles sacratissimorum corporum lecticas argenteas, que altari principali superposite toto spacio bellici conventus extiterant, ubi continuo celeberrimo diei et nocte offitio fratrum colebantur, multa devotissimi populi et religiosarum mulierum ad suffragandum exercitui frequentabantur multiplici oratione;" SUGER, *Vie de Louis VI*, cap. 28, p. 228.

55 SUGER, *Vie de Louis VI*, cap. 28, pp. 222–225.

56 "cui etiam seipsum interesse, spe suffragii protectoris sui, disponens: "In hac, inquit, acie tam secure quam strenue dimicabo, cum, preter sanctorum dominorum nostrorum protectionem, etiam qui me compatriote familiariter educaverunt aut vivum juvabunt aut mortuum conservantes reportabunt;" SUGER, *Vie de Louis VI*, cap. 28, pp. 222, 224.

57 "quoniam jure et consuetudine regum Francorum demigrantium insignia regni ipso sancti martyri, tanquam duci et protectori suo, referuntur, coronam patris nostri ei reddidimus;" *MONUMENTS HISTORIQUES. CARTONS DES ROIS*, no. 379, p. 213. Suger claims that Louis VI handed over his father's crown to the Abbey as late as in 1124, together with other gifts to express his gratitude for help in defeating Henry V; SUGER, *Vie de Louis VI*, cap. 28, pp. 226, 228. According to SCHRAMM, MÜTHERICH, *Denkmale der Deutschen Könige und Kaiser*, p. 95, Saint-Denis was the place where the coronation insignia, including the crown, were stored at least from the late ninth century, what is allegedly evidenced by the marginal glossa on the BnF, Ms. Latin 7230 (writings by Vegetius and Solinus from Saint-Denis library), fol. 117v<sup>o</sup>: "Hoc accepit rex de thesauro Sancti Dionysii." If this was the case, the insignia must have been

announced in the charter issued at that occasion that the kings of France were linked with Saint Denis by the bonds of benevolence and familiarity.<sup>58</sup> This reasoning seems similar to that presented in the record of Helgaud of Fleury according to which Hugh Capet on his deathbed allegedly addressed Robert II by listing the saints with whom the dynasty enjoyed the links of friendship (“amicitia”).

The emperor resigned from his attack after learning that Louis VI was joined by the most eminent French princes, even those who previously had waged war with the king, like the count of Blois and Chartres. As soon as the victory was announced, Louis VI returned to Saint-Denis in order to thank the holy martyrs. Besides the gifts, which – according to Suger – he gave to his holy patrons,<sup>59</sup> Louis VI carried on his own shoulders, with filial piety and tears in his eyes, the reliquaries with the bodies of the holy patrons back to the martyrdom, in which they used to rest.<sup>60</sup> We cannot overlook the fact that we have to do with the first for almost a century – from the end of Robert the Pious’s reign – testimony that a Capetian king carried personally the saintly bodies. We do not know whether the king performed the act of deposition of the relics with the physical help of the members of the clergy or not. Suger does not mention whether the clergy participated in the ceremony – although the convent accompanied the king at least during the procession – and does not say directly that Louis VI made it on his own.

Moreover, at the end of his account, Suger mentions the taboo protecting the inviolability of the bodies of the saints in their resting place. Namely, he notes that the emperor died before the year ended which, in accordance with the belief of the ancients (“antiquorum sententia”), was to happen to anyone who harmed the Kingdom of France and the Church, and due to whose wickedness the body of Saint Denis was raised from the grave.<sup>61</sup> This

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deposited in Saint-Denis during the reign of Charles the Bald, who not only highly appreciated the Abbey and had his palace there, but also was its lay abbot in 867–877.

58 “ei [sancto Dionysio] antecessores nostri benivolentia et familiaritate confederati sunt;” *MONUMENTS HISTORIQUES. CARTONS DES ROIS*, no. 379, p. 213.

59 SUGER, *Vie de Louis VI*, cap. 28, pp. 228–229. According to the editor (fn. 1–4, pp. 228–230), the information about the majority of the privileges and gifts mentioned by Suger are imprecise: they were made by the king in earlier years or more than a dozen days earlier during the ceremony of elevation of saints’ bodies on the high altar.

60 “rex ipse proprio collo dominos et patronos suos cum lacrimarum affluentia filiariter loco suo reportavit;” SUGER, *Vie de Louis VI*, cap. 28, p. 228.

61 “Imperator ergo theutonicus, eo vilescens facto et de die in diem declinans, infra annum circulum extremum agens diem, antiquorum verificavit sententiam,

moral stresses the uniqueness of the special prerogative or the extraordinary benefice mentioned by Louis VI in his charter and Suger in the king's Life, which permits, in dramatic circumstances, to elevate the bodies of the saints from the graves to the altar and to mark the exceptional, personal bond of the king of France with Saint Denis and his relics. Nevertheless, we should note that Suger's narrative clearly indicates that – although the king personally carried the body of the saint back to the sepulchre – Louis did not elevate it from the grave but only assisted the ceremony. Yet, Louis VI's active role in the ritual is very clearly expressed in the charter, in which we read that the king himself ordered that the relics should be elevated to the altar,<sup>62</sup> but also in Suger's account.<sup>63</sup>

We should note that we are not aware of any precedents for raising the body of Saint Denis from the grave and elevating it to the altar in 1124 for adoration when there was a danger of an invasion on France. The only superficially similar situation happened in 845, when the Norman invasion threatened the Paris region, and the body of Saint Germain and other relics were taken away from Paris in order to protect them from being robbed or desecrated. The body of Saint Denis and the remains of other saints resting in Saint-Denis Abbey were then lifted from their graves, yet not for the purposes of adoration but to prepare them for evacuation. However, Charles the Bald, staying at the time in Saint-Denis, did not allow them to leave the Abbey, possibly believing that if the Saint had left him, he would have lost his protection.<sup>64</sup> However, would it be reasonable to believe that the events from 845 were interpreted as the beginning of the liturgical tradition allowing to lift the body of Saint Denis from the grave and present it on the altar in the event of war?

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neminem nobilem aut ignobilem, regni aut ecclesie turbatorem, cujus causa aut controversia sanctorum corpora subleventur, anni fore superstitem, sed ita vel intra deperire;" SUGER, *Vie de Louis VI*, cap. 28, p. 230.

62 "pro regni defensione eosdem patrones nostros *super altare* eorumdem *elevari* pio affectu et amore *effecimus* [emphasis JP];" *MONUMENTS HISTORIQUES. CARTONS DES ROIS*, no. 391, p. 217.

63 "ut ... ipse beatus et admirabilis defensor cum sociis suis tanquam ad defendendum altari suo superponatur, eo presente fit tam gloriose quam devote;" SUGER, *Vie de Louis VI*, cap. 28, p. 220.

64 "sanctorum corpora, qui in hac regione multo iacuerant tempore, e propriis effossa sepulchris, propter metum supra dictorum Normannorum alias sunt deportata, preter corpus beatissimi martyris Dyonisii ceterorumque sanctorum, qui in eodem monasterio condigno quiescunt honore. Quae licet ex propriis essent effossa sepulchris, tamen preceptione ac iussione domni Karoli gloriosissimi regis ad alium inde non sunt permissa deportari locum;" *EX MIRACULIS S. GERMANI*, cap. 8, p. 12.

The use of the relics of martyrs as a palladium protecting the community from enemies has a long tradition beginning in the Late Antiquity, starting at the turn of the fourth and fifth century. Saint Ambrose, Victricius of Rouen, and Paulinus of Nola wrote that the saints whose relics were deposited in the cities of the Roman Empire defended them from invasion. In a letter to his sister, Ambrose called Saints Gervasius and Protasius the knights, warriors, and defenders (“*milites, propugnatores, defensores*”). However, Ambrose emphasized that they were knights of Christ who fought only in defense of all the Christians, without harming anyone.<sup>65</sup> In his speech about the translation of the relics of the martyrs (obtained from Saint Ambrose) to Rouen, Victricius mentioned the arrival of *militia coelestis* to the city, who were to defend Rouen from the invaders and triumph together with Christ.<sup>66</sup> In turn, in one of his songs, Paulinus of Nola describes the translation to Constantinople – conducted by Constantine the Great – of the relics of Saints Andrew and Timothy, who since then were protecting the imperial city.<sup>67</sup> And the other way round: the evacuation of the relics of

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65 SAINT AMBROSE, *Epistolae*, no. 22, cap. 10, coll. 1022: “Cognoscant omnes quales ego propugnatores requiram qui propugnare possint, impugnare non soleant. Hos ego acquisivi tibi, plebs sancta, qui prosint omnibus, nemini noceant. Tales ego ambio defensores, tales milites habeo: hoc est, non saeculi milites, sed milites Christi. Nullam de talibus invidiam timeo, quorum quo majora, eo tutiora patrocinia sunt. Horum etiam illis ipsis, qui mihi eos invident, opto praesidia. Veniant ergo et videant stipatores meos; talibus me armis ambiri non nego: hi in curribus, et hi in equis: nos autem in nomine Domini Dei nostri magnificabimur.”

66 VICTRICIUS OF ROUEN, *De laude sanctorum*, cap. 13, p. 90; CLARK, *Victricius of Rouen. Praising the Saints*, pp. 365–399; CLARK, *Translating Relics. Victricius of Rouen and Fourth-Century Debate*, 161–176; both papers reprinted in CLARK, *Body and Gender, Soul and Reason in Late Antiquity*, art. XII and XIII.

67 PAULINUS OF NOLA, *Carmi*, XVI, v. 317–330, vol. I, pp. 374–376: “nam quia non totum pariter diffusa per orbem / prima fides ierat, multis regionibus orbis / martyres afuerant, et ob hoc, puto, munere magno / id placitum Christo nunc inspirante potentes, / ut Constantino primum sub Caesare factum est, / nunc famulis retegente suis, ut sede priori / martyres accitos transferrent in noua terrae / hospitia; ut sancto non olim antistite factum / nouimus Ambrosio, qui fultus munere tali, / postquam ignoratos prius et tunc indice Christo / detectos ibimet mutata transtulit aula, / reginam prompta confudit luce fugientem. / nam Constantinus proprii cum conderet urbem / nominis et primus Romano in nomine regum / christicolam gereret, diuinum mente recepit / consilium, ut quoniam Romanae moenibus urbis / aemula magnificis strueret tunc moenia coeptis, / his quoque Romuleam sequeretur dotibus urbem, / ut sua apostolicis muniret moenia laetus / corporibus. Tunc Andream deuexit Achiuis / Timotheumque Asia; geminis ita turribus extat / Constantinopolis.”

Saint Germain and other saints from Paris in 845 – when threatened with the Norman invasion – was said to have sent the inhabitants of the city into despair, as they were deprived of their protection.<sup>68</sup>

The ritual of elevating the relics of the holy martyrs and patrons saints when France was endangered with foreign kingdom's invasion resembles very similar local practices performed, for instance, in the monasteries of Luxeuil in the tenth century and Conques in the eleventh century, even though they served there – as Adso of Montier-en-Der explains in his “Miracles of Saint Waldebert and Eustace” – as a replacement for the absent royal power which could not ensure the public order. Namely, when the properties of the Abbeys in Luxeuil or Conques were attacked by the lay noblemen, the monks took the reliquaries of Saint Waldebert or Saint Foy out of the churches and carried them around the lands belonging to the monastery to manifest not only the rights of the saints to these lands, and thus of their Abbeys, but also their patronage and protection over the territory and the community.<sup>69</sup> A similar course of action was taken in 1107, when the abbot of Saint-Amand organized a tour of the relics of Saint Amand across the lands belonging to the Abbey to protect his monastery from neighbour

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68 “Tota autem die illa ac nocte thesaurus aecclisiae in navibus ponitur, in quas die crastina quidam fratres ipsius monasterii ingredients, quidam vero ad venerabile corpus summi pontificis Germani servandum atque custodiendum in monasterio remanentes, timore magno ac terrore concussi, a facie Normannorum per alveum Sequanae tristes ac merentes fugere coeperunt. Venerabile nanque corpus beati presulis Christi Germani, quod in monasterio dimissum est, postea propriis humeris monachorum cum honore et reverentia ad ipsius sancti villam quae dicitur Cumbis delatum est; necnon caetera sanctorum corpora, qui in hac regione multo iacuerant tempore, e propriis effossa sepulchris, propter metum supra dictorum Normannorum alias sunt deportata, preter corpus beatissimi martyris Dyonisii ceterorumque sanctorum, qui in eodem monasterio condigno quiescunt honore. Quae licet ex propriis essent effossa sepulchris, tamen preceptione ac iussione domni Karoli gloriosissimi regis ad alium inde non sunt permessa deportari locum. Heu! quanta lamentatio monachorum, quantus clericorum atque laicorum luctus, quanta mulierum ac virginum, quanta senum vel infantum tunc extitit deploratio, nullus effari valet, videntes sanctorum corpora, quorum meritis semper defensi erant et auxilio, a suis egredi finibus et ad alia asportari loca;” *EX MIRACULIS S. GERMANI*, cap. 7–8, p. 12.

69 *MIRACULA SANCTORUM WALDEBERTI ET EUSTASII*, p. 1174; *LIBER MIRACULORUM SANCTE FIDIS*, lib. I, cap. 28, p. 132; cf. BOZÓKY, *Voyage de reliques et démonstration du pouvoir*, pp. 275–277; cf. PYSIAK, *Gest monarchy i wizualizacja symboliki rytuałów związanych z kultem relikwii*, pp. 171–172; PYSIAK, *The Monarch's Gesture and Visualisation of Rituals*, p. 33; PYSIAK, *Teatralizacja kultu relikwii w średniowieczu*, p. 35.

baron's foray.<sup>70</sup> For the ceremony in Saint-Denis of 1124, the body of the patron saint was not moved outside the sanctuary. Yet the elevation of the relics of the saints, whom the royal charter issued on the very same day called "special protectors and patrons of the kings and kingdom of France" to the high altar of the Abbey Church – named in the same royal charter "caput regni nostri", reveals a similar way of understanding the phenomenon of the cult of saint and relics. The relics of the holy protector of a community – in this case broader than that of a monastery, as it embraced the entire kingdom – taken out from the grave and publicly venerated on the main altar of the church make apparent the fact that the entire kingdom was protected by its apostle. There also appears another observation: the sacral and political ritual performed in Saint-Denis in 1124 reveals significant ideological analogies to the earlier described ceremonies, namely to the translation of Saint Germanus in Auxerre in 860 or of Saint Aignan in Orléans in 1029. The analogy, although inaccurate – every case is different from each other, seems nevertheless clear. Unlike Charles the Bald in Auxerre, Louis VI did not perform the translation of the body of the saint personally. The direct contact of Louis VI with the saints enclosed in the reliquaries – because the king, contrarily to Charles the Bald, did not touch the saintly body – happened after the military victory, when the king carried the reliquaries back to the sepulchre. However, the aim and the ideological meaning of this ritual is the same: fighting back the attack on the kingdom and defending the king.<sup>71</sup> Louis VI acknowledged Saint Denis as the special patron guarding the safety of the kings – the name "dux et protector suus" was used to denote Saint Denis already in the charter of 1120 – and of the Kingdom of France, as clearly indicated both by the charter of 1124 and Suger's account. Still, this acknowledgment was unprecedented in the Capetian practice, contrary to what is stressed by the author of the royal documents and by Suger. The best analogy may be found in Robert II's speech in Orléans, related by Helgaud of Fleury, made at the ceremony of translation of Saint Aignan in 1029, during which the king described in detail the Saint's patronage over various groups of his subjects – actually making up the entire community of the kingdom – calling him the protector of the kings and father of the homeland.<sup>72</sup> If we assume that Robert II's speech reflects the king's actual ideological intentions – even if its literal

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70 BOZÓKY, *Voyage de reliques et démonstration du pouvoir*, p. 277.

71 See also: MICHAŁOWSKI, *Gniezno Summit*, pp. 121–122.

72 "regum protectio;" HELGAUD DE FLEURY, *Epitoma vitae regis Rotberti*, cap. 22, p. 106. See above, Point 2, Chapter 2 in this Part, entitled "The Cult of Relics During the Reign of Robert the Pious."



content was made up by the hagiographer, which seems rather improbable as two almost identical accounts have been preserved – then we should conclude that this is another analogy between the Orléans translation of 1029 and the exposition of the relics of Saint Denis in 1124 – namely, that of creating a spiritual capital of the kingdom by renewing the cult of the relics of the saint, which could be found in these two centres of the royal power. If Saint Aignan was for Robert the Pious not only the protector of the kings but also the patron saint of all the *ordines* in his kingdom – princes, knights, bishops, monks, widows, orphans, the mighty and the poor – then the sanctuary of that saint must have functioned, in the king’s intention, as the main cult centre of the entire kingdom as its ecclesiastical capital. Thus, it is worth remembering that, according to the hagiographers, Robert the Pious was not only the main celebrant during the translation ceremony but also the magnificent new Church of Saint-Aignan was of royal foundation, as Helgaud describes (which is confirmed by the preserved monumental crypt). It is also worth recalling the translation to the Orléans cathedral of the relics of the True Cross, brought in all probability at Robert the Pious’s request from Constantinople, and the fact that it was in Orléans that Robert was crowned and anointed in 987. Moreover, Robert the Pious often and gladly stayed in the royal palace in Orléans, so that we can see all the political, religious and pragmatic premises of the king’s intention to grant the city the rank of his royal capital. Finally, we should not forget that the hagiography of Saint Aignan made him the protector of Orléans against the Huns, thus the saint was seen – no less than Saint Denis at the time – as the military defender of the Kingdom of the Franks, what Robert did not fail to affirm in his speech pronounced during the liturgy of the translation.<sup>73</sup>

To sum up the similarities between the ceremony in Saint Denis of 1124 and the translation of Saint Aignan in Orléans of 1029, we should also refer to the – distant in time yet highly interesting – declaration of Chlothar II, who named Orléans with its Saint-Aignan Church one of the four ecclesiastical capitals of his kingdom, along with Saint-Denis, Saint-Médard Abbey in Soissons, and the Abbey of Saint-Martin in Tours,<sup>74</sup> where the most important holy patrons of the Frankish kings and Kingdom were to be resting (“*praecipua loca sanctorum*”), according to the Merovingian monarch.

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73 “sancti Aniani virtute mirabili, patris patriae, ab inimicis mirabiliter liberate;” *DE CONSECRATIONE BASILICAE SANCTI ANIANI*, cap. 6, p. 470.

74 EHLERS, *Politik und Heiligenverehrung in Frankreich*, p. 151; KRÜGER, *Königsgraben der Franken, Angelsachsen und Langobarden*, p. 174. On the importance of the Collegiate of Saint-Aignan under Robert’s successors, especially in the twelfth century, see GRIFFITHS, *The Capetian Kings and St. Martin of Tours*, pp. 90–92.

Certainly, the dramatic political circumstances of elevating the body of Saint Denis to the altar, his public veneration by Louis VI and his subjects, the war with the emperor, and the fact that the majority of the princes arrived in arms at the king's call<sup>75</sup> helped to create the myth describing the event and the ritual. Moreover, they were imprinted in the official memory of the monarchy, owing to the role played by the abbots and the Abbey of Saint-Denis at that time, and in the following years, in shaping the ideological foundations of the Capetian monarchy. Hence, unlike the Orléans translation of 1029, the royal adoration of the relics of Saint Denis before a just war, and especially some of its elements, could become a lasting political-sacral ritual of the royal authority in France. However, we should first comment on the information from the royal charter and Suger's account concerning the allegedly ancient character of the ritual of elevating to the altar and placing in the public view of the relics of three holy martyrs when the kingdom and the Church are in danger. In fact, no such thing was ever mentioned before. The only information about any *elevatio* and *expositio* (*ostensio*) of Saint Denis's body earlier than the one in 1124 concerns the above-presented mid-eleventh century argument between Saint-Denis, supported by Henry I, and the Regensburg monastery of Saint Emmeram, on who was the true owner of the martyr's body. Let us recall that – after the alleged rediscovery of the body of Saint Denis by the monks from Saint Emmeram – the reliquary of Saint Denis was publicly exposed in Saint-Denis in 1053 to prove that the allegations of the imperial monastery were groundless. However, while the claims made by the monks from Saint-Emmeram may be interpreted as a threat to the Church and the Kingdom of France, such a claim was not mentioned in the account of these events.<sup>76</sup> We should also note that the account was written as late as the end of the twelfth century; even though the claims of its author, Haymo, are accepted at face value – that he derived his knowledge about the event from a charter issued in the the mid-eleventh century to commemorate this – enforced by the circumstances – ostension, and hidden in the reliquary.<sup>77</sup> The information about when and why the reliquary was

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75 According to Suger, Louis VI's call to the *levée en masse* (*ost*) was answered by the duke of Burgundy, count palatine of Blois and Chartres and the counts of Flanders, Troyes, Vermandois and Nevers, and troops from the cities of Amiens, Beauvais, Saint-Quentin, Reims, Châlons, Étampes, Soissons, Laon, Orléans and Paris; the duke of Aquitaine and the counts of Anjou and Bretagne were allegedly unable to come due to the shortage of time; SUGER, *Vie de Louis VI*, cap. 33, pp. 222–225.

76 HAYMO OF SAINT-DENIS, *Liber de detectione Macharii Areopagitae Dionysii* (FÉLIBIEN), p. clvi–clxxii; edition of the excerpts: HAYMO OF SAINT-DENIS, *Liber de detectione Macharii Areopagitae Dionysii* (MGH), pp. 371–375.

77 See above: “The Content and Dating of the Descriptio” in Part 1, Chapter 1.

opened in the late twelfth century can be established by following the recurrence and durability of the rituals begun in 1124 by Suger and Louis VI.

At first, one should recall two important pieces of information found both in the charter of Louis VI and in Suger's *Vita Ludovici Grossi*. First, the relics were exposed when the Kingdom and the Church of France were in danger, which was an entirely exceptional privilege enjoyed by the French kings, because it was normally forbidden to violate the peace of the worldly remains of the saint. The enemy of the Church and the Kingdom whose actions necessitated such drastic measures was to be punished by death within a year. Second, the patronage of Saint Denis over the king was also manifested by his protection of the king's personal security, life, health, and ultimately, the salvation of his soul. Thus, the ceremony of 1124 was only a consequence of the belief that the emperor's invasion on France fulfilled all the necessary conditions to raise the bodies of the martyrs from their graves. In this context the account of Odo of Deuil – a Benedictine from Saint-Denis and a companion of Louis VII at the second Crusade, then Suger's successor as the abbot of Saint-Denis – of a ceremony accompanying Louis VII's departure to the crusade in 1147 seems particularly interesting. In his work, known as *De profectioe Ludovici VII in Orientem* written at Suger's request, Odo says that Louis VII came to Saint-Denis before the opening of the *Indictum* (in 1147 it took place on June 11) to meet pope Eugene III, who had been staying in the Abbey since Easter.<sup>78</sup> According to Odo, Louis came to the Abbey to ask Saint Denis for a banner (*vexillum*) and Saint's permission to go to the war (*licentia abeundi*) which, as Odo adds, was the custom of all victorious kings of the Franks.<sup>79</sup> After entering the Abbey Church, where he was awaited by the pope, abbot, the convent, the royal family, and the members of the court, Louis VII performed a prostration (in front of the martyrs' grave?) to venerate his patron.<sup>80</sup> Next, the pope and the abbot opened the gold doors of the sepulchre and *slightly* (*paululum*) took

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78 ODO OF DEUIL, *De profectioe Ludovici VII in Orientem*, pp. 14, 16.

79 "Dum igitur a beato Dionysio vexillum et abeundi licentia petiit, qui mos semper victoriosis regibus fuit;" ODO OF DEUIL, *De profectioe Ludovici VII in Orientem*, p. 16.

80 "Tunc ipse humillime humi prosternitur; patronum suum adorat;" ODO OF DEUIL, *De profectioe Ludovici VII in Orientem*, p. 16. On the Western liturgy of departure for the Crusade see GAPOSCHKIN, "From Pilgrimage to Crusade – The Liturgy of Departure, 1095–1300," *Speculum*, Vol. 88, No 1, January 2013, pp. 44–91, on *licentia abeundi* in Saint-Denis pp. 53–54; GAPOSCHKIN, "The Place of Jerusalem in Western Crusading Rites of Departure (1095–1300)," *The Catholic Historical Review*, Vol. 99, No 1, January 2013, pp. 1–28, on *licentia abeundi* in Saint-Denis p. 4. The Author, however, mentions the French royal ritual of *licentia abeundi* only marginally.

out the silver reliquary of Saint Denis, which the king piously kissed. The possibility of seeing and kissing the reliquary of the beloved patron Saint was to make the king's soul more joyful.<sup>81</sup> Louis VII took the banner from the altar, received the pope's blessing,<sup>82</sup> and went to the dormitory in the monastery, where he spent the night before departing for the Crusade.<sup>83</sup> Thus, Odo's account presents a quite similar but still distinct and occurring in different circumstances ritual than that of 1124. The Kingdom had not been attacked and the monarch raised his sword to defend the Holy Land, even though the *Loca Sancta* were not directly endangered at the end of the first half of the twelfth century. Thus, there is no justification for elevating Saint Denis's body to the altar. His reliquary was only slightly moved out from the grave to make the soul of the monarch rejoice when setting off to Jerusalem, and Louis VII venerated his patron by an act of kenosis and kissing the reliquary. Thus, the king had physical contact with the reliquary, which is certainly an important part of the ritual described by Odo, yet it seems rather conventional. Moreover, it seems evident that the relic was at the disposal of the abbot of Saint-Denis (and the pope). In contrast to Suger's account, the king had no decision-making power in the ritual described by Odo. The latter does not say that it was Louis VII who had the ceremony organized, like his father had a quarter of century earlier. Furthermore, we should note the statement that the king of France came to the Abbey of Saint-Denis to ask the saint for permission to undertake a military expedition outside of his kingdom and take the war banner as a sign of permission of his patron.

It is worth checking in the writings of Suger's and Odo's successors in the field of royal historiography whether and how the rituals of the cult of the relics of Saint Denis in wartime, shaped during the reign of Louis VI and Louis VII, became part of the tradition of the Capetian kingship. We shall focus on the chronicles written until the late thirteenth century in Saint-Denis, for two reasons. There is no doubt that beginning with the twelfth century the scriptorium of Saint-Denis Abbey became the place where the official royal historiography was shaped. For obvious reasons, the chroniclers from Saint-Denis produced reliable sources for the cult of Saint Denis's relics. The chronicler of Philip Augustus (1179–1223), Rigord, describes an analogous ritual when writing about the king's departure for the Third Crusade in 1190, but with a few differences. Like Louis VII, Philip came to the Abbey

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81 "Papa vero et abbas portulam auream reserant et argenteam thecam paululum extrahunt, ut osculato rex et viso quem diligit anima sua alacrior redderetur;" ODO OF DEUIL, *De profectioe Ludovici VII in Orientem*, p. 16.

82 "Deinde sumpto vexillo desuper altari et pera et benedictione a summo pontifice;" ODO OF DEUIL, *De profectioe Ludovici VII in Orientem*, p. 16.

83 ODO OF DEUIL, *De profectioe Ludovici VII in Orientem*, pp. 16, 18.

to ask for permission to go on a military expedition (“causa licenciam accipiendi”). As 43 years before, the ceremony took place close in time of the *Indictum*, yet not exactly on its day, but on June 24, thus on Saint John’s day, when the Lendit ended. Like previous chroniclers of the Abbey, Rigord emphasised the ancient character of the custom and the ritual and added that the kings of France used to raise the *vexillum* of Saint Denis from the altar in order to gain the care and protection of the Saint, then carried the banner at the very front line of their army, so that the enemies often fled at its sight.<sup>84</sup>

After entering the church, Philip Augustus humiliated himself in front of the bodies of Saint Denis, Rusticus, and Eleutherius, by prostrating on the marble floor, and he entrusted himself to the protection of God, Our Lady, the martyrs, and all the saints.<sup>85</sup> Next, he took from the hands of the archbishop of Reims and papal legate, cardinal William White Hands of Champagne (like Louis VII did, from the hands of the pope in 1147), a pilgrim’s travelling bag and stick. Then, with his own hands, the king elevated the large silk banners decorated with gold crosses lying “on the bodies of the saints” (“desuper corpora sanctorum”), which were both a memoir of the holy martyrs and the sign of God’s protection against the enemies of the Holy Cross.<sup>86</sup> Finally, the king was blessed with the relics of the Crown of Thorns, the Holy Nail of the True Cross and Saint Simeon’s arm.<sup>87</sup> This ceremony is not mentioned at all by the other royal chronicler, William the Breton, who for many years was in direct service of Philip Augustus,<sup>88</sup> but it was almost literally translated by Primat, the author of

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84 “Consueverant enim antiquitus reges Francorum quo quodcumque contra hostes arma movebant vexillum desuper altare beati Dyonisii pro tutela seu custodia secum portabant et in prima acie pugnatorum portabant. Quod videntes adversarii et cognoscentes, territi, multociens terga dederunt;” RIGORD, *Gesta Philippi Augusti* (2006), cap. 76, p. 272.

85 “Ideo christianissimus rex ante corpora sanctorum martyrum Dyonisii, Rustici et Eleutherii humiliter super pavimentum marmoreum in oratione prostratus, Deo et beate Virgini Marie et sanctis martyribus et omnibus sanctis se commendavit; RIGORD, *Gesta Philippi Augusti* (2006), cap. 76, p. 272.

86 “desuper corpora sanctorum duo standalia serica optima et duo magna vexilla aurifrisiis crucibus decenter insignita pro memoria sanctorum martyrum et tutela contra inimicos crucis Christi pugnaturus, propriis manibus accepit;” RIGORD, *Gesta Philippi Augusti* (2006), cap. 76, p. 274.

87 “accepta benedictione clavi et spinee corone et sancti senis Symeonis brachii;” RIGORD, *Gesta Philippi Augusti* (2006), cap. 76, p. 274.

88 WILLIAM THE BRETON, *Gesta Philippi*, pp. 168–332; WILLIAM THE BRETON, *Philippidos libri XII*. I mention William the Breton here although he was not a chronicler from the Abbey of Saint-Denis. However, as a historiographer of Philip Augustus and author of the long poem *Philippide* he proved his ambitions, extolling especially Philip’s military victories.

*Les Grandes Chroniques de France*,<sup>89</sup> who wrote during the reign of Louis IX and used Rigord's text. The successor of Primat at the position of the chronicler in Saint-Denis, Guillaume de Nangis, working under the reign of Philip the Fair (1285–1314), again does not mention the ceremony of 1190. Interestingly, almost none of the chroniclers active after Louis VI and Suger, until the times to Saint Louis, writes this ritual of veneration of the relics and submitting oneself to the care of Saint Denis to precede or accompany any other military actions of the kings of France, except the crusades. Yet, there were many wars during the reign of Philip Augustus, Louis VIII, and the first years of Saint Louis's reign. The only exception is the information provided by Rigord about 1191. Rigord writes that on August 25, following the advice of queen mother Adele, the archbishop of Reims, William of Champagne (the two ruled the Kingdom on behalf of Philip Augustus who was then on a crusade), and all the bishops of France,

the bodies of the holiest martyrs Denis, Rusticus, and Eleutherius were raised [from the crypt] together with the reliquaries of purest silver, in which they were enclosed and carefully sealed, then exposed on the altar; next to them the bodies of other saints resting in the church were placed, so that all the faithful who would come to see this holy sight could raise their clean hands together with Moses,<sup>90</sup> and direct their prayers to the Lord, crying and sighing, in the intention of freeing the Holy Land and of the king of the Franks and all his companions.<sup>91</sup>

The exhibition of the reliquaries was long. They remained on the high altar until the day of Saint Denis, October 9, when Saint Denis's reliquary was opened in the presence of the bishops of Senlis and Meaux, queen Adele, and many abbots and monks who gathered in the Abbey Church.<sup>92</sup> After

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89 PRIMAT, *Grandes Chroniques de France. Gestes au bon Roi Phelippe*, cap. 2, p. 370.

90 Cf. Exodus 17:11: "cumque levaret Moses manus, vincebat Israel."

91 "Eodem anno, VIII<sup>o</sup> kalendas septenbris, consilio domini G[uillelmi] Remensis archiepiscopi et Ale regine et omnium episcoporum, corpora beatissimorum martyrum Dyonisii, Rustici et Eleutherii cum purissimis vasis argenteis in quibus diligentissime sigillata continebantur sunt extracta et super altare posita, adjunctis ibi aliis corporibus sanctorum in eadem ecclesia quiescentium, ut ibi omnes fideles ad tam sanctum spectaculum convenientes, cum gemitu et suspiriis pro Sancta Terra liberanda et pro rege Francorum et universu comitatu suo puras manus cum Moyse levantes, ad Dominum preces funderent;" RIGORD, *Gesta Philippi Augusti* (2006), cap. 87, p. 300.

92 It is during the opening of the reliquary that Haymo could see the document hidden inside. The document described the previous opening and elevation of the relics of Saint Denis to the high altar in 1053, in order to disprove the claims of the Abbey of Saint Emmeram in Regensburg that Denis's body was found there (see above).

having established that the relics were untouched, the body of the Saint, found in integrity with the head, was shown to the populace and pilgrims.<sup>93</sup> Next, the bodies of the martyrs were deposited in the crypt again, in a sealed reliquary, but the head of Saint Denis remained in public view for another year to inspire the piety of the pilgrims and the common people. It was returned to the crypt on Saint Denis's day next year.<sup>94</sup> Rigord explains that another reason why Denis's head was exposed on the altar were the unjustified claims made by the canons of Paris Cathedral that it was (or at least its part)<sup>95</sup> in their possession.<sup>96</sup> This event is repeated after Rigord's chronicle by Primat in *Grandes Chroniques de France*, where the "Parisians' mistake" – the unjustified claims of the Parisian clergy to possess Saint Denis's head – is mentioned in one sentence without any more attention.<sup>97</sup>

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93 "Sequenti vero festo beati Dyonisii, aperto vase argenteo in quo corpus sacratissimi martyris Dyonisii continebatur, asistentibus venerabilis episcopis Silvanectensi et Meldensi et Ala Francorum regina et multis abbatibus et viris religiosis, totum corpus ipsius cum capite, ut prediximus, est inventum et universis Dei fidelibus qui de longinquis partibus orandi causa convenerant devotissime demonstratum;" RIGORD, *Gesta Philippi Augusti* (2006), cap. 87, p. 302.

94 "Caput vero pro excitanda devotione fidelium per totum annum omnibus peregrinis est ostensum et in sequenti festo beati Dyonisii cum corpore in vase suo repositum;" RIGORD, *Gesta Philippi Augusti* (2006), cap. 87, p. 302.

95 So PRIMAT, *Grandes Chroniques de France. Gestes au bon Roi Phelippe*, cap. 6, p. 375 (see below).

96 "Et ad removendum errorem Parisiensium, retento capite ieromartiris Dyonisii et in vase argenteo decenter collocato;" RIGORD, *Gesta Philippi Augusti* (2006), cap. 87, p. 302.

97 "En ce tempoire, droit en la VIII.<sup>e</sup> kal. de septembre, par le conseil l'arcesvesque Guillaume, la roine Ade et de touz les prelaz de France, fu traiz li precieus cors monseigneur Saint Denis fors de là où il repose enclos et seelez en riches vaissiaus de lente, et fu posez sor l'autel il et ses compaignon, et plusors des glorieus cors saints qui laiens reposent. La raison pourquoi il furent hors trait, fu por ce que l'on voloit que li pelerin et li popes qui là vinroient et verroient presentement le glorieus martyr et la sainte congregation, fussent plus esmeu et plus devot à prier Dieu et la benoite Vierge, et les glorieus martyrs, pour la delivrance de la sainte Terre, pour le roi et pour toute sa compegnie, que il par sa misericorde li donast force et victoire contre les anemis de la foi de la Croiz. A la feste saint Denis, qui est celebrée ou mois d'oïtrove, fu la fierte deseelée et overte, en quoi les precieuses reliques du glorieus martyr reposent, en la presence de l'evesque de Senlis et de celui de Miaus, de la roine Ade et des mainz abbez, et de mainz autres homes du siecle et de religion. Lors fu li cors trevez toz entiers o tout le chief, et fu monstrez au pople par grant devotion, et à touz ceus qui là estoient venu en pelerinage de divers païs. Quant la sollempnitez fut passée, li vassiaus fu diligemment seelez, et furent li cors sainz remis en la fort

Both chroniclers write that Philip Augustus, after he had returned from the Holy Land, paid a thanksgiving visit to the Abbey of Saint-Denis and, prostrated, prayed in front of the martyrs' grave.<sup>98</sup> There is no mention of venerating the head of Saint Denis, yet still exposed on the altar.<sup>99</sup> Thus, we may say that Philip Augustus followed the example of Louis VI who, having repelled the emperor's invasion, also paid a thanksgiving visit to the Abbey. Contrarily to his grandfather, Philip did not personally carry the relics to the crypt. Saint Denis's head remained on the altar until October 1192, and the other holy relics returned to the sepulchre before the king returned from the Crusade. Philip Augustus paid similar thanksgiving visits to the grave of the patron saint of the kings of France also after the military campaigns against Richard the Lionheart in 1195<sup>100</sup> and John Lackland in 1199<sup>101</sup> – each time depositing on the Saint's altar some valuable fabrics, like after he returned from the Crusade. Did Philip Augustus also venerate the relics of Saint Denis, like Louis VI in 1124, Louis VII in 1147, and he himself in 1190, before setting off to war, or did he only take the banner from the altar of the saint? Did he do it when facing the joint invasion of England and the Empire in 1214? *Gesta Philippi* and the poem *Philippide* by William the Breton, written several years later, suggest that the banner accompanied Philip Augustus during that war as well and that, in accordance with the custom, it preceded all the standards and battle banners of the kings of

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voute cimentée dont il orent esté osté. Mais li chiés fu lors retenuz et mis en un riche vaissel d'or et d'argent, et de riches esmauz de pierres précieuses, pour les pelerins et pour exciter la devotion du pople ... et meismement pour effacer l'error de ceus de Paris qui font entendant au monde que il en ont une partie;" PRIMAT, *Grandes Chroniques de France. Gestes au bon Roi Phelippe*, cap. 6, p. 375. The only differences in Primat's account are: the lack of information that the ostension of Saint Denis's head lasted for a year, the different description of the reliquary of Saint Denis's head (according to Rigord it was made of silver and according to Primat, of gold, silver, enamel, and precious stones), different descriptions of martyr's reliquary (according to Rigord it was made of silver and according to Primat, of lead) and the exactitude of the information about the aspirations of the Parisian clergy to possess Saint Denis's head: Primat says that they claimed to have had only a part of it.

98 RIGORD, *Gesta Philippi Augusti* (2006), cap. 90, pp. 308, 310; PRIMAT, *Grandes Chroniques de France. Gestes au bon Roi Phelippe*, cap. 8, p. 377.

99 Philip Augustus was back in France already in autumn that year; according to Rigord (RIGORD, *Gesta Philippi Augusti* (2006), cap. 90, p. 308), he spent Christmas in Fontainebleau. The king was back to Paris on December 27, 1191.

100 RIGORD, *Gesta Philippi Augusti* (2006), cap. 117, p. 336.

101 RIGORD, *Gesta Philippi Augusti* (2006), cap. 136, p. 360.



France.<sup>102</sup> In *Philippide*, William the Breton also confirms that the king received the banner from the abbot of Saint-Denis, but none of these works describes the ceremony in the Abbey.<sup>103</sup> In one of the manuscripts of the poem there are lines saying that, before the battle, Philip Augustus asked in his prayers the Saint for protection. But the poem indicates that this happened immediately before the battle, not in the Abbey.<sup>104</sup> However, William is the first known chronicler to call the banner of Saint-Denis “oriflamme” (“aurea flamma”).<sup>105</sup> The chroniclers from Saint-Denis do not mention the taking of the *vexillum* of Saint Denis in 1214. The next chronicler from Saint-Denis after Primat, Guillaume de Nangis, the author of a continuation of the universal chronicle of Sigebert of Gembloux, written for the years 1113–1300,<sup>106</sup> is completely silent about the exposition of the relics in 1124 during the war with Henry V or the taking of Saint Denis’s banner in 1124, 1147, and 1190.<sup>107</sup> The demonstration of the relics and the opening of Saint Denis’s reliquary in 1191 was also described, but as its only reason Guillaume indicates the controversy – also related by Rigord – between the Abbey and the Paris Cathedral about the ownership of Saint Denis’s

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102 “revocatur vexillum beati Dionysii, quod omnes procedere in bella debebat;” WILLIAM THE BRETON, *Gesta Philippi*, cap. 14, pp. 178–179.

103 “Ast regi satis est tenues crispare per auras / Vexillum simplex, cendato simplice textum, / Splendoris rubei, lethania qualiter uti / Ecclesiana solet certis ex more diebus; / Quod cum flamma habeat vulgariter aurea nomen, / Omnibus in bellis habet omnia signa preire, / Quod regi prestare solet Dionysius abbas, / Ad bellum quoties sumptis proficiscitur armis;” WILLIAM THE BRETON, *Philippidos libri XII*, lib. XI, v. 32–39, p. 319. On the history of the oriflamme cf. LOMBARD-JOURDAN, *Fleur de lis et Oriflamme*.

104 “Seque prius sancto precibus commendat eidem / Quique marescalli vice fungitur, illud habendo / In manibus, cunctas debet procedere turmas;” WILLIAM THE BRETON, *Philippidos libri XII*, p. 319, fn. 2.

105 The name of “Porieflambe” can be found earlier only in *The Song of Roland* (*laisse* CCXXV, v. 3093), where it was used to denote Charlemagne’s battle banner, carried into battle by Geoffrey of Anjou. In the earliest known manuscript (Oxford), however, the oriflamme was called Saint Peter’s banner (v. 3094). In the earliest known manuscript of *The Song of Roland*, compiled in Saint-Denis, line 3094 was removed. Cf. BOURNAZEL, *Louis VI le Gros*, p. 387 and no. 68, p. 454; LOMBARD-JOURDAN, *Fleur de lis et Oriflamme*, p. 57 f; LOOMIS, *L’oriflamme et le cri „Munjoie” au XII<sup>e</sup> siècle*, pp. 469–499.

106 GUILLAUME DE NANGIS, *Chronique latine*; GUILLAUME DE NANGIS, *Chronicon*, pp. 725–763 (1113–1225), pp. 543–582 (1226–1300), pp. 583–646 (1301–1327).

107 GUILLAUME DE NANGIS, *Chronique latine*, pp. 14, 40, 97; GUILLAUME DE NANGIS, *Chronicon*, pp. 727, 745–746.

head.<sup>108</sup> Guillaume does not mention any ceremony in 1214, neither the other chroniclers of Saint-Denis do.<sup>109</sup>

The only testimonies created by the chroniclers from the Abbey of Saint-Denis about the existence of the discussed ritual during the reign of Saint Louis concern the taking of the oriflamme by the king while setting off on the Seventh Crusade in 1270. Like in the case of Philip Augustus's wars with England and the Empire, there is no mention about Saint Denis's relics' exposition in the Abbey due to the invasion of the army of Henry III on Aquitaine in 1242 (in order to support the Lusignan rebellion), actually ended by Saint Louis's two great victories in the battles of Taillebourg and Saintes, though the war of 1241–1242 itself is rather well described in the chronicles of Saint-Denis. Guillaume de Nangis, the author of the most important preserved chronicle of the reign of Louis IX written in Saint-Denis, and Jean de Vignay, the translator and adaptator of the lost chronicle of Saint Louis's reign written by Primat,<sup>110</sup> do not mention this ritual also for 1248, when Louis IX set off for his first Crusade, but only for 1270. Whereas, in the case of Jean de Vignay, the reason for the gap is obvious – his chronicle, probably like its Latin prototype by Primat, begins in 1251 – and Guillaume de Nangis, whose work he could have used, does not mention this subject, which inspires surprise and questions. Had the ritual been forgotten by the kings and the Abbey of Saint-Denis after the reign of Philip Augustus or was it abandoned and rekindled only after Saint Louis's reign? It seems improbable, since Primat, a chronicler from Saint-Denis,

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108 GUILLAUME DE NANGIS, *Chronique latine*, p. 101; GUILLAUME DE NANGIS, *Chronicon*, p. 746.

109 GUILLAUME DE NANGIS, *Chronique latine*, pp. 145–149; GUILLAUME DE NANGIS, *Chronicon*, pp. 756–757.

110 Jean de Vignay was a prolific translator and adaptator of Latin literature into French. He translated *Speculum historiale* by Vincent of Beauvais, *De Otia Imperialia* by Gervase of Tilbury, *Legenda aurea* by Jacobus de Voragine, *Speculum ecclesiae* by Hugh of Saint-Cher, *Moralisatio super ludum scaccorum* by Jacobus de Cessolis, *Itinerarium* by Odoric of Pordenone, *De regimine principis* by Theodore Palaeologus, *Epitoma de re militari* by Vegetius, *Directorium ad passagium [in Terram Sanctam] faciendum*. Jean de Vignay's adaptation of Primat's chronicle, covering the years 1251–1270 (Primat's chronicle originally covered probably the period of 1251–1286, and was intended to be a continuation of the *Grandes Chroniques de France* offered to Philip III the Bold in 1274) was made in the 1330s, most likely on commission Joan of Burgundy, Philip VI de Valois's queen. On Jean de Vignay's adaptation of Primat's chronicle, see TROTTER, *Jean de Vignay*, pp. 209–221, with the most exhaustive literature. For the complete bibliography of Jean de Vignay's output: [http://www.arlima.net/il/jean\\_de\\_vignay.html](http://www.arlima.net/il/jean_de_vignay.html) (April 23, 2020).

simultaneously describes such a ritual performed during the times of Philip Augustus. The ceremony of 1270 presented by Guillaume de Nangis is in fact identical to the ritual of 1190, which we know from Rigord and from a contemporary French version of Primat's text. The king came with his sons and barons to the seat of his patron in Saint-Denis to obtain Saint's permission to begin a military expedition ("licentiam accepturus") in accordance with the ancient custom of his ancestors and, like them, having said the prayers to the holy martyrs, Saint Louis took up the banner from their altar as a Saints' banner-bearer ("signiferi jure," thus, in the same way as Louis VI described this ritual in the charter from 1124).<sup>111</sup> The French version of the chronicle presents a more detailed description, which says that Louis IX prayed "in front of the bodies of the holy martyrs," and that he obtained the pilgrim's stick and travelling bag from the abbot, then took the banner from the altar himself.<sup>112</sup> We cannot guess if the words about the prayer "in front of the bodies" (relics) of Saint Denis, Rusticus, and Eleutherius, mean that the reliquaries were taken out from the *sepulchrum* or not. In the Latin version of the chronicle, we instead find the information, absent in the French text, that Louis IX, like Philip Augustus in 1190, obtained a blessing by the relics of the Holy Nail and the Crown of Thorns.<sup>113</sup> Before his departure, Louis IX left his kingdom under the care of Saint Denis.<sup>114</sup> Primat's

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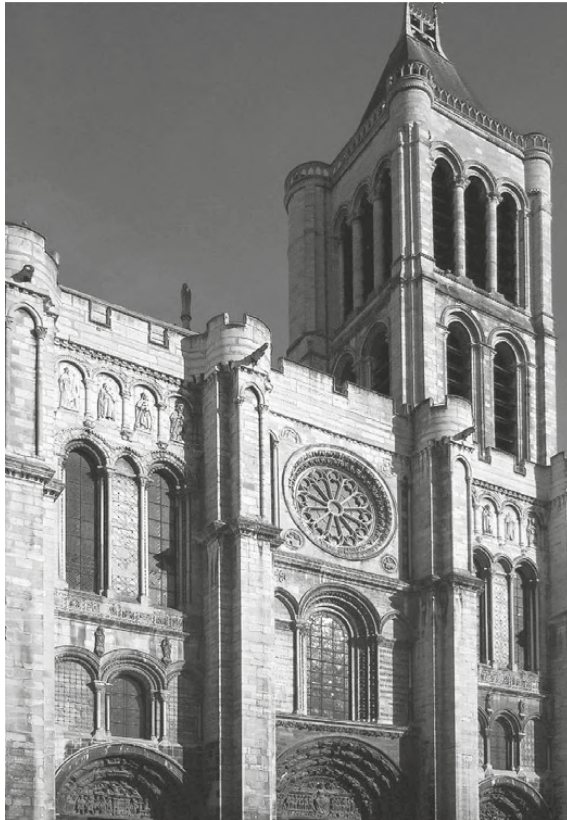
111 "rex devotus cum filiis et multis regni proceribus, *ad sanctum Dionysium patronum suum, secundum antiquam regum Francorum consuetudinem, licentiam accepturus accessit. Itaque martyres beatum Dionysium, Rusticum et Eleutherium, devotissime cum multis precibus interpellans, vexillum de altario sancti Dionysii, ad quod comitatus Vulcassini spectare dignoscitur, quem etiam comitatum rex Francia debet tenere de dicta ecclesia in feodum, morem antiquum antecessorum suorum servare volens, signiferi jure sicut comites Vulcassini soliti erant suscipere, suscepit cum pera et baculo peregrinationis* [emphasis: JP];" GUILLAUME DE NANGIS, *Gesta sancti Ludovici / Vie de Saint Louis*, p. 440.

112 "devant les cors des glorieus martirs monseigneur saint Denis et ses compagnons, a oroison moult devotement, et prit lescherpe et le bourdon dou pelerinage de la main labbé, et puis sus lautel lenseignie saint Denis;" GUILLAUME DE NANGIS, *Gesta sancti Ludovici / Vie de Saint Louis*, p. 441.

113 "sancti clavi et coronae benedictione percepta, ab ecclesia est egressus;" GUILLAUME DE NANGIS, *Gesta sancti Ludovici / Vie de Saint Louis*, p. 440.

114 "totumque regnum Franciae martyris Dionysii protectioni deputans / li roys ot commandé par ses prieres et par ses oroisons tout son royaume au glorieus martir monseigneur saint Denis et ses compagnons;" GUILLAUME DE NANGIS, *Gesta sancti Ludovici / Vie de Saint Louis*, p. 440 (Latin version), p. 441 (French version).

relation in the account of Jean de Vignay<sup>115</sup> is very similar in its content to that noted by Guillaume de Nangis, and the former draws attention to the same important details, differing in fact only in the lack of the mention about the king's role as the banner-bearer of Saint Denis.



5. The Abbey of Saint-Denis, western facade of the Abbey Church, ca. 1144.

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115 “*Et donc le roy très devot, et ses fils et plusieurs de ses barons, ala mout doucement et devotement, à son patron monseigneur saint Denis, prendre congïé selonc la coustume ancienne des roys de France. Et là deproia très devotement les saints martyrs par mout des proïeres, et oy messe, li et tous les barons et plusieurs autres nobles; et quant le servise fu tout dit, il prit illec l'escharpe et le baston de son pelerinage; et la banière saint Denis fu atainte, qui est appelée du commun l'oriflambe, et l'emporta avec soi; et recommanda le royaume de France en la garde et en la protection du martyr saint Denis. ... et donc prist le roy et les barons la benëïçon de l'abbé, qui les benesqui du Clou et de la Couronne;*” PRIMAT / JEAN DE VIGNAY, *Chronique dite de Primat*, cap. 24, p. 40.

#### 4. Miraculous Healings of Kings in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Century Owed to Saint Denis and His Relics

The year 1191 saw many rituals instrumentalizing the cult of relics in Saint-Denis. The exposition of the body and head of Saint Denis from August 25, 1191, to October 9, 1192, was not the first disturbing of the holy relics' peace for the sake of the monarchy that year. According to Rigord and Primat, the relics left the sepulchre for the second time that year. For the first time they had been taken out of the crypt due to the serious illness of the four-year-old only son of Philip Augustus and the heir to the throne, the future Louis VIII. Thus, we shall separately discuss the role of the relics in preserving the health of Capetian kings.

As it seems, Louis VI indeed deeply trusted this kind of Saint Denis's protection not only during the war, which he mentioned in his charter from 1124. Suffering from severe dysentery in November 1135, as Suger writes, the king made a wish to be brought to Saint Denis.<sup>116</sup> Feeling certain that he was dying, the king conferred the royal power to his son, Louis, and gave rich gifts to the saints and the abbey, then indulged in pious practices. However, after having confessed, Louis VI recovered<sup>117</sup> and went back to Saint Denis's grave to thank the martyrs for saving his life;<sup>118</sup> he lived almost two years longer.<sup>119</sup> Although this statement is not made explicitly in Suger's work, the narrative is constructed in such a way that the conclusion seems obvious: Louis VI owed his recovery to Saint Denis's protection.

The belief that Saint Denis's patronage may preserve the king's health was evidently shared by the successive generations. When the young prince Louis fell ill with dysentery in 1191, Rigord writes, following the advice of the monks from Saint-Denis, after fasting and praying in the monastery, the body of Saint Denis was taken from the grave and brought to Paris. The relics of the patron of the kings of France were accompanied by the relics

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116 "Qui, ut erat in consiliis providus, sibi ipsi consulens et miseratus anime sue, Deo placens, frequentate confessionis et orationum sibi devotione providebat, hoc unum toto animi affectu preoptans, spud sanctos Martyres protectores suos Dyonisium sociosque ejus se quomodocumque deferri;" SUGER, *Vie de Louis VI*, cap. 33, p. 272.

117 SUGER, *Vie de Louis VI*, cap. 33, pp. 272–279.

118 "ob amorem sanctorum Martirum quo visitare et grates reddere desiderabat;" SUGER, *Vie de Louis VI*, cap. 34, p. 278.

119 Louis VI died on August 1, 1137.

of the Crown of Thorns, the Nail of the True Cross, and the arm of Saint Simeon (the same, which according to *Descriptio qualiter* were brought from Constantinople by Charlemagne).<sup>120</sup> They were welcomed in Paris by a procession led by the bishop with the Parisian clergy and monks from all the Parisian monasteries. After a sermon to the populace gathered in front of the royal palace, the royal child was touched with the relics: the sign of the cross was made on Louis's belly with the Holy Nail, the relics of the Crown of Thorns, and the arm of Saint Simeon; immediately the disease was healed. On the very same day and hour, Philip Augustus, who was then staying in Acre, was healed from the same disease.<sup>121</sup> The sick prince was touched with other relics than those of Saint Denis, but Rigord stresses in his narrative the particular part of the importation of the body of the martyr to Paris: he never found (and neither have we) any sources which would confirm that the bodies of the saints had ever left Saint-Denis due to any kind of danger.<sup>122</sup> Thus, such an event occurred for the first time in 1191 due to the serious illness of the heir to the throne.<sup>123</sup> Furthermore: even if nobody in France knew about the illness of Philip Augustus, the king was also healed even though he was not touched with the Passion relics. Hence, it seems logical to assume that Rigord intended to create a clear message: the double miracle should be in fact ascribed to the merits of Saint Denis. The same claim is explicitly made by Primat two generations later, in *Grandes Chroniques de France*: "Then our Lord made a clear [miracle] thanks to the merits of a glorious martyr, the noble Saint Denis and other glorious martyrs and confessors whose holy relics were present."<sup>124</sup>

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120 Rigord does not mention Charlemagne's expedition to the East, but he must have read the *Descriptio qualiter*, because he writes that the relics were given to Saint-Denis by Charles the Bald; RIGORD, *Gesta Philippi Augusti* (2006), cap. 41, p. 204.

121 RIGORD, *Gesta Philippi Augusti* (2006), cap. 84, pp. 294–299.

122 RIGORD, *Gesta Philippi Augusti* (2006), cap. 84, pp. 298–299.

123 In 1179, Philip, the heir to the throne, fell seriously ill just on the eve of his expected royal anointing. Philip's illness, developed after he had lost his way in the forest during a hunt, was grave enough to postpone the anointing and coronation from August 15 till the All Saints Day; Louis VII went on a pilgrimage to the grave of Saint Thomas Beckett in Canterbury to aid the recovery of his only successor; cf. WILLIAM THE BRETON, *Gesta Philippi*, cap. 14, pp. 178–179.

124 "Lors i ovra Nostre Sires apertement par les merites du glorieus martyr monseigneur Saint Denis, et des autres glorieus martyrs et confesseurs dont les saintes reliques estoient presentes; car il recovra maintenant plaine santé à l'atouchement du Saint Clou et de la Sainte Corone, et du braz Saint Symeon, qui li furent atouchié en croiz sur le ventre là endroit où maladie le tenoit: et si, come on affirme pour voir, li Rois Phelipes ses peres, qui au siege d'Acre estoit, fu garis

A similar, or perhaps the same, disease as Louis VI, Philip Augustus, and the future Louis VIII in 1191, struck Louis IX<sup>125</sup> in December 1244. The king's serious illness scared the archbishops, bishops, abbots, barons, and the population of the kingdom. They were afraid that the king, a special defender of the Christian faith and the Church,<sup>126</sup> may die. Hence, a large group of bishops and kingdom's officials came to the castle in Pontoise where the sick king was staying. In all bishoprics of France alms were ordered to be given in cathedrals in the intention of Louis's recovery, common prayer and public processions were ordered. However, the monarch was so ill that at a certain moment he was assumed dead. As the royal medics despaired for his life despite the fact that Louis IX regained consciousness, the king and the queen mother, Blanche of Castile, asked the abbot of Saint-Denis to expose on the altar the bodies of Saint Denis and his companions so that they could intercede with God for the king's recovery. Louis IX himself invested his greatest hopes in the intercession of Saints Denis, Rusticus, and Eleutherius, believing that – after God and Our Lady – they were his and his kingdom's special defenders and protectors.<sup>127</sup> Guillaume de Nangis writes

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d'autel maladie droit en ce point et en cele heure meismes;" PRIMAT, *Grandes Chroniques de France. Gestes au bon Roi Phelippe*, cap. 6, pp. 374–375.

- 125 Suger called Louis VI's illness "diarria" (should be: "diarrhoea," i.e., diarrhea), Rigord named the disease of Philip Augustus and Louis VIII, "dissinteria" (dysentery), cf. above; Guillaume de Nangis called the disease, from which Louis IX suffered "valida febris et vehemens fluxus ventris" (strong fever and violent diarrhea); see below.
- 126 The account relating the disease of Louis IX is placed in the immediate vicinity of the account on the First Council of Lyon, and on the threat to the Church posed by emperor Frederick II.
- 127 "coepit devotissimus rex Ludovicus Francorum, mense Decembri, die Sabbati ante festum sanctae Luciae virginis, valida febris et vehemente fluxu ventris vehementer infirmari. Postquam autem fama nuncia praevolante Francorum auris rumor insonuit, quod fidei Christianae et ecclesiae sanctae Dei defensor in terra singularis, pre aegritudinis pondere periclitaretur, corda eorum non modica replevit amaritudine et dolore. Archiepiscopi autem, episcopi et abbates quamplurimi nec non barones Franciae, prout decebat, compatientes regi suo, Pontisaram quantocius advenerunt .... Sed regis infirmitatem videntes crescere, placuit ipsis quod divinam clementiam implorarent, quatenus Deus, qui omnia solus potest, virtutem suam circa infirmum regem ostendere dignaretur. Destinantur igitur nuncii per ecclesias cathedrales, ut in illis eleemosynae et orationes ac sollemnes pro rege fierent processiones. Sed regis aegritudine postea ingravescente, creditus fuit rex per magnum unius diei spacium spiritum exhalasse .... Tandem, quia regis aegritudo adeo gravis erat ut medici desperarent de ipso, rex et serenissima mater ejus domina Blanca regina petierunt Odonem abbatem ecclesiae macharii Dionysii, ut sacratissima corpora Dionysii, Rustici, et Eleutherii, quorum patrocini tota gaudet regio, regni stat potentia, de cripta

that it is known God cannot refuse Saint Denis, since he had promised it so during the Saint's lifetime.<sup>128</sup>

Then, we learn about the setting of the ceremony: the Abbey of Saint-Denis had the whole church decorated with valuable fabrics and candles placed everywhere like for the greatest of holidays.<sup>129</sup> At that time a message about the elevation of the bodies of the saints from the crypts and the procession, which were to happen on the following day, spread in Paris, causing a huge influx of the faithful,<sup>130</sup> both lay and ecclesiastical, who wanted to see the saints with their own eyes, since the holy martyrs left their tombs only when the king's health or the Kingdom was in danger.<sup>131</sup> The ceremony took place on Friday before Christmas,<sup>132</sup> concelebrated by the bishops of Noyon and Meaux and the abbot of Saint-Denis. When the prayers had been said, the bodies of the saints, enclosed and sealed in capsules from electrum, were taken out from the crypt located under two gold obelisks

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*in qua quiescebant, ut suis precibus regi sanitatem impetrarent a Domino, tollere et elevari facere non differret. Rex siquidem post Dominum et sacratissimam Virginem matrem ejus, in ipsis, utpote in suis et regni sui advocatis et protectoribus, confidentius sperabat, nec immerito [emphases: JP];*" GUILLAUME DE NANGIS, *Gesta sancti Ludovici / Vie de Saint Louis*, p. 344 (Latin version) and 345 (French version).

- 128 "Quid enim posset Dominus beato Dionysio denegare, qui eidem in carcere propter fidem catholicam retruso dixerat: "Dilectio et benignitas quam habes, semper pro quibuscunque petieris, impetrabit?;" GUILLAUME DE NANGIS, *Gesta sancti Ludovici / Vie de Saint Louis*, p. 344 (Latin version) and 345 (French version).
- 129 "Quam [ecclesiam] illico cereis circumquaque positis, quemadmodum in praecipuis solemnitatibus fieri solet, ut in crastino ad tam sanctas removendas reliquias devotio astantium et animi ad Deum excitarentur, et ut ipsis martyribus congruus honor dignanter exhiberetur, pretiosissimis jussit pallis adornari;" GUILLAUME DE NANGIS, *Gesta sancti Ludovici / Vie de Saint Louis*, p. 344 (Latin version) and 345 (French version).
- 130 In the French version, Guillaume de Nangis writes that the crowds filled the whole town of Saint-Denis; GUILLAUME DE NANGIS, *Vie de Saint Louis*, p. 345.
- 131 "auditum fuit Parisius, quod pro salute regis beatorum corpora martyrum, quae nunquam nisi solummodo pro salute regis Franciae, vel regni sui periculo, de loco suo extrahuntur, essent in crastino extrahenda, et ad processionem deportanda. Unde accurrit in crastino utriusque sexus virorum ac mulierum ad tam sanctum spectaculum copiosa multitudo. Sed et tam clerici, quam laici, rubeant catervatim, gloriosos martyres cernere cupientes [emphasis: JP];" GUILLAUME DE NANGIS, *Gesta sancti Ludovici / Vie de Saint Louis*, p. 344 (Latin version) and 345 (French version).
- 132 Louis IX fell ill on the Saturday preceding Saint Lucy (December 13).



and elevated to the altar dedicated to these martyrs.<sup>133</sup> Next, a barefoot procession with the relics circled the monastery and the Abbey Church in the intention of Louis's recovery, during which there were more sobs, sighs, and tears shed out of worry about the king's health and life<sup>134</sup> than psalms sung for the glory of God.<sup>135</sup> At the same hour, Louis IX felt better and soon regained his health.<sup>136</sup> Thus, it is evident that the king owed his recovery to his patron, Saint Denis, but in the French language version of Louis's Life, there is also a conclusion that dispells any possible doubts<sup>137</sup> (Guillaume de Nangis mentions a popular opinion that the monarch was healed thanks to the crusade vows he made during his illness).<sup>138</sup>

Such a conclusion, emphasizing Louis IX's recovery as owed to the intercession of Saint Denis may have been necessary in Guillaume's view to make evident the patron saint true merits. It is worth noting that a contemporary English chronicler Matthew Paris claimed that Louis – having already sunken into lethargy – miraculously recovered after his cold and stiff body was touched with the relics of the Holy Cross, the Crown of Thorns, the

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133 “die Veneris ante festum Dominicae Nativitatis, facta oratione, levata fuerunt et extracta pretiosissima corpora de cripta, quae subtus pyramides est aureas, ubi in capsulis electrinis longo tempore quieverent diligentissime sigillata, et super altare ipsorum martyrum pretiosis palliis decoratum collocata;” GUILLAUME DE NANGIS, *Gesta sancti Ludovici / Vie de Saint Louis*, p. 346 (Latin version) and 347 (the French version has fewer details).

134 “pour la grant douleur que il avoient de la maladie le roy;” GUILLAUME DE NANGIS, *Gesta sancti Ludovici / Vie de Saint Louis*, p. 347. This specification has not been included in the Latin version.

135 “Deinde processione praeparata, quae facta fuit nudis pedibus, suspiriis, singultibus et lachrymis plus quam Psalmis ad Dominus resonantibus, fuerunt ad processionem, ob regis salutem, quam idem rex sibi sperabat per dictos martyres impetrari, per claustrum et ecclesiam deportata;” GUILLAUME DE NANGIS, *Gesta sancti Ludovici / Vie de Saint Louis*, p. 346 (Latin version) and 347 (French version).

136 “ex illa hora, qua corpora sacrosancta martyrum Dionysii, Rustici et Eleutherii, ad processionem deportata sunt, paulatim aegritudine regis decrescente, coepit rex melius se habere;” GUILLAUME DE NANGIS, *Gesta sancti Ludovici / Vie de Saint Louis*, p. 346 (Latin version) and 347 (French version).

137 “et fu garis prouchainement par les prieres des glorieus martirs monseigneur saint Denis et ses compagnons;” GUILLAUME DE NANGIS, *Gesta sancti Ludovici / Vie de Saint Louis*, p. 347.

138 GUILLAUME DE NANGIS, *Gesta sancti Ludovici / Vie de Saint Louis*, pp. 344 and 346 (Latin version), 345 and 347 (French version).

head of the Lance of Longinus, and the Nails of the Cross,<sup>139</sup> that is, the relics which the king had brought to Paris in 1239–1242.

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A review of the narrative sources from the Abbey of Saint-Denis concerning the royal cult of the relics of Saint Denis in the period which began with the reign of Louis VI (r. 1108–1337) and ended with the reign of Saint Louis (r. 1226–1270), makes possible to draw several general conclusions. Most importantly, although already before 1124 Louis VI mentioned in his charters the special patronage of Saint Denis over the Kingdom of the Franks<sup>140</sup> and over the king himself, it seems doubtless that the exposition of the holy martyrs' relics celebrated in the Abbey<sup>141</sup> and the adoration of relics by the kings – when the Kingdom was under military threat in 1124 – had no precedent in the history of the West Frankish monarchy. Rather, they constituted such a precedent. For it is hard to assume that the rich – and already centuries-old – history of the Abbey did not preserve even a meagre piece of information which would confirm the existence of such a ritual before the turn of the first and second quarter of the twelfth century. It is worth remembering that the cult of Saint Denis does not seem to be a leading one for the early Capetians: Helgaud never mentions him among the saints whom Hugh Capet considered as the special *amici* of the dynasty and ordered Robert the Pious to venerate them in particular. Indeed, in the story of how Robert's mother, queen Adelaide, gave the Abbey a precious chasuble, Helgaud adds that she considered Denis as one of the closest *amici* among the saints and herself as his servant and passed this belief to her offspring; she also counted, as Helgaud says, that thanks to that she would get from God the same favour as, according to his Life, Saint Denis enjoyed, namely – that God would not reject any request addressed to Him through the Saint's mediation.<sup>142</sup> As for Robert, Helgaud says that he was a generous donor, without providing any further details; instead he states, quite surprisingly, that the king visited Saint-Denis because of his veneration for Saint Hyppolytus, whose relics were stored in the Abbey. We can also

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139 “in extasim letalem raptus, jacuit aliquot diebus quasi mortuus – Mater autem ipsius, scilicet Blanchia, reliquias, de quibus supra meminibus, scilicet veram Crucem, coronam, lanceam et clavos, aptavit corpori rigido et frigido; et, redeunte spirritu, revixit;” MATTHEW PARIS, *Historia Anglorum*, vol. III, p. 497.

140 In this respect, Louis VI followed the Merovingian and Carolingian traditions, which shaped the historical memory of the Abbey.

141 Such celebrations were intended to muster the beneficial help of Saint Denis, Rusticus, and Eleutherius.

142 HELGAUD DE FLEURY, *Epitoma vitae regis Roberti*, cap. 14, p. 83.

learn that Robert used to stay spend the second week of Eastertide in Saint-Denis.<sup>143</sup> Other Helgaud's remarks about the cult of Saint Denis during the reign of the new dynasty concern Robert's gift of the relics of Saint Denis to Helgaud, who was to store them in the church dedicated to Denis, which he founded in Fleury.<sup>144</sup> In the mortuary roll of abbot Vitalis of Savigny, written in ca. 1122–1123, a monk of Saint-Denis mentioned Robert the Pious and Henry I as the equally important benefactors of the Abbey as Dagobert I and Charles the Bald.<sup>145</sup> Haymo's account, written in the last decade of the twelfth century, of the *detectio* and *ostensio* of the relics of Saint Denis of 1053 mentions numerous pilgrims, the ecclesiastical hierarchs, and several barons, who participated in it. However, even though Henry I intervened with emperor Henry III in defense of the authenticity and integrality of Saint Denis's relics stored in Saint-Denis Abbey, the king himself did not take part in the opening of the reliquaries and in the ostension of the bodies of the saints. The dynasty was represented by king's younger brother and Henry I arrived at the Abbey only when the inviolability and thus authenticity of the bodies of the saints had been confirmed. It was only then that he made his gift of the purple fabric.<sup>146</sup>

We should therefore consider the narratives presented both in Louis VI's charter of 1124 and in Suger's *Gesta Ludovici Grossi* as apocryphal and presumably inspired by the content of the arengas of the authentic royal documents from the Merovingian and Carolingian era. Suger was most probably the *spiritus movens* of this undertaking, but it is also possible that Louis VI intentionally took part in creating the newly constructed religious image of the Capetian kingship and its new ideological foundations. Like the equally apocryphal *Descriptio qualiter* and the annual ostension of the Passion relics, the legend created by Louis VI and Suger was aimed, on the one hand, at building the prestige of the Abbey of Saint-Denis as the main pillar of the monarchy and the guardian of the relics, which were the cornerstone

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143 HELGAUD DE FLEURY, *Epitoma vitae regis Rotberti*, cap. 14, pp. 82–83. For a very synthetic presentation, still recalling certain specific significant cases, of the relations of the first Capetians with Saint-Denis see WALDMAN, *Saint-Denis et les premiers Capétiens*, pp. 193–194.

144 HELGAUD DE FLEURY, *Epitoma vitae regis Rotberti*, cap. 24, pp. 116–119.

145 WALDMAN, *Saint-Denis et les premiers Capétiens*, pp. 193–194. Similarly already Louis VI in 1112; cf. BOURNAZEL, *Louis VI le Gros*, pp. 385–386; GROSSE, *L'abbé Adam, précurseur de Suger*, pp. 31–43.

146 See above. According to WALDMAN, *Saint-Denis et les premiers Capétiens*, pp. 195–197, the copy of the act of devotion of Henry I towards the relics of Saint Denis is modeled after the pious gestures of Louis VI in 1124, thus it is impossible that the ostensio of 1053 was an archetype for that of 1124.

of the Kingdom, and on the other hand, creating a new sacral ideology of the monarchy. During the hundred years between the mid-eleventh and the mid-twelfth centuries, the Abbey of Saint-Denis skillfully conducted a reconstruction of the historical memory: its own and that of the Capetian monarchy too. Although the source of this ideological and mythological reconstruction of the memory and identity of the kingdom were the Abbey of Saint-Denis and Suger, one should assume that Louis VI intentionally co-created the renewed ideological image of the kingship. His ardent participation in the cult of the relics of Saint Denis was undoubtedly caused not only by the fact that he appreciated Suger's advice. As the royal charter of 1124 indicates, Louis considered the martyrs from Saint-Denis as his tutors and teachers, which is certainly connected to his youthful years when he received education in the Abbey. Clearly, it was at that time when his views, which he expressed as a king, on the cult of Saint Denis and the role of his sanctuary for the monarchy gained their definite shape. Noteworthy, many of the most important symbolic acts of Louis VI towards Saint-Denis – such as the charter of 1113 which declares that the Church of Saint Denis, being the most eminent among the churches of France, deserves special honours from the king, or the offering of his father, Philip I's, crown to the Abbey and the recognition of Saint Denis' apostolate in the charter issued on this occasion in 1120 – occurred at the time when Suger was not the abbot yet nor even a member of the king's close milieu: *familia regis*, which he joined, according to Éric Bournazel, only in ca. 1124.<sup>147</sup> One may thus dismiss the claim that the Capetian political theology connected with the cult of Saint Denis was created only by Suger and the king was only its executor. Rather, it seems feasible to suggest that Louis VI and Suger created it together.<sup>148</sup>

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147 BOURNAZEL, *Suger and the Capetians*, pp. 55–56.

148 One should not overlook the important creative influence of Suger's predecessor, abbot Adam (1099–1122) on the reintroduction of Saint Denis to the main thread of the Capetian monarchic ideology; see GROSSE, *L'abbé Adam, précurseur de Suger*, pp. 31–43; GROSSE, *Saint-Denis zwischen Adel und König. Die Zeit vor Suger*, pp. 131–229, especially pp. 131–151, 172–194, 223–229.



6. Healing the seriously ill Louis IX by touching him with the Passion relics from Saint-Denis in 1244, drawing by Matthew Paris, 1250–1259; *Historia Anglorum*, British Library, Ms. Royal 14 C VII fol. 137v<sup>o</sup>

In turn, one may draw quite different conclusions from the study of how the tradition created by Louis VI and Suger evolved. The sources recorded in Saint-Denis clearly indicate that it was substantially reinterpreted in several aspects by successive generations, even if it became an unalienable attribute of the monarchy in its military aspect. From 1147, the only known occasions when the king adored the bodies of Saint Denis and his companions to celebrate the beginning and the end of a war were linked to the Crusades to Holy Land: they took place in 1147, 1190, 1191, and 1270. The source texts written in Saint-Denis do not mention the occurrence of this ritual in 1248. This appears to be a departure from the tradition created by Louis VI who inaugurated this ritual when defending his Kingdom against an invasion into his lands, rather than setting off overseas. What is the most surprising, especially in the light of the fact that the ceremony of 1124 became a fixed part of the historiographical memory of the monarchy shaped in the scriptorium of Saint-Denis, is that there are no mentions of a similar ritual for 1214 when the Kingdom had to face the emperor's invasion again; furthermore: one of the accounts of the battle of Bouvines says explicitly that other than Denis saints took part in it, especially Germanus of Auxerre. William of Bretagne wrote that on the day of the battle the Abbey of Saint-Germain in Auxerre was burgled. Responding to the monks, who complained in their prayers to their patron that he failed to defend his church from the plunderers, a voice from the reliquary responded that, together with other saints, he was helping the

king and the Franks win a battle on that day.<sup>149</sup> If we add that, after Henry III's invasion on Aquitaine in 1242, such a ceremony was not performed – at least according to sources from Saint-Denis – the only plausible conclusion is that, after 1147, the intellectual milieu of Saint-Denis considered or even decided (having consulted the kings?) that this ritual should be restricted to the Crusades, and only those going to the Holy Land. After all, no records of a similar ceremony inaugurating the Albigensian Crusade of Louis the Lion can be found, even in contemporary sources of the Abbey of Saint-Denis.

However, what is striking in the evolution of the ritual, as reflected by the chronicles, is the continual limitation of the liturgical role of the relics themselves. The only univocal testimony confirming that the reliquaries were displayed on the altar before the royal expedition comes from 1124. Before the Second Crusade initiated by Louis VII in 1147, the reliquaries were only *slightly moved out* of the Saints' grave, so that the monarch could gladden his soul with their sight; even if the accounts connected with the Third and Seventh Crusade mention the *corpora sanctorum*, in all cases they do not go beyond the statement that the king venerated them and do not suggest in any way that the relics were taken out of the sepulchre. It seems that the kings established their contact with the Saint indirectly, only through the mediation of the *vexillum*, the banner called oriflamme from the early thirteenth century. As distinct from the pilgrim's attributes of a Crusade, the king did not obtain them from the representatives of the clergy but he used to personally take it from the altar of the saints.

Another important aspect of the evolution of the Saint Denis's cult, very closely linked to the previous one, is a *sui generis* specialization in the use of the relics according to the monarchy's interests. For as soon as the ritual of displaying the relics of Saint Denis and his companions in apostolate and martyrdom in the military context fell into disuse, there appeared the ostension during the adoration aimed at shielding the king's health, an element which was unprecedented in the earlier tradition. To be sure, we know about Louis VI's claims that Saint Denis was watching over the king's safety and health and that he sought the saint's protection when fighting through a life-threatening illness (1135). However, we have no information about exposing the saints' remains on the main altar of the Abbey or a procession with the relics, which took place in 1191 when the life of the heir to the throne, Louis (and – although no one knew about this in Paris and Saint-Denis – the life of Philip Augustus, too) was in danger and in 1245, when fears arose that Louis IX might die. Thus, we deal here with a paradox: the

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149 WILLIAM OF BRETAGNE, *Philippidos libri XII*, lib. XII, v. 764–787, p. 378.

tradition of the ritual adoration of the relics of Saint Denis as a special patron of the king and Kingdom of France, begun in the times of Louis VI, gradually became a lasting heritage of the French monarchy,<sup>150</sup> but the order of the rituals was reversed: the relics were no longer exposed on the altar for military purposes but were taken out from the grave when the king was threatened with death from natural causes. This change took place no later than during the reign of Philip Augustus, but so far no one has determined its causes. Besides, in the context of the discussed specialization of the royal veneration of the relics of Saint Denis, it is worth noting that the reversal of the ritual order is related to a single type of a potentially lethal/deadly/fatal disease, namely – dysentery. As far as the period between the reigns of Louis VI and Louis IX is concerned, we do not know of any other cases of the relics of Saint Denis being exposed on the altar or in a procession to help combat other health issues of the kings. However, none of the investigated texts says that the saint specialized in curing this particular disease.

## 5. The Translation of the Relics of Saint Denis in Saint-Denis Abbey in 1144

The redevelopment of the Abbey Church in Saint-Denis begun by Suger in 1135–1136 is famous for many reasons. One of them has to do with its role as a starting point for the development of Gothic architecture.<sup>151</sup> The

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150 For more on the role of the cult of Saint Denis in shaping the monarchy and the political nation of France see SCHRAMM, *Der König der Frankreich*, vol. I, pp. 131–134; SPIEGEL, *The Cult of Saint Denis and Capetian Kingship*, pp. 43–69; SPIEGEL, *The Chronicle Tradition of Saint-Denis*, pp. 11–37. As for the late Middle Ages, see BEAUNE, *Naissance de la nation France*, pp. 83–125, especially pp. 96–106 (Saint Denis as the patron of the king), pp. 106–112 (patron of the Kingdom), pp. 112–120 (patron of the Crown of France). The author briefly discusses the earlier period (the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, i.e., the period which we have analysed in detail here). However, she quotes very few sources and refers to scarce bibliography, which often makes it impossible to verify her claims.

151 On Suger's church see SUGER, *Opus administrativum*, II, cap. 1–19, pp. 111–154. PANOFKY, *Abbot Suger on the Abbey Church of St.-Denis*; PANOFKY, *Abbot Suger of St.-Denis*, pp. 108–145; SIMSON, *The Gothic Cathedral*, especially pp. 61–155; CLARK, *Suger's Church at Saint-Denis*, pp. 105–130; BONY, *What Possible Sources for the Chevet of Saint-Denis?*, pp. 131–142; GRIERSON, *Suger as Iconographer. The Central Portal of the West Façade of Saint-Denis*, pp. 183–198; BLUM, *The Lateral Portals of the West Façade of the Abbey Church of Saint-Denis*, pp. 199–228; CROSBY, *The Royal Abbey of Saint-Denis*; GRANT, *Abbot Suger of St. Denis*; BLUM, *Early Gothic Saint-Denis*.

first stage was completed in 1144 by the consecration of the new chancel, in which Louis VII took part, and which Suger himself describes in detail in his work about the consecration of the new Abbey Church.<sup>152</sup> Suger begins his book by presenting in a topical way the reasons why he decided to write it<sup>153</sup>, then he explains why the Abbey Church needed to be redesigned. Afterwards, Suger proceeds to describe the origins of the church and the Abbey and – following the historical tradition of Saint-Denis – sees them in the foundation of the church by king Dagobert I.<sup>154</sup> In a further part, he describes the opulence and elegance of the edifice and its splendour: the only reason for its insufficiency was the scarcity of the church's space. However, Suger immediately adds that this was not because king Dagobert was not pious enough and did not put enough effort into making the church magnificent: in those times, as Suger says, Gaul certainly had no church larger than or even equal to Saint-Denis; perhaps, it was thanks its modest dimensions that people gathered in the church could fully enjoy its rich decor: gold and jewels, of which they could have a close view.<sup>155</sup> Indeed, the magnificence of the Abbey Church and the renown of the saints resting in it drew increasing numbers of pilgrims who wanted to see the beautiful shrine or turn to the saints for the intercession. The church was too small to fit everyone who wanted to come in, which resulted in various unpleasant incidents; there were even tragedies caused, for instance, by a dreadful squeeze in the crowd gathered for a public demonstration of the Passion relics: the Crown of Thorns (or rather its particle) and the Holy Nail presented during the annual *Indictum (Lendit)*.<sup>156</sup>

The reconstruction of the Abbey Church was begun in a solemn way several years earlier. On June 9, 1140, the new Western part (*pars anterior* as Suger called it) was consecrated together with the entire church and the oratories of the saints in the Eastern part (*pars superior*).<sup>157</sup> On July 14, 1140,

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152 SUGER, *Scriptum consecrationis Ecclesiae Sancti Dionysii*, cap. 14, pp. 48–49.

153 SUGER, *Scriptum consecrationis Ecclesiae Sancti Dionysii*, cap. 1, pp. 2–6.

154 SUGER, *Scriptum consecrationis Ecclesiae Sancti Dionysii*, cap. 2, pp. 6, 8.

155 As Suger observes, “... hoc solum ei defuit quod quandam oporteret magnitudinem non admisit; non quod aliquid ejus devotioni aut voluntati deesset, sed quod forsitan tunc temporis in primitiva ecclesia nulla adhuc aut major aut equalis existeret, aut quod brevior fulgorantis auri et splendorem gemmarum propinquitati arridentium oculorum acutius delectabiliusque refundendo, ultra satis quam si major fabricaretur irradiaret;” SUGER, *Scriptum consecrationis Ecclesiae Sancti Dionysii*, cap. 2, p. 8.

156 SUGER, *Scriptum consecrationis Ecclesiae Sancti Dionysii*, cap. 2, pp. 8–11

157 SUGER, *Scriptum consecrationis Ecclesiae Sancti Dionysii*, cap. 6, pp. 20–24; SUGER, *Opus administrativum*, cap. 3 and 5, pp. 114 and 116–121.



the construction of the new chancel was begun with a solemn consecration. A magnificent procession was held, and its splendour was due, as Suger says, both to its liturgical paraments and its participants: the Holy Spirit inspired many bishops, abbots, and other distinguished men, including king Louis VII himself, so that they came to Saint-Denis. The procession was led by bishops and abbots who carried the Passion relics: the Crown of Thorns and the Holy Nail, together with Saint Simeon's arm and other holy relics; guided by them, the procession descended to the vaults of the church<sup>158</sup> in order to consecrate the cornerstone and the foundations of the new chancel. The most striking element of this description is the leading role, despite the presence of the king, which, as Suger says, was highly coveted, of the abbots and bishops: they led the liturgical procession and, in accordance with the rules of *ordines ad consecrandam ecclesiam*, personally carried the relics to the place where the consecration was to be held. During the ceremony, Louis VII only placed, together with the bishops and abbots, one of the first cornerstones of the new chancel.<sup>159</sup> During the renovation of the so-called Holy Altar,<sup>160</sup> the reliquaries of Saint Stephen and Saint Vincent stored there were opened and inspected on Suger's orders (the arm of Saint James was also discovered there); four archbishops and seven bishops witnessed the ceremony but the abbot does not mention the king.<sup>161</sup> It may thus seem that,

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158 "Ut autem sapienti consilio, dictante Spiritu Sancto cujus unctio de omnibus docet, luculento ordine designatum est quid prosequi proponeremus, collecto virorum illustrium tam episcoporum quam abbatum conventu, accita etiam domini ac serenissimi regis Francorum Ludovici presentia, pridie idus julii die dominica, ordinavimus ornamentis decoram, personis celebrem procesionem. Quin etiam manibus episcoporum et abbatum insignia Dominice passionis, videlicet clavum et coronam Domini, et brachium sancti senis Symeonis, et alia sanctarum reliquiarum patrocinia preferentes, ad defossa faciendis fundamentis preparata loca humiliter ac devote descendimus;" SUGER, *Scriptum consecrationis Ecclesiae Sancti Dionysii*, cap. 7, pp. 26, 28. Cf. SUGER, *Opus administrativum*, cap. 5, pp. 116–121.

159 SUGER, *Scriptum consecrationis Ecclesiae Sancti Dionysii*, cap. 7, p. 28.

160 According to Suger this name was connected with the antiquity of the altar; this information was allegedly passed on by Louis VI, who himself had learnt it from the eldest monks when he was a pupil in the monastery as a boy. The grave of Charles the Bald was situated near the Holy Altar; SUGER, *Opus administrativum*, cap. 15, p. 140. It is impossible to establish the exact date of the ceremony, but, according to Suger's account, it was certainly Saint Denis' day (October 9) before 1138 or in 1141 at the earliest, because in 1138–1140 the post of the archbishop of Reims was vacant, and the archbishop of Reims is mentioned as being present; cf. SUGER, *Oewres*, pp. 227–228, no. 242.

161 SUGER, *Opus administrativum*, cap. 14–15, pp. 138–144.

at least in the early years of Louis VII's reign, Suger did not believe that the king should perform any important functions in the rituals worshipping the relics. The royal presence at the inauguration and consecration of the building site of the new chancel in 1140 was probably only of ceremonial-honorary character, for there is no information concerning the king playing a liturgical role.

However, the consecration of the completed new choir carried on June 11, 1144, and the translation of the relics of Saint Denis, Rusticus, and Eleutherius to the sepulchre took a completely different course. Most probably, this was due to the king's explicit wish. Namely, as Suger says, Louis VII strongly desired to see his patrons saints. Even the date of the ceremony, according to Suger, was agreed upon with the king.<sup>162</sup> The ceremony was to extol the Abbey and its new church and to confirm Saint Denis's apostolic status: Suger invited the archbishops and bishops from the entire Gaul, justifying this by Saint Denis's apostolate.<sup>163</sup> The archbishops of Reims, Rouen, Sens, Bordeaux, and Canterbury, the bishops of Chartres, Soissons, Noyon, Orléans, Beauvais, Auxerre, Arras, Châlons, Coutances, Évreux, Théroutanne, Meaux and Senlis,<sup>164</sup> and Cambrai came to attend and concelebrate the ceremony.<sup>165</sup> Thus, this was an assembly of bishops from the Capetian royal domain, from the vassal principalities, and from the Anglo-Norman Kingdom: from Normandy and England, and even from the Empire. On the next day, king Louis VII with his queen, Eleanor of Aquitaine, and the queen mother, Adelaide of Maurienne, arrived together with lay noblemen. According to the liturgical ritual, on Saturday, on the eve of the ceremony, the bodies of the saints were taken out from the reliquaries and the sepulchres in the oratories of the church, then collected under silk tents located in the passage from the chancel to the nave. We

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162 "Urgebat deinceps nove fieri consecrationem ecclesie tam operis laboriosa consummatio quam nostra que ad hoc diu anhelaverat suspensa devotio. Et quoniam tam ipsam quam sanctorum dominorum nostrorum, velut pro gratiarum actione et laboris nostri gratissimo fructu, translationem fieri celeberrimam optando affectaremus, regie majestatis serenissimi regis Francorum Ludovici placido favore – desiderabat enim sanctos martires suos protectores ardentissime videre;" SUGER, *Scriptum consecrationis Ecclesie Sancti Dionysii*, cap. 13, p. 40.

163 Ibid.

164 The bishops are mentioned in the same order as in Suger's account; *ibid.*

165 Suger does not mention the bishop of Cambrai among those who came to Saint-Denis Abbey, yet, in his later account (SUGER, *Scriptum consecrationis Ecclesie Sancti Dionysii*, cap. 15, p. 50), he indicates that the latter was present at the consecration of the altars and consecrated himself the altar of Saint John the Baptist and Saint John the Evangelist in the new choir.

do not know who took the relics out from their resting places; Suger uses the first person plural, so probably he means to say that he did it himself together with the members of the convent of Saint-Denis. Thus, in all probability, the king did not take part in this ritual; after all, the abbot would have mentioned this in his account.<sup>166</sup> In the next stage, the procession was to go round the church inside and outside it; the king was asked to instruct the noblemen and members of his train to maintain order by separating the crowds of common people from the church and the procession. The king and his lords did it eagerly, protecting the entrances to the church and defending them from the pressure of the crowd with canes and sticks; at that time, the bishops – whom the king, as Suger says, saw as a celestial rather than worldly congregation – consecrated the new chancel.<sup>167</sup> After the consecration, the procession walked to the grave of all the main patrons of the Abbey Church: Saint Denis, Rusticus, and Eleutherius, whose bodies, unlike those of all the other saints resting in Saint-Denis, were left untouched in the tomb.<sup>168</sup> At the tomb, the king and the bishops performed the act of kenosis – prostration, “self-emptying” – assisted by the abbot and the monks, as many as could gather in the narrow crypt. The participants also contemplated the relics and magnificence of the reliquaries, made, as Suger says, on command of Dagobert.<sup>169</sup> Finally, singing the psalms, and laughing and crying at the same time, the clergymen asked king Louis VII to elevate the bodies of the saints from the grave:

Come, they say, and help us, with your own hands, to carry our lord, apostle and protector, so that we can venerate the holiest ashes, embrace the holy urns and rejoice until the end of our lives that we have held them. Here are the holy

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166 “Nos autem ... die sabbati proxima, sanctorum corpora de suis assumptis oratoriis, ex consuetudine in palatiis tentoriis in exitu chori decentissime reponendo locavimus;” SUGER, *Scriptum consecrationis Ecclesiae Sancti Dionysii*, cap. 13, p. 42.

167 SUGER, *Scriptum consecrationis Ecclesiae Sancti Dionysii*, cap. 13, pp. 42, 44, 46.

168 “Ut autem, peractis ordinarie sancte consecrationis misteriis, ventum est ad sanctarum reliquiarum repositionem, ad sanctorum dominorum nostrorum antiquos et venerandos tumulos accessimus: [n]eque enim adhuc de loco suo mota erant;” SUGER, *Scriptum consecrationis Ecclesiae Sancti Dionysii*, cap. 14, p. 46.

169 “Prosternentes autem se tam ipsi pontifices quam dominus rex, et nos omnes, quantum pro loci angustia permittebatur, inspectis isto aperto venerandis scriniis rege Dagoberto fabricatis, in quibus sanctissima et Deo cara eorum continebantur corpora;” Ibid. The description of the reliquaries (considerably damaged during the religious wars in 1567 and ultimately destroyed in 1628): SUGER, *Opus administrativum*, II, cap. 9–10, pp. 124, 126.

men who, wishing to bear witness to God, gave their bodies [for martyrdom and death], who for our redemption, burning with the flame of love left their lands and families, who, having the apostolic authority, taught the faith in Jesus Christ to the entire Gaul .... Do it then, Christian King, let's receive the One who has received us [at his own], Saint Denis, and let's keep begging him to intercede for us with the One who faithfully keeps his Promise, for owing to the love and mercy, which you enjoy [with Saint Denis] everything you ask for will be fulfilled.<sup>170</sup>

Thus, the bishops – who, according to all the liturgical instructions found in all the known *libri officiorum*, pontificals, and *ordines* were the only ones entitled to come into physical contact with the relics – asked Louis VII to join them, so that they can raise and carry the relics of the saint together with the king.<sup>171</sup> Moreover, the words, which Suger put in their mouth, seems to convey an important message: it was thanks to the king's participation in the ritual that the bishops could have the joy and privilege of touching the relics. It is also worth noting how this belief was justified: the king enjoyed Saint Denis's special love thanks to which the Saint was willing to fulfill the king's any request. In other words, even though the saint's body was protected by a taboo ensuring its inviolability (Suger himself confesses to his fear of God's wrath he felt when he decided to open the reliquaries of Saint Vincent and Saint Stephen to see and kiss them<sup>172</sup>) – Louis VII was able to move the holy relics because he was the king of France and enjoyed Saint Denis' special patronage. Although the bishops did not say it in their speech, the abbot mentioned the saint's patronage at the very

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170 “Vade, inquit, et tu ipse manibus tuis dominum et apostolum et protectorem nostrum huc afferre adjuva, ut sacratissimos cineres veneremur sacratissimas urnas amplectamur, toto tempore vite nostre eas suscepisse, eas tenuisse gratulemur. Hi sunt enim sancti viri, qui pro testamento Dei sua corpora tradiderunt, qui pro salute nostra, caritatis igne accensi, terram suam et cognationem exierunt, qui fidem Jhesu Christi apostolica auctoritate omnem Galliam edocuerunt .... Age, igitur, rex christiane, beatum suscipiamus susceptorem nostrum Dyonisium, supplicianter flagitantes ut pro nobis petat ab eo qui fideliter promissit; dilectio et benignitas quam habes semper pro quibuscumque petieris implebit;” SUGER, *Scriptum consecrationis Ecclesiae Sancti Dionysii*, cap. 14, pp. 46, 48.

171 HEINZELMANN, *Translationsberichte und andere Quellen des Reliquienkultes*, passim; HERR MANN-MASCARD, *Les reliques des saints. Formation coutumière d'un droit*, pp. 84–86, 150–168 (especially pp. 156–161), 175–189, 206–216.

172 “Nos igitur tantarum et tam sanctarum reliquiarum protectione muniri appetentes, eas videre, eas deosculari, si Deo displicere non timerem, gratantissime multo temporum processu rapiebar. Assumens igitur ex devotione audaciam, at antiquitati honorem veritatis conservans, modum et diem detegendi ipsas sanctas reliquias elegimus,” SUGER, *Opus administrativum*, II, cap. 15, p. 140.

beginning of his description of the translation; nor can one separate this account from Suger's other writings, including the ones about the ostension of 1124, in which the king's special bond with Saint Denis was presented only too well. It finds implicit expression in the fragment of the bishops' speech that recalls the apostolate of Gaul conferred to Denis and his companions (which, in this respect, comes close to the justification of bringing the bodies of the saints out of their grave in the face of Henry V's invasion). And it finds explicit expression, too: the bishops make it clear that the saint would fulfill any request made by the king of France. This conviction is important for yet another reason: namely, it is a projection of a story known from the earliest lives of Saint Denis onto the king's relation with him. According to this story, the saint had a special bond with Christ: when the apostle of Gaul was in prison awaiting his martyrdom, Christ came to him, gave him the Holy Communion, and promised that God will fulfill all his requests.<sup>173</sup>

Next, Louis VII and the bishops began the ceremony of translation, followed by the procession; the second procession, which consisted of the noblemen and remaining bishops, went forth with the relics of other saints owned by the abbey to meet the king and Saint Denis:

The king himself, who went together [with the bishops] took from their hands, namely from the archbishops of Reims, [and] Sens, [the bishop of] Chartres, and others, a silver reliquary [of his] special patron, and with great piety and veneration headed [the procession]. It was a wonderful pageant! The bodies of the holy martyrs and confessors [taken out] from underneath the silk tents and canopies, [carried on the] shoulders and necks of bishops, counts, and barons, went towards the Ivory Gate to meet Saint Denis and his companions.<sup>174</sup> Never before had anyone seen a more magnificent pageant, except for the one held during the ancient consecration [of the church of Saint Denis] when<sup>175</sup> a heavenly cortege was seen. The procession, singing hymns and lauds, went around the claustrum with the candelabras and crosses and other festive paraments ... Having returned

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173 See below: Part 2, Chapter 3, point 7 of this book, entitled: 'The Capetian monarchy and the cult of the relics of the Crown of Thorns and the cult of the relics of Saint Denis in the hagiographical sources: the Lives of Saint Denis'.

174 According to the description of Saint-Denis in 799 from the manuscript of Sankt-Gallen dated to ca. 830 and stored in the Badische Landesbibliothek, there were at least three pairs of doors decorated with silver and ivory. In Suger's times, there was only one – known as the Ivory Gate or Saint Eustace Gate – leading from the church to the monastery.

175 The authors of the earliest Lives of Saint Denis presenting the account of the consecration of the church founded by Dagobert I say that the first consecration performed by the bishops was accompanied by a divine consecration: Christ himself came to consecrate the Abbey Church of Saint-Denis.

to the church they climbed the steps leading to the altar on the Eastern side,<sup>176</sup> designed as the resting place of the saints; the relics were placed on the old altar when the new one, located in front of the new place of [the saints'] burial, was being consecrated.<sup>177</sup>

In the final part of the account of the consecration of the Abbey Church, Suger – who unfortunately neglected to describe the successive stages of the translation of the relics of Saint Denis and his companions – recounts the consecrations of the twenty altars in the nave of the church and in the crypt.<sup>178</sup> The majority of that text is not interesting from our point of view: one can learn from it only which of the bishops consecrated which altar.<sup>179</sup> It is,

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176 The new main altar in the new choir of the church.

177 “... ipse dominus rex se medium eis ingerens, lecticam argenteam specialis patroni de manu episcoporum, sicut videtur de manu Remensis archiepiscopi, Senonensis, Carnotensis et aliorum assumens, tam devote quam honeste previus egrediebatur. Mirabile visu! Numquam talis, preter illam que in antiqua consecratione celestis exercitus visa est, processionem aliquis videre potuit, cum sanctorum corpora martirum et confessorum de tentoriis palliatis humeris et collis episcoporum et comitum et baronum, sanctissimo Dyonisio sociisque ejus ad eburneum ostium occurrerunt; per claustrum cum candelabris et crucibus et aliis festivis ornamentis, cum odis et laudibus multis processerunt; dominos suos tam familiariter quam pre gaudio lacrimabiliter deportaverunt. ... Revertentes igitur ad ecclesiam, et per gradus ad altare superius quieti sanctorum destinatum ascendentes, super antiquum altare pignorum sanctorum repositis, de nova ante novam eorum sepulturam consecranda agebatur principali ara;” SUGER, *Scriptum consecrationis Ecclesiae Sancti Dionysii*, cap. 14–15, p. 48. On the new altar with relics in Suger’s chancel see LEVILLAIN, *L’autel des Saints-Martyrs de la basilique de Saint-Denis*, pp. 212–225.

178 SUGER, *Scriptum consecrationis Ecclesiae Sancti Dionysii*, cap. 15, pp. 48, 50, 52.

179 According to this account, the main part in the ceremony was assigned to the archbishop of Reims; it seems to indicate that his leading position in the French church was very secure, presumably because he was the successor of Saint Rémi and the consecrator of the kings. However, one should remember that already the father of the reigning king, Louis VI, was anointed and crowned in 1108, at his own request, by the archbishop of Sens in Orléans (this was the last medieval coronation not celebrated by the archbishop of Reims, except for the cases when there was a vacancy in Reims and the duties were taken over by the first suffragan bishop of the province of Reims, the bishop of Soissons). For the most recent interpretation of crowning of Louis VI (albeit a not very novel one, rather summing up the previous opinions), see: BOURNAZEL, *Louis VI le Gros*, pp. 89–96. The archbishop of Bordeaux was second in the importance as the main metropolitan bishop of Aquitaine, i.e., a duchy belonging to the queen; the third position in the *cursus honorum* was occupied by the archbishop of Sens (who, during the pontificate of Gregory VII, lost the rank of the primate of Gaul, which he had enjoyed from Pippin the Short’s reign, for the benefit of

however, worth calling attention to the final part of the account, in which Suger makes an invocation to Christ. There is also an apology of the Church and of the anointment with the holy chrism, through which Christ becomes the highest priest. It is worth stressing that the anointment was given to bishops and kings – including obviously Louis VII himself who, as it were, participated in the consecration, and whom the bishops present at the translation of the relics of Saint Denis made the head of the translation ceremony. Moreover, as we remember, the king led the procession with the relics of the patron saint of the Abbey and Kingdom: he carried the relics on his own shoulders, assisted by the prelates. In other words, Louis VII symbolically presided over the central ritual of the consecration, even though, for obvious reasons, he could not co-celebrate it in a strictly ritual sense. Unfortunately, Suger neglected to describe how the relics of Saint Denis were returned to the sepulchre: the *Scriptum consecrationis* does not specify what, if any, was the king's part. After all, Suger himself wrote that after the adoration of 1124, Louis VI personally carried Saint Denis body to the crypt. At that time, the only thing which provided a feasible justification for the king's ritual role was the special patronage of Saint Denis over the Kingdom and the monarch himself. When reading Suger's description of the translation from 1144, one may have a justifiable impression that the author proposed a broader interpretation of Louis VII's active participation in the ritual. Namely, Louis VII deserved the epithet of 'Christian king' (*rex christianus*); since the fact itself is evident, the emphasis upon the king's role in the bishops' speech, which encourages the former to hold the bodies of the saints, seems to be significant and was undoubtedly one of the elements spurring the tradition of giving the king of France the name of 'the most Christian king.' Two other topics tackled by Suger are also worthy of attention: first, the bishops expressed the view that Louis VII – due to his being the king of France, rather than for his personal qualities, even if these were also important – had an analogous relation with Saint Denis as the saint had with Christ himself: each of his requests were to be fulfilled. Thus, we may interpret the familiarity of the king of France and Saint Denis, described by both Louis VI and Suger, in the context of the ostension of 1124 and his vassalage towards the martyr: being part of the *familia* of Saint Denis, the king could count on the saint's protection like a vassal of his senior. The special patronage over the king could be expressed in many ways: protection during a war or looking after the life and health of the monarch. Here, it finds the most general expression: the saint will fulfill any royal request.

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the archbishop of Lyon,) or the archbishop of Canterbury, who was probably to be honoured as a guest.

Furthermore, since the earlier Lives of Saint Denis affirm that Christ will fulfill every request of the saint, the king of France may expect that, by extension, his own requests will be fulfilled, too. For this reason, Louis VII, like his father, is entitled to enter physical contact with the body of the saint; indeed, it is king's active participation in the translation that allows the bishops to move the relics.

Finally, the glorification with the anointment with the holy chrism – shared by Christ, the bishops, and the king – turns Louis VII into an image of Christ on the Earth, according to the idea of *Rex imago Christi*.<sup>180</sup> One would doubt whether that was really Suger's intention, for in the apology of the anointment, which ends the *Scriptum consecrationis Ecclesiae Sancti Dionysii*, he refers to the sacerdotal rather than royal function of Christ – if it was not for the comparison of the procession with the relics of Saint Denis headed by Louis VII to the divine consecration of Saint-Denis Abbey church, which, in the hagiographic tradition, was to take place during the dedication of the church founded by Dagobert, on January 24, 636. At that time, Christ surrounded by the angels and saints would perform a consecration parallel to that carried out by the clergy.<sup>181</sup> The fact that the consecration of the church built by Suger is compared to the consecration performed by Christ five centuries earlier and described as equally makes king Louis VII a Christ-like figure. The monarch shares the biblical anointment with Christ himself, in the same way as bishops or priests. The anointment given during the coronation made the king a God's anointed: the *christus Domini*, which is stated clearly in all the coronation *ordines*. Like Christ, who led the consecration pageant in Saint-Denis in 636, Louis VII led a similar one in 1144, carrying on his shoulders the body of Saint Denis. The king of

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180 The three main works on this subject are: KANTOROWICZ, *Laudes Regiae*, especially Chapter 3; KANTOROWICZ, *Deus per Naturam, Deus per Gratiam*, pp. 253–277; KANTOROWICZ, *The King's Two Bodies*, especially Chapter III.

181 On the consecration of the church in Saint-Denis by Christ see the classic texts: LIEBMAN, *La consécration légendaire de la basilique de Saint-Denis*, pp. 252–264; LECLERCQ, *La consécration légendaire de la basilique de Saint-Denis*, pp. 74–84; SIMSON, *The Gothic Cathedral*, p. 137. The most recent study of the medieval legends about the consecration of churches (especially abbeys) by Christ or angels in the former Carolingian empire: TISCHLER, *Die Christus- und Engelweihe im Mittelalter*, pp. 42–47, the edition of the legend about the consecration of Dagobert's church by Christ on pp. 119–123, discussion of iconography pp. 152–155; with an exhaustive bibliography. See below: Part 2, Chapter 2, point 7 of this book, entitled: 'The Capetian monarchy and the cult of the relics of the Crown of Thorns and the cult of the relics of Saint Denis in the hagiographic sources: the Lives of Saint Denis'.



France, not being a priest, did not have the right to celebrate the liturgy like the priests, which is why he could not perform consecration. However, the ritual procession with the relics of Saint Denis is the central element of the celebration, as it is shown by the numerous *ordines ad consecrandam ecclesiam* in which the placing of the relics in the *sepulchrum* was, alongside the consecration of the altar, the main element of the rite of consecration performed by a bishop. The reconsecration of a redeveloped church customarily included this ritual.<sup>182</sup> As the God's anointed, the king is similar to Christ and has at his disposal the sacral prerogatives which derive from the holiness of the royal anointment, in this case strengthened by the special bond between the king and Saint Denis, the apostle of his kingdom and his personal patron saint.

Luckily, there is a charter Louis VII issued on the occasion of the translation, in which the king gave the Abbey, as a sign of gratitude and attachment to Saint Denis, the *jura regalia* in five suburbs of Paris (very limited, however, since wine, oats, *droit de gîte* (*gistum*),<sup>183</sup> levy en masse: *ost*,<sup>184</sup> and the military service *equitatio* – *chevauchée* were still reserved for the king). The charter mentions some very important details concerning the course of the translation omitted by Suger. The arenga of the charter is very similar – not by accident, as it seems – to that of the charter issued by Louis VI for Saint-Denis in 1124. Using almost the same words as his father had done twenty years earlier, Louis VII declares that, in his return for doing the royal duty, namely – manifesting care and concern for the worship of God and the worldly benefits for Saint-Denis, he expects that his rule in the kingdom will be, by virtue of the divine benefits he was afforded, praiseworthy, because the worldly kingdom may survive only with God's help. Moreover, what Louis expects as well is that, after his reign (and life) is over, he will be taken to Heaven.<sup>185</sup> In particular, among many other churches, the king

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182 Suffice to remind the consecration of the new abbey church in Saint-Benoît-sur-Loire in 1108 which was witnessed by young Louis VI.

183 *Iacere* in the charter; *yeast* in Old English.

184 *Exercitus* in Latin. *Ost* is a name in Old French derived from the Latin noun *hostis* – enemy.

185 “Quia, Dei omnipotentis larga miseratione, regnum nostrum stare et nunquam terrenum, nisi per celeste, veraciter proficere manifeste cognovimus, summa cura sollicitudine continua instandum nobis est circa ecclesie Dei cultum, ex regie majestatis munificentia, benignitatis opera impendere, terrenis celestia felici commutatione commercari, ut per hec regni nostri amministrazione temporaliter fit gloriosa, et, istis deficientibus, illa nos recipiant in eterna tabernacula;” *MONUMENTS HISTORIQUES. CARTONS DES ROIS*, no. 469, p. 255.

cherishes a special affection for the Church of Saint-Denis, because that the saint, having been granted the apostolate of the Kingdom of France, shedding his own blood, returned it to God; for this reason, the king follows the example of his predecessors who, having joined the holy alliance of benevolence and friendship (*familiaritas*), gave much to it but received a lot more.<sup>186</sup> That is why Louis VII came to the consecration of the new basilica of the holiest martyrs. After dedicating the church, the king, accompanied by many archbishops and bishops, descended to the ancient place where the bodies of the saints are deposited.

Having opened the reliquaries and lifted the relics from them, we carried them on our own shoulders across the church and deposited them in an earlier prepared most glorious place, shedding the tears of joy.<sup>187</sup>

Thus, Louis VII's charter provides additional information about the course of the ritual: the king not only personally carried the body of Saint Denis, leading the pageant with the relics, but also personally, like Louis VI in 1124, deposited it in the *sepulchrum*. Moreover, the relics were taken out from the reliquaries: the use of the term *scrinium*, denoting a pyx or box reliquary, clearly means that it was not just reliquaries with the bodies of the saints enclosed inside that were taken out and carried by the procession. Louis VII touched the relics, carried them, and returned them to the reliquaries and the *sepulchrum*. This direct participation and physical contact of the king with the relics seem to be explained and justified in the arena of the charter, in which Louis VII assigns himself the duty of dealing with the religious cult (*summa cura sollicitudine continua instandum nobis est circa ecclesiae Dei cultum*). In this charter, Louis does not mention anointment as something that entitles the king to perform such tasks, yet there is no doubt that it may only have strengthened that prerogative. Moreover, we know that the king held such a view, as it is indicated by the charter issued in 1143, which is to say, a year before the consecration of the new church in

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186 “Nos igitur cum et aliis longe lateque ecclesiis, tum precipue nobili monasterio ter beati Dyonisii, sociorumque ejus propensius attendentes, eo primum affectu quo totum regnum nostrum sorte apostolica suscipiens Domino Deo proprii sanguinis effusione restituit, eo etiam quo antecessores nostri benivolentia et familiaritate confederati sunt, qui cum multa ei contulerint, multo majora per ipsum receperunt;” *ibid.*

187 “... post ipsius ecclesie consecrationem, ad locum antiquum, in quo peculiaris patroni nostri, beatissimi videlicet Dyonisii, ejusque sociorum, sacra corpora continebantur, cum archiepiscoporum et episcoporum plurimo conventu accessimus, apertis scriniis, extractisque ac propriis humeris, per ipsam ecclesiam, deportatis, in loco superius preparato, sacra pignora letis cum lacrimis reposuimus;” *ibid.*

Saint-Denis (where the king gave up the *ius spoli* with respect to the Paris bishopric). Louis VII wrote there:

We are aware that by virtue of the Old Testament and the Church resolution from our times, only the kings and priests are consecrated by anointment with the holy chrism. It befits thus that those who are the only among all [people] united by the anointment with the holy chrism and placed at the head [of the people], are to govern the people, [and] help each other, serving one another and their subjects both in the worldly and spiritual matters.<sup>188</sup>

Thus, the king was ready to make concessions to the clergy in the realm of the worldly matters but, in exchange, he successfully demanded a recognition of his quite literally understood sacral prerogatives, based on his proposal formulated in 1143. As the arenga of the Parisian charter indicates, Louis's participation in the translation of 1144, the invocation of the bishops to the king made during its course, at least in the form recorded by Suger, and even the apology of anointment crowning the *Scriptum consecrationis*, seem to make up the next step in construing the Capetian political theology. This applies, among other things, to the royal prerogatives in the realm of the cult of relics. For the only justification of Louis VII's active participation in the ritual elevation of the relics of Saint Denis to the altar for the purpose of adoration and in the return of the relics to the crypt was his personal bond with the saint and the special patronage of Saint Denis over the kings and the kingdom, of which he was the apostle. Thus, whenever a monarch and his kingdom faced any kind of danger, the former could easily resort to the ancient patronage and *familiaritas*. The *ad hoc* tradition allowed the king, as the closest family member of the saint, to invoke this personal bond of a patron and client. The king could show to the world that he remained under the saint's protection by performing a ritualized cult action, which involved touching the relics or reliquary. In this way, the king confirmed the *familiaritas*, which bound him to the saint. Louis VII did not abandon this model but extended and enriched it with new topics: the already well-fixed idea of Saint Denis's apostolate strengthened and theologically justified the claim of the saint's special patronage over the Kingdom, which was personified by the king. Besides, the king – who shared the anointment with bishops and Christ himself – was entitled, by virtue of the sacrament he

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188 “Scimus quia ex auctoritate Veteris Testamenti, etiam nostris temporibus, ex ecclesiastica institutione soli reges et sacerdotes sacri crismatis unctione consecrantur. Decet autem ut qui, soli pre ceteris omnibus sacrosancta crismatis litione consociati, ad regendum populum proficiuntur, sibi ipsis et subditis suis tam temporalia quam spiritualia subministrando provideant;” *MONUMENTS HISTORIQUES. CARTONS DES ROIS*, no. 465, p. 253.

received, to perform certain cult activities, and it was his duty to supervise the religious cult, a duty that came from the anointment he was given. The king's activity and leading role in the field of the cult of relics resulted from the sacral aspect of his power and authority.

## 6. Cult of Relics in the Abbey of Saint Denis in the Twelfth Century as a Model for the King of England and the Emperor?

According to Jürgen Petersohn, the consecration of the new Abbey Church in Saint-Denis in 1144, and especially the translation of the relics of the patron of the Kingdom, in which the ruling king, Louis VII, played the main part, had an enormous influence on the sovereigns of the neighbouring kingdoms: Henry II Plantagenet and Frederick Barbarossa. In fact, it has become a model of the ruler's involvement in the cult of relics.<sup>189</sup> Considering the Capetian monarchy as the model, soon followed by the king of England and the emperor, Petersohn focused on the Saint-Denis rituals from 1124 and, in particular, 1144. Still, one should remember that, although Saint-Denis unquestionably played the leading role in the twelfth-century Capetian political ideology, Louis VII proved very consistent in continuing this line of action with respect to the cult of other relics in the sanctuaries connected with the monarchy. Moreover, as in the case of Saint-Frambourg in Senlis described above, he very firmly executed the royal sacral prerogatives. For the neighbouring monarchs, in turn, the example of the Abbey of Saint-Denis remained the most prominent and authoritative one.

The royal cult of relics in the Anglo-Norman monarchy appears to be a complex issue due to the unquestionable political discontinuity between the old Anglo-Saxon Kingdom of the House of Wessex<sup>190</sup> and the monarchy of William the Conqueror and his sons, formed after the Norman conquest. The rise of the Plantagenet empire makes this picture only slightly more complex, because the enduring similarities between the Norman and Anjou Houses, despite some substantial differences, were not only more prominent but also intentionally stressed and strengthened by the Plantagenets.<sup>191</sup> It

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189 PETERSOHN, *Saint-Denis – Westminster – Aachen. Die Karls-Translatio von 1165 und ihre Vorbilder*, pp. 420–454

190 On the cult of relics in the Anglo-Saxon world: ROLLASON, *Saints and Relics in Anglo-Saxon England*; on the use of the holiness of the Anglo-Saxon kings in political ideology: CHANEY, *The Cult of Kingship in Anglo-Saxon England*.

191 On the empire of the Plantagenets: AURELL, *L'Empire des Plantagenêts*; for a summary of the discussion on whether the term 'Plantagenet empire' is justified, see pp. 9–39.

seems that at least until the beginning of the second half of the twelfth century (possibly even until the reign of Henry III), any interest in the cult of holy relics manifested by the Norman and Plantagenet kings focused mainly on the sanctuaries and relics in Normandy, especially on the relic of Lord's Holy Blood in Fécamp<sup>192</sup> as well as the cult of Our Lady in Rouen<sup>193</sup> or in Aquitaine,<sup>194</sup> even if one of the most important elements used to legitimate the Norman kingship in England was William the Conqueror's support of the cult of Saint Edmond in Bury St. Edmond.<sup>195</sup> Interestingly enough, in 1066, in order to arouse winds favorable for the Norman fleet, so that it could easily get to England, William ordered to bring out to the sea the relics of Saint Walaric on one of the ships: is this evidence of the belief that the saint who ensured the Capetians the crown almost a century earlier may do the same for William, too?<sup>196</sup> According to Geoffrey Koziol, the royal ideology in the Anglo-Norman Kingdom – and, at least before Henry III's (1216–1272) accession to the throne, of the Plantagenets – placed a conscious emphasis on the lay and pragmatic aspects: the administrative efficiency of the monarchy.<sup>197</sup> The realm of symbolic legitimation of power is said to have been dominated by the secularized pseudo-historical argumentation provided by the Arthurian myth.<sup>198</sup> Historians also noted that the evolution of the medieval English historiography took a slightly different course than in the case of its continental counterpart: starting

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192 On the relic of Holy Blood in Fécamp: KAJAVA, *Études sur deux poèmes en vers français relatifs à l'abbaye de Fécamp*, pp. 21–120; LÅNGFORS, KAJAVA, *Histoire de l'Abbaye de Fécamp en vers français du XIIIe siècle*, passim; BEAUNE, *Les ducs, le roi et le Saint Sang*, pp. 711–732; HERVAL, *En marge de la légende du Précieux-Sang: Lucques – Fécamp – Glastonbury*, pp. 105–126, 359–361; TRÂN-DUC, *De l'usage politique du Précieux Sang dans l'Europe médiévale*, pp. 89–106. See also the two following fn.

193 EHLERS, *Politik und Heiligenverehrung in Frankreich*, pp. 155–160; TRÂN-DUC, *Les princes normands et les reliques (Xe–XIe siècles)*, pp. 525–561.

194 BOZÓKY, *Le culte des saints et des reliques dans la politique des premiers rois Plantagenêt*, pp. 277–291.

195 FOLZ, *Naissance et manifestation d'un culte royal: Saint Edmond, roi d'East-Anglie*, pp. 226–246.

196 BOZÓKY, *Le culte des saints et des reliques dans la politique des premiers rois Plantagenêt*, pp. 284–285. On Saint Walaric's prophecy as a religious legitimation of Hugh Capet's taking over the royal power see above.

197 KOZIOL, *England, France, and the Problem of Sacrality in Twelfth-Century Ritual*, pp. 124–148. His views are questioned by VINCENT, *The Holy Blood. King Henry III and the Westminster Blood Relic*, pp. 189–190.

198 On the Plantagenets' ideology of power see AURELL, *L'Empire des Plantagenêts*, pp. 95–183 and CHAUOU, *L'idéologie Plantagenêt*.

from the Norman era, much earlier than in other European countries, the English chroniclers avoided the subject of divine intervention in history,<sup>199</sup> which fits the secularized character of the ideological foundations of the monarchy and distinguishes it from the Capetian model. Agreeing with Antonia Gransden, Geoffrey Koziol, Martin Aurell, and Amaury Chaou, who claim that the mental culture of the English political elite had a special character, one may still expose this reconstruction as insufficient. It seems to be a fair reflection of the intellectual attitude of the English historiography shaped in the nineteenth century, complemented only to a slight degree by the new studies of such historians as Édina Bozóky and Nicholas Vincent: the involvement of the Norman and Plantagenet kings in the cult of relics and saints still remains a poorly investigated topic. To be sure, Henry II Plantagenet took part in quite numerous rituals connected with the cult of relics. In 1162, he was present at Fécamp at the translation of the bodies of seven saints buried in the Abbey: Sidonius (Saëns), Flavian, Contestus, Afra, Perpetua, and Geneviève, taken from the altars in the nave and exposed near the High Altar of the Holy Trinity in the Abbey Church. Noteworthy, the translation was accompanied by the removal of the bodies of Richard I (942–996) and Richard II (996–1026) from their graves in order to place them (perhaps as dynastic saints?)<sup>200</sup> behind the same altar of the Holy Trinity. However, despite the 1167 invention of the relics of the Blood of Christ in Fécamp, stored there probably since the times of Richard I, there is no evidence that this finding had any important impact on Henry II's interest in the Abbey: after 1162, he never visited Fécamp again. In turn, in 1157, Henry II refused Frederick Barbarossa's insistent request to return the arm of Saint James the Great, which the dowager empress Matilda (Henry's mother) took away from Germany in 1125 and which her father, Henry I Beauclerc (1100–1135), gave to his royal Benedictine foundation in Reading.<sup>201</sup> Yet, even though Henry II came in 1164 to the consecration of the Abbey Church in Reading, we have no information whether

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199 GRANSDEN, *Historical Writing in England*.

200 BOZÓKY, *Le culte des saints et des reliques dans la politique des premiers rois Plantagenêt*, pp. 281–282; MUSSET, *Les sépultures des souverains normands*, p. 33; TRÂN-DUC, *De l'usage politique du Précieux Sang dans l'Europe médiévale*, pp. 89–106. As Lucille Trân-Duc (TRÂN-DUC, *De l'usage politique du Précieux Sang dans l'Europe médiévale*, pp. 99–100) notes, gathering the bodies of the saints in the chancel may have had a liturgical meaning separate from the dynastic one: the concentration of the divine service and the monastic officium in the choir.

201 LEYSER, *Frederick Barbarossa, Henry II and the Hand of St James*, pp. 481–506.

he participated in the rituals of the cult of relics, which undoubtedly took place.<sup>202</sup> Still, in 1166, the king was present in Angers at the translation of the body of Saint Briec and he ordered a translation of Saint Frideswide in Oxford in 1180.<sup>203</sup> None of the above-mentioned events can be equaled in rank or show a similar involvement of Henry II in the cult of relics as the translation of Saint Edward the Confessor in Westminster Abbey in 1163 (Edward was canonized by pope Alexander III in 1161).<sup>204</sup> Besides the support of William the Conqueror to the cult of Saint Edmund, Edward's translation was not only the first but also one of the most powerful religious acts aimed at emphasising the new dynasty's continuity with the tradition of Anglo-Saxon monarchy (even though the true development of the royal cult of Saint Edward the Confessor began later on, during the reign of Henry III).<sup>205</sup> According to a much later work, the *Speculum historiale de gestis Regum Angliae*,<sup>206</sup> written in the late fourteenth century by a monk from Westminster, Richard of Cirencester, Saint Edward's relics were carried in a pageant "by the royal [i.e. Henry II's] shoulders and hands of the greatest lords of the kingdom" to Westminster Abbey church, and then "the vessel of excellent purity and a house of perfect excellence was most reverently placed by the royal hands in a precious feretrone." Later on, Richard becomes more specific: "the translation was celebrated by the most eminent king of the Englishmen, Henry, assisted by the venerable men: the archbishop of Canterbury, Thomas,"<sup>207</sup> and other bishops. Thus, Henry II, like Louis VI in 1124 and Louis VII in 1144, touched the relics and carried them with his own hands. According to the monks from Westminster, at least in

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202 BOZÓKY, *Le culte des saints et des reliques dans la politique des premiers rois Plantagenêt*, p. 288.

203 Ibid.

204 FOLZ, *La sainteté de Louis IX d'après les textes liturgiques de sa fête*, pp. 91–101. Recently on the canonization of Edward the Confessor: BOZÓKY, *The Sanctity and Canonisation of Edward the Confessor*, pp. 173–186, with literature.

205 BINSKI, *Westminster Abbey and the Plantagenets*, pp. 52–89; also: VINCENT, *The Holy Blood. King Henry III and the Westminster Blood Relic*, pp. 10–12, 160–163, 167–170, 199–200; WALCZAK, *Alter Christus*, pp. 100–102, 132–134, 138–140, 379–380.

206 RICHARD OF CIRENCESTER, *Speculum historiale*.

207 "... regis humeris praecipuorumque totius regni procerum manibus .... Sicque illud vas insigne castitatis et universae virtutis domicilium in feretro pretioso ... regis manibus honorifice collocatum est ... Celebrata est autem translatio ista ... ab excellentissimo Anglorum rege Henrico, assistentibus venerabilis viris Thoma archiepiscopo Cantuariensi...;" RICHARD OF CIRENCESTER, *Speculum historiale*, vol. II, pp. 325–326.

the fourteenth century, it was Henry II who was the actual celebrant of the translation and the bishops only assisted the king.

Jürgen Petersohn noted a clear similarity, at least in terms of the narrative, between the translation of Edward the Confessor in Westminster in 1163 and the translation of Saint Charlemagne by Frederick Barbarossa in Aachen in 1165:<sup>208</sup> both were preceded by canonizations announced by a pope (in the case of Charlemagne, by the antipope Paschal III); every time, it was the pope (or antipope) who gave permission for the translation; in both cases, a monarch was canonized; finally, both translations took place in the symbolic centres of power of the respective monarchies, which were at the same time the historical *loca memoriae* of both canonized rulers.<sup>209</sup> Petersohn also sees analogies between the royal Abbeys of Westminster and Saint-Denis, both in terms of their aspirations and the functions that they actually performed: from the late eleventh century, possibly in connection with the growing, but not yet formalized cult of Edward the Confessor, there appeared forged charters in Westminster, attributed to king Edgar (r. 959–975). According to the forged documents, Edgar made the Westminster Abbey the “caput regni,” the place where kings were to be crowned and buried and where the coronation insignia were to be deposited; the patron of the Abbey, Saint Peter, was called the “specialis patronus et protector noster.”<sup>210</sup> It is also worth noting that, if the suggested dating to ca. 1100 is right, then almost all ideological similarities were confirmed earlier in Westminster than in Saint-Denis – the only exception comes with the phrase “specialis patronus” known from the times of Chlothar II (r. 584–629) and frequently used since the Carolingian era.<sup>211</sup> According to Petersohn, when personally carrying in 1163 the relics of Saint Edward in Westminster, Henry II allegedly imitated Louis VII in Saint-Denis in

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208 PETERSOHN, *Saint-Denis – Westminster – Aachen. Die Karls-Translatio von 1165 und ihre Vorbilder*, passim.

209 PETERSOHN, *Saint-Denis – Westminster – Aachen. Die Karls-Translatio von 1165 und ihre Vorbilder*, p. 435.

210 PETERSOHN, *Saint-Denis – Westminster – Aachen. Die Karls-Translatio von 1165 und ihre Vorbilder*, pp. 440–441 and fn. 73–79.

211 However, Jürgen Petersohn (ibid.) is convinced that it was Westminster that imitated Saint-Denis, not vice versa; ibid. This belief is clearly in opposition to: KIEFT, *Deux diplômes faux de Charlemagne pour Saint-Denis*, that the forgery of Charlemagne’s charter for Saint-Denis was compiled during the times of abbot Odo of Deuil (after 1156); Petersohn agrees with Kieft’s opinion, in contrast to: BUCHNER, *Das fingierte Privileg Karls des Großen für Aachen* and BARROUX, *L’abbé Suger*. Nonetheless, Petersohn does not resolve this contradiction in any way.



1144.<sup>212</sup> In 1164, Frederick Barbarossa, accompanying antipope Victor IV, the patriarch of Aquileia, and other bishops, as well as the abbot of Cluny, participated in the translation of the relics of Saint Bassianus from Old Lodi to New Lodi. The emperor carried the Saint's body on his own shoulders together with the prelates.<sup>213</sup> Toward the end of his reign, in 1187, Frederick – as the fourteenth-century *Annals of Saint Ulrich's and Saint Afra's Abbey* inform us – ordered a translation of Saint Ulrich's body, taking advantage of the consecration of the Abbey Church, and personally carried the relics to the new place of deposition.<sup>214</sup>

If we are to believe Petersohn's conclusions, Barbarossa's reign was characterized by the emperor's increased ritual involvement in the the cult of relics, which had been getting less and less important after the Ottonian dynasty had expired (a certain exception was probably the reign of Henry III, 1039–1056);<sup>215</sup> possibly, this was due to the inspirations coming from the Capetian France. The translation of Charlemagne's body in Aachen in 1165<sup>216</sup> was modeled, according to Petersohn, on the most distinguished French and English translations: of Saint Denis in 1144 and Saint Edward the Confessor in 1163.<sup>217</sup> Besides formal similarities, Petersohn, following the conclusions made by other researchers, indicates the indisputable connections of the intellectual elite from the imperial court and the Aachen clergy with Paris, Saint-Denis, and Île-de-France, where many of them received education.<sup>218</sup> Here, one should mention especially archchancellor

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212 PETERSOHN, *Saint-Denis – Westminster – Aachen. Die Karls-Translatio von 1165 und ihre Vorbilder*, pp. 433–435.

213 OTTO MORENA, pp. 172–173.

214 “Cuius auctoritate et ordinatione tota eadem dedicatio patrata est: nam idem imperator cum tribus episcopis sanctum corpus beati Uodalrici cum veneratione magna ad locum repositionis deportavit;” *ANNALES SANCTORUM UDALRICI ET AFRAE AUGUSTENSES*, p. 430. On both translations PETERSOHN, *Saint-Denis – Westminster – Aachen. Die Karls-Translatio von 1165 und ihre Vorbilder*, pp. 427–428.

215 PETERSOHN, *Kaisertum und Kultakt in der Stauferzeit*, pp. 101–105. On Henry III's involvement in the cult of relics see above.

216 The most recent works on Charlemagne's canonization: VONES, *Heiligsprechung und Tradition. Die Kanonisation Karls des Großen 1165*, pp. 89–106; SKWIERCZYŃSKI, *De sanctitate meritorum*, pp. 172–195, with detailed bibliography.

217 PETERSOHN, *Saint-Denis – Westminster – Aachen. Die Karls-Translatio von 1165 und ihre Vorbilder*, p. 435 et passim. It is also necessary to mention the classic study of Robert Folz: FOLZ, *Le souvenir et la légende de Charlemagne dans l'Empire germanique médiéval*, pp. 203–238.

218 PETERSOHN, *Saint-Denis – Westminster – Aachen. Die Karls-Translatio von 1165 und ihre Vorbilder*, pp. 444–449.

Rainald of Dassel who studied in Paris in the 1140s and could know a lot about the 1144 translation of Saint Denis. References to the chronicle writings of Saint-Denis in *De sanctitate Karoli Magni*, Charlemagne's Life composed soon after the translation, provide one of the clearest demonstrations of the intellectual influence of Saint-Denis's milieu on Frederick I's court.<sup>219</sup> Another known phenomenon is the Capetian – Hohenstaufen rivalry for appropriation of the memory and symbolic heritage of Charlemagne vivid in the twelfth century, which is naturally connected with Charlemagne's imperial canonization but no less so with the cult of Saint Denis, what I have discussed above.<sup>220</sup> Here, I shall merely draw attention to the analogies between the Aachen translation and the Capetian ritual practice and the political theology which went along with the cult of Saint Denis, noticed by Petersohn. According to all the contemporary written sources: the *Royal Chronicle of Cologne*, *The Annals of Wales*, and the Chronicle of Geoffroy du Breuil, Frederick personally lifted the remains of Charlemagne from the grave and placed them in the reliquary.<sup>221</sup> Only in Andrew of Marchiennes' account, the emperor did it together with the bishops;<sup>222</sup> the other chroniclers say he did it on his own. This may be one of the examples of Barbarossa's imitating both Louis VI and Louis VII in Saint-Denis and Henry II in Westminster, all the more so given the fact that the only earlier case in which he carried relics (together with bishops) was the translation in Lodi. At this very time, Frederick had already reigned for more than ten years. Noteworthy, no such behavior of emperors and German kings has been noted after the death of Henry III.<sup>223</sup> In addition, on January 8, 1166 Frederick issued a charter for Aachen in which, like Louis VI in 1124 and Louis VII in 1144, he described in the narrative the translation of the relics. Frederick also claimed that he performed it personally: "his [Charlemagne's] holiest body ... in the presence of many dukes and a large number of clergy and the populace, among hymns and religious chants with fear and reverence we lifted [from the grave] and raised [to the altar]."<sup>224</sup> The

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219 *DE SANCTITATE KAROLI MAGNI*, Prologue of Book III, p. 67.

220 I have also presented the Aachen Life of Charlemagne elsewhere in this volume and in other published works. See PYSIAK, *Z legendarnej historii Karola Wielkiego*, pp. 231–272.

221 *CHRONICA REGIA COLONIENSIS*, p. 116; LAMBERTI WATERLOS, *Annales Cameracenses*, p. 538; GAUFREDUS DE BRUIL, *Chronica*, p. 202.

222 "... de tumulo marmoreo levantes in locello ligneo in medio eiusdem basilicae reposuerunt;" *SIGEBERTI CONTINUATIO AQUICINCTINA*, p. 411 [author's emphasis].

223 PETERSOHN, *Kaisertum und Kultakt in der Stauferzeit*, pp. 101–105.

224 "... corpus eius sanctissimum ... cum magna frequentia principum et copiosa multitudine cleri et populi in ymnis et canticis spiritualibus cum timore et

most evident imitation of the French model is Charlemagne's forged charter for Aachen, which appeared at the time when he was canonized, titled the *Pragmatica sanctio* (partly known from his hagiographical Life *De sanctitate Karoli Magni*,<sup>225</sup>) and later confirmed as a transumpt in the privilege for Aachen promulgated by emperor Frederick II in 1244.<sup>226</sup> In the joint opinion of Marc Bloch, Robert Folz, and Jürgen Petersohn, this forgery is an imitation of Charlemagne's forged charter made out for Saint-Denis.<sup>227</sup> One of the most striking examples is that Aachen is called "caput Galliae:" the capital of Gaul, which is certainly a reference to "caput omnium ecclesiarum regni nostri" from the forgery made for Saint-Denis. However, in its deeper meaning, it rather repeats the ideological content of the privilege of Louis VI from 1124, in which Saint-Denis was called "caput regni nostri:" the capital of France. To be sure, calling Aachen "caput Galliae" made sense not only along the lines of the Capetian model, in which the monarchy used the cult of saints and their relics as part of its symbolic policy, recreating the ideological foundations of the kingship. For "caput Galliae" was also a clear reference to the dispute over the Carolingian heritage: whereas *De sanctitate Karoli Magni*, following the Saint-Denis writings, especially *Descriptio qualiter*, continues to describe Charlemagne as "imperator Gallicus," Frederick Barbarossa probably used this phraseology for his own purposes. Giving the name "caput Galliae" to Aachen, which was under the emperor's rule, may have served to lay the imperial claims for the emperor's symbolic superiority over the king of France. The controversy between France and the Empire is also visible in the parts recounting the Carolingian translation of the Crown of Thorns: even though Book II of *De sanctitate Karoli Magni* repeats almost entire *Descriptio qualiter*, it omits the final part of the document, which describes the translation of the relics from Aachen to Saint-Denis and Compiègne. On July 27, 1215, two days after his coronation in Aachen, which was carried out on the day of Saint

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reverentia elevavimus et exaltavimus;" *AACHENER URKUNDEN*, no. 2, p. 117.

225 RAUSCHEN, *Die Legende Karl des Grossen*, pp. 154–160.

226 MGH, *Diplomatum Karolinorum*, no. 295, pp. 441–443; new edition: *AACHENER URKUNDEN*, no. 1, pp. 113–115. On that subject: MEUTHEN, *Karl der Große – Barbarossa – Aachen*, pp. 54–75; MEUTHEN, *Barbarossa und Aachen*, pp. 28–59.

227 BLOCH, *Histoire d'Allemagne*, p. 629; FOLZ, *Le souvenir et la légende de Charlemagne dans l'Empire germanique médiéval*, pp. 225–233; PETERSOHN, *Saint-Denis – Westminster – Aachen. Die Karls-Translatio von 1165 und ihre Vorbilder*, pp. 448–449; PETERSOHN, *Kaisertum und Kultakt in der Stauferzeit*, pp. 108–112, 128–131.

James the Apostle, Frederick II performed the second translation of the relics of Charlemagne, this time to a newly executed reliquary. Both these two dates and the connection made between these two ceremonies convey a symbolic meaning. The coronation on the day devoted to James the Great certainly referred to the legend of Charlemagne: Book III of *De sanctitate Karoli Magni* is an adaptation of Pseudo-Turpin Chronicle;<sup>228</sup> the close proximity in time of the translation and the coronation certainly underlined their ideological similarities. Indeed, this finds confirmation in the iconography of Charlemagne's reliquary: it is encrusted with the scenes known from *Descriptio qualiter* and *De sanctitate Karoli Magni*: Charlemagne receiving the relics in Constantinople and the emperor's levitating glove with the flowers which grew on the Crown of Thorns when its particle for Charlemagne was being cut out.<sup>229</sup> Art historians believe that this representation is analogous to the scene depicted in the Charlemagne's window in Chartres Cathedral,<sup>230</sup> which was made soon after 1204 or in 1210–1225,<sup>231</sup> i.e., at the time of the creation of the reliquary and the second translation of Charlemagne's relics. In this book, I have already analyzed in greater detail Charlemagne's window in the part devoted to the reception of

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228 On the importance of the cult of Saint James in the actual and legendary history of Charlemagne, see: KLEIN, *Karl der Grosse und Compostela*, pp. 133–148; JAKOBUS UND KARL DER GROSSE: VON EINHARDS KARLSVITA ZUM PSEUDO-TURPIN, especially the papers: VONES, *Heiligspredung und Tradition. Die Kanonisation Karls des Großen 1165*, pp. 89–106; HERBERS, *Karl der Grosse und Santiago: zwei europäische Mythen*, pp. 173–194.

229 SCHRAMM, MÜTHERICH, *Denkmale der Deutschen Könige und Kaiser*, no. 195, pp. 188–189. On the iconographic similarity of the relief on the Aachen Charlemagne's reliquary and Charlemagne's window in Chartres, especially: STONES, *The Codex Calixtinus and the Iconography of Charlemagne*, pp. 169–203; see also: PASTAN, *Charlemagne as Saint? Relics and the Choice of Window Subjects at Chartres Cathedral*, p. 108.

230 The most exhausting monograph of the stained glass windows in the Chartres cathedral is: MANHES-DEREMBLE, *Les vitraux narratifs de la cathédrale de Chartres*, where an earlier dating is advised (pp. 258–260); LAUTIER, *Les vitraux de la cathédrale de Chartres. Reliques et images*; LAUTIER, *Le vitrail de Charlemagne à Chartres et les reliques du trésor de la cathédrale*, pp. 229–240.

231 LAUTIER, *Les vitraux de la cathédrale de Chartres. Reliques et images*, passim; MANHES-DEREMBLE, *Les vitraux narratifs de la cathédrale de Chartres*, pp. 9–17; PASTAN, *Charlemagne as Saint? Relics and the Choice of Window Subjects at Chartres Cathedral*, pp. 97–135. These works exhaustively discuss the bibliography of the subject and state of research. The stained glass windows are located in the northern ambulatory of the choir in the cathedral; MANHES-DEREMBLE, *Les vitraux narratifs de la cathédrale de Chartres*, names it as no. 7.

the Carolingian legend of the translation of the Crown of Thorns. Now, it is important to recall that the similarity between the scenes in the Chartres Charlemagne window and the reliquary in Aachen seems to indicate at least a dialogue, if not an ideological debate, between the Capetian France and the Empire about Charlemagne's sacral heritage. In addition, it is important to observe that Charlemagne's forged charter mentions, albeit in a very general manner, the relics which the Aachen Church of Our Lady was said to have obtained thanks to the emperor: "relics of apostles, martyrs, confessors, virgins, from various countries and kingdoms, in particular [from the Empire of the] Greeks, I collected and gave to this holy place."<sup>232</sup> The charter never refers to the Crown of Thorns, neither the Holy Nail, nor the Shroud of the Lord. Thus, Frederick I must have acknowledged that these relics were in France at that time.

However, there was one relic which became an object of a dispute over ownership claims between Aachen and Capetian France, namely – the tunic of Virgin Mary, "sancta camisia." The earliest inventory of the Aachen relics, which consisted mainly of the objects listed in the *Iter Hierosolimitanum* and the "velum B. Marie virginis," was compiled more or less at the time when Charlemagne's reliquary was ordered and made, which is to say, between the late twelfth century and 1238 when, after dedicating the newly built Gothic apse of the Aachen cathedral, the Aachen chapter organized a translation of all the relics stored in the church (except for the relics of Charlemagne) to new reliquaries: these were the relics of the Twelve Apostles, martyrs, confessors, virgins, Christ's swaddling clothes, Christ's loincloth stained with His Blood, Saint John the Baptist's beheading cloth, and the cloak of Our Lady. Most probably an *ostensio reliquiarum*<sup>233</sup> took place at that time, confirmed from 1312 as an annual ceremony.<sup>234</sup> If *De sanctitate Karoli Magni* never mentions the translation of the Crown of Thorns to Saint-Denis, the text remains silent about the gift of the "sancta camisia" to the Chartres Cathedral by Charles the Bald. The representation of the scenes known from *Descriptio qualiter* and *De sanctitate Karoli Magni* on the reliquary's side panels was certainly meant to confirm the rights of Aachen to this part of Charlemagne's heritage. In turn, the personal deposition by Frederick II of Charlemagne's remains in that reliquary<sup>235</sup> authenticated, as it were, its iconographic program. Frederick

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232 "... pignera apostolorum, martirum, confessorum, virginum a diversis terris et regnis et precipue Grecorum collegi, que huic sancto intuli loco;" *DE SANCTITATE KAROLI MAGNI*, p. 41.

233 KÜHNE, *Ostensio reliquiarum*, pp. 179–184.

234 KÜHNE, *Ostensio reliquiarum*, pp. 157–178.

235 PETERSOHN, *Kaisertum und Kultakt in der Stauferzeit*, pp. 115–116, 134.

II continued and repeated the tradition of Charlemagne's cult initiated by Barbarossa not only by personally performing the translation of the saint emperor's relics but also by legally reaffirming the *Pragmatica sanctio* with its inventory of relics stored in Aachen cathedral almost thirty years later (1244). Moreover, during the second translation of Charlemagne's relics, Frederick II symbolically completed the work of his grandfather: he personally drove in the nails enclosing the reliquary.<sup>236</sup> Since then, the anniversary of the second translation was celebrated in Aachen as a *festum anniversarium*.<sup>237</sup> As Robert Folz noted, the choice of July 27, 1215 as the day of the new translation of Charlemagne's relics had a special symbolic meaning: namely, it was the anniversary of the battle of Bouvines (1214) in which Philip Augustus defeated Otto IV and sent the imperial banners gained by the victorious French to young Frederick II, to whom Otto's defeat paved the way for the German and imperial thrones.<sup>238</sup>

It is worth noting that, at the turn of the twelfth and the thirteenth centuries, we observe, at least in the ideological realm, a certain renaissance of the interest in the Holy Lance, as evidenced by the eulogy of Godfrey of Viterbo, the *Pantheon*, written to the glory of the Empire and the Hohenstaufen dynasty. Apart from other topics, the author describes the symbolism and origins of the imperial regalia, including the Holy Lance, identified with the Lance of Saint Maurice.<sup>239</sup>

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236 REINERI, *ANNALES*, p. 673; PETERSOHN, *Kaisertum und Kultakt in der Stauferzeit*, p. 116.

237 FOLZ, *Le souvenir et la légende de Charlemagne dans l'Empire germanique médiéval*, p. 283.

238 FOLZ, *Le souvenir et la légende de Charlemagne dans l'Empire germanique médiéval*, p. 280; cf. PETERSOHN, *Kaisertum und Kultakt in der Stauferzeit*, p. 134, wonders whether Frederick II's aim was to sanctify this way the anniversary of Bouvines, in order to celebrate Charlemagne, whom he calls 'the moral victor' of Bouvines. The last-mentioned claim seems controversial: why should Charlemagne be the 'moral victor' from Bouvines for Frederick? After all, it was the king of France who defeated the emperor at Bouvines; perhaps, taking into consideration the Carolingian genealogy of the Hohenstaufen, the new German ruler saw the defeat of a *Welf* at Bouvines as the return of the descendants of Charlemagne to the German throne. Nonetheless, this is problematic since the Carolingian genealogy of the *Welfs* was not worse, and perhaps even better than that of the Hohenstaufen.

239 GODFREY OF VITERBO, *Pantheon*, particula XXVI, 3, pp. 273–274, the whole chapter on the interpretation of the imperial insignia on pp. 272–276. On the legend of Saint Maurice and the Holy Lance in Godfrey of Viterbo's *Pantheon*: É BOZÓKY, *La légende de saint Maurice selon Godefroi de Viterbe*, pp. 161–175

It would be worth further investigating the connections between the imperial power and the cult of saints and relics in the Reich during the reign of Frederick II, together with his own involvement in cult activities, but this exceeds the scope of our research. In an important paper about the cult acts of the emperors in the Hohenstaufen era, Jürgen Petersohn barely touched this issue<sup>240</sup>. And today, thirty years after Petersohn's paper, the situation is no different. Still, researchers have noted two facts which deserve greater attention. The first one is the translation of Saint Elisabeth of Thuringia in Marburg in 1236, when, accompanied by the princes, Frederick II opened the sarcophagus, then climbed into the Saint Elisabeth's grave, took out the coffin, personally performed the translation of Elizabeth's body, and finally put a gold crown on the Saint's head.<sup>241</sup> This indicates that Frederick II was interested in the cult of saints and relics, and that he believed, like the French kings, that, as an anointed one, he was entitled to physical contact with the sacred of the relics.<sup>242</sup> As Petersohn's investigations suggest, the translation of Saint Elisabeth in Marburg was the last one personally performed by the German ruler,<sup>243</sup> which makes the Reich different from the late Capetian France and thirteenth-century Plantagenet England; in the latter country Henry III was very active in that field.<sup>244</sup> But this does not mean that the German kings and emperors gave up their personal participation in the cult of relics. On the contrary, they took part, at least from the first quarter of the fourteenth century, in public demonstrations of the so-called Holy Relics of the Empire, i.e., the relics from the Treasury of the Empire,

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240 PETERSOHN, *Kaisertum und Kultakt in der Stauferzeit*.

241 CAESARIUS VON HEISTERBACH, *Sermo zur Elisabeth-Translatio*, p. 387; *CHRONICA REGIA COLONIENSIS*, p. 268.

242 PETERSOHN, *Saint-Denis – Westminster – Aachen. Die Karls-Translatio von 1165 und ihre Vorbilder*, p. 429–431, discusses the issue of the liturgical competences, or even duties, of the emperor in the realm of the cult of relics: according to the imperial *ordines coronandi*, the pope during the imperial coronation created the emperor a canon of the Basilica Saint John in Lateran, in the rank of a sub-deacon. In turn, the Carolingian *Ordo ad dedicationem ecclesiae* (*ORDO XLI*, cap. 27–28, pp. 256–257) impose on the sub-deacons and acolytes the duty of elevating the relics during the consecration of a church: “vadunt ad locum in quo reliquiae praetenta nocte cum vigiliis fuerant et elevant eas cum feretro cum honore et laudes decantando.”

243 PETERSOHN, *Kaisertum und Kultakt in der Stauferzeit*, pp. 117–118.

244 VINCENT, *The Holy Blood. King Henry III and the Westminster Blood Relic*; PYSIAK, *Kult relikwii Męki Pańskiej w ideologii władzy monarszej we Francji i w Anglii*, pp. 281–303; PYSIAK, *Kult relikwii umučení Páně v ideologii královské vlády ve Francii a v Anglii*, pp. 209–234.

considered to be the emperor's property. In fact, this was an ostentatious manifestation of the legitimacy of imperial or German royal power (e.g., Frederick Habsburg in 1315, Louis the Bavarian in 1324, Charles IV of Luxembourg in 1350).<sup>245</sup> Noteworthy, the already mentioned public *ostensio* of the Aachen relics begun possibly in 1238, if not earlier, and since then was repeated it every succeeding year basing – as Hartmut Kühne supposes – on the model of the ostension of the Passion relics in Saint-Denis.<sup>246</sup> Already Charlemagne's canonization in 1165, completed by a half-century later translation of his relics to the new reliquary, was meant to make Aachen the “emperor's Saint-Denis.”<sup>247</sup> Frederick II did not take part in the festivities held in Aachen in 1238, but despite the decentralization of the Reich and the weakening of the imperial power, he maintained his influence over Aachen and its Cathedral chapter. Thus, possibly, the ostension in Aachen should be related to the intentionality of the imperial symbolic policy, which was a purposeful continuation of the ideological trend begun by Barbarossa. Even if the Aachen translations of 1238 (and the assumed annual *ostensiones*) were conducted without Frederick II's influence, they were still the aftermath, carried out by the Aachen chapter, of Charlemagne's translation of 1165, following the example of the Capetian France.

## 7. The Capetian Monarchy and the Cult of the Relic of the Crown of Thorns and the Relics of Saint Denis in Hagiographic Sources: *Lives* of Saint Denis

In the thirteenth and the early fourteenth centuries, three important hagiographic-historical compilations connected with the cult of Saint Denis were created in the Abbey of Saint-Denis: the *Vita et actus beati Dionysii*<sup>248</sup>

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245 KÜHNE, *Ostensio reliquiarum*, pp. 82–88, 106–129.

246 KÜHNE, *Ostensio reliquiarum*, pp. 185–197, assumes that the *ostensiones* in Aachen began soon after – or at the time of – the canonization of Charlemagne, following the one described in *De sanctitate Karoli Magni*, in shape of the Indictum as depicted in the *Descriptio qualiter*, as well as Saint-Denis's Lendit.

247 FOLZ, *Le souvenir et la légende de Charlemagne dans l'Empire germanique médiéval*, p. 207: *Aix devait être le Saint-Denis de l'Allemagne*; PETERSOHN, *Saint-Denis – Westminster – Aachen. Die Karls-Translatio von 1165 und ihre Vorbilder: Aachener 'imitatio Sancti Dionysii'*, p. 449, see also pp. 444–449 et passim.

248 Anonymous, BnF, Ms. Latin 2447 and BnF, Ms. Nouvelles Acquisitions Latines 1509.



composed in ca. 1123–1124 with additions from 1233 or soon afterwards;<sup>249</sup> the *Vita beatorum martyrum Dyonisii, Rustici et Eleutherii*<sup>250</sup> (so-called *Vie en prose de Saint Denis*, because, contrary to the Latin incipit, it was written in French), its earliest version comes from ca. 1250<sup>251</sup> and the latest known one can be probably dated to soon after 1280;<sup>252</sup> finally, there is the *Vita et passio sancti Dionysii*,<sup>253</sup> written in 1313/1314–1317 by Yves de Saint-Denis on the commission of Philip IV the Fair (r. 1285–1314), and offered, after his death, to his third successor, Philip V the Tall (r. 1316–1322).<sup>254</sup>

Therefore, let us take a look at the reception of the royal rituals of the cult of Saint Denis and of the Passion relics held in Saint-Denis Abbey, as presented in those source materials, no less reliable than the chronicles compiled in the Abbey.

The *Vita et actus beati Dyonisii* consists of two parts: the hagiographic-liturgical one and the historiographic collection made up from single, narratively heterogenous texts or passages devoted to the most important, according to the compiler–editor, miraculous and sacral events from the history of the Abbey, which involve the cult of Saint Denis: the account of the *inventio* and translation of the relics of Saint Denis by king Dagobert I; the legend about the miraculous (performed by Christ) consecration of the first Abbey Church in Saint Denis<sup>255</sup> and the miracles which occurred along with

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249 LIEBMAN, *Étude sur la Vie en prose de Saint Denis*, pp. VIII–XXVI, large fragments on pp. 143–210; SPIEGEL, *The Cult of Saint Denis and Capetian Kingship*, pp. 53–54.

250 Anonymous, basic manuscript: BnF, Ms. Nouvelles Acquisitions Françaises 1098. LIEBMAN, *Étude sur la Vie en prose de Saint Denis*, pp. XLV–CIV, this and the fragments from some other manuscripts on pp. 1–142; SPIEGEL, *The Cult of Saint Denis and Capetian Kingship*, pp. 54–55.

251 BnF, Ms. Nouvelles Acquisitions Françaises 1098.

252 BnF, Ms. Français 696; cf. LIEBMAN, *Étude sur la Vie en prose de Saint Denis*, pp. LXXXI–LXXXIX; BARROUX, *Recueil historique en français*, pp. 25–34.

253 Basic manuscripts: BnF, Ms. Latin 2090–2091–2092 only with Part 1 and 2, hagiographic (with a translation into French), and BnF, Ms. Latin 5286, the only completely preserved Latin text.

254 DELISLE, *Notice sur un recueil historique présenté à Philippe le Long*, pp. 249–265; LIEBMAN, *Étude sur la Vie en prose de Saint Denis*, pp. XXVI–XXXVIII; SPIEGEL, *The Cult of Saint Denis and Capetian Kingship*, pp. 55–56. It is one more fundamental French medieval hagiographic-historical text which has not had a full critical edition yet. Fragments issued in: *HISTORIAE FRANCORUM SCRIPTORES COAETANEI*, vol. V, pp. 257–260, 288, 395, 549 and in RHF, vol. XX, pp. 45–57, 540–541 and vol. XXI, pp. 201–211.

255 LIEBMAN, *La consécration légendaire de la basilique de Saint-Denis*; LECLERCQ, *La consécration légendaire de la basilique de Saint-Denis*; TISCHLER, *Die Christus- und Engelweihe im Mittelalter*, pp. 42–47.

the consecration; the story of the revelation of Saints Denis, Martin and Maurice, who annunciated that the soul of king Dagobert would be delivered from suffering in hell; the revelation of Saint Denis to pope Stephen II, as a result of which Pippin the Short was anointed the king of the Franks in Saint-Denis; the account of the death of Charlemagne and the salvation of his soul through the intercession of Saints James and Denis; the account of how the body of Charles the Bald was transferred from the Abbey in Nantua to Saint-Denis; the story of the dispute between the Abbey of Saint Emmeram and Saint-Denis concerning the body of the martyr and the ostension of Saint Denis in 1053; the narrative about the salvation of the soul of Gervase, the archbishop of Reims, in 1067, owing to the intercession of Saints Denis and Nicasius; the revelation of Saint Denis who heralded to one of the cardinals in 1223, the death and salvation of the soul of Philip Augustus, thanks to Saint Denis, also describing the solemn exequies performed in the intention of the deceased king by pope Gregory IX; a catalogue of the miracles performed by Saint Denis in 1193–1223; an abridged version of the *Descriptio qualiter* (the establishment of the *Indictum* in Aachen by Charlemagne and its subsequent moving to Saint-Denis, together with the Passion relics, by Charles the Bald; the account of Charlemagne's expedition to the East is omitted);<sup>256</sup> the so-called *Charles's Vision*, created as the *Vision of Charles the Fat* (*Visio Karoli Grossi*),<sup>257</sup> but, since the twelfth century, often attributed to Charles the Bald;<sup>258</sup> a catalogue of the gifts given to the Abbey by Charles the Bald; a list of the relics of the saints collected in the Abbey from the times of Dagobert till 1215; and finally, the story of losing and miraculous finding of the Holy Nail in 1233.<sup>259</sup>

The review of this historical dossier allows to make several remarks. To be sure, the author of the compilation underscored the close and tight bond linking the monarchy – and especially those rulers who did service to Saint-Denis – with the Abbey. He was also interested in the ritual cult of the relics of Saint Denis and the Passion relics deposited in Saint-Denis. Moreover, he emphasized the special patronage of the martyr over the kings of France. However, for unknown reasons, he utterly omitted the most spectacular

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256 See the chapter on the reception of the *Descriptio qualiter* in texts (Part 1, Chapter 2).

257 LE GOFF, *La naissance du Purgatoire*, pp. 162–166, with a translation and interpretation of the text.

258 Similarly the *Iter Hierosolimitanum* in the thirteenth century manuscript from Montpellier; see the chapter about the transmission of the text of the *Descriptio qualiter* (Part 1, Chapter 2).

259 The historical-hagiographical collection listed after: LIEBMAN, *Étude sur la Vie en prose de Saint Denis*, pp. VIII–XXI.

cult events connected with those relics, which occurred a century before the compilation had its final form and which initiated the new, ostentatious form of celebration that redefined the bond between the ruling dynasty and its patron saint. This is quite interesting, since the omission of these facts cannot be explained by the author's lack of knowledge or limited access to the sources.

A similar but slightly shorter version of the historical narrative, addressed to a larger group of readers than the monks, is the French *Vita beatorum martyrum Dyonisii, Rustici et Eleutherii*.<sup>260</sup> The text contains a brief account of Clovis's baptism (missing from the *Vita et actus beati Dionysii*) and the genealogy of Dagobert I, followed by accounts (analogous to the *Vita et actus*) of: the discovery and translation of the relics of Saint Denis; the construction and consecration of the Church of Saint-Denis, the salvation of Dagobert soul; and, finally, the revelation of Saint Denis to Stephen II and Pippin's coronation and anointment in Saint-Denis Church.<sup>261</sup> One of the manuscripts reports how Clovis II (r. 639–657) opened the grave of Saint Denis, appropriating part of the saint's arm, and what was the king's punishment (he lost his mind); we also learn about his penance, atonement, and death; then, how the body of Charles the Bald was moved to Saint Denis.<sup>262</sup> The earliest manuscript of the *Vita beatorum martyrum Dyonisii, Rustici et Eleutherii*, dated to 1250,<sup>263</sup> is a luxury codex decorated with 31 full-page miniatures.

The miniatures represent the scenes from the history of the Salvation and the life and martyrdom of Saint Denis and his "co-apostles", then, from Dagobert I's history: the foundation of the Abbey Church of Saint-Denis, Dagobert's soul salvation thanks to Saint Denis's intercession. Thus, already the iconographic part of the manuscript clearly indicates that the author or his patron was not really interested in the history of the Frankish Kingdom but rather in the hagiographic aspect of the work. It is also possible that a larger work was planned but never completed, as the latest manuscript of

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260 The first part of that Life is a rather faithful – like the second, historical one, combined into a uniform narrative – adaptation of the hagiographical part of the *Vita et actus beati Dionysii*.

261 LIEBMAN, *Étude sur la Vie en prose de Saint Denis*, pp. 64–142 (BnF, Ms. Nouvelles Acquisitions Françaises 1098, pp. 64–95) and fragments of manuscripts: BL, MS. Egerton 745; BnF, Ms. Français 696, pp. 96–113.

262 BL, MS. Egerton 745; LIEBMAN, *Étude sur la Vie en prose de Saint Denis*, pp. 99–101.

263 DELISLE, *Notice sur un livre à peintures exécuté en 1250 dans l'abbaye de Saint-Denis*, pp. 444–476.

this work, written in 1280 at the earliest, may indicate.<sup>264</sup> Besides repeating some passages from the mid-thirteenth-century manuscript, it presents a catalogue of the relics of saints stored in the Abbey of Saint-Denis, which is an adaptation of the Latin version from the *Vita et actus beati Dyonisii*; in the later manuscript, the list is extended by the relics of the martyrs from the Theban Legion given by Louis IX to Saint-Denis<sup>265</sup> in 1262.<sup>266</sup> This last manuscript also contains a chronicle – more precisely, an adaptation into French of the works of Eusebius, Saint Jerome, and Sigebert of Gembloux – which begins with the birth of Christ and continues until 1112. The author intended to carry on the chronicle till his own times: the last, tenth, folio of the manuscript was meant to cover 1113–1280, but it contains only single entries under certain dates during the reigns of the successive kings of France. The last entry concerns hanging Pierre de la Broce (1280), once a mighty chamberlain of Philip III the Bold (150r<sup>o</sup>). According to Paulin Paris, the manuscript should be dated to 1280–1285, since in the record about Philip III's return from Tunis to France in 1271 the author says: *En ceste ennee retorna nostre rois Phelipes*,<sup>267</sup> which, according to Paris, indicates that he wrote about a living monarch. There is not even one mention of a presentation of the relics of Saint Denis on the altar for public veneration: the rubrics designed for the years 1124, 1147, 1190, 1191, and 1124 are empty,<sup>268</sup> just like the majority of others. There are

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264 BnF, Ms. Français 696. LIEBMAN, *Étude sur la Vie en prose de Saint Denis*, pp. LXXXIX–XCI, here: pp. LXXXVVI–LXXXVII, the fragments on pp. 105–113. The facsimile of the manuscript is available at: <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b8447187m/f1.image.r=Fran%C3%A7ais+696.langFR> (April 23, 2020).

265 Edition: LIEBMAN, *Étude sur la Vie en prose de Saint Denis*, pp. 112–113.

266 On the translation of the relics of the martyrs from the Theban Legion cf. CAROLUS-BARRÉ, *Saint Louis et la translation des corps saints*, pp. 1100–1104; HÉLARY, *Le prieuré Saint-Maurice de Senlis*, pp. 333–348; LESTER, “Confessor, King, Martyr, Saint. Praying to Saint-Maurice d’Agaune”, in: Katherine L. Jansen, G. Geltner, Anne E. Lester (eds.), *Center and Periphery. Studies in Power in the Medieval World in Honor of William Chester Jordan*, Brill, Leiden-Boston 2013, pp. 195–210. Besides, see: PYSIAK, *Królewski kult Korony Cierniowej we Francji*, pp. 300–301; PYSIAK, *Gest władcy i wizualizacja treści ideowych kultu relikwii*, pp. 27–29; PYSIAK, *Teatralizacja kultu relikwii w średniowieczu*, pp. 41–43; PYSIAK, *Gest monarchy i wizualizacja symboliki rytuałów związanych z kultem relikwii*, pp. 182–184; PYSIAK, *The Monarch’s Gesture and Visualisation of Rituals*, pp. 49–52.

267 BnF, Ms. Français 696, fol. 149v<sup>o</sup>; PARIS, *Les manuscrits français de la Bibliothèque du roi*, vol. V, p. 374.

268 BnF, Ms. Français 696, fol. 140v<sup>o</sup>, 142r<sup>o</sup>, 144v<sup>o</sup>, 147v<sup>o</sup>.

records of Saint Louis embarking on two Crusades (1248 and 1270), but none of these says anything about the king going to Saint-Denis to take the banner of Saint Denis.

The *Vita et passio sancti Dionysii*, written by monk Yves toward the end of the Capetian era, has a slightly different character, since, unlike the previously discussed ones, it was commissioned by the sovereign and given to the king by abbot Gilles of Pontoise. The book, which Giles presented Philip V with in 1317,<sup>269</sup> is a luxury codex with more than twenty full-page splendid miniatures representing the scenes from the history of Salvation and the life and martyrdom of Saint Denis within the framework of genre scenes from the life of medieval Paris.<sup>270</sup> The two first parts of the *Vita et passio sancti Dionysii* are indeed devoted to the life and martyrdom of the saint; the third one is a historiographic work which presents the saint's *post mortem* participation in the history of the Kingdom of France and the importance of his cult for the French monarchy. This part of Yves's manuscript offered to Philip V in 1317 is known only from other manuscripts (BnF Ms. Latin 5286),<sup>271</sup> it was lost already in the mid-fourteenth century, when the codex was stored in Charles V's library in Louvre.<sup>272</sup> Part III of the *Vita et passio sancti Dionysii* is a history of the Kingdom of the Franks from its mythical ancient beginning: the fall of Troy, completed with a new edition of one of the most important historiographical manuscripts, known as Latin 5925 from the Bibliothèque nationale de France in Paris, written in ca. 1285,<sup>273</sup> supplemented with an account of the reigns of Philip IV the

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269 BnF, Ms. Français 2090–2091–2092.

270 A study of the miniatures from the BnF, Ms. Français 2090–2091–2092 presenting Paris in the early fourteenth century and their facsimile: MARTIN, *Légende de Saint Denis. Reproduction des miniatures du manuscrit*.

271 BnF, Ms. Latin 5286, the only conserved complete manuscript of the *Vita et passio sancti Dionysii* and the third one, containing only the historiographic Part III of the *Vita et passio sancti Dionysii*, BnF, Ms. Latin 13836 (formerly: Saint-Germain Ms. Latin 1082, containing only chapters LVII–CLXVIII of Part III, with their French translation), are far more modestly illuminated. See DELISLE, *Notice sur un livre à peintures exécuté en 1250 dans l'abbaye de Saint-Denis*, p. 455; LIEBMAN, *Étude sur la Vie en prose de Saint Denis*, p. XXXIV, also mentions the Vatican (BAV, Ms. Reg. Lat. 695.2) and Berlin (Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, Ms. Latin fol. 53) manuscript which contain only Part III.

272 LIEBMAN, *Étude sur la Vie en prose de Saint Denis*. XXXIII. LIEBMAN, *Étude sur la Vie en prose de Saint Denis*, p. XXXIII.

273 For more on the manuscript BnF, Ms. Latin 5925, its origins and importance in the historiographical tradition of the Abbey of Saint-Denis, see BOURGAIN, *La protohistoire des Chroniques latines de Saint-Denis*, pp. 375–394 with the most important literature. On the tradition of medieval historiographic production in Saint-Denis see also: SPIEGEL, *The Chronicle Tradition of Saint-Denis*,

Fair (r. 1285–1314) and Louis X the Quarreler (r. 1314–1316), then the beginnings of the reign of Philip V the Tall (r. 1316–1322).<sup>274</sup> The very first sentences of the chapter describing the reign of Philip Augustus and presenting the territorial gains made by that king, reveal that he owed his conquests to his trust in Saint Denis, the patron saint of the Kingdom of the Franks.<sup>275</sup> Yves devoted a separate chapter in the part of the chronicle recounting the reign of Philip Augustus to the ostension of the relics of Saint Denis in Saint-Denis Abbey from 1191–1192 discussed above. As distinct from other historians, however, Yves imposes a new narrative order on the event of taking the bodies of the martyrs and the Passion relics out from reliquaries: when describing the reign of Philip Augustus, he considers the king's participation in the Crusade as the only reason for the ostension, which is why he stresses the military aspect of Saint Denis's patronage over the kings and the Kingdom of France:

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about the manuscript BnF, Ms. Latin 5925 na pp. 68–71; SPIEGEL, *Les débuts français de l'historiographie royale*, pp. 395–404; NEBBIAI DALLA GUARDA, *Des rois et des moines. Livres et lecteurs à l'abbaye de de Saint-Denis*, pp. 355–374; GUYOTJEANNIN, *La science des archives à Saint-Denis (fin du XIII<sup>e</sup> – début du XVI<sup>e</sup> siècles)*, pp. 339–354.

BnF, Ms. Latin 5925 is another stage of the work on the Latin historiographic corpus from Saint-Denis, the earlier stages being the manuscripts: BnF, Ms. Latin 12711 and BAV, Ms. Reg. Lat. 550. On the contents of these historical collections see BOURGAIN, *La protohistoire des Chroniques latines de Saint-Denis*, *passim*.

274 There is, however, a very important from the point of view of the royal ideology, difference between the two manuscripts. The author of BnF, Ms. Latin 5925, describing the beginning of the reign of Louis VIII, presents an archaic interpretation of the *reditus regni ad stirpem Karoli*, referring to the tradition unfavorable to Capetians, claiming Hugh Capet to be an usurper. In the *Vita et passio sancti Dionysii* Yves of Saint-Denis argues against this claim, presenting Hugh's Carolingian genealogy and describing both the beginnings of the Capetian dynasty and the marriage of Philip Augustus with Isabella. Cf. *GESTA ALIA PHILIPPI AUGUSTI* [Yves de Saint-Denis, *Vita et passio sancti Dionysii*, BnF, Ms. Latin 5286], p. 258 and *Gesta Ludovici Octavi* [BnF, Ms. Latin 5925], RHF, vol. XVII, pp. 302–303 (after the edition: *HISTORIAE FRANCORUM SCRIPTORES COAETANEI*, vol. V, pp. 284–285).

275 *GESTA ALIA PHILIPPI AUGUSTI* [Yves de Saint-Denis, *Vita et passio sancti Dionysii*, BnF, Ms. Latin 5286], p. 257: “Hic Ducatum Normanniae acquisiuit, Comitatumque Viromendensium, Pictaorum, Andegauensium, Turonesium, Cenomanensium, Clarimontis, sic etiam Bellimontis, hic etiam in patroni Regni Francorum Dionysij vt eiusdem gesta Regis luculenter ostendunt, semper & praecipue post Deum sperans precibus & confidens omnes suos aduersarios viriliter subiugauit.”

Thus, during the reign of the mentioned Most Christian King Philip, when he went on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land in the name of Jesus, namely in the eleventh year of his reign, on the octave before the calendas of September [August 25, 1191] the holiest bodies of Saint-Denis, Rusticus, and Eleutherius, stored in the vessels made of the purest silver [in the Abbey of Saint-Denis], [and] carefully sealed, were taken out [of the grave] and displayed on the altar, surrounded by the bodies of the other Saints who are resting in that very church, which is the custom when the kings of France set off to war, so that all the faithful, who will come from all over the country to see this holy spectacle, can raise their hands, together with Moses, and pray to the Lord, sighing and crying, for the intention of the liberation of the Holy Land and for the intention of the mentioned king of the Franks and all his companions, who made a pilgrimage there; for the Christians trust not in the power of the weapons but in the might and mercy of Christ..., so that they turned to nothing the infidel, hostile to the Holy Cross people. On the next day of Saint Denis [October 9, 1191], a silver vase was opened, in which the body of the holiest Saint Denis the Martyr was located, in the presence of the bishops of Senlis and Meaux, Adele, the queen of the Franks, and many abbots and monks; and the entire body with the head (besides the holy bones about which we talked earlier) and it was piously shown to all the faithful who came from distant places to pray.<sup>276</sup>

Thus, just like other contemporary sources, Yves explains that the long-time display of the relics of Saint Denis and his co-martyrs was due to the king's expedition to the Third Crusade. His account is very similar to that of Rigord and it was probably partly copied verbatim. However,

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276 "Praefato igitur Christianissimo Rege Philippo regnante, & in Terra Sancta pro Christi nomine peregrinante, Regni scilicet eius anno vndecimo, octauo Kalendas Septembris sanctissima beatissimorum martyrum Dionysij, Rustici & Eleutherij corpora cum purissimis vasis argenteis, in quibus diligentissime sigillata continebantur, vt moris est cum Reges Francorum solent ad bella procedere, sunt extracta & super altare posita adiunctis ibi aliis corporibus sanctorum in eadem Ecclesia quiescentium, vt ibi omnes fideles ad tam sanctum spectaculum conuenientes cum gemitibus & suspiriis pro Terra Sancta liberanda, & etiam pro Rege Francorum praefato in eadem Terra Sancta tunc vt diximus peregrinante, & vniuerso comitatu suo puras manus cum Moyse leuantes ad Dominum preces funderent, quia non in armorum potentia, sed in Christi virtute & misericordia Christiani confidunt ..., populos infideles inimicos crucis Christi ad nihilum redigentes. Sequenti vero beati Dionysij festo aperto vase argenteo, in quo sanctum corpus beatissimi Dionysij martyris continenabatur, assistentibus Episcopis Siluanectensi & Meldensi & Ala Francorum Regina & multis Abbatibus & viris religiosis totum corpus cum capite exceptis sacris assibus, de quibus supra diximus est inuentum, & vniuersis Dei fidelibus qui de longinquis partibus orandi causa conuenerant, deuotissime demonstratum;" *GESTA ALIA PHILIPPI AUGUSTI* [Yves de Saint-Denis, *Vita et passio sancti Dionysii*, BnF, Ms. Latin 5286], p. 258.

Yves disregards that part of Rigord's account in which the latter says that the ceremony was held at the advice of the queen mother and the bishops, adding that the ritual was genetically connected with the fact that the king of France was at war. It is as if Yves's purpose was to dismiss the impression that the ostension of 1191 had an accidental character. And it is only after that Yves presents the vain claims of the Paris Cathedral clergy of possessing part of Saint Denis's head, and the *ostensio*, which ultimately disproved these claims.<sup>277</sup> Therefore, it seems that the changes made by Yves in the account of the 1191–1192 ostension were used for the ideological purposes of the Capetian monarchy: the work dedicated to Philip V shifted the emphasis onto the ritual and traditional aspect of the ceremony connected with the military patronage of Saint Denis over the kings of France. In turn, the polemic with the Parisian clergy about the integrity of the remains of the saint owned by the Abbey of Saint-Denis is significant: indeed, it is developed into a more elaborate narrative than in Rigord's chronicle and the *Great Chronicles of France* – but still bears a secondary importance. Let us remind that Primat's continuator, Guillaume de Nangis, describing the public display of Saint Denis's relics in 1191, focused only on its authenticating function and completely disregarded the aspect of Saint Denis's patronage over the king and the king's war. One may therefore contend that the *Vita et passio sancti Dionysii* is a synthesis of the two narrative traditions of the Abbey scriptorium: the hagiographic and the royalist one, with a slight preference for the latter.

Yves devoted further pages to the miracles performed by Saint Denis during Philip Augustus's reign and to an account of how Philip Augustus presented the Abbey of Saint-Denis with the relics from Constantinople, which he received from the first Latin emperor, Baldwin I – incorrectly dating these events to the fourteenth (1194) – instead of the twenty-fifth (1205) – year of Philip's reign. In this case, too, Yves's text hinges on Rigord's chronicle,<sup>278</sup> following a theme which was completely ignored by Primat and Guillaume de Nangis. Further he proceeds to describe the gift of the relics of Saint Dionysius of Corinth to the Abbey by Innocent III and finally goes on to sum up the reign of Philip Augustus and the miracles linked to his death. Like the author of the *Vita et actus beati Dyonisii*, William the Breton, and Primat, Yves described the vision in which Saint Denis informed knight

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277 *GESTA ALIA PHILIPPI AUGUSTI* [Yves de Saint-Denis, *Vita et passio sancti Dionysii*, BnF, Ms. Latin 5286], pp. 258–259.

278 RIGORD, *Gesta Philippi Augusti* (2006), cap. 153, pp. 392, 394



James of Segni about the death of Philip Augustus and ordered cardinal Thomas of Saint Sabina to ask the pope to absolve the soul of the deceased king, so that he could go to Heaven.<sup>279</sup> There is no doubt that Philip owed these eschatological favours of Saint Denis to the services he had done in his lifetime to the Church, especially the church of his special patron – Saint-Denis Abbey.<sup>280</sup> The right of Philip Augustus’s soul to go to the Kingdom of Heaven was supported by the description of the miraculous healings, which took place at his grave in Saint-Denis soon after king’s funeral.<sup>281</sup>

Yves also tells how, in 1191, prince Louis (future king Louis VIII) and Philip Augustus received a miraculous healing from dysentery respectively in Paris and the Holy Land. However, as distinct from his predecessors, he did not include this story in the chapter about Philip, but in the introductory part of the chapter about the reign of Louis the Lion. This little difference in composition is by no means the only one. Let us remind that, in 1191, for the first time in their history, the relics of Saint Denis left the Abbey for the intention of the recovery of the heir presumptive to the throne, who suffered from dysentery. To that end, the relics were taken in a procession to Paris and the royal Palais de la Cité. Finally, however, the child’s belly was not touched with the relics of the monarchy’s patron saint but with the Crown of Thorns, the Holy Nail, and the arm of Saint Simeon. As Rigord’s reasoning suggests, and the Great Chronicles of France make it explicit, both Louis in Paris and Philip Augustus in the Holy Land owed their miraculous healing to Saint Denis. Yves, in turn, gives a different account:

Louis the Eight ... in his childhood, namely, in the eleventh year of his father’s reign, caught a serious illness, called dysentery by the doctors. When everyone despaired for his life it was agreed that, after pious fasting and prayers, the monks of the monastery of Saint Denis would come in a barefoot procession with the clergy and populace, carrying the Nail and the Crown of Thorns of the Lord and the arm of the holy elder Simeon. All the monasteries from Paris and the venerable bishop of Paris, Maurice, his canons and clerics, and countless crowds of people came to the Church of Saint Lazarus near Paris. Carrying the bodies of the saints, and the relics, barefoot, they went towards them [the monks of Saint-Denis] and joined them, singing, crying, and sighing. And they came [together] to the royal

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279 *GESTA ALIA PHILIPPI AUGUSTI* [Yves de Saint-Denis, *Vita et passio sancti Dionysii*, BnF, Ms. Latin 5286], pp. 260–261.

280 *GESTA ALIA PHILIPPI AUGUSTI* [Yves de Saint-Denis, *Vita et passio sancti Dionysii*, BnF, Ms. Latin 5286], p. 260.

281 “Post cuius funerationem multi viderunt ad sepulturam eius claudos erigi, & caecos ad lumen redire;” *ibid.* For more on the alleged incentive of canonization of Philip Augustus, see BALDWIN, *Philippe Auguste*, pp. 492–495; BRANNER, *The Montjoies of Saint Louis*, pp. 13–15; LE GOFF, *Le dossier de sainteté de Philippe Auguste*, pp. 22–29.

palace, where the sick boy [prince Louis] was lying. [There,] having preached to the people and cried many a tear, and the people saying a prayer to the Lord in his [Louis's] intention, the boy was saved from death thanks to the touch of the Holy Nail and the Crown of Thorns of the Lord and the arm of Saint Simeon, with which a sign of the cross was made on the [prince's] belly; his father, king Philip, staying in foreign lands, was on the same day healed from the same illness. After the boy kissed the Lord's holy relics and was blessed, everyone performed the lauda in the Church of Our Lady [i.e., in the Paris Cathedral]; [then] the procession from the Church of Our Lady and many other [processions] saw the procession of Saint Denis off to the city gates. [Then,] after having blessed each other with the relics, all returned to their homes. The Parisian canons and the populace rejoiced because the relics of Saint Denis, which had so far never, for the reason of any danger, left the town of Saint-Denis, came then to Paris.<sup>282</sup>

In Yves's narrative, the relics of Saint Denis are important in that they left the city of Saint Denis for the first time in the history as a result of the mortal disease which afflicted the heir presumptive to the throne. However, as distinct from his predecessors, it is not the relics of Saint Denis but the

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282 "Iste Ludovicus octauus ... in pueritia positus Regni videlicet patris sui anno vndecimo, aegrotauit morbo graui, qui a medicis dissenteria nominatur, omnibusque de vita desperantibus, fuit in commune deliberatum, quod Conuentus Beati Dionysij ieiuniis, & orationibus deuote praemissis, portans secum, clauum & spineam Coronam Domini, & brachium sancti Symeonis senis, cum processione Cleri & populi, nudis pedibus incederent. Vt autem ad Ecclesiam sancti Lazari iuxta Parisius venerunt vniuersi Conuentus Religiosorum vrbis Parisiaca & venerabilis Mauritius Parisiensis Episcopus, cum suis Canonicis & Clericis, & infinita populi concurrente multitudine, cum sanctorum corporibus, & Reliquiis, nudis plantis flentes obuiam venerunt, & coniungentes se illis cantantes cum fletu multo, & suspiriis, ad Palatium Regis, vbi puer aegrotabat, venerunt, & sancto sermone ad populum, & multa lacrymarum effusione, & oratione populi fusa ad Dominum pro eo, ad tactum sacri clauis, & spineae coronae Domini, & brachii sancti Symeonis, per totum ventrem in modum crucis, eodem die puer fuit ab imminente periculo liberatus, paterque eius Rex Philippus in transmarinis partibus exinde eodem die simili morbo est curatus. Osculatis itaque a puero sanctis Reliquiis Dominicis, ac benedictione sibi data, ab omnibusque in Ecclesia Beatae Mariae solutis diunis laudibus processio beatae Mariae, & plures aliae processionem beati Dionysij vsque ad villae exitum perduxerunt, & ibi se inuicem cum reliquiis benedicientibus vnus quisque ad propria remeavit. Gaudebantque Canonici Parisienses & populi, pro sancti Dionysii reliquiis Parisius deportatis, quae alias villam sancti Dionysij non exierant pro quocumque periculo imminente;" *Fragmentum de vita Ludovici VIII* [Yves de Saint-Denis, *Vita et passio sancti Dionysii*, BnF, Ms. Latin 5286], ed. in: *HISTORIAE FRANCORUM SCRIPTORES COAETANEI*, vol. V, p. 288.

Passion relics to which Yves attributes the miracle of the healing of both the prince and the king.

The information about Saint Louis's veneration for the patron saint of the kings of France mentioned in the *Vita et passio sancti Dionysii* is unexpectedly different from the scheme we know. Quite surprisingly, Yves omits the story of Louis's disease and healing in 1244, so vivid and suggestive in the chronicle of Guillaume de Nangis. Nor does he recount how the king took the oriflamme from Saint-Denis in 1270 before setting off on the Crusade. Indeed, the hagiographer-chronicler stresses Louis IX's devotion to Saint Denis: he mentions twice that, on his deathbed, the king entrusted himself to the martyr's protection;<sup>283</sup> describes in detail Louis IX's participation in the liturgy in honour of the Saint conducted in Saint-Denis on Saint Denis's day and the deposition of four gold bezants on the martyr's altar by the king. Yves also writes that the king confirmed the privileges granted to Saint-Denis by Charlemagne, and about Saint Denis Abbey receiving (in 1262) a part of the relics of the Theban Legion, which he later deposited in Senlis.<sup>284</sup> However, Yves does not mention the ostension of Saint Denis's relics during the reign of Saint Louis; he does not present the Saint either as a military patron or a healer of the kings of France. In a very brief chapter, he describes the reign of Louis's son, Philip III the Bold (1270–1285), but he never mentions that the king took the banner of Saint Denis for the planned war with Castile, which ultimately never took place.<sup>285</sup>

The last part of the chronicle part of the *Vita et passio sancti Dionysii* is devoted to the reign of Philip IV the Fair and his two sons, Louis X the Quarreler, and the beginnings of the reign of Philip V the Tall.<sup>286</sup> It briefly recounts how Philip the Fair took the banner from Saint-Denis before his expeditions against Flanders (1298, 1302, 1304). Yves also remarks that the king did it following the custom of his predecessors, entrusting his Kingdom to the Saint under a threat of war. However, there is no mention

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283 YVES DE SAINT-DENIS, *Gesta sancti Ludovici noni* [*Vita et passio sancti Dionysii*, BnF, Ms. Latin 5286], pp. 52, 56 (all on pp. 45–57); according to the edition: *HISTORIAE FRANCORUM SCRIPTORES COAETANEI*, vol. V, pp. 395–406, here: pp. 400–401, 405–406.

284 YVES DE SAINT-DENIS, *Gesta sancti Ludovici noni*, pp. 51–52; according to the edition: *HISTORIAE FRANCORUM SCRIPTORES COAETANEI*, vol. V, pp. 400–401.

285 YVES DE SAINT-DENIS, *Fragmentum de vita Philippi regis Franciae* [BnF, Ms. Latin 5286], RHF, vol. XX, p. 540; after the edition: *HISTORIAE FRANCORUM SCRIPTORES COAETANEI*, vol. V, pp. 549–550.

286 YVES DE SAINT-DENIS, *Pars ultima Chronici* [*Vita et passio sancti Dionysii*, BnF, Ms. Latin 5286], RHF, vol. XXI, pp. 202–211.

of the exposure of Saint Denis's relics on the high altar which, according to other chroniclers, accompanied this ceremony.<sup>287</sup> Also after a victory, like Philip Augustus is said to do in Rigord's account, Philip the Fair paid a thanksgiving visit to the Abbey and repaid the Saint with donations. In this context, we should note that there is no mention of the ostension, but, strikingly enough, Philip the Fair considered Our Lady as his and Kingdom's special protector, because he paid a thanksgiving visit and gave gifts after the victory not only to Saint-Denis but also to the Paris Cathedral (and, in his circulars distributed throughout the Kingdom, he attributed the victory equally to the beneficial patronage of Virgin Mary and Saint Denis).<sup>288</sup> Interestingly, there is no matching description of such ritual for the war with England in 1294–1297. This may be explained by the fact that, unlike Louis VII, Philip Augustus, Louis VIII, and Saint Louis, who conducted the wars with England before, Philip the Fair did not go to the war in person (the army was commanded by the king's brother, Charles de Valois, and cousin, Robert II d'Artois). Still, let us remind that, when describing the earlier wars with the Plantagenets, the chroniclers from Saint-Denis also did not mention the *licentia abeundi* and the king receiving the *vexillum*, together with the military patronage of Saint Denis, from the altar.

Each of the last three monarchs presented in the *Vita et passio sancti Dionysii* was shown as an ardent venerator of Saint Denis: Philip the Fair, after giving a long deathbed speech to his successor, Louis, which instructed him on how to govern France in the best and most honourable way,<sup>289</sup> requests the future king to venerate the Church of Saint-Denis above

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287 "Habens tamen fiduciam in Domino, beata Virgine et patrono suo Dionysio, quem humiliter et devote hac vice et quotiens in Flandrenses movit exercitum visitavit, regnum eidem tanquam patrono, more precedentium regum cum ad bella soliti fuerunt procedere, devote recommendans, ac desuper ejus altare vexillum benedictum accipiens;" YVES DE SAINT-DENIS, *Pars ultima Chronici*, RHF, vol. XXI, pp. 204–205.

288 "Attendens autem rex pius tantum de coelo datum sibi triumphum meritis beatae Mariae et beati patroni sui Dionysii, post victoriam litteras misit presentaliter, postea venturus ad conventum Sancti Dionysii, in quibus de victoria Deo et sanctis martyribus gratias agens, per eorumdem martyrum merita se recognoscens de hostis triumphasse. Sed et in Franciam reversus, ecclesias beatae Mariae Parisiensis et beati Dionysii pro gratiarum actione visitans, utrisque, ad Dei et sanctorum suorum laudem et gloriam et ad praedicti triumphii memoriam, perpetuos redditus assignavit;" YVES DE SAINT-DENIS, *Pars ultima Chronici*, RHF, vol. XXI, p. 205. On Our Lady as the patron of the kings and kingdom of France from the times of Philip Augustus till Charles VI see the beautiful paper: GUENÉE, *Le Voeu de Charles VI. Essai sur la dévotion des rois de France aux XIII<sup>e</sup> et XIV<sup>e</sup> siècles*, pp. 67–135.

289 YVES DE SAINT-DENIS, *Pars ultima Chronici*, RHF, vol. XXI, pp. 206–207.

all other churches in his Kingdom, and to love and always ask for help Saint Denis, who is its patron saint; to trust him because this Saint will be his most reliable and kind helper.<sup>290</sup> According to Yves, both Louis X and Philip V, symbolically began their reigns with a visit to Saint-Denis and entrusting their rule to their patron saint before the coronation in Reims.<sup>291</sup> This ritual seems to have been started by Louis X in 1315. Indeed, it was a novelty in the Capetians' symbolism of power: no similar accounts are found in any earlier source; nor does Yves of Saint-Denis claim that the predecessors of Louis X performed it. Unfortunately, he does not present any details of the ceremony of the kings' entrusting themselves to Saint Denis before their anointment.

The *Vita et passio sancti Dionysii* ends with a long moralistic and prayerful discourse, dedicated to Philip the Tall, in which the author discusses the essence and tasks of the royal authority and praises the French monarchy as the one chosen by God to look after the universal Church.<sup>292</sup> The final part of the text contains an invocation to God and Saint Denis for the intention of the new king. Referring to the history of France, Yves asks Saint Denis to continue to serve as the guardian, defender, and protector of the Kingdom and its kings, who will, may God allow, worship him in the future, just as they worshipped him in the past. For Denis, like before, is still a special, faithful, and vigilant patron saint of the kings and the entire Kingdom of France; Saint Denis, due to his merits, will always get from Christ what he asks for, for France and for the entire world.<sup>293</sup> In particular, Yves asks

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290 "Ecclesiam Sancti Dionysii super omnes recommendatam habete; vestrum gloriosum, beatum Dionysium diligite et in omnibus necessitatibus vestris invocate; et confidatis in eo, quia pro certo ipsum habebitis propitium adiutorem;" YVES DE SAINT-DENIS, *Pars ultima Chronici*, RHF, vol. XXI, pp. 207.

291 "Iste Ludovicus ... patri succedens in regno Francorum, dominica post festum beatae Mariae Magdalenaee, visitato prius patrono suo sancto Dionysio, ejus orationibus se recommendans, Remis ... est inunctus. ... Iste Philippus anno Domini millesimo tricentesimo sexto decimo, dominica post Epiphaniam, devote prius visitato regni patrono beato Dionysio, Remis ... inungitur et regali diademate coronatur;" YVES DE SAINT-DENIS, *Pars ultima Chronici*, RHF, vol. XXI, p. 209.

292 YVES DE SAINT-DENIS, *Pars ultima Chronici*, RHF, vol. XXI, pp. 209–210.

293 "Sed et tu, sacerdotum dignissime et martyrum praestantissime Dionysi, tuis sanctis Deoque gratissimis orationibus regem regnumque ab omnibus adversantibus custodi. Te etenim, ut eorum fidei latorem verissimum et patronum praecipuum, honore debito semper sunt prosecuti et usque hodie prosequuntur, futurisque temporibus, concedente Domino, prosequuntur, ita ut eorum custos vigilantissimus defensorque promptissimus esse debeas jure et debito patronatus. Sicut ergo regem regnumque Francorum, ut fidelis patronus, tuis ab olim non cessas semper juvare precibus, ut praeteritarum rerum magistra

Saint Denis to preserve the peace in the Kingdom of France, as well as the well-being of the king and the unity of the universal Church.<sup>294</sup> The peace and inviolability of the Kingdom of France acquire an almost eschatological dimension – let us recall that in Yves’s opinion French kings had been chosen by God to look after the security of the Church on the Earth – for they make it possible to achieve a state close to the Kingdom of God on Earth, when all people will praise the Lord. By venerating Saint Denis, the king of France becomes a tool in God’s hands for the advancement of this holy plan.

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A review of the thirteenth- and early fourteenth-century hagiographic sources from Saint-Denis reveals a very interesting account of the origins and evolution of the narrative about the royal cult of Saint Denis. The account is slightly different than, albeit complementary to, the historiographic accounts. Indeed, it is parallel to the development of historiographic writings. It is clear that the Abbey scriptorium’s tendency toward historiographic production – channeled, since the twelfth century, into the preaching of the glory of the Capetian monarchy as the successor and continuator of the ancient cult of the apostle of France and patron saint of the Kingdom – brought about the birth of the monastic, hagiographically tinged historiography of the thirteenth century. One may be even surprised that it developed so late, because in the eleventh and the twelfth centuries, when the monastic annalism flourished in Western Europe, no significant works on the history of Saint-Denis were created in the Abbey (except for the modest Paschal chronicles). The feeling that the past and present of the Abbey should be commemorated comes with Suger and is connected with the abbot’s reflection on his own achievements (*Opus administrativum, Scriptum de consecratione*). The only substantial writings produced before Suger’s times come from the ninth century. One may therefore contend that it was only with the renaissance of the Carolingian memory, reconstructed around such works as the *Descriptio qualiter* and the *Liber Sancti Iacobi*, and only when Saint-Denis, competing with Parisian Saint-Victor and Saint-Germain Abbeys, finally took over the role of the centre of royal

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docet experientia, ita et nunc pro rege nostro Philippo, ejus tuoque regno, sed et pro orbe universo mansuetissimum, apud quem quod petieris impetrabis, interpella Jesum;” YVES DE SAINT-DENIS, *Pars ultima Chronici*, RHF, vol. XXI, p. 211.

294 “... perfectam et absque turbatione inviolabilem regi Francorum et regno totique Ecclesiae Dei impetra tranquillitatem et statum pacificum, piissime Dionysi, ut, regno tuo per te totique mundo pace concessa unanimitateque obtenta ... Christus ab omnibus laudetur et glorificetur;” *ibid.*

(or national)<sup>295</sup> historiography from increasingly – and paradoxically – provincialized Fleury-sur-Loire,<sup>296</sup> that the historiography and hagiography of Saint-Denis could finally develop. This process took a considerable time, probably because the intellectual powers of the Saint-Denis scriptorium were concentrated on the creation of the royal historiography. This finds clear reflection in the structure of both the *Vita et actus beati Dyonisii* and the *Vita beatorum martyrum Dyonisii, Rustici et Eleutherii*. In the *Vita et actus beati Dyonisii*, the consistent narrative is limited to the Life of Saint Denis, which is a re-drafted version of the Carolingian text, and the following parts are a collection of liturgical texts and historical anecdotes taken out from old chronicles and annals or contemporary accounts of miracles. They are not structured into a uniform narrative. The French *Vita beatorum martyrum Dyonisii, Rustici et Eleutherii* seems to be simply unfinished – or incomplete – a hagiographic-historical synthesis *in statu nascendi*, which is suggested by the fact that all the other manuscripts except for the earliest one, illustrated with more than thirty miniatures, contain, besides the Life of Saint Denis and the *silva rerum* of his cult, an unfinished historiographic-hagiographic narrative, absent from the illuminated manuscript. In turn, the *Vita et passio sancti Dionysii* from the early fourteenth century seems to be a coherent and complete work, but this may have been achieved at the price of departing from the assumptions probably made by the authors of the earlier, unfinished or incomplete, attempts at the hagiographic-monastic historiography created in the thirteenth century. For the contemporary part of the *Vita et passio sancti Dionysii* is, in fact, a chronicle of the kings of France which stresses the importance of the cult of Saint Denis for the

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295 On the origins of the political French nation, see ZIENTARA, *Świt narodów europejskich*, Chapter III and IV, pp. 70–198; BRÜHL, *Deutschland–Frankreich*.

296 The heyday of the Abbey in Fleury (Saint-Benoît-sur-Loire), in all respects: of spiritual, intellectual, political and material importance, is certainly the period between the end of the tenth century and the very beginning of the twelfth century, i.e. the age of the first Capetians. The symbols of the then success of the Abbey may be first, the flourishing of the historiographic writings begun by Aimoin, which became the foundation for the development of Capetian historiography the twelfth century; second, the theological and historical writings of Hugh of Fleury, as well as the hagiographic collection of miracles of Saint Benedict, which is a testimony of the role the Abbey played as a spiritual and pilgrimage centre; finally, the development of the Abbey Church (in stages from ca. 1020 till 1218) and the burial of Philip I in the Abbey (1108). However, beginning with the reign of Louis VI, the political and spiritual centre of the Capetian monarchy moved away from the Loire Valley to Paris and the Paris region for the next three centuries.

monarchy. It is not yet a story of Saint Denis as a patron saint of the kings, of the Kingdom, and an actor in the history of France.

There are several indications that this was indeed the case. First, the text omits the description of how the relics of Saint Denis were displayed in 1244 for the intention of healing Louis IX. Second, there is nothing about the king's trip to Saint-Denis for the *licentia abeundi* and Saint Denis's *vexillum* in 1270, which he received before setting off on the Crusade. Third, the healing of prince Louis and Philip Augustus in 1191 is attributed to the relics of the Crown of Thorns and the Holy Nail, rather than to Saint Denis, as described by Guillaume de Nangis in the royal chronicles.<sup>297</sup> However, it is important to highlight that, in the Dyonisian hagiography from the thirteenth and the early fourteenth centuries, just like in Saint-Denis chronicles dedicated to the monarchy, the ceremony of exposing the relics of Saint Denis in 1124 occupies a special place among the royal rituals linked to the cult of Saint Denis. No subsequent source, until as late as 1317, confirms the ceremony to be repeated in the same form: rather, it seems to have been reduced to a ritualized visit of the monarch in the Abbey. The king received the banner of Saint Denis in the Abbey Church and the permission of the patron saint to begin a military expedition; after a victory, he returned to the Abbey to give back the *vexillum* and offer thanksgiving gifts to the patron saint, who was considered to be the author of the triumph. Whereas the thirteenth century chroniclers of Saint-Denis confirm the institutionalization of the ritual of displaying the relics of Saint Denis to the public view on the altar, performed when the king or his heir presumptive suffered from a mortal disease, the hagiographers from Saint-Denis clearly regarded this ritual as not significant enough to be listed among the examples of the Saint's patronage over the French kings. Indeed, they paid more attention to Saint Denis's intercession for the soul of the king, which they illustrated with the examples of Dagobert, Charlemagne and Philip Augustus. In turn, the only author (Yves) who brought more focus on the healing of the future Louis VIII and Philip Augustus in 1191 – and, as far as we know, the only one who was commissioned by the king and whose work, after completion, was given to the king – ascribed this miracle to the Passion relics from

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297 For more about the eschatological role of the Capetian monarchy, see: PYSIAK, *Sakralizacja władzy królewskiej w ideologii monarchicznej Kapetyngów*, pp. 251–286; STRAYER, *The Holy Land, the Chosen People, and the Most Christian King*, pp. 3–16; STRAYER, *Medieval Statecraft*, pp. 300–314; STRAYER, *The Reign of Philip the Fair*, pp. 256–280. On the “evangelical rule” of Saint Louis, see VAUCHEZ, *La sainteté en Occident*, pp. 416, 417, 454; LE GOFF, *Saint Louis*, pp. 214–219, 243–245, 667–673; PYSIAK, *Ludwik Święty: portret hagiograficzny idealnego władcy*, pp. 67–75.



Saint-Denis. Moreover, he never mentioned the healing of Saint Louis in 1244, nor the earlier ostension of the relics of Saint Denis and his co-martyrs in the abbey.

It is worth noting that in his chronicle of the kings of France as contained in *Vita et passio sancti Dionysii*, Yves did not fail to mention the both legendary Carolingian translations of the Passion relics: made by Charlemagne from Constantinople to Aachen, after he had set free the Holy Lands from Saracen rule (chapter 100, fol. 145v–146r), then by Charles the Bald from Aachen to the Abbey of Saint-Denis (chapter 124, fol. 187v–188r).

What is interesting, is that both the accounts of the translation are followed by chapters about miracles emblematic for the French monarchy. Charlemagne, after having placed the Passion relics in his Palace chapel royal, is miraculously absolved from his sins during a Holy Mass said in the Abbey Church of Saint-Denis by Saint Giles (chapter 101, fol. 146r). As for Charles the Bald, the miracle is related to his Kingdom's welfare: the blessing by the Passion relics put an end to the terrible famine which was ravaging all of France (chapter 125, fol. 188r). After these miracles happen, both kings are crowned emperors in Rome (chapter 102, fol. 146v–147r, and chapter 126, fol. 188r–190r). The translation of the Passion relic thus results in a *translatio imperii*, a topic that we have discussed while analysing the reception of the *Iter Hierosolimitanum Karoli Magni* in twelfth- and thirteenth-century France, and which is to be developed further.

## 8. Importance of the Cult of Passion Relics of Saint-Denis from the Early Twelfth century until the First Years of the Reign of Saint Louis

### The Holy Crown from Saint-Denis Abbey

In an earlier part of this book dealing with Louis VI's charter from 1124 and the origins of the cult of the relics of Saint Denis as the royal patron, we have noticed that the king considered the Abbey of Saint-Denis to be of fundamental importance for the French monarchy not only because of the special patronage of Saint Denis but also because of the Passion relics stored in that abbey. To be sure, Saint-Denis owed the name "caput regni nostri" to the fact that it was the place where the saint patrons of France were resting, but also where God placed the relics of the Crown of Thorns.<sup>298</sup> We have also noted that the charter is the earliest confirmation of the reception of the apocryphal translation of the Crown of Thorns in the ideology and official

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298 *MONUMENTS HISTORIQUES. CARTONS DES ROIS*, no. 391, pp. 217–218; see above.

writings of the Capetian monarchy. This is not the only proof of Louis VI's veneration of the Passion relics from Saint-Denis. In his account of the pious practices that the king undertook in 1135, when he thought he was dying, Suger mentions the legacies which the king made for the benefit of the Abbey. They include an extremely precious jewel, which Louis inherited from his grandmother, Anne of Kiev: a jacinth which he ordered to fit in the reliquary of the Crown of Thorns.<sup>299</sup>

We do not know the shape of the reliquary from the times of Louis VI and Suger. However, as the sources from the thirteenth century confirm, there existed an object called the Holy Crown, "Sancta Corona," stored in Saint-Denis. In the thirteenth century, or perhaps as early as the late twelfth century, it had certainly the form of a royal diadem. We find evidence for this in the writings of Rodrigo Ximénez de Rada (ca. 1170–1247), archbishop of Toledo and the author of the chronicle *De rebus Hispaniae*. He describes the pilgrimage of Louis VII to Santiago de Compostela and the king's visit to Alfonso VII, the king of León and Castile and emperor of Spain<sup>300</sup>, at

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299 "... preciosissimum jacinctum atave regis Ruthenorum filie, quod de sua in manu nostra reddens ut corone spinee Domini infigeretur precepit; SUGER, *Vie de Louis VI*," cap. 33, p. 276. Jacinth is a very rare gemstone, highly valued in the Middle Ages: a red, red-orange, yellow-red, or red-brown translucent variant of zircon with a strong, so-called diamond-like or glassy shine. The name was (inappropriately) used to denote equally desirable variants of other valuable minerals such as the red sapphire (padparadsha), topaz (oriental jacinth), spinel or hessonite (Ceylonite) red, orange, pink, red-orange, yellow-red or red-brown. According to a description from 1505, the stone weighed 280 carats; MONTESQUIOU-FEZENSAC, GABORIT-CHOPIN, *Le Trésor de Saint-Denis*, vol. II, no. 205, XIX, p. 369. In the Middle Ages, jacinth was often confused with garnets, spinels or rubies or called carbuncle; *État des pierreries provenant du trésor de Saint-Denis suivant l'ordre d'ouverture des caisses et la date des procès-verbaux de la Commission générale des Monnaies*, BnF, Ms. Français 7786, fol. 68r<sup>o</sup>, qtd. after: MONTESQUIOU-FEZENSAC, GABORIT-CHOPIN, *Le Trésor de Saint-Denis*, vol. II, no. 205, s.v. *Sainte Couronne*, XXXV, p. 372.

300 The title of the emperor of Spain, connected with the aspiration to rule over all the Christian and some of the Muslim kingdoms on the Iberian Peninsula, was taken up by Alfonso VII, the king of León, in 1135 (the imperial crowning in León Cathedral). Earlier this title was sporadically used by the kings of León (starting with Alfonso III in 866). From the second half of the eleventh century, the title was aspired by the kings of Navarre, Aragon, and León. After the death of Alfonso VII, and the following division of Castile and León between his two sons (1157), this title was no longer used and, when Castile and León were rejoined (1230), it appeared only once (Alfonso XI, 1312–1350).

the turn of 1154 and 1155.<sup>301</sup> During that meeting, the emperor of Spain gave Louis VII a precious carbuncle which the latter, having returned to his kingdom, had fitted in the “crown of the Lord’s thorn” (*in corona spine Dominice*) stored in the Abbey of Saint-Denis.<sup>302</sup> The archbishop adds that he saw the jewel with his own eyes.<sup>303</sup> Although Rodrigo Ximénez compiled his chronicle as late as in the 1240s, he studied in Paris in the last decade of the twelfth century or at the turn of the twelfth and the thirteenth centuries. The phrase “*corona spine Dominice*” clearly indicates that the author saw a crown in Saint-Denis, which contained a thorn from the crown of Christ. This confirms that, during the reign of Philip Augustus, such a crown – as a reliquary object, and perhaps also royal insignia – was indeed stored in the treasury of the Abbey of Saint-Denis, where crown jewels were kept since Louis VI.<sup>304</sup> However, it is impossible to determine whether it was the same artefact in which Anne of Kiev’s jacinth was fitted, or a new insignia or reliquary made in the late twelfth century. Even less is known the carbuncle mentioned by Rodrigo Ximénez. In his *Chronicon mundi*, on which Ximénez drew in *De rebus Hispaniae*, bishop Lucas de Tuy also reports the visit of Louis VII to Spain, but he refers to an emerald, when describing the

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301 The political aim of Louis VII’s journey to Spain was to strengthen the alliance against the Plantagenets with king of Castile and León, Alfonso VII the Emperor – whose daughter, Constance, he married in 1154 – and Raymond V, count of Toulouse, who, in turn, was Louis’s son-in-law (SASSIER, *Louis VII*, pp. 253–255). Louis also met king Sancho VI the Wise of Navarre, and Raymond Berengar IV, count of Barcelona and prince of Aragon. However, Rodrigo mentions as the main aim of Louis’s journey the verification of the rumors spread throughout the French court that his freshly married wife did not come from a legal marriage of the ruler of Castile but was a daughter of a concubine of humble origins; RODRIGO XÍMENEZ DE RADA, *Historia de rebus Hispanie*, lib. VII, cap. 8, p. 230.

302 “Optulit autem imperator infinita donaria, que sui ualore numerum excedebant; set nil eorum uoluit recipere Ludouicus, nisi quendam carbunculum, quem in corona spine Dominice apud Sanctum Dionisium collocauit, quem etiam memini me uidisse;” RODRIGO XÍMENEZ DE RADA, *Historia de rebus Hispanie*, lib. VII, cap. 8, p. 230.

303 Ibid.

304 Cf. above: Louis VI giving the Abbey the crown of his father, Philip I, quoting the alleged tradition of that gift (1120, Louis VI’s charter; *MONUMENTS HISTORIQUES. CARTONS DES ROIS*, no. 379, p. 213; according to Suger, this happened in 1124; SUGER, *Vie de Louis VI*, cap. 28, pp. 226, 228). Besides, when describing the visit of Innocent II in Saint-Denis on Easter 1131, Suger wrote that the abbey church shone with the light reflected from the gold crowns (*Perveniens uero ad sanctorum basilicam, coronis aureis rutilantem*); SUGER hanging above the altars, *Vie de Louis VI*, cap. 30, p. 264.

jewel which the king received from the emperor of Spain and entrusted to Saint-Denis upon his return to France. Besides, Lucas does not say even a word about the Crown of Thorns.<sup>305</sup> It is possible that Ximénez replaced an emerald with a carbuncle because he had a chance to see the crown containing the Holy Thorn for himself, perhaps during a visit to the Abbey's treasury or a religious ceremony, and identified Anne of Kiev's jacinth with the gift of Alfonso the Emperor. The term "carbuncle" had been used since antiquity to designate precious stones, red in color, especially cabochons; the name also referred to rubies and garnets, which were often confused with red jacinths and spinels.<sup>306</sup> One may therefore assume that Rodrigo Ximénez described the jewel of Anne of Kiev which, according to Louis VI, was fitted into the reliquary of the Crown of Thorns which, in ca. 1200, certainly had the form of a royal insignia.

Another example of a reliquary crown which contained the thorns from the Crown of Thorns is known from the first years of the thirteenth century. It was commissioned by Philip I, marquis of Namur, and made in 1206–1210;<sup>307</sup> his brother, Henry I, the Latin emperor of Constantinople, gave him two thorns from the imperial treasury in 1206. Noteworthy, the construction of the crown of Namur (eight rectangular parts joined with hinges and crowned with lilies) indicates that it was designed to be worn on the head as an insignia. A year earlier, Baldwin I, the first Latin emperor, sent Philip Augustus a collection of Passion relics, including one thorn from the Crown of Thorns, a one-foot long piece of the Holy Cross, and Christ's hair.<sup>308</sup> While the relic of the Cross was placed in a golden reliquary cross,<sup>309</sup> the remaining objects found their place in the so-called oratory of Philip Augustus, a reliquary made of gold in the form of a tablet encrusted with jewels.<sup>310</sup> Both reliquaries were funded by Philip Augustus, who personally gave them ("propria manu ... tradidit") to the abbot of

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305 For more on that topic, see: MARTIN, *L'escarboucle de Saint-Denis*, pp. 439–462, the quoted account of Lucas of Tuy on p. 445.

306 For more on the symbolism of the carbuncle in the medieval culture, see WIECZOREK, *Quasi carbunculum emicantem qui gladii mei capulo connexus*, pp. 5–29.

307 Conserved today in Musée diocésain de Namur

308 The collection also included: a piece of linen cloth with which Jesus was wrapped in the Manger and a piece of the red gown in which he was dressed before the Flagellation; the rib and tooth of Saint Philip the Apostle; RIGORD, *Gesta Philippi Augusti* (2006), cap. 153, pp. 392, 394.

309 MONTESQUIOU-FEZENSAC, GABORIT-CHOPIN, *Le Trésor de Saint-Denis*, vol. II, no. 3, pp. 10–20.

310 MONTESQUIOU-FEZENSAC, GABORIT-CHOPIN, *Le Trésor de Saint-Denis*, vol. II, no. 14, pp. 55–60.

Saint-Denis, Henry de Troon, in Paris.<sup>311</sup> An anonymous description of the treasury of Saint-Denis Abbey from the early sixteenth century mentions “a golden crown decorated with various jewels and stones, in which also a carbuncle of amazing size glitters and sparkles; in that [crown], one thorn from the Crown of Thorns is fitted.”<sup>312</sup> A note from Saint-Denis from 1505 describes “a crown called the Holy Crown with four lilies ... in the middle of the front part a large circular cabochon from a pink ruby ... and [contains] in its setting a piece of silk sendal,<sup>313</sup> behind [which there are] thorns [from the Crown] and hair of Our Lord.”<sup>314</sup> Even though the descriptions of the Holy Crown from Saint-Denis, which present it with Christ’s hair and thorns from the Crown of Thorns, come from a very late period,<sup>315</sup> the name itself – namely, “sancta corona” – used to designate this artefact appeared already during the reign of Philip IV the Fair (1285–1314). Account books from 1286–1287 record a payment of 20 solidi for repairing and gilding the Holy Crown.<sup>316</sup> In the first years of Philip the Fair’s reign, then, the “Holy Crown” must have referred to a reliquary crown or royal diadem. Was that the same insignia which Rodrigo Ximénez de Rada saw near the

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311 RIGORD, *Gesta Philippi Augusti* (2006), cap. 153, pp. 392, 394.

312 “Corona una aurea, variis ornata gemmis et lapidibus, ubi etiam carbunculus mire magnitudinis emicat scintillatque; in ea asservatur spina una ex corona Christi;” MONTESQUIOU-FEZENSAC, GABORIT-CHOPIN, *Le Trésor de Saint-Denis*, vol. II, no. 205, s.v. *Sainte Couronne*, XVIII, p. 369.

313 Fr. *cedal*: thick, expensive silk fabric.

314 “Une couronne, nommée la sainte Couronne, à quatre fleurons ..., au milieu du devant, d’un gros ballay cabochon rond, persé au long, pesant deux cens quatre vingtz carratz, et soubz iceluy en son chaton ung sendal, et dedans le sendal des espines et des cheveulx de Nostre Seigneur;” MONTESQUIOU-FEZENSAC, GABORIT-CHOPIN, *Le Trésor de Saint-Denis*, vol. II, no. 205, s.v. *Sainte Couronne*, XIX, p. 369.

315 It is particularly irritating how carelessly this issue is treated in French historiography where the unproven claims of the seventeenth and eighteenth century erudites identifying the *sancta corona* with the crown of Saint Louis are followed blindly. PINOTEAU, *La tenue de sacre de Saint Louis IX*, pp. 488–489, 494–495 (original edition from 1972: pp. 150–151, 156–157) and BEAUNE, *Naissance de la nation France*, p. 114, arbitrarily decide that the crown with which Saint Louis was crowned in 1226 contained the thorn of the Crown of Thorns and Lord’s hair and that it is identical with the reliquary of the Crown of Thorns and the Holy Crown from the Abbey of Saint-Denis, without giving even the smallest piece of evidence to support this claim.

316 Comptes de Saint-Denis, PARIS, AN, LL. 1240, fol. 50v<sup>o</sup>: *Item eidem [Johanni de Nanthodoro] pro sancta corona reparare et deaurare*, qtd. after: MONTESQUIOU-FEZENSAC, GABORIT-CHOPIN, *Le Trésor de Saint-Denis*, vol. II, no. 205, s.v. *Sainte Couronne*, XI, p. 368.

end of the twelfth century or at the turn of the twelfth and the thirteenth centuries? Or perhaps it was a new insignia? Or just the old one refreshed? This issue shall be discussed below, using the historic-artistic analysis of the artefact called the ‘Holy Crown’ in modern times and known only from iconographic presentations. However, it should be certainly assumed that the thorn in the crown from Saint-Denis described by Rodrigo Ximénez de Rada is the relic allegedly given to the Abbey by Charles the Bald, as it is said in *Descriptio qualiter* for the thorn obtained by Philip Augustus from Constantinople was in a reliquary table called *écrin de Philippe Auguste*. However, it is worth noting that although the description of the treasury in Saint-Denis from the early sixteenth century explicitly mentions “one thorn from the Christ’s Crown” (*spina una ex corona Christi*), in 1505 the “thorns” (*des espines ... de Nostre Seigneur*) were mentioned. The successive descriptions from the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth century also mention one thorn<sup>317</sup>, but in 1625 Dom Doublet says that under the above-mentioned ruby cabochon (i.e., under Anne of Kiev’s jacinth) there is an inscription DE SPINIS DOMINI<sup>318</sup> indicating that there may have been more than one thorn under the jewel. Doublet believes this was the crown of Saint Louis<sup>319</sup> and claims that it was given to the Abbey in 1261 as one of the three crowns which the king handed over to the Abbey of Saint-Denis at that time.<sup>320</sup> However, the same author in another place of the same

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317 MONTESQUIOU-FEZENSAC, GABORIT-CHOPIN, *Le Trésor de Saint-Denis*, vol. II, no. 205, s.v. *Sainte Couronne*, XVIII, pp. 370–372.

318 ... très beau et très excellent gros ruby balay cabochon (estimé plus de trente mil escus) percé de long et soubz iceluy en son chaton d’or est escrit: DE CAPILLIS DOMINI: DE SPINIS DOMINI; DOUBLET, *Histoire de l’abbaye de S. Denys en France*, p. 367, qtd. after: GABORIT-CHOPIN, *Les couronnes du sacre des rois des reines au Trésor de Saint-Denis*, no. 205, s.v. *Sainte Couronne*, XXVI, p. 370.

319 The first known identification of the ‘Holy Crown’ with Louis IX (mentioning the thorns) can be found in the inventory of the Abbey of Saint-Denis of 1576. (PARIS, AN, LL. 1226, fol. 67v<sup>o</sup>-71r<sup>o</sup>): *La couronne de Saint Loys appelée la Sainte Couronne*, qtd. after: GABORIT-CHOPIN, *Les couronnes du sacre des rois des reines au Trésor de Saint-Denis*, no. 205, s.v. *Sainte Couronne*, XXII, p. 370.

320 *Il y a une charte de ce très saint Roy de l’an 1261, au mois de May ... par laquelle il appert qu’il rendit au thrésor de S. Denys trois Couronnes d’or pour y estre gardées*; DOUBLET, *Histoire de l’abbaye de S. Denys en France*, p. 367, qtd. after: MONTESQUIOU-FEZENSAC, GABORIT-CHOPIN, *Le Trésor de Saint-Denis*, vol. II, no. 205, s.v. *Sainte Couronne*, XVIII, p. 370. A document of Louis IX issued in May 1261 in Neuville-en-Hez; PARIS, AN, K. 31.

work mentions one thorn under a great ruby.<sup>321</sup> We do not know when the inscription which Dom Doublet was the first to quote was written, i.e., whether it was engraved at the time when the crown was made or a later addition; so it is not possible to determine how many thorns there were in the ‘holy crown.’

The above mentioned note from Saint-Denis of 1505 says that two of the four lilies at the top of the Holy Crown are covered on their internal side with gilded silver to strengthen their construction;<sup>322</sup> we may guess that these are the traces of the repair mentioned in the bills from 1286–1287 and another one from 1289–1290, which confirms paying 30 solidi “for a silver flower from the Crown” (*pro flore argenteo de Corona*).<sup>323</sup> The repairs and gilding were rather minor since the costs were not very high<sup>324</sup> but what is the most important is the certainty that we are dealing with a reliquary in the shape of a crown or a crown containing relics. Now a question should be posed if the insignia is the ‘crown of the Lord’s thorn’ which Rodrigo Ximénez de Rada saw as a youth in Saint-Denis. Up till the early fourteenth century there are no preserved documents confirming the presence in Saint-Denis of the thorn from the Lord’s Crown in an insignia called the Holy Crown, yet the use of the name of the *Sancta Corona* in the late thirteenth century is not accidental. The *corona spine Dominice* mentioned by Rodrigo Ximénez is a proof that at the turn of the twelfth and thirteenth century there was in the treasury in the Abbey of Saint-Denis a crown decorated with a large carbuncle under which a thorn of the Crown of Thorns was fixed. Calling such an insignia or reliquary the ‘holy crown’ seems thus natural. Placing the thorn from the Crown of Thorns in the king’s crown is indeed in accordance with the logic of the cult of that relic; another example of such reasoning is the crown from Namur discussed above. There is evidence of other reliquary crowns for the thirteenth

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321 ... très riche couronne que l'on garde encore de présent au Thrésor de l'Abbaye de S. Denys, en laquelle y a un gros ruby balay très exquis et de bien grand prix et en iceluy une sainte espine enclose de la Couronne de nostre Seigneur Jesus Christ; DOUBLET, *Histoire de l'abbaye de S. Denys en France*, p. 122, qtd. after: MONTESQUIOU-FEZENSAC, GABORIT-CHOPIN, *Le Trésor de Saint-Denis*, vol. II, no. 205, s.v. *Sainte Couronne*, XVIII, p. 370.

322 ... à quatre fleurons, les deux couvers par derriere d'argent doré pour les renforcer; MONTESQUIOU-FEZENSAC, GABORIT-CHOPIN, *Le Trésor de Saint-Denis*, vol. II, no. 205, s.v. *Sainte Couronne*, XIX, p. 369.

323 Comptes de Saint-Denis, PARIS, AN, LL. 1240, fol. 89v°, qtd. after: MONTESQUIOU-FEZENSAC, GABORIT-CHOPIN, *Le Trésor de Saint-Denis*, vol. II, no. 205, s.v. *Sainte Couronne*, XI, p. 368.

324 The first repair cost 20 solidi, thus an equivalent of one livre (a pound of silver), for the second one, one and a half of a livre.

century: from Arras Cathedral (before 1221), from Notre-Dame Collegiate Church in Poissy (before 1270: it was a gift of Saint Louis, or 1313, a gift of Philip the Fair, together with the thorn from the Crown of Thorns of Sainte-Chapelle), and from the Abbey of Flines in Flanders (1278: a gift of Philip of the Bold). Reliquary crowns on feet were made for the Maturines convent in Paris (1260) and Notre-Dame Cathedral in Paris (before 1270). All the reliquary crowns were designed to store the thorns of the Crown of Thorns (except for the crown from Flines, in which the relic of Lord's Blood was kept).<sup>325</sup> In 1260–1280, a reliquary crown was made for the Dominican convent in Liège, which contained a thorn of the Crown of undetermined origin (only in the modern times its origins from the collection of Saint Louis has been first suggested)<sup>326</sup> today stored in the Louvre.<sup>327</sup> Finally, the Crown of Thorns brought by Louis IX from Constantinople in 1239 and stored in Sainte-Chapelle from 1248, is given in the sources describing the translation the name of *the holy crown* or *the holy diadem*<sup>328</sup> and in the miniatures from the early fourteenth century, is presented as a gold royal insignia.<sup>329</sup> The reliquary-ostesorium (a philatory on a foot) of the Crown of Thorns from Sainte-Chapelle, known from the illuminations made in the

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325 DOR, *Les reliquaires de la Passion en France du V<sup>e</sup> au XV<sup>e</sup> siècle*, p. 76, 166, 167, 227; WIRTH, *Dornenkronenreliquiar*, coll. 312–315.

326 Louis IX did give the Dominicans from Liège a thorn from the Crown of Thorns yet the charter of September 8, 1267, in which he confirmed his donation does not say that he also gave a reliquary; see *EXUVIAE SACRAE CONSTANTINOPOLITANAE*, vol. II, no. CXIII, pp. 156–157.

327 Paris, Musée du Louvre, Inv. O A 9445. This artefact, known as ‘the crown of Saint Louis’, was often determined as a reliquary given by Louis IX with the crown from the Crown of Thorns donated by the monarch to the Dominicans from Liège in 1267, however, it is not entirely certain: from the late Middle Ages the thorn given by Louis was held in a reliquary cross coming from the fourteenth century; the origin of the thorn which was in the crown from Liège is unknown; TABURET-DELAHAYE, *Reliquaires de saintes Épines données par saint Louis*, pp. 210–211. More on the crown: see VERLET, *La Couronne de saint Louis*, pp. 14–17; DENIS, *Un chef d'oeuvre de l'orfèvrerie mosane au Musée du Louvre*, pp. 293–298, BERTRAND, *Commerce avec dame Pauvreté*, pp. 136–137.

328 Such terms are used by the archbishop of Sens, Gautier Cornut, and Guillaume de Nangis; see PYSIAK, *Królewski kult Korony Cierniowej we Francji*, pp. 22–23; PYSIAK, *Kult relikwii Męki Pańskiej w ideologii władzy monarchicznej we Francji i w Anglii*, p. 287.

329 Guillaume de Saint-Pathus, *Vie et miracles de Saint Louis* (text: 1302–1303), BnF, Ms. Français 5716 (ca 1330–1340), fol. 67r<sup>o</sup> (*Heures de Jeanne de Navarre*, ca. 1336–1340), BnF, Ms. Nouvelles Acquisitions Latines 3145, fol. 102r<sup>o</sup>, 150r<sup>o</sup>.



fourteenth, fifteenth, and early sixteenth century, also had the royal crown at the top;<sup>330</sup> placing in the reliquary crown the whole wreath of the Holy Crown was, due to its size, impossible.

To sum up: even though there is no direct evidence, we have, as it seems, a sufficient number of quite strong even if indirect premises which, put together, allow to make a claim that there existed in Saint-Denis, at the latest in ca. 1200, a crown in which a thorn from the Crown of Thorns was stored. It is possible, however, that the reliquary crown, mentioned by Rodrigo Ximénez de Rada, was in the Abbey already during the reign of Louis VI<sup>331</sup> or that it was made on his commission after 1135 when he gave the Abbey Anne of Kiev's jacinth. It is another question whether this insignia-reliquary is the same one which we know from the late medieval and early modern iconography. The Holy Crown of Saint-Denis was destroyed in 1793, yet there exist its four iconographic representations. As the first one one should mention the most detailed and probably most reliable depiction, namely the watercolor made by François-Roger de Gaignières (1642–1715),<sup>332</sup> a French collector, antiquarian, teacher of Louis XIV's grandchildren, author of a series of drawings and watercolors representing the 'antiquities' of the French monarchy; he gave their collection to the king in 1711. The watercolor is signed *Couronne du Roi Charlemagne Tirée sur celle qui est en l'Abbaie de Sainct Denis en France* (The crown of Charlemagne, representing that in the Abbey of Saint-Denis); Charlemagne's name was crossed out by another hand and above it was written *Saint Louis*. The watercolor presents the crown almost identical to that seen at the painting called *La Madonne de Vic* or *La Vierge de la famille Vic* (painted in 1617 for the Parisian church of Saint-Nicholas-des-Champs by a Flemish painter, Frans Pourbus the Younger, working in Paris) and worn by Charlemagne adoring Virgin Mary. It is also, despite a certain difference, strikingly similar to the crown of Charlemagne painted

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330 Paris breviary (ca 1414), CHÂTEAUROUX, BM, Ms. 0002, fol. 350r<sup>o</sup>; the Pontifical of Poitiers (also called Missal of Jacques Jouvenel des Ursins: a treasurer of Sainte-Chapelle, archdeacon of Paris and bishop of Poitiers, archbishop of Reims, then patriarch of Antioch), ca. 1430, destroyed in 1871, miniature, fol. 86r<sup>o</sup>, known from A. Godard's lithography (after 1837, MUSÉE DE CLUNY, inv. no. 22847); Missal of Sainte-Chapelle, BnF, Ms. Latin 8890 (miniatures by Jean Fouquet?, ca. 1420 – ca. 1480, or the early sixteenth century), fol. 35r<sup>o</sup>, 65v<sup>o</sup>; *Horae ad usum Romanum* (so-called Hours of Anne of Bretagne, Heures d'Anne de Bretagne, ca. 1503–1508), BnF, Ms. Latin 9474, fol. 211v<sup>o</sup>.

331 Such suppositions are suggested by DOR, *Les reliquaires de la Passion en France du V<sup>e</sup> au XV<sup>e</sup> siècle*, p. 76, but does not support them with any proof.

332 BnF, Estampes, Oa 9, fol. 54r<sup>o</sup>. This watercolour was copied (BnF, Ms. Français 15643) slightly later by Bernard de Montfaucon (1655–1741).

in ca. 1500 in one of the quarters of the Parisian retable by the Master of the Mass of Saint Giles.<sup>333</sup> The quarter depicts a scene from legend of Saint Giles: while the Saint is performing the Eucharistic Consecration during the Mass he says in Saint-Denis Abbey Church, an angel is bringing a charter with an absolution of Charlemagne's sin given by God and written down on the parchment.<sup>334</sup> The emperor is kneeling on the northern side of the altar, wearing an imperial crown on his head.

These four iconographic representations are basically similar. At each of the depictions of the crowns the large red cabochon on the ring is highlighted. The earliest of them, however, presents the imperial crown with two crossed arches at the top at the intersection of which there is a globe with a cross, an attribute of the imperial power. This circumstance is quite baffling as the Master of the Mass of Saint Giles is known for his particular care about the details, and the discussed quarter is believed to be a faithful representation of the interior of the Abbey Church in Saint-Denis, which is proved by the depiction of the so-called cross of Saint Eloi (Eligius) and the gold altar (retable) founded by Charles the Bald as the frontal. No other representation of the holy crown or its description confirms that it had imperial arches. The earliest evidence of identifying the Holy Crown with the crown of Saint Louis is the inventory from Saint-Denis of 1576,<sup>335</sup> however, it is known that the Holy Crown was often identified and confused with the so-called Charlemagne's crown, which was used as a crowning insignia of the kings of France starting from the fourteenth century.<sup>336</sup> In

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333 At present in the National Gallery, London, inv. no. 4681. The central quarter is missing. An excellent iconographic-historical interpretation of this artefact, juxtaposed with the historical tradition of the Abbey of Saint-Denis, was made by HINKLE, *The Iconography of the Four Panels by the Master of Saint Giles*, pp. 110–144 and Figs 19–25; on pp. 112–130 the author indicates that the *Vita et passio sancti Dionysii* by Yves of Saint-Denis served as an inspiration for the altar.

334 The sin, too horrible to be confessed, was the alleged incestuous relation of Charlemagne with his sister, the fruit of which was said to be Roland. We have discussed Saint Giles's mass when analysing the ideological content of the so-called Charlemagne window in the Chartres cathedral.

335 *Comptes de Saint-Denis*, PARIS, AN, LL. 1226, fol. 67v<sup>o</sup>: *La couronne de Saint Loys appelée la Sainte Couronne*, after: MONTESQUIOU-FEZENSAC, GABORIT-CHOPIN, *Le Trésor de Saint-Denis*, vol. II, no. 205, s.v. *Sainte Couronne*, XXII, p. 370; similarly all the later descriptions and inventories: MONTESQUIOU-FEZENSAC, GABORIT-CHOPIN, *Le Trésor de Saint-Denis*, vol. II, pp. 369–372.

336 PINOTEAU, *L'ancienne couronne française dite de Charlemagne*, pp. 375–431; PINOTEAU, *Couronnes dites de Charlemagne*, pp. 22–29; cf. GABORIT-CHOPIN, *Les couronnes du sacre des rois des reines au Trésor de Saint-Denis*,

fact these crowns were very similar: the coronation crown also had four lilies, a similar number of rubies, sapphires, and emeralds arranged in a similar way, which is indicated by the drawing by Michel Félibien from 1706<sup>337</sup> and the watercolor by Bernard de Montfaucon (ca 1729).<sup>338</sup> ‘Charlemagne’s crown’ presented by them is in fact an old queen’s crown very similar to that used for crowning the king, destroyed by the Catholic League in 1590, slightly smaller and decorated with less valuable stones, but besides that, identical.<sup>339</sup> The most important difference was that the king’s crown had the imperial purple coronet with crossing arches and since 1360 there was a large ruby at their intersection fitted there at the request of John II the Good.<sup>340</sup> ‘Charlemagne’s crown’ and the queen’s crown, in turn, differ from the Holy Crown in the lack of pearls, which the latter was set with: pearls decorated only the coronet of ‘Charlemagne’s crown’, which we know from later descriptions.<sup>341</sup> In the royal accounts of 1350 we can find the bill for decorating the ‘crown of Saint Louis’ with 60 pearls for the crowning of John the Good<sup>342</sup> (i.e., of its coronet because we know that the crown did not have pearls on its ring), which indicates that in the fourteenth century

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pp. 165–174; GABORIT-CHOPIN, *Regalia: les instruments du sacre des rois de France*.

337 Michel Félibien (ca. 1666–1719), a Maurist, monk in the Abbey of Saint-Germain-des-Prés, author of the *Histoire de l’abbaye royale de Saint Denys en France et contenant la vie des abbés qui l’ont gouvernée depuis onze cent ans, les hommes illustres qu’elle a donnez à l’Église et à l’État, avec la description de l’Église et de tout ce qu’elle contient de remarquable, le tout justifié par des titres authentiques et enrichi de plans, de figures et d’une carte topographique par dom Michel Félibien*, Paris 1706. The drawing is on Plate IV.

338 Bernard de Montfaucon (1655–1741), a Maurist, one of the creators of paleography, a historian of the French monarchy, paleographer and member of the Académie des Inscriptions et des Belles-Lettres in Paris. The watercolour is stored in Papiers de Montfaucon, BnF, Ms. Français 15634, Plate 7.

339 GABORIT-CHOPIN, *Les couronnes du sacre des rois des reines au Trésor de Saint-Denis*, pp. 165, 168–172. Cf. MONTESQUIOU-FEZENSAC, GABORIT-CHOPIN, *Le Trésor de Saint-Denis*, vol. I, no. 1 and 2, pp. 1–84.

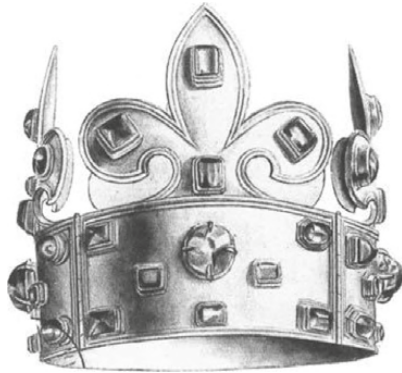
340 It was confirmed by an inscription placed on the foot under the ruby: SI HIC PULCHRAE CITUATUS EST FRANCORUM REGE JOHANNÉ DATUS IN MEDIO FLORUM LAPIS, qtd. after: GABORIT-CHOPIN, *Les couronnes du sacre des rois des reines au Trésor de Saint-Denis*, p. 168; MONTESQUIOU-FEZENSAC, GABORIT-CHOPIN, *Le Trésor de Saint-Denis*, vol. I, pp. 80–81; PINOTEAU, *L’ancienne couronne française dite de Charlemagne*, pp. 9–12.

341 GABORIT-CHOPIN, *Les couronnes du sacre des rois des reines au Trésor de Saint-Denis*, pp. 165, 168–172.

342 MONTESQUIOU-FEZENSAC, GABORIT-CHOPIN, *Le Trésor de Saint-Denis*, vol. II, no. 205, s.v. *Sainte Couronne*, XIV, p. 368.

the coronation crown was identified with Louis IX, and its identification with Charlemagne has a later date. What is more, the earlier coronation crown, the one previously used by the queens, was, in the light of the iconography, composed of four segments; in the case of the king's crown it must have been the same; the ring of the Holy Crown is monolithic.

There are some difficulties in dating the coronation crowns and the Holy Crown. Some believe that the coronation crowns were funded by Philip Augustus, possibly for his own coronation;<sup>343</sup> other researchers suggest the second half of the thirteenth century for the historical-artistic reasons. Given the fact that on the seal used by the regents of France in 1270, i.e., during the Seventh Crusade, at the absence of Saint Louis and then his successor, Philip III, there is a representation of a crown very similar to the coronation crowns and the Holy Crown from Saint-Denis<sup>344</sup> one may consider this as probable that the Holy Crown existed already during the reign of Saint Louis<sup>345</sup> and possibly even earlier.



7. The coronation crown of the kings of France, the so-called *couronne de Charlemagne*, drawn by Bernard de Montfaucon, BnF, Ms. Français 15634, pl. 7

343 PINOTEAU, *L'ancienne couronne française dite de Charlemagne*, pp. 375–431; PINOTEAU, *Couronnes dites de Charlemagne*, pp. 22–29.

344 GABORIT-CHOPIN, *Les couronnes du sacre des rois des reines au Trésor de Saint-Denis*, fig. 8, p. 166. The original of the seal is stored in the Archives Nationales in Paris.

345 Cf. GABORIT-CHOPIN, *Les couronnes du sacre des rois des reines au Trésor de Saint-Denis*, p. 168; GABORIT-CHOPIN, *Regalia: les instruments du sacre des rois de France*; ONTESQUIOU-FEZENSAC, GABORIT-CHOPIN, *Le Trésor de Saint-Denis*, vol. I, comment to Plate 94, pp. 106–108.



8. Reliquary crown from Saint-Denis, the so-called Holy Crown or the Crown of Saint Louis, drawn by Bernard de Montfaucon, ca. 1729.

In 1261, Louis IX, in accordance with the alleged custom referred to by Louis VI and Suger already in the twelfth century, handed over to Saint-Denis three royal crowns: two used to crown the kings and queens of France, commissioned, according to the charter issued in connection with the event, by Philip Augustus, and one small crown (*coronula*) which the king wore during the coronation feast.<sup>346</sup> This is the first confirmed donation of the royal crowns for Saint-Denis after 1120 when Louis VI had given Saint Denis the crown of his father, Philip I. However, we do not even know whether, and, if yes, then when, the crown of Louis VI was handed over to Saint-Denis.<sup>347</sup>

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346 “Notum facimus quo nos duas coronas aureas cum lapidibus preciosis quae ab inclitae recordationis Rege Philippo avo nostro pro coronandis regibus et reginibus Franciae olim factae in thesauris regis servabantur, et unam coronulam auream cum lapidibus preciosis quam consuevit rex die coronationis suae in prandio deportare, dilectis nostris abbati et conventui beati Dionysii in Francia custodiendas commissimus ... ut ... in sollempnitatibus praecipuis circa altare, una cum aliis coronis regum Francorum, praedecessorum nostrorum, ad ornatum et decorem altaris ejusdem, secundum quod de coronis aliis consuevit fieri, collocentur;” qtd. after: MONTESQUIOU-FEZENSAC, GABORIT-CHOPIN, *Le Trésor de Saint-Denis*, vol. II, s.v. *Couronnes*, VII, p. 531.

347 Unless we interpret Suger’s imprecise mention that Louis himself distributed his valuables among the churches in 1135 when he thought he was dying: “Ubi etiam aurum et argentum et vasa concupiscibilia et pallia et palliatas culcitras et omne mobile quod possidebat et quo ei serviebatur ecclesiis et pauperibus et egenis pro amore Dei distribuens, nec clamidibus ner regis indumentis usque ad camisiam pepercit;” SUGER, *Vie de Louis VI*, cap. 33, pp. 274, 276. The

The charter of Saint Louis indicates only that the crowns of Philip Augustus had not been given to Saint-Denis till then, even though the king bequeathed them to the Abbey in 1222.<sup>348</sup> probably, together with all the jewels Philip bequeathed to Saint-Denis they were repurchased by Louis VIII in August 1223;<sup>349</sup> he probably needed these crowns for his own coronation. However, the quoted charter of Louis IX does not mention giving but placing the crowns in the care of the Abbey (*commissimus custodiendas*). In other words, they were to remain the king's property and could, should the need arose, be used during a coronation, but the monks could and even should display them on the main altar of the Abbey Church during important festivities, adding the crowns of Philip Augustus to the crowns of the previous kings of France, already held in the treasury of the Abbey.<sup>350</sup> Thus, if we assume that the crowns placed in the care of Saint-Denis by Louis IX were still to be used during coronations,<sup>351</sup> this supports the view that the crowns used in the thirteenth and fourteenth century during the Capetian coronations were in fact founded by Philip Augustus. Their almost complete stylistic identity to the Holy Crown suggests that the latter may also have been made during his reign. This supposition is supported by the fact

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translator and editor, Henri Waquet, translates *regia indumenta* as *ornements royaux*, which may also suggest a crown, thus it would be natural that since the king stayed at that time in Saint-Denis, he must have given it to the Abbey like the majority of his other valuables; however, this conclusion seems a gross overinterpretation.

- 348 "Item donamus et leguamus abbatie Beati Dionisii, in qua sepulturam eligimus, omnia ludicra nostra, cum lapidibus pretiosis, et coronas nostras, et omnes lapides pretiosos;" *LAYETTES DU TRÉSOR DES CHARTES* (II), no. 1546, p. 549; also: MONTESQUIOU-FEZENSAC, GABORIT-CHOPIN, *Le Trésor de Saint-Denis*, vol. II, s.v. *Couronnes*, VI, p. 530.
- 349 Letter of Peter, Abbot of Saint-Denis from August 1223, *LAYETTES DU TRÉSOR DES CHARTES* (II), no. 1597, p. 11; also: *EXUVIAE SACRAE CONSTANTINOPOLITANAE*, vol. II, no. L, pp. 111–112.
- 350 When recounting the visit of Innocent II in Saint-Denis, Suger described the opulence of the church shining with, among others, the gold crowns decorating it (SUGER, *Vie de Louis VI*, cap. 32, p. 264), which is sometimes interpreted as a proof that already in the twelfth century the Abbey had a considerable collection of royal crowns; cf. GABORIT-CHOPIN, *Les couronnes du sacre des rois des reines au Trésor de Saint-Denis*, p. 165. However, Suger does not say there that the crowns were offered by the predecessors of Louis VI.
- 351 Describing the burial of Louis IX in Saint-Denis, Guillaume de Nangis says that contrary to what is said in Louis's charter, he gave (*donna*) the Abbey or enriched it (*ditaverat*) with the royal crowns; cf. GUILLAUME DE NANGIS, *Gesta Philippi Regis / L'histoire du Roy Phelippe*, pp. 468, 469.

that the first testimony (of Rodrigo Ximénez) of the existence of that artefact, which he called *corona spine Dominice* comes from these times.

Commissioning by the king of France (?) and depositing in the Abbey of Saint-Denis – where the royal crowns were collected at least from the times of Louis VI and Suger, and possibly from the reign of Louis IX the coronation jewels were stored – of a crown almost identical with the coronation crown and being at the same time a reliquary holding the thorn from the Lord's Crown, was certainly an intentional action being part of a well-thought-over political theology of the Capetian monarchy. Obviously, it is also part of a more general theological notion, known from the early Christian times: the Crown of Thorns, like the reed or purple coat were the royal insignia of Christ the King, thus a reliquary in the form of a crown is in all respects suitable for storing a particle of the Crown of Thorns. The representation of the Crucified with a royal or imperial crown on his head was one of the most popular images of Christ in the eleventh to twelfth century, being a fixed iconographic type of the crucifix.<sup>352</sup> Also the other issue from the sphere of political theology known from the times of Saint Ambrose should not be overlooked. Let us recall how Saint Ambrose interpreted the alleged placing of the relics of the Cross in Constantine's imperial diadem by Saint Helena: it was done so that one could speak about the Roman emperor like about God himself: "you placed a crown of pure gold on his head."<sup>353</sup> This phrase comes from Psalm 20 which, from the times of Fulrad, i.e., from the eighth century, was present in the coronation *ordines* and was said when the crown was placed on the king's head. Thus, making a Holy Crown from Saint-Denis, which was also a reliquary, was certainly an ideological manifestation suggesting the similarity of the king of France to Christ the King.

### Philip Augustus and the Cult of Relics

The most important from our point of view events connected with the cult of relics of Saint Denis and the Passion relics known from the times of

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352 Only in the thirteenth century there appeared (besides the earlier example from the basilica of San Paolo fuori le Mura near Rome; THOBY, *Le crucifix*, p. 9) crucifixes representing Christ wearing a realistically executed Crown of Thorns. The examples of crucifixes from the eleventh to thirteenth century with a royal or imperial crown may be found in numerous European museums collections of medieval art. Cf. THOBY, *Le crucifix*, especially p. 156 and fig. LXIV, LXV, LXXII, LXXVI; MERCURI, *Corona di Cristo, corona di re*, pp. 162–163; WITZLEBEN, *Dornenkrone*, coll. 299–311; WITZLEBEN, *Dornenkrönung Christi*, coll. 315–326; KOPEĆ, *Przemiany ideowe pobożności pasyjnej na przykładzie kultu Cierniowej Korony Chrystusa*, p. 157.

353 Psalm 20 [21],4: "posuisti in capite eius coronam de lapide pretioso."

Philip Augustus, i.e., the war rituals in Saint-Denis, healing prince Louis and the king of dysentery, and the public display of the relics of Saint Denis in the Abbey in 1190–1192, have been discussed in detail above, so I shall not go back to them. I have also discussed the translation of the relics from Constantinople to Saint-Denis in 1205. According to Rigord's account, after the relics had been taken by a procession from Paris to the Field of Lendit (the abbot was probably accompanied by the Parisian clergy) where it was met by the monks of Saint-Denis, and then to the Abbey, they were deposited in the church on the graves of Saint Denis, Rusticus, and Eleutherius, right next to the head of Saint Denis and the shoulder blade of Saint John the Baptist.<sup>354</sup> As it seems, Philip Augustus did not participate in the procession and translation; Rigord's account indicates that he only handed the relics over to the abbot in Paris. We also know that he founded two magnificent reliquaries made of gold and precious stones, which existed till the French Revolution, i.e., a gold reliquary cross in which a fragment of the Holy Cross was placed, and a gold tablet, later known as the reliquary (*scrinium*, *écrin*) or oratory of Philip Augustus, which held the thorn from the Crown of the Lord, Christ's hair, a fragment of linen cloth with which Jesus was wrapped in the Manger, a fragment of the purple coat he was wearing before flagellation, and the rib and tooth of Saint Philip the Apostle.<sup>355</sup> It was also told that in 1210 Philip Augustus when visiting the Chartres Cathedral, redeveloped at that time, venerated their most important relic, namely, the tunic of Our Lady (*sancta camisia*) humbly passing under the arcade *scrinium*: the architectonic reliquary placed in the choir.<sup>356</sup>

In December 1206, there was a great flood in Paris: the Seine broke three of the spans of the Petit-Pont (*Parvus pons*) bridge joining the Marché Palu near the *cardo* of the Cité with Rue Saint Jacques on the left bank in the Quartier Latin, destroyed the houses on the bridge and caused a lot of damage in other places. To avert the danger the Abbot of Saint-Denis came to Paris with a barefoot procession of the monks, carrying the relics of the Crown of Thorns and the Holy Nail as well as the relics of the Holy Cross (probably the reliquary given a year earlier by king Philip). After the

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354 RIGORD, *Gesta Philippi Augusti* (2006), cap. 153, p. 394.

355 RIGORD, *Gesta Philippi Augusti* (2006), cap. 153, pp. 392, 394; MONTESQUIOU-FEZENSAC, GABORIT-CHOPIN, *Le Trésor de Saint-Denis*, vol. II, no. 3, pp. 10–20: the cross of Philip Augustus, no. 14, pp. 55–60: Oratory of Philip Augustus.

356 "... sub sacrosancto scrinio devote et humiliter transitum faciens;" *CARTULAIRE DE NOTRE-DAME DE CHARTRES*, p. 59.



blessing, the water began to abate.<sup>357</sup> Thus the Passion relics were considered in Saint-Denis as ones protecting the capital of the Kingdom; however, also in this case we do not know whether the king was involved in this ritual. We know that the relics were used to prevent a flood not only in 1206: according to the Paschal Chronicle of Saint-Denis from the late thirteenth century (continued until 1292), in 1280 a great flood happened again, but then the Grand-Pont leading from the Cité to the right bank of the Seine, to Châtelet<sup>358</sup> was destroyed.

A review of the rituals connected with the relics from Saint-Denis during the reign of Philip Augustus seems to show that the king had a different attitude to them than his predecessors, Louis VI and Louis VII. Like his father and grandfather, Philip Augustus certainly venerated Saint Denis and adored his relics, acknowledging the Saint as the patron of the kings and the Kingdom, although the military ritual of 1190 performed before the Crusade was reduced in comparison to the analogous earlier celebrations, probably taking the ultimate shape, known from the thirteenth century: those from the times of Louis IX and Philip III look similar, but are different from the earliest ones: the relics of Saint Denis are not taken out from the grave, like in 1124 and 1147, and the more so, they are not displayed. The only known *ostensio* performed in the intention of healing the heir to the throne, which resulted also in healing the king, took place when Philip was absent. Clearly, Philip believed that taking care of the cult of relics and venerating them was his royal duty: this is indicated by the course of his visit in Chartres or funding opulent reliquaries for the relics he obtained from Constantinople and giving them to the Abbey of Saint-Denis.

If we assume that also the reliquary Holy Crown from Saint-Denis was made during Philip's reign, it would mean that he understood well the value of symbolic identification of his own royal power with Christ's kingship and took care to give it a material form: the crown-reliquary and the crown-insignia had almost the same shape and decorations. Despite that, in the light of the known source materials, unlike his two predecessors, Philip played only a passive role in the royal cult of relics. He never appeared as the main actor in these rituals taking up, like Louis VI, Louis VII (as well as Frederick Barbarossa or Henry II) the liturgical functions: he did not carry

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357 RIGORD, *Gesta Philippi Augusti* (2006), cap. 156, p. 398.

358 BREVE CHRONICON ECCLESIAE SANCTI DIONYSII, p. 145: "MCCLXXX. Eodem anno, sic crevit fluuius Sequanae quod aqua posset accipi cum manibus desuper Magnum Pontem, de quo maiores duae arcae totaliter corruerunt. Eodem anno fecit conventus processionem ad fluuium Sequanae cum Clavo et Corona Domini, et brachium sancti Symeonis deportauerunt."

the relics in his hands or on his shoulders, did not lead a pageant of bishops and monks with the relics. This observation is quite surprising. Philip was quite a grown up, twelve-year-old, boy when Louis VII led the translation and publicly adored the relics of Saint Frambourg in Senlis in 1177. Two years later, being fourteen years old, he took from his paralyzed father the seals and boldly took over the power in the kingdom. Did he intentionally choose a different model than that of his predecessor of participating in the cult of saints and relics: a passive one? If so then why? We do not know the answer to this question as there does not seem to be any justification for Philip's behaviour in the spirituality of these times or in the contemporary royal practice (e.g., of the Hohenstaufen house) and later, the Capetian one. Perhaps the explanation should be sought in Philip Augustus's individual sensitivity. Neither do we know about any spectacular cult acts performed by Louis VIII, but possibly this is because he ruled only for three years that we cannot see any signs of the new model of the Capetian 'relic policy' during his reign. Louis IX, whose acts of piety related to relics will be described below, will more than make up for Philip Augustus's contentment with the role of a passive (actual or intentional, or perhaps resulting only from the existing sources) participant in their cult.

## Part III. Saint Louis and the Cult of Relics

In the final chapter of the previous part, it has been demonstrated that the veneration of the relics was an important element of the piety of the Capetian kings and their religious policy from the beginnings of the dynasty. As in other countries, the years after the Fourth Crusade brought an unprecedented influx of relics to France.<sup>1</sup> This was probably this was one of the factors which made the reign of Louis IX particularly intense in terms of the cult of saints and relics, including the Passion relics, manifested in the veneration of Christ through participating in various forms of liturgy of relics: translation, elevation and ostension. However, the majority of such the acts of piety related to the relics, concerned the ‘native’ relics, often kept in French sanctuaries *ab antiquo*.

Clearly the most important part of the cult of relics during the reign of Louis IX was a series of translations of the Passion relics performed in 1239–1242. These relics were brought from Constantinople and the Holy Land to Paris and the most important among them was the Crown of Thorns and the relics of the Holy Cross; many other valuable holy memorials were brought alongside them: the relics of the Passion, Old Testament, and Saints. We shall reconstruct and analyze these translations in the final part of this study. However, it was by no means an isolated act of Saint Louis involving the relics, for Louis IX was unprecedentedly pious in comparison to his predecessors (like his great grandfather Louis VII), active in the sphere of the cult of relics and certainly deserves to be called ‘the king of relics’ given to him by Jacques le Goff.<sup>2</sup> Le Goff gave the king this sobriquet having analyzed the reaction of Louis IX to the disappearance and then the ‘miraculous’ finding of one of the Passion relics from Saint-Denis, i.e., the Holy Nail, allegedly brought by Charlemagne from Constantinople

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1 On that subject especially the monumental, outdated, but still the basic compendium: *EXUVIAE SACRAE CONSTANTINOPOLITANAE*.

2 “roi des reliques”, LE GOFF, *Saint Louis*, p. 124.

together with the relics of the Crown of Thorns, related by the chronicler Guillaume de Nangis, who was Louis's contemporary.<sup>3</sup> The relic disappeared during Lent in 1232 (on the third day after the March Calends): it fell out of the reliquary when the receptacle was being given to the faithful to kiss. When recounting the reactions to the loss of the nail, Guillaume de Nangis becomes apocalyptic: he describes the general despair of the subjects of Louis IX, who cried and prayed in churches for almost a month, begging God to show his mercy and allow to find the relic. For, as Guillaume de Nangis wrote, wise men feared that the loss of such a great treasure in the capital of the kingdom may foretell great calamities in the whole state or even of the whole world (*generale excidium*), possibly a plague (in the French version, *pestilence*). The king and queen mother, Blanche of Castile, were highly alarmed: both started to weep and Louis is said to have shouted out/exclaimed that he would rather have one of the most beautiful cities of his kingdom sink into the ground than lose this priceless relic. The abbot and monks from Saint-Denis also bemoaned the loss. However, Guillaume de Nangis presented Louis as a rather reasonable man: contrary to the initial sentences in which the chronicler presented the king's hysterical reaction, later he goes on to say that Louis had a royal appeal distributed in the streets and squares of Paris encouraging people to look for the relic and containing the king's promise that the person who would find and return the Holy Nail could expect a very generous reward in coins (100 pounds) and, which sounds unexpected at first, a guarantee of safety (*securus de vita*). The explanation seems obvious: Louis IX probably assumed that someone, taking advantage of the confusion, could have simply stolen the relic. Again, we get the impression of a deeply religious young man but with his feet firmly on the ground when we read that when the king learnt that the abbot of Saint-Denis was in despair, Louis sent messengers who were to console him;<sup>4</sup> the king intended to go to Saint-Denis himself but was advised against it. The relic was miraculously rediscovered, as Guillaume de Nangis assures, almost a month after it had been lost, on Good Friday, which in 1232 was on April 1, and was accompanied by numerous miracles (which the chronicler does not describe) and the Holy Nail was solemnly transferred to Saint-Denis.

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3 GUILLAUME DE NANGIS, *Gesta sancti Ludovici / Vie de Saint Louis*, pp. 320–323. LE GOFF, *Saint Louis*, pp. 124–127.

4 Contrary to the translation of the text made by Jacques Le Goff according to whom it was the abbot of Saint-Denis who sent the comforters to the king.

Even though this account does not contain any descriptions of the king's devotion to the relics, the chronicler, perhaps unintentionally (the title of the chapter in the chronicle stresses the king's compassion and suffering caused by the loss of the relic (*de compassione quam pro ammissione sancti clavi demonstravit*) shows in it much more than Louis IX's religious sensitivity. Namely, the king is presented as the 'king of the relics' – 'lord of the relics'. Even though the nail of the Holy Cross belonged to the Abbey of Saint-Denis, the narrative indicates that it is Louis IX after God, who was the ultimate cause of the miraculous rediscovery of the Holy Nail, and not the abbot and the convent of Saint-Denis (who are generally absent from the narrative and, strikingly, do not take any actions in order to recover the relic) who is the principal actor and takes the initiative. King's words that he would prefer one of his cities to sink underground rather than lose the holy nail, quoted or assigned to Louis, are a proof that the monarch believed that the relic, even if stored in Saint-Denis, is his own property. And if this is the case, it is not surprising that the king looked for it. The structure of this narrative may have been the result of another phenomenon. Guillaume de Nangis described the loss of the nail of the Holy Cross as a calamity commonly felt by Louis's subjects, one may say, a 'national' one. Of course this was mainly due to the author's wish to increase the importance of the Abbey of Saint-Denis and the relics kept in it and make them into symbols of the whole political community of the Capetian Kingdom. The proof of that, among other things, is an expression known from the twelfth century: *in capite regni*, in the capital of the Kingdom, to denote Saint-Denis. The loss of one of the Passion relic from Saint-Denis was perceived by the wise men as a possible harbinger of catastrophes which may could befall the whole state. However, the discourse, identifying the loss of the Holy Nail from Saint-Denis with a misfortune of the whole political community gave the king a sacred and legal right to take the initiative in the search, because it is the king who, owing to his royal prerogative, is responsible for the fate of the whole kingdom and all his subjects. Thus it was an automatic and logical outcome that Louis IX became the superior guardian of the treasures, rather than the community of the monks who were the depositaries of the relic. Since the relics were a treasure belonging to the whole Kingdom, the Abbey had the right to be called its head (capital) and Louis IX who owing to God's grace was the head of French Kingdom, was particularly entitled to carry out the search. It was not, despite the appearances, an act of compassion (*compassio*) of the king toward the Abbey; the king simply fulfilled his royal duty toward his subjects. That is why the king sent the comforters to the abbot of Saint-Denis and it was the king's prerogative to look for the relics and to reward or not punish the finder or culprit.

It seems that the Louis IX's approach to responsibility for the relics in his kingdom, revealed in the anecdote about the losing and finding the nail of the Holy Cross of Saint-Denis in 1232, may be considered as a prognostication of his consistently implemented policy toward the relics conducted in the coming years both at the level of the whole kingdom and on the local scale, which shall be demonstrated below.

# Chapter 1. The Translation of the Relics of the Crown of Thorns and Other Passion Relics to Paris in 1239–1242. A Tentative Reconstruction<sup>1</sup> and Ideological Meaning

It was due to a coincidence that Louis IX could manifest his veneration for the relics during his reign at a so far unprecedented scale, namely, owing to the translations of the Crown of Thorns, the True Cross and many other Passion relics and relics of saints, at the turn of the 1230s and 1240s (1239–1242). The influx of the Constantinople relics, very intensive in the first years after the Latin conquests of the city, was stopped in the second decade of the thirteenth century not only because the majority of treasuries of the churches in Constantinople had already been plundered but also because of the gradual decrease of the interest in the Byzantine world in the West after the expansion of the Latin Empire first stopped and then failed. In 1236 the situation of the Franks in Constantinople, surrounded by the hostile Byzantines from the Empire of Nicaea and the Bulgarians, on the verge of bankruptcy, seemed quite desperate; emperor Baldwin II (1228–1261) set off to Western Europe to ask the pope and the Catholic rulers for military and financial help for Constantinople. The journey did not bring any impressive results so Baldwin II decided to take a desperate step: he asked the king of France for a loan secured with the Crown of Thorns and other relics from the imperial treasury in Constantinople, to which Louis IX gladly agreed,

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1 Very concise reconstructions of the translations were presented in recent years by: LE GOFF, *Saint Louis*, pp. 140–146, understandably brief and, less understandably: MERCURI, *Corona di Cristo, corona di re*, pp. 101–111. Cf. *EXUVIAE SACRAE CONSTANTINOPOLITANAE*, vol. I, p. li, lxxvii–lxxi, cxii, cxxii, cxi–clxii, 45–56, vol. II, pp. 4–6, 47–49, 119–123; JORDAN, *Louis IX and the Challenge of the Crusade*, pp. 108, 193–197; VIDIER, *Le trésor de la Sainte-Chapelle*, pp. 262–267; WAILLY, *Récit du treizième siècle sur les translations faites en 1239 et en 1241 des saintes reliques de la Passion*; KOPEĆ, *Przemiany ideowe pobożności pasyjnej na przykładzie kultu Cierniowej Korony Chrystusa*, pp. 158–159. Dr Emily Guerry from the University of Kent has, for several years, announced the publication of an extremely interesting work on the translation of the Crown of Thorns to Paris in 1239: GUERRY, *Crowning Paris: King Louis IX, Archbishop Cornut, and the Translation of the Crown of Thorns*, Transactions of the American Philosophical Society, Philadelphia

paid Baldwin II 21 thousand livres tournois and selected among the Parisian Dominicans the envoys: prior Jacques and André of Longjumeau, for the mission of bringing the relics to France. When the French envoys arrived in Constantinople they learnt that the regents of Constantinople had already taken a loan secured with the Crown of Thorns from the Venetian bankers and since they could not pay their debt, the relic was to be handed over to the Venetian patrician Nicolai Quirino who had bought out the Crusaders' debts from their creditors, and taken to Venice. Jacques and André left Constantinople on Christmas 1238 and escorted the Crown of Thorns to Venice. There, having paid off the whole debt (more than 13 thousand hyperpyra (called bezants in the Western Europe) or 137 thousand livres tournois in the French currency) could, on behalf of the king of France, take over the relic, which was brought to Paris in August 1239.

## 1. Sources

### Hagiographic Sources

*De susceptione Corone Domini* of Archbishop Gautier Cornut (1240)

Among the texts about the translation of the Crown of Thorns to Paris in 1239 the most important is the short account of Gautier Cornut, archbishop of Sens (1222–1241), who participated in the majority of the events he described.<sup>2</sup> In 1239 Gautier had been connected with the royal court for more than forty years perhaps owing his success to his relationship to the Clément family, which was closely connected to the Capetian monarchy from the times of Philip Augustus. Gautier himself from ca. 1200 held the title of a university master (*magister Gualtierus*) and managed the income from the royal vineyards in the Orléans district; he was also the canon of the Parisian Chapter becoming its dean toward the end of Philip's reign; finally, in 1222 he was elected archbishop of Sens. During the reign of Saint Louis the Cornut family evidently enjoyed recognition at the royal court and

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(submitted), <https://www.kent.ac.uk/history/people/394/www.kent.ac.uk/history/people/394/guerry-emily> (23.04.2020). The full text of this publication, however, has still not been published, and is not currently available from the repository of the University of Kent (KAR): the abstract is only available at <https://kar.kent.ac.uk/53925/> (23.04.2020).

2 GAUTIER CORNUT, *De susceptione Coronae Domini*, pp. 26–32 (also in: *EXUVIAE SACRAE CONSTANTINOPOLITANAE*, vol. I, pp. 45–56). See also a very important paper: M. C. Gaposchkin, “Between Historical Narration and Liturgical Celebrations. Gautier Cornut and the Reception of the Crown of Thorns in France”, in: *Revue Mabillon*, 30 (2019) pp. 91–145. Recently on that text: MERCURI, *Corona di Cristo, corona di re*, pp. 101–111.



Church of France because Gautier's brothers gained the pinnacles of ecclesiastical hierarchy in France: Alberic (Aubry) was the bishop of Chartres, Robert, the bishop of Nevers, and Gilon, the archbishop of Sens after Gautier's death. Their nephews followed suits: William was appointed the bishop of Nevers after Robert, Henry, archbishop of Sens after Gilon; after the death of Saint Louis another Cornut, Gilon II, became the archbishop of Sens again.<sup>3</sup> At the same time one of Gautier's cousins, Jean Clément, was the marshal of France and another one, Eudes (Odo), was the abbot of Saint-Denis.<sup>4</sup> All that evidences that Gautier was very much part of the power elites during the reign of Louis IX.

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3 The first known member of the Cornut family who became a bishop was Bermundus, probably Gautier's uncle, archbishop of Aix-en-Provence in 1212–1223 (the Kingdom of Arles, thus formally being a part of the Holy Empire, but from the eleventh century the ecclesiastical nominations at that territory were made directly by the Holy See). Aubry Cornut was a bishop of Chartres in 1236–1244; Robert, the bishop of Nevers in 1240–1252, and William, in 1252–1254; Gilon I was the archbishop of Sens in 1241–1254; Henry, in 1254–1258, and Gilon II, in 1275–1292; BALDWIN, *Paris, 1200*, pp. 181–201.

4 Two uncles of Gautier Cornut: Aubry and Henry, were sons of the tutor of Philip Augustus, Robert Clément du Mez, Lord of Le Mez in Gâtinais (dep. Loiret), located ca. 30 km to the South-East of Fontainebleau. The elder, Aubry, who accompanied Philip Augustus during the Third Crusade, was nominated to the newly created post of marshal of France in 1190; he died at Accra in 1191. The younger, Henry, called Henry Marshal or, due to his smallness, the Short Marshal (Henri Le Maréchal, Le Petit Maréchal), was first the king's champion (in the royal documents he was called *miles regis*) and from 1204 the Marshal of France and the commander in chief of the royal army; together with Gautier Le Chambellan, knight Bartholomew de Roze, and the Keeper of the Seals, Brother Guérin (from 1213 elected the bishop of Senlis), was one of Philip's most trusted collaborators. The position of the Marshal of France became in fact a hereditary function of the Clément family until the end of the reign of Louis IX: after the death of Henry the Short Marshal (1214) it was given to his son, John, and after John's death (1262), to his grandson, Henry (II), who had accompanied Louis IX during the Crusade. Thus the two younger sons of Henry (I) – like John, marshal of France – cousins of Gautier, fulfilled important functions in the Capetian ecclesiastical domain: Eudes (Odo) or Hugh was an archdeacon, then the dean of the Parisian Chapter and finally the dean of the royal Abbey of Canons of Saint-Martin in Paris; at the same time he was a steward of the royal estate in the Capetian domain; the youngest brother, Eudes (Odo) Clément was the abbot of Saint-Denis in 1228–1245, thus at the time when the nail of the Holy Cross was lost and found; he also began, as Guillaume de Nangis assures in the same chapter of the Chronicle of Louis IX's reign, at the king's advice and permission, the redevelopment of the Church and the Abbey, continued later on by abbot Matthew of Vendôme and finished in 1263.

Gautier Cornut had the best insight into the details and course of the translation, not only as a close collaborator of Louis IX and as the archbishop of Sens, the superior of the diocese of Paris, and thus the top person in the Church of France. It is also important that the celebrations of the translation began in Sens on August 11, 1239, and it was that date (not August 18, when the king and the clergy brought the Crown of Thorns to Paris), was soon to become the main day on which the relics were venerated, beginning the octave of *susceptio Sancte Corone* in the sanctoral for the whole province of Sens. The archbishop participated in the translation liturgy in Paris on August 18 and 19 and, probably as the metropolitan bishop, was the main celebrant, author, and deliverer of the sermon, which probably became part of the hagiographic text of the *translatio*. According to the commonly accepted claim of Natalis de Wailly, *De susceptione Corone Domini* is the sermon delivered by Gautier Cornut, but enriched with historical details. This sermon was delivered at the request of Saint Louis on the first anniversary of the event, *anniversarium adventus Sancte Corone*, held on August 11, 1240, in Paris. There is no doubt that the archbishop was the author; it is probable that he based the text on the homily he had delivered a year earlier.<sup>5</sup> Geoffroi de Courlon, who in the late thirteenth century compiled a Chronicle of the Abbey of Saint-Pierre-le-Vif in Sens on the basis of old chronicles and tables of the Paschal cycles, when mentioning the translation of the Crown of Thorns says that archbishop Gautier Cornut was the author of the book describing the course of the translation: “it happened as Master Archbishop Gautier presented it in his book”.<sup>6</sup> The account in *De susceptione* of the translation and its interpretation was accepted by the royal court and the lay and ecclesiastical milieus, becoming the foundation for the *lectiones historicae*, i.e., the readings contained in the majority of the breviary offices compiled in the two and a half century to come and read to the clergy and the faithful during the liturgy for the Feast of the Crown of Thorns, also in the breviaries created for the royal court. *De susceptione Corone Domini* was also known in the modern times: the whole text was preserved in two copies dated to the turn of the sixteenth and seventeenth century made from (today lost) manuscript of the chronicle of the Abbey of Pierre-le-Vif in Sens where it

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5 WAILLY, “Récit du treizième siècle sur les translations faites en 1239 et en 1241 des saintes reliques de la Passion,” pp. 406–407.

6 “... sic factum est, ut dominus Galterus, archiepiscopus, in libro quem fecit, declaravit;” GEOFFROI DE COURLON, *Chronique de l'abbaye Saint-Pierre-le-Vif*, pp. 514, 515. Cf. GEOFFROI DE BEAULIEU, *Vita sancti Ludovici (Acta Sanctorum)*, cap. V, 42, pp. 551–552; GEOFFROI DE BEAULIEU, *Vita sancti Ludovici* (RHF), cap. 24, p. 15.

had been copied.<sup>7</sup> A new edition of the *De susceptione Corone Domini (In translatione corone sancte domini)*, based on the newly discovered thirteenth-century manuscripts from the former library of the Saint-Victor Abbey in Paris, was recently made by M. Cecilia Gaposhkin<sup>8</sup>.

Thus Gautier Cornut is not only a reliable eyewitness, but also an educated official of the Church of France and one of the king's close collaborators who expressed an opinion on the ideological meaning of the translation of the Crown of Thorns to France, which was conclusive for the court and the Capetian Church.

### Gérard of Saint-Quentin, *Translatio Sancte Corone Domini Ihesu Christi* (after 1248)

The second source, almost contemporary to the translation of the Crown of Thorns, containing the information crucial for creating the fullest possible reconstruction of the events is the work *Translatio Sancte Corone Domini Ihesu Christi a Constantinopolitana urbe ad civitatem Parisiensem, facta anno Domini M°CC°XLI°*, regnante Ludovico, filio Ludovici Regis Francorum.<sup>9</sup> This short text, discovered by Édouard Miller, has been preserved in two manuscripts from the second half of the thirteenth or early fourteenth century. Its authorship was ascribed in the late thirteenth century (in the work *De scriptoribus ecclesiasticis* written by Henry of Ghent – Doctor Solemnis)<sup>10</sup> to a Benedictine monk, Gerard, from the Abbey of Saint-Quentin-en-l'Isle in Picardy<sup>11</sup>, known as a theologian, author of church songs and collections

7 BnF, Ms. Latin 3282 (Part I), see *TRÉSOR DE LA SAINTE-CHAPELLE*, no. 7, p. 45.

8 GAPOSCHKIN, „Between Historical Narration and Liturgical Celebrations. Gautier Cornut and the Reception of the Crown of Thorns in France”, pp. 121–142 (with an English translation).

9 GERARD DE SAINT-QUENTIN, *Translatio Sancte Corone* (Journal des Savants), pp. 295–302, comment: pp. 292–294, 302–309; reprint of the edition with the comment: WAILLY, *Récit du treizième siècle sur les translations faites en 1239 et en 1241 des saintes reliques de la Passion*, pp. 408–415, comment: pp. 401–407. Édouard Miller's edition was made basing on a manuscript from the late thirteenth or early fourteenth century stored at that time in the library of Firmin Didot (from 1881 in the BnF, Ms. Nouvelles Acquisitions Latines 1423). Variants of the reading of the second manuscript (CHARLEVILLE, BM, Ms. 275, also from the late thirteenth or early fourteenth century) are presented by DELISLE, *Translations des reliques de la Passion en 1239 et 1241*, p. 143. A version unifying the readings of the two manuscripts: GERARD DE SAINT-QUENTIN, *Translatio Sancte Corone (Exuviae)*, pp. 102–112. Below quotations after the edition by Fernand de Mély.

10 *TRÉSOR DE LA SAINTE-CHAPELLE*, no. 8, p. 46.

11 *HISTOIRE LITTÉRAIRE DE LA FRANCE* (XIX), p. 424.

of miracula. This attribution was retained by scholars in the nineteenth century.<sup>12</sup> Contrary to its title, Gerard's text not only describes the translation of the Crown of Thorns, as it mainly contains an account of two successive translations of the Passion relics to Paris carried out in 1241 or in 1241 and 1242.

The dating of Gerard of Saint-Quentin's work is uncertain: in the early twenty-first century Marie-Pierre Lafitte opted for the time immediately after 1242,<sup>13</sup> but she overlooked a very important premise indicating that it must have been written later, in 1248, namely, the statement that the Crown of Thorns "is piously held in a basilica of a marvelous shape built soon afterward by that king" (Louis IX).<sup>14</sup> As it seems certain that the author could have meant only Sainte-Chapelle founded by Louis in 1245 and consecrated in August, 1248, and the relic had been kept in the Abbey of Saint-Denis until the new palace chapel was consecrated, it is impossible that the *Translatio Sancte Corone Domini* could have been written before 1248.

We do not know exactly why Gerard wrote the account of the translations. It is possible that, like the text by Gautier Cornut, it was a sermon or, like *De susceptione*, was destined for future use as *lectiones historicae* in the Franciscan *officium* in honour of the relics. However, if that was the case, the intention failed: we do not know of any breviary with the excerpts from Gerard's account. The text did not become popular since it is known only from two manuscripts. These two accounts have been preserved in manuscripts with exactly the same content, which are collections of various historical and hagiographic writings, including the ones by Jacques de Vitry: *Historia orientalis*, *Historia occidentalis* and *Historia Hierosolimitana abbreviata*.<sup>15</sup>

### *Other Hagiographic Sources (till the End of the Thirteenth Century)*

Discussing the hagiographic sources which contain information on the translation of the Crown of Thorns, we are going to omit their largest group i.e.

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12 DELISLE, *Acquisitions faites par la Bibliothèque nationale*, p. 357; Riant, *Inventaire sommaire des manuscrits relatifs à l'histoire et à la géographie de l'Orient latin*, p. 145; GOLUBOVICH, *Biblioteca bio-bibliografica della Terra Santa e dell'Oriente francescano*, pp. 306–311; KRUITVAGEN, *Gérard van Saint-Quentin's Translatio Crucis et Coronae Dominicae*, p. 204; TRÉSOR DE LA SAINTE-CHAPELLE, no. 8, p. 46.

13 TRÉSOR DE LA SAINTE-CHAPELLE, no. 8, p. 46.

14 "... in edificata non multo post per eundem regem basilica, precioso scemate constructa, honorifice reservatur;" GERARD DE SAINT-QUENTIN, *Translatio Sancte Corone (Exuviae)*, p. 105.

15 BnF, Ms. Nouvelles Acquisitions Latines 1423; CHARLEVILLE, BM, Ms. 275.

the breviaries. The majority of the offices devoted to the Crown of Thorns contain the *lectiones historicae* presenting, as their name indicates, the historical circumstances in which the translation took place. These *lectiones historicae* are not useful to us in reconstructing the events because all of them are excerpts from Gautier Cornut's *libellus*. Thus it does not make sense to use the breviaries as long as we are only interested in the *histoire événementielle* of the translation. Within the scope of interest of the positivist method it is sufficient to state that the breviaries, mainly those from Paris and Sens, but also the ones from the other French dioceses, contain excerpts of Gautier Cornut's account. In our studies we have not found any case in which the account of Gerard of Saint-Quentin was used for a *lectiones historicae*.

Paradoxically the main hagiographic source which is not a direct account of the translation of the Crown of Thorns is the *Treatise on the translation of Saint Geneviève the Virgin* written by Jacques de Dinant, master of theology at the University of Paris and then a bishop of Arras (†1259). The work<sup>16</sup> describes the translation to a new reliquary of the relics of the holy patroness of Paris, performed on October 28, 1242, thus after the third and final translation of the Passion relics. It presents the circumstances of the translations from 1239–1242 rather briefly, but comments on them vividly. Two aspects of the account are important to us: first, the very fact that the author of a text on a completely different liturgical ceremony chose to include in it a short account of the translation of the Crown of Thorns.<sup>17</sup> He must have considered that translation as very important in his days. Second, it would be interesting to compare the course of the translations of the Passion relics to Paris and the translation of the relics of Saint Geneviève, because they differ considerably: the former were ostentatiously public and the latter, ostentatiously exclusive: it took place within the *claustrum* of the Abbey of Sainte-Geneviève, in secret – at night, after the Lauds. In the *Treatise on the Translation of Saint Geneviève the Virgin* Jacques briefly presents the historical circumstances of the translation: he says that king Louis, thanks to his considerable efforts, great labors and high expense, despite various dangers that faced the royal envoys sent to far away countries, miraculously obtained Christ's Crown of Thorns from the emperor of Constantinople and his barons, which was confirmed by the

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16 JACQUES DE DINANT, *Tractatus de translatione beatae Genovefae*, pp. 139–142.

17 JACQUES DE DINANT, *Tractatus de translatione beatae Genovefae*, pp. 140–141.

faithful testimony of the words and trustworthy documents with authentic seals.<sup>18</sup>

The other hagiographic sources describing or interpreting the translation are, obviously, the Lives of Saint Louis. Performed at the royal incentive, the translations of the Crown of Thorns and other relics from Constantinople and the Holy Land to Paris naturally drew attention of the authors of the king's Lives. The Capetian Church began to further the cause of his canonisation immediately after his death and it is pope Gregory X who initiated the writing of Louis IX's hagiographic Lives.<sup>19</sup> The hagiographers considered bringing the Passion relics to France, building Sainte-Chapelle, and establishing new feasts to celebrate the relics as proofs that Louis IX devotedly venerated the Passion and thus as one of the arguments for his becoming a Saint. For that reason the translations are mentioned in all the Lives of Louis which were written until the first decades of the fourteenth century and, as we shall see, also in the fourteenth century offices in honour of Saint Louis.

The earliest hagiographic texts which talk about Saint Louis were written by two Dominicans who were close to him: his confessor, Geoffroi of Beaulieu, and his personal secretary and chaplain and, during the Tunisian Crusade, also confessor, William of Chartres.<sup>20</sup> Both these lives were written before the canonization, in the 1270s.

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18 "Sic haec, labore gravi, multis intercedentibus periculis, maxime sollicitudine, sumptibus immensis, modo mirabili, dictus rex iunior Ludovicus, bonitate conspicuus, fidei pollens integritate, multimodis virtutibus incessanter insistens, nunciis fidelibus per varia loca destinatis, ab imperatore Constantinopolitano et imperii baronibus necnon et aliis, sub fideli testimonio vivae vocis et instrumentorum cum sigillis authenticis fide dignis, efficaciter acquisivit;" JACQUES DE DINANT, *Tractatus de translatione beatae Genovefae*, p. 140.

19 The letter of the archbishop of Sens (who at that time was Gilon II Cornut) and the bishops of the province of Sens to pope Gregory X; *GALLIA CHRISTIANA* (XII), p. 78. In fact the actual initiator of the procedure of canonization of Louis IX was most probably Gregory X himself who on March 4, 1272, asked from Viterbo the confessor of the deceased king, Geoffroi of Beaulieu to write the Life of the king; GUILLAUME DE CHARTRES, *De Vita sancti Ludovici* (RHF), p. 28; GUILLAUME DE CHARTRES, *De Vita sancti Ludovici (Acta Sanctorum)*, p. 559. Cf. PYSIAK, *Ludwik Święty: portret hagiograficzny idealnego władcy*, pp. 57–86. English translation of the Lives of Saint Louis by Geoffroi de Beaulieu and William of Chartres: *The Sanctity of Louis IX: Early Lives of Saint Louis by Geoffrey of Beaulieu and William of Chartres*.

20 These two lives were the subject of my first scholarly paper: PYSIAK, *Ludwik Święty: portret hagiograficzny idealnego władcy*, pp. 57–86 (I translated the name GEOFFROI [Lat. *Gaufridus*] into Polish as Galfryd). With a still valid

In the *Vita et sancta conversatio piae memoriae Ludovici quondam regis Francorum*<sup>21</sup> written by Geoffroi of Beaulieu, the Crown of Thorns is discussed in Chapter XXIV<sup>22</sup> placed between the praise of Louis IX's fondness for listening to sermons and reading the writings of the Fathers of the Church, and a chapter about his first Crusade. *De vita et actibus inclytæ recordationis Regis Francorum Ludovici*<sup>23</sup> by William of Chartres was not divided into chapters by its author; in this text the information about the Crown can be found at the very beginning, between the praise of Louis IX's life as a king but also resembling that of a monk (it is exemplified by his fondness of church music and aversion to minstrels) and a description of Louis's daily pious practices.<sup>24</sup>

The author of the next Life of Saint Louis was Guillaume de Saint-Pathus, a Franciscan monk, consecutively a confessor (1277–1314) of Louis's widow, Margaret of Provence (†1295), and then of their daughter, Blanche. *The Life of Saint Louis*<sup>25</sup> was written in 1302–1303, at the commission of Blanche, on the basis of the sources collected by a papal commission called to scrutinise the virtues of Louis's holiness, including the testimonies of witnesses in the canonization process.<sup>26</sup> We do not know when Guillaume was born, yet since he was still alive in 1315 it is hardly probable that he had been a witness of the translation of the Crown of Thorns. However, this is not very

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bibliography; the only new item to be added is: GAPOSCHKIN, *The Making of Saint Louis*, pp. 33–36, and the edition of the *Life of Saint Louis* by Geoffroi: The Sanctity of Louis IX: Early Lives of Saint Louis by Geoffrey of Beaulieu and William of Chartres.

- 21 GEOFFROI DE BEAULIEU, *Vita sancti Ludovici* (RHF), pp. 1–27; GEOFFROI DE BEAULIEU, *Vita sancti Ludovici (Acta Sanctorum)*, pp. 541–558.
- 22 GEOFFROI DE BEAULIEU, *Vita sancti Ludovici* (RHF), cap. 24, pp. 15–16; GEOFFROI DE BEAULIEU, *Vita sancti Ludovici (Acta Sanctorum)*, cap. V, 42, pp. 551–552.
- 23 GUILLAUME DE CHARTRES, *De Vita sancti Ludovici* (RHF), pp. 27–41; GUILLAUME DE CHARTRES, *Vita sancti Ludovici (Acta Sanctorum)*, pp. 559–567.
- 24 GUILLAUME DE CHARTRES, *De Vita sancti Ludovici* (RHF), p. 29; GUILLAUME DE CHARTRES, *Vita sancti Ludovici (Acta Sanctorum)*, pp. 559–560.
- 25 GUILLAUME DE SAINT-PATHUS, *Vie de Saint Louis* (RHF), pp. 58–121; also: GUILLAUME DE SAINT-PATHUS, *Vie de Saint Louis* (DELABORDE) – the last-mentioned edition will be quoted.
- 26 Guillaume de Saint-Pathus' own account: *Vie de Saint Louis*, pp. 3–7; cf. CAROLUS-BARRÉ, *Les enquêtes pour la canonisation de Saint Louis et la bulle 'Gloria Laus'*, pp. 19–29; CAROLUS-BARRÉ, *Le procès de canonisation de Saint Louis 1272–1297*; LE GOFF, *Saint Louis*, pp. 337–344.

important since neither *The Life of Saint Louis* nor the sermon about Saint Louis,<sup>27</sup> known from a fourteenth century collection of sermons from the library of the Chartres Cathedral,<sup>28</sup> present any information on the translation, although the Crown of Thorns is mentioned there.<sup>29</sup> In this respect these sources constitute an exception in the hagiography of Saint Louis compiled until the mid-fourteenth century. Thus, it is surprising that later in the same chapter of the *Life* Guillaume describes in considerable detail the translation of the relics of the martyrs of the Theban Legion to Senlis in 1262.<sup>30</sup> This *Life* was used by Yves, a hagiographer and historian from the Abbey of Saint-Denis, the author of the *Vita et passio sancti Dionysii* whom we mentioned earlier when discussing the cult of Saint Denis. The part devoted to the reign of Louis IX was presented by Yves as the *Life* of a saint king: the chapter about Louis's veneration of the saints, relics, the Holy Cross and Saint Denis is an almost exact Latin version of a similar chapter from the *life* compiled by Guillaume de Saint-Pathus (or, which is more probable, a very faithful adaptation of the lost Latin *Life* written by the latter).<sup>31</sup> Thus, also in that work there is no information on the course of the translations, but there are details of the liturgy.

Some details about the translation, however, are provided by two anonymous lives, both written probably at the turn of the thirteenth and fourteenth century, after Louis's canonization. The historical information in the *Beati Ludovici vita e veteri lectionario*<sup>32</sup> is scant; *Beati Ludovici vita partim ad lectiones partim ad sacrum sermonem parata*<sup>33</sup> describes the translation in detail, but, as we shall see, is incompatible with the picture obtained from other sources.

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27 GUILLAUME DE SAINT-PATHUS, *Sermon en l'honneur de Saint Louis*, pp. 276–288.

28 CHARTRES, BM, Ms. 226, fol. 166ro-174ro, qtd. after: DELABORDE, *Une oeuvre nouvelle de Guillaume de Saint-Pathus*, p. 265.

29 GUILLAUME DE SAINT-PATHUS, *Vie de Saint Louis* (DELABORDE), cap. 6, pp. 41–42; GUILLAUME DE SAINT-PATHUS, *Sermon en l'honneur de Saint Louis*, p. 286.

30 GUILLAUME DE SAINT-PATHUS, *Vie de Saint Louis* (DELABORDE), cap. 6, pp. 45–46. About the translation in Senlis in 1262 see below.

31 Published as: YVES DE SAINT-DENIS, *Gesta sancti Ludovici noni*, pp. 45–57, here: pp. 51–52.

32 *VITA BEATI LUDOVICI E VETERI LECTIONARIO*, pp. 160–167, here: p. 163.

33 *BEATI LUDOVICI VITA PARTIM AD LECTIONES*, pp. 167–176, here: *Lectio VII*, pp. 171–172.



If the authors of the Lives of Saint Louis mention the historical events preceding the translation at all, they do it very generally and briefly: Geoffroi of Beaulieu and Jacques de Dinant in the latter's *Treatise on the translation of Saint Geneviève the Virgin* only praise Louis's piety, which motivated him to obtain for France from the emperor of Constantinople, his efforts and expenditures, as well as the dangers, which the royal envoys had to face.<sup>34</sup> Not only does the *Beati Ludovici vita partim ad lectiones partim ad sacrum sermonem parata* alter the order of the translation (according to its anonymous author the translation of the Crown of Thorns happened after the relics of the Holy Cross were brought to Paris), but it also suggests that the relics were brought to Paris not from Constantinople but from Venice (which, as we shall show, was only a stage in the relics' journey to France).<sup>35</sup> William of Chartres and Guillaume de Saint-Pathus were not interested in the historical circumstances of the translation at all.

### Chronicles (until the Mid-Fourteenth Century)

The main sources for reconstructing the course of the 1239 translation of the Crown of Thorns are doubtlessly the two hagiographic-liturgical texts presented above (Gerard of Saint-Quentin's also for the two later translations). The translation of the Passion relics to Paris inspired a vivid interest of French and European chroniclers, from the contemporary and successive generations. The historiographical writings are less precise in their description of the events, yet sometimes provide important details and allows to confront them with the accounts of Gautier Cornut and Gerard of Saint-Quentin. These sources are the most useful in reconstructing the ideological meaning of the translation as seen in its times and by several successive generations, also by comparing them with the hagiographic-liturgical sources.

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34 "Quanta devotione fidei, et quam immensis laboribus et expensis, ac nunciorum suorum periculis obtinuerit a Constantinopolitano imperatore sacrosanctam Coronam spineam Salvatoris et partem maximam sanctae Crucis cum aliquibus reliquiis multis ac plurimum pretiosis;" GEOFFROI DE BEAULIEU, *Vita sancti Ludovici* (RHF), cap. 24, p. 15; GEOFFROI DE BEAULIEU, *Vita sancti Ludovici (Acta Sanctorum)*, cap. V, 42, p. 551.

35 "Mittuntur igitur ex praecepto regis duo fratres Minores viri probatissimi, cum regia clientela, ut ab imperatore Constantinopolitano, regis favore praevio, nostrae Redemptionis obtinerent insignia. Voto freti nec labore frustrati, licet itinere fatigati, revertuntur in Franciam, Reliquias sacrosanctas referunt;" *BEATI LUDOVICI VITA PARTIM AD LECTIONES*, p. 171. "Missi sunt postmodum fratres Predicatores Venecias, cum Corona spinea Domini redeuntes, et regis beneplacitum fideliter exequentes;" *BEATI LUDOVICI VITA PARTIM AD LECTIONES*, p. 172.

*French Chronicles*

By French chronicles we will understand the texts written not only in the area of modern France but also those written by Franco-Flemish authors, because the County of Flanders was a vassal principality of the West Frankish Kingdom, then France. In the thirteenth century, its aristocratic and intellectual elites certainly felt a strong political and cultural bond with the Capetian monarchy. Flanders, usually defiant and rebellious toward the king from Paris, between the triumph of Philip Augustus at Bouvines and the renouncement of allegiance to Philip the Fair (1214–1298) did not manifest any eagerness for separation – on the contrary: it was politically and culturally drawn to the Capetian kingship. The authority of Louis IX was respected in Flanders, which can be shown by the fact that he was asked to mediate the inheritance of Flanders and Hainaut by the Avesnes and Dampierre families in 1256. The king’s ruling was accepted and consistently observed. We have hinted in the previous chapters at the importance of the Picardy-Flemish borderland for the birth of the French-language medieval chronicle-writing; some of the Flemish authors writing about Charlemagne’s *Iter Hierosolimitanum*<sup>36</sup> described also Louis IX’s translations of the Passion relics to Paris. Chronologically the first chroniclers who described the translations of the Constantinopolitan relics to Paris in 1239–1242 were Philip Mouskès<sup>37</sup> and Alberic, a Cistercian from the Abbey of Trois-Fontaines, both of whom came from the Flemish circle.<sup>38</sup> Their accounts of the Parisian translations are noteworthy (although not very detailed) since both authors lived at the time of the events.

Another author already mentioned above who briefly discusses the translations of the Crown of Thorns and the Holy Cross is Vincent of Beauvais. In the *Speculum historiale* he did not mention the translations of 1239–1242, but he concisely recounted them in his chronology of the world, the *Memoriale omnium temporum*, added to the *Speculum naturale*.<sup>39</sup>

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36 See the chapter about the reception of *Iter Hierosolimitanum* in French chronicles at the turn of the twelfth and thirteenth century (Part 1, Chapter 2).

37 PHILIPPE MOUSKÈS, *Chronique rimée*, v. 10040–15000, vol. II: translation of the Crown of Thorns: v. 30581–30618, p. 667; the second translation of the Passion relics: v. 30861–30879, p. 677; RHF, vol. XXII, pp. 73–74, 76–77.

38 ALBERIC DE TROIS-FONTAINES, *Chronica*, p. 947, 950 (RHF, vol. XXI, pp. 626, 629).

39 “Anno Domini 1239. Corona spinea Domini per industriam piissimi Ludovici Francorum regis, annuente Balduino imperatore, ab urbe Constantinopoli Parisius est translata, atque ab ipso rege cum multis episcopis et militibus et infinita populi multitudine cum summa humilitate atque devotione recepta. Nec multo post eidem quoque regi pars dominice crucis a peregrinibus transmarinis

In a milieu nearly equally close to the Capetian court which for several generations adopted the mission of creating the monarchy's memory, the Abbey of Saint-Denis, some other historiographic accounts of the translations were made. Probably the earliest of them, called the lost Latin chronicle of Primat, the author of *Les Grandes Chroniques de France*, was preserved only in its French version translated in ca. 1330 by Jean de Vignay from the Parisian monastery of the Knights of the Order of Saint James of Altopascio<sup>40</sup> (Saint-Jacques du Haut-Pas) at the commission of Joanna of Burgundy. Jean de Vignay translated only those chapters of Primat's chronicle which were not included in the *Great Chronicles*; besides, he translated and completed the *Speculum historiale* by Vincent de Beauvais (*Le miroir historial*) presenting the reigns of Louis VIII, Saint Louis, Philip III, and the beginnings of the reign of Philip the Fair (1223–1286).<sup>41</sup>

The chronicles by Guillaume de Nangis, also already mentioned, are later than Primat's lost chronicle, but have been completely preserved in two versions compiled by the author, describing the reign of Saint Louis in Latin and French: *Gesta sancti Ludovici regis*, *Vie de Saint Louis*<sup>42</sup> and a

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transfertur et ibidem honorifice valde recipitur;" VINCENT OF BEAUVAIS, *Memoriale omnium temporum*, p. 161. About *Memoriale omnium temporum* and its attribution to Vincent de Beauvais see WAILLY, *Notice sur une chronique anonyme du treizième siècle*, pp. 389–395; WAITZ, *Über kleine Chroniken des dreizehnten Jahrhunderts*, pp. 49–76; PAULMIER-FOUCART, *Histoire ecclésiastique et histoire universelle: le 'Memoriale temporum'*, pp. 87–110.

40 The hospice in Altopascio near Lucca in northern Tuscany was first mentioned in 1084. It was located on so-called *Via Francigena* or, not to be confused with Camino Francés in Castile, which had the same name in Latin, *Via Francesca Romea*, a pilgrimage route from Gaul to Rome. It was probably founded some time earlier by the twelve *probiviri* of Lucca and may have been the earliest order of the knights: besides running the hospice the knights also maintained order on the roads and nearby fords, also built and maintained bridges, among others, on the Arno. In the twelfth century the order took over the protection of the whole *via Romea* and expanded beyond Tuscany: to the Kingdom of Sicily, Sardinia, France, Bavaria, Spain, and England. In 1180 Philip Augustus funded the first church of Tuscan Hospitallers, Saint-Jacques du Haut-Pas, existing also today but in a modern architectural shape, rue Saint-Jacques, the road leading to Santiago de Compostela. The Hospitallers of Altopascio initially observed the rule of Saint Augustine; in 1239 pope Gregory IX issued a bull in which he promulgated their rule as that of Knights of Saint John.

41 PRIMAT / JEAN DE VIGNAY, *Chronique dite de Primat*, pp. 5–106 and PRIMAT / JEAN DE VIGNAY, *Ex Primati chronicis*, pp. 628–681 (comparison of the original chronicles of Primat and Guillaume de Nangis with the translation of Jean de Vignay).

42 GUILLAUME DE NANGIS, *Gesta sancti Ludovici / Vie de Saint Louis*.

universal chronicle in Latin (1113–1300),<sup>43</sup> which was a continuation of the work by Sigebert of Gembloux. Guillaume de Nangis, a Benedictine monk from Saint-Denis, was Primat's successor as a chronicler of the kings of France.<sup>44</sup> From the same period comes the *Breve chronicon ecclesiae Sancti Dionysii ad cyclos paschales*, continued until 1292,<sup>45</sup> which continues the earliest chronicle-writing tradition of the Abbey of Saint-Denis and the Christian West in general.

The chronicles from the Abbey of Saint-Denis are very interesting for reconstructing the translations of 1239–1242 especially because they present a different point of view than that of Gautier Cornut and Gerard of Saint-Quentin. Their accounts present a more universal view of the events: they look at the translations from the point of view of the Church of France and the French monarchy. The chroniclers from Saint-Denis have a slightly different focus: even though their texts contain references to the political situation in France during the reign of Louis IX, the translations are described from the point of view of the Abbey and its participation in the celebrations.

The other chronicles in which the translation of the Crown is mentioned do not contribute to the description of the translation. I mean here the chronicle from Rouen presenting the times till 1282<sup>46</sup> and several Benedictine chronicles: the chronicle by Peter Coral, abbot of Saint-Martial in Limoges, ending in 1266<sup>47</sup> (the author died in 1285); the chronicle of the Abbey of Saint-Taurin in Évreux which embraces the period from the birth of Christ till 1317, written in the first two decades of the fourteenth century,<sup>48</sup> and even from the Abbey of Saint-Pierre-le-Vif in Sens (till 1294) compiled in the late thirteenth century by Geoffroi de Courlon, who only mentions the translation from 1239 and sends the reader to the *booklet* by the archbishop of Sens. The brevity of the latter may be quite surprising, because the church in Sens was closely involved in the translation and the Sens Cathedral was

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43 GUILLAUME DE NANGIS, *Chronicon*.

44 CHAZAN, *L'Empire et l'histoire universelle de Sigebert de Gembloux à Jean de Saint-Victor*, pp. 379–386; DELISLE, *Mémoire sur les ouvrages de Guillaume de Nangis*, pp. 287–372; LE GOFF, *Saint Louis*, pp. 357–362; SPIEGEL, *The Chronicle Tradition of Saint-Denis*, pp. 98–108.

45 BREVE CHRONICON ECCLESIAE SANCTI DIONYSII, pp. 143–144.

46 CHRONIQUE DE ROUEN, p. 338 This chronicle is included in a manuscript from the turn of the fifteenth and sixteenth century, entitled *Chronicon triplex et unum*, BnF, Ms. Latins 5530 and 5659.

47 PETRUS CORAL, *Chronicon Sancti Martiali*, p. 765.

48 CHRONICON MONASTERII SANCTI TAURINI EBROICENSIS, pp. 465–467.

one of the first to which the king gave a particle of the relic. However, we know that like in the other episcopal sees, the Abbey of Saint-Pierre-le-Vif was engaged in a fierce rivalry with the bishopric, and in 1293 Geoffroi de Courlon wrote *A Booklet about the relics and foundation of the monastery of Saint Pierre le Vif in Sens (Libellus editus super reliquiis et fundatione monasterii Sancti Petri Vivi Senonensis)*,<sup>49</sup> thus probably he did not want to promote the Thorn of the Crown stored in the treasury of the Cathedral. Paradoxically, more detailed accounts can be found in the chronicle of the Abbey of Saint-Médard in Soissons (until 1296)<sup>50</sup> although it did not obtain any thorns from the Crown, and in the chronicle of the monastery of Sainte-Catherine-du-Mont in Rouen, compiled in 1345, so more than one hundred years after the translation.<sup>51</sup>

Two French-language historical works written during the reign of Philip the Fair (1285–1314) are noteworthy: an anonymous chronicle probably written under the patronage of the archbishop of Reims,<sup>52</sup> describing the history of the kings of France starting from the pagan (“Saracen”) times<sup>53</sup> till the coronation of Philip the Fair and a historical poem *The Branch of Royal Lineages (La branche des royaus lingnages)* by Guillaume Guiart of Orléans, written in 1306.<sup>54</sup> Both these authors attach great importance to the translation of the Crown of Thorns (according to the anonymous one it was the greatest achievement of Saint Louis) but neither of them offers more on the course of the translation than Gautier Cornut, Gerard of Saint-Quentin and the chroniclers from Saint-Denis.

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49 GEOFFROI DE COURLON, *Chronique de l'abbaye Saint-Pierre-le-Vif*.

50 *CHRONICON SANCTI MEDARDI SUESSIONENSIS*, p. 250.

51 *CHRONICUM S. CATHARINAE DE MONTE ROTHOMAGI*, pp. 399–400; the version modeled after the account of Gautier Cornut.

52 *CHRONIQUE ANONYME FINISSANT EN 1286*, pp. 80–102, here: pp. 84–85. The manuscript of that chronicle dated to the last decade of the thirteenth century (BnF, Ms. Français 8396 [part II]), before it was added to the collection of the Bibliothèque nationale de France belonged to the archbishops of Reims (Ms de Monseigneur l'Archevêque de Reims 10). It is known that a minstrel, called Minstrel of Reims, was active in Reims in the thirteenth century. He was an author of a satirical chronicle of the kings of France, from Louis VI till Louis IX; *MINSTREL OF; REIMS, Récits*.

53 “Ci fenissent les vraie Chroniques de touz les rois de France qui ont régné dès le temps aus Sarrasins jusques au roy Phelipe qui fuis au bon roi Phelipe qui mourut en Arragon.” *EXPLECIT; CHRONIQUE ANONYME FINISSANT EN 1286*, p. 102.

54 GUILLAUME GUIART, *La branche des royaus lingnages*, v. 9179–9211, p. 180.

*Foreign Chronicles*

The most important foreign chronicle relating the translation of the Crown of Thorns to Paris and one of the main foreign sources concerning the reign of Saint Louis, including the cult of the Passion relics, are certainly the *Chronica majora* written by Matthew Paris (ca 1200–1259), an English Benedictine monk from the monastery of Saint Albans in Hertfordshire.<sup>55</sup> The chronicler took a vivid, unfriendly, but filled with evident awe and jealousy, interest in France and Louis IX, whom he considered the most magnificent Christian ruler and the worldly king of kings: according to Matthew the king of France was the *rex regum* of the world and thus an image of Christ on Earth.<sup>56</sup> In 1247, Matthew was Louis IX's envoy to the king of Norway, Haakon IV, on a mission to persuade him to join the Crusade.<sup>57</sup> The *Chronica majora* provide a comprehensive account of the history of England starting from the creation of the world until 1259 (i.e., the year of the chronicler's death); the period until 1235 is a modified version of the chronicle of Roger of Wendover, a monk from the same Abbey, while the last quarter century was described by Matthew himself. In the *Chronica majora* the purchase of the relics from Constantinople by Saint Louis is mentioned three times: the author describes two translations and dates them to 1240 and 1241.<sup>58</sup> In one of the shorter versions of the chronicles of England, the *Historia Anglorum*, embracing the years 1067–1253, Paris contaminates all the translations and dates them to 1241.<sup>59</sup> Even though his accounts are much less precise than the contemporary French texts, they provide some important information especially on the chronology of the events and the liturgy in honour of the relics. Also, his works are of great importance for the studies on the translation of the Crown of Thorns to Paris because they contain Matthew's drawings, among which his illustrations there is<sup>60</sup> a miniature connected with the Parisian translations of 1239–1242.<sup>61</sup>

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55 So far the best monograph of Matthew's life and work has been a work issued more than half a century ago: VAUGHAN, *Matthew Paris*; see also: VAUGHAN, *Illustrated Chronicles of Matthew Paris*.

56 MATTHEW PARIS, *Chronica majora*, vol. V, pp. 480–481.

57 MATTHEW PARIS, *Chronica majora*, vol. IV, pp. 651–652. Louis IX offered the king of Norway the command of the Crusaders' fleet. Cf. JACKSON, *The Seventh Crusade*, p. 23.

58 MATTHEW PARIS, *Chronica majora*, vol. III, pp. 517–518, vol. IV, pp. 75–76, 90–92.

59 MATTHEW PARIS, *Historia Anglorum*, vol. II, pp. 446–447.

60 LEWIS, *The Art of Matthew Paris in the 'Chronica majora'*.

61 Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, Ms. 16, fol. 141r°.

Another foreign chronicler worthy of our attention is Giovanni Colonna and his universal chronicle, the *Mare historiarum*.<sup>62</sup> Written in the mid-fourteenth century and ending at 1251, Colonna's *Mare historiarum* is an important source because it was broadly distributed and translated in France in the fourteenth and fifteenth century, often luxuriously illustrated. It does not contain any additional details of the course of the translation, the author makes mistakes in details, although he seems to be quite well informed given the fact that almost a century had passed between the translations and writing of the *Mare historiarum*; the actual importance of Colonna's account consists in, like in case of many other chroniclers, the ideological meaning he gave to the translation, but this shall be discussed in due course.

To sum up the information about the chroniclers' mentions of the translation of the Crown of Thorns and other Passion relics to France in 1239–1242, one should say that although more than a dozen authors of French and foreign chronicles active in 1240–1340 described the events in greater or lesser detail, many contemporary chronographers or historiographers, also French ones, ignored the translation. Especially strange seems the silence in that subject on the part of the first true (according to Jacques Le Goff<sup>63</sup>) biographer of Louis IX, Jean de Joinville. Another interesting issue is the fact that most chroniclers mentioning the translation are Benedictine monks, including an Englishman, Matthew Paris. This may be correlated with the dissemination of *Iter Hierosolimitanum* before the beginning of the French vernacular historiography in ca. 1200, also created by the Benedictine authors. It is true that Matthew Paris was fascinated with France and its king, but another foreign chronicler who paid similar attention to France and also knew Louis IX personally, Salimbene of Parma,<sup>64</sup> a Franciscan monk, did not make a briefest mention of the king's translation of the Crown of Thorns.

## Other Sources

The last kind of sources useful in gathering knowledge about the translation of the Crown of Thorns are the partially preserved accounts of the Louis's

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62 GIOVANNI COLONNA, *Mare historiarum* (RHF), pp. 106–123 (with a wrong identification of the author as the provincial superior of the Dominicans in Tuscany deceased in 1290, archbishop of Messina and, finally, cardinal) and GIOVANNI COLONNA, *Mare historiarum* (MGH), pp. 266–283 (it lacks the fragment about the translation which was included in the RHF).

63 LE GOFF, *Saint Louis*, pp. 473–498.

64 About Salimbene and Louis IX: LE GOFF, *Saint Louis*, pp. 451–460.

court; when talking about the liturgy in honour of the relics and the importance of the Crown of Thorns for the Capetians' ideology of power we will refer to the court accounts of the successors of Saint Louis.

## 2. The Historical Context of the Translation

### Translation of 1239 in the Light of Hagiographic Sources

We shall base the reconstruction of the translation from 1239 on the *libellus* of Gautier Cornut who, being an eyewitness and participant in the events, wrote them down soon after they had happened, and for the two consecutive translations of 1241–1242, the account of Gerard of Saint-Quentin, who described also the translation of 1239. The information given by these two authors will be complemented or confronted with that provided by the other sources discussed above.

Of all the authors discussing the translation, the most detailed historical context is presented by archbishop Gautier Cornut. He begins his story of the translation with the imprisonment and death of the Latin emperor of Constantinople, Peter de Courtenay (1219). Next, in several ten sentences he presents the mishaps of the Latin Empire, gradually yielding in 1217–1238 to the Greeks and Bulgarians, as well as the family connections of the Courtenay dynasty with the family of Louis IX who was asked for help by emperor Baldwin II (1228–1261), desperately seeking support from the pope and the princes of the West in fighting off the Eastern Orthodox Greeks. Baldwin II appealed to Louis IX as his relative and senior at the same time (for he intended to take over his hereditary castellany of Courtenay and marquisate of Namur).<sup>65</sup> As it was confirmed by the

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65 “Duplex autem adventus ipsius [Balduini] causa dicitur extitisse, scilicet ut a rege Ludovico, de cuius sanguine ex utraque parte patris et matris ortum habuerat, et a prudentissima matre eius Blancha, cuius neptem duxerat in uxorem, a nobilibus etiam regni Francie baronibus, consanguineis suis, in tante necessitatis articulo, sibi et suis peteret subveniri: alia insuper causa suberat, ut hereditatem fratrum suorum, qui sine herede decesserant, adiret, marchionatum Namurcensem cum pertinentiis, et castellaniam Curtineti;” GAUTIER CORNUT, *De susceptione Coronae Domini*, p. 28. Paternal ancestors of both Louis IX and Baldwin II were the Capetians: Baldwin II's grandfather was Peter, the youngest son of Louis VI married to Lady of Courtenay. Thus Baldwin II was a great grandson and Louis IX, a great great grandson of Louis VI. Besides, Baldwin II's mother, Yolanda of Flanders was a sister of Isabelle, grandmother of Louis IX. The Courtenays took the throne in Constantinople in 1216 after the death of Henry I of Flanders: his successor, Peter II of Courtenay, father of Baldwin II, was married to Henry's sister, Yolanda.



envoy from Constantinople who had followed Baldwin to France, the situation of the Latin Empire became even worse after 1238 when Baldwin's father-in-law, emperor-regent, John of Brienne, died and Constantinople was almost entirely surrounded by the Greeks. The town was struck with hunger, and many inhabitants, including some of the Latin barons, escaped expecting siege and defeat, all the more, probable due to frequent desertions and fearing that there will be not enough men to defend the walls.<sup>66</sup> Thus, Baldwin II beseeched the king and the queen mother for help lest the Constantinopolitan Empire, once gloriously won by the Franks, fall into the hands of the infidel Greeks. Baldwin presented the letters of indulgence issued by Gregory IX in which the pope considered aiding the Latin Empire as equivalent to the participation in a Crusade to the Holy Land. Saint Louis and Blanche of Castile offered emperor Baldwin a considerable sum of money and started to look for other benefactors and the bravest knights who could set off to the East.<sup>67</sup>

Baldwin's pleas, despite Gautier Cornut's assurances that Saint Louis gave the emperor a large sum of money, did not bring much effect, which the chronicler does admit saying that *some* of the emperor's relatives, out of piety and respecting the ties of kinship, made an oath to Baldwin II

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66 "... statim etiam Constantinopolitane civitatis et terre alterius, si quam extra muros eiusdem urbis habebat, ita per incursus hostium arctatum penitus et opressum, quod vix eis ad campos pateret aditus; intus autem uxor sua, proceres et vulgus, quotidianis egebant alimentis. Discurrebant etenim libere per regionem hostiles impetus, non permittentes in urbe deferri victualia: congregatis turmis hoc animo ut ipsam Constantinopolim obsiderent. Ad hec maior rem urgebat desolationis cumulus, quia multi de populo, de nobilibus aliqui, presentibus devicti angustiis, et futura metuenses pericula, noctu vel alias furtive muros civitatis exibant, et per mare vel viarum discrimina fugientes, propter metum, se certioribus periculis exponebant; propter quod erat dubium ne, si urbem hostilis circumiret obsidio, non invenirent proceres quos ad munitionem murorum in propugnaculis collocarent;" GAUTIER CORNUT, *De susceptione Coronae Domini*, p. 29.

67 "... unde frequentius regem Francorum matremque eius et amicos suos circuit sollicitus, humiliter interpellans, miserabiliter obsecrat ut sibi subveniant, et imperium Romanie quod per Francos potenter et gloriose fuerat acquisitum, non permittant rursus in Grecorum infidelium redigi servitutum. Litteras exhibet pape Gregorii, quibus eiusdem imperii necessitati succurrentibus eandem concedit indulgentiam, quam in subsidium Terre Sancte proficiscentibus concesserat concilium generale. Ad hec moventur rex et regina, de thesauris suis magnas ei pecunie conferunt quantitates, stipendiarios ipsi querunt, et sociant milites alios quos noverant egregios bellatores;" *ibid.*

promising him to help as much as they could.<sup>68</sup> The archbishop also alludes that seeing that his earlier attempts did not bring the expected results, the emperor, having considered the piety of Louis and Blanche, decided to mention the Crown of Thorns.<sup>69</sup> Namely, Baldwin said that there was such terrible hunger in Constantinople that the barons ruling the city after John of Brienne's death agreed that they had to sell or at least pawn the greatest treasure of the Empire called the *titulus Imperii*: the Crown of Thorns.<sup>70</sup> Having learnt that, Baldwin II wanted this invaluable jewel of the Empire to go to the king of France, as his relative, benefactor, lord, and senior (*dominus*), and to the kingdom from which the emperor's parents came.<sup>71</sup> The sale of the relic, not allowed by the canon law,<sup>72</sup> however, would have hurt the royal conscience of Louis IX, which is why Baldwin II, with tears, begged the king of France to take this relic as a gift (*munus*) and that the latter immediately sent to Constantinople Brothers Jacques and André from the Dominican order to take over the Crown of Thorns and bring it to France.<sup>73</sup> Gautier Cornut writes that Jacques was the prior of the Dominican order in Constantinople and that he had often seen the Crown<sup>74</sup> so he could authenticate the relic. The second Dominican monk was most probably none other than André of Longjumeau,<sup>75</sup> later known as the ambassador

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68 "Nonnulli de consanguineis eius, quos et pietas et carnalis affectus induxerat, eidem se iuramento confederant, pollicentes seipsum pro viribus secuturos; *ibid.*

69 "Perpendens igitur idem Balduinus devotionem regis et matris ipsius, de sacrosancta spinea Corona facit ei[s]dem mentionem;" *ibid.*

70 "... quod incomparabilem thesaurus illum Corone Domini (que totius imperii titulus erat et gloria specialis) oportebat eos alienis vendere, vel ad minus titulo pignoris obligare;" *ibid.*

71 "Unde ardentem habebat in votis, quatinus ad regem, consanguineum, dominum, et beneficium suum, necnon ad regnum Francie, de quo parentes ipsius utrique processerant, huius speciose gemme honor inestimabilis et gloria provenirent;" *ibid.*

72 HERRMANN-MASCARD, *Les reliques des saints. Formation coutumière d'un droit*, pp. 348–363.

73 "Verum, quia idem Balduinus perceperat quod si tam preciosa res ei venderetur pecunie precio, regis consciencia lederetur, affectuosa prece cum lacrimis eidem supplicat ut munus illud honorificum ab ipso recipere dono dignetur, et gratis. ... Rex igitur, referens grates uberrimas Balduino, gratanter annuit se munus illud inestimabile recepturum ab ipso. Mittuntur ocius a rege Constantinopolim pro complendo negocio Iacobus et Andreas, fratres ordinis Predicatorum;" GAUTIER CORNUT, *De susceptione Coronae Domini*, p. 29.

74 "Iacobus, prior fratrum eiusdem ordinis fuerat in urbe predicta, ubi Coronam ipsam frequenter viderat, et ea que circa illam erant optime cognoscebat;" *ibid.*

75 So: PELLIOT, *Les Mongols et la papauté*. In GUILLAUME DE ROUBRUCK, *Mission*, p. 35, the identification of André from the Dominican order mentioned in *De susceptione* with André of Longjumeau is considered as certain. LE GOFF,

of Saint Louis to the Great Khan.<sup>76</sup> The Dominicans were accompanied by an envoy of Baldwin II with letters patent in which the emperor ordered the Constantinopolitan barons to hand over the relics to the envoys of the French king. However, when they reached the city it turned out that the barons had managed to pawn the relics with the Venetians and were obliged to pay off the debt before the nearest feast of Saints Gervasius and Protasius (i.e., June 16, 1239). If the debt had not been paid on time, the bond was to become an act of sale and the creditors were to take the relic to Venice.<sup>77</sup> Surprisingly, the archbishop expresses a belief that these circumstances were a proof that God himself was thus paving the way for the pious intention of the king of France.<sup>78</sup> After the negotiations between the regents of Constantinople, the Venetian merchants, and the French Dominicans, an agreement was made according to which Louis IX became the legal owner of the relic but the Crown of Thorns was to stop over in Venice and it was to be accompanied in its journey by the envoys of the king of France, of the Latin Empire, and selected eminent Venetians.<sup>79</sup> Despite the unfavorable season: Christmas was near and in the thirteenth century sailing was avoided in winter, and the fears of the navy of emperor John III Doukas

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*Saint Louis*, pp. 140–146, does not make any statements about the identity of brother André mentioned by Gautier; RICHARD, *André de Longjumeau*, pp. 63–64, considers such an identification as probable but not evident. See also: GUERRY, “A path prepared for them by the Lord: Saint Louis, Dominican diplomacy and the Odyssey of Jacques and André of Longjumeau”, pp. 1–31.

76 See PYSIAK, *Król Ludwik IX Święty i Mongolowie*, pp. 55–62; PELLISOT, *Les Mongols et la papauté*; RICHARD, *Saint Louis, roi d'une France féodale, soutien de la Terre Sainte*, pp. 489–492; SPOTKANIE DWÓCH ŚWIATÓW, pp. 69–78.

77 “... tanta enim barones imperii arctaverat angustia, quo sacratissimam Coronam pro ingenti summa pecunie compulsi sunt Venetis obligare. Cives autem Venetie, qui thesaurum illum nobilem plurimum affectaverant, hanc obtinuerunt conditionem apponi, quod, nisi Corona sancta per heredem imperii vel barones redimeretur infra terminum, videlicet solemnitatem SS. martyrum Gervasii et Prothasii, ipsa caderet in commissum, ita quod illa pignoris obligatio converteretur in titulum venditionis pro pecunia iam soluta; apposuerant insuper quod illud pignus inestimabile Venetiam interim transferretur;” GAUTIER CORNUT, *De susceptione Coronae Domini*, pp. 29–30.

78 “Post multos itaque viarum anfractus, ingredientes Constantinopolim, inveniunt ad pium regis propositum via a Domino preparatam;” GAUTIER CORNUT, *De susceptione Coronae Domini*, p. 29.

79 “Conveniunt ergo cum Venetis, ut nuncii regales, quorum vita et habitus religio nem testabantur, illud sacrosanctum portarent Venetiam, adiunctis sibi solemnibus nunciis imperii, presentibus etiam magnis civibus Venetorum;” GAUTIER CORNUT, *De susceptione Coronae Domini*, p. 30.

Vatatzes who was said to have learnt that the relics were to be taken away from Constantinople and wanted to intercept them,<sup>80</sup> the journey passed smoothly, since those travelling in God's name can not be hindered by any obstacles,<sup>81</sup> and in the early 1239 the relic arrived in Venice. The embassy transporting the relic was enthusiastically received and the relic itself was deposited in a sealed vessel in the vaults of Saint Mark's Basilica.<sup>82</sup> From Venice Jacques and the Constantinopolitan envoys went to France where they informed the king and queen about the situation; André remained in Venice to guard the relic.<sup>83</sup> Louis IX sent a ceremonial embassy to Venice a member of which was again Brother Jacques, accompanied by the royal envoys bringing the money to redeem the relics and the envoys of the Latin Empire who were going back to the East. The king of France sent a letter to emperor Frederick II asking him to extend, should such need arise, help to the French delegation (*conductum, consilium, iuvamen*).<sup>84</sup> In Venice, the king's envoys – thanks to God's will (*procurante divina clementia*) – met the merchants from France who, having read the king's missive, gave them credit, putting their money at the envoys' disposal.<sup>85</sup> To the Venetians' regret the relic was redeemed and after checking whether the seals of the barons of the Latin Empire on the *receptaculum* in which the Crown of Thorns was deposited in the basilica treasury were not broken, Louis's envoys took the relic and left for France, in their journey taking advantage of the protection (*securitas conductus*) extended to them by Frederick II's men.<sup>86</sup> Besides

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80 Ibid.

81 "... sed nunciis venientibus in nomine Domini nihil contrarietatis obsistit;" *ibid.*

82 "Ingrediuntur Venetiam ovanter recepti, beatissimam Coronam cum vase signato in thesauraria Capelle beati Marci evangeliste cum diligentia et devotione deponunt;" *ibid.*

83 "Relicto ibidem fratre Andrea custode thesauri nobilis, frater Iacobus cum nunciis imperii festinanter ad regem accedit, rem gestam et statum negocii regi fideliter exprimit et regine. Gaudent ambo, et omnes quibus id secretum communicavit letitia ineffabili, sperantes in Domino quod ipse qui ceperat, votum eorum feliciter consummaret;" *ibid.*

84 "Preparant itaque nuncios solemnes et discretos cum fratre Iacobo et nunciis imperii, mittentes eos Venetiam, instructos plenius et munitos de pecunia ad redemptionem sacri pignoris obtinendam. Imperatori Friderico scribitur ut, si opus sit, nunciis regalibus conductum, consilium conferat et iuvamen;" *ibid.*

85 "Expedite veniunt Venetiam, fratrem Andream inveniunt cum thesauro; procurante divina clementia, tunc temporis in partibus illis negociabantur natione de regno Francie mercatores; exhibitis sibi litteris regalibus, de mutuo exponunt pecuniam ad libitum nunciorum;" *ibid.*

86 "Redimitur sanctum pignus, dolentibus Venetis, sed, pro conditionibus initis, non valentibus obviare. Agnitis sigillis procerum, vasculum sancte Corone suscipiunt

the emperor's protection, the delegation was also in God's care ensured to them by escorting such an eminent relic: Gautier Cornut says that during the whole journey they did not encounter any adverse weather, not a drop fell on them, even though it often rained heavily, but only after the envoys had gone to their lodgings.<sup>87</sup> Upon reaching France they sent a messenger to the court to let Louis IX know when the Crown of Thorns would arrive at Troyes.<sup>88</sup> It is in that town that the actual translation was to begin.

Before we comment on Gautier Cornut's account, we shall discuss the information on the historical circumstances of the translation given in the other sources.

As we know, Gerard of Saint-Quentin focused especially on the second translation, which shall be discussed later in this volume; however, he mentions some details concerning that of 1239 different, for most part, from the information given by Cornut; often unexpectedly vague. According to Gerard, the count of Namur and the future emperor of Constantinople, Baldwin, who came to the king of France to get help for his Empire, having found that Louis IX especially venerated the *instrumenta Passionis* and due to the help the king offered him, gave Louis the Crown of the Lord.<sup>89</sup> The king immediately selected two Dominican monks who were given instructions necessary to carry out the project and the king's letters. They set off to Constantinople together with some other envoys about whom we do not learn anything.<sup>90</sup> On their arrival to Constantinople, the king's envoys

nuncii, se vie laboribus committentes; conductus securitatem, ubi decuit, per imperatoris ministros, habuerunt;" *ibid.*

87 "... protectos insuper divini muneris presentia, nihil in via contrarium contristavit; nulla eis intemperies aeris nocuit, nec stilla pluvie cecidit super eos, licet ipsis susceptis in hospitio pluisset pluries abundanter;" *ibid.*

88 "Premittunt nuncios, qui iam usque Trecas munus sacratissimum nunciat advenisse;" *ibid.*

89 "Nam divino nutu illustrissimus vir Namucensis comes nomine Balduinus, ex successione paterna Constantinopolitanus imperator futurus, qui propter specialem Constantinopolitani imperii necessitatem ad prefatum regem in Franciam venerat, ob precipue devotionis insignia que in eo viderat et impense sibi ab eodem rege debite venerationis obsequia, dedit et concessit Corone Domini et salvatoris nostri proprietatem quam habebat, de cuius presentia Constantinopolis civitas tunc pollebat;" GERARD DE SAINT-QUENTIN, *Translatio Sancte Corone (Exuvia)*, p. 103.

90 "... jam preaftus rex de Corona habenda incessanter estuans, de mittendis pro ea celeriter nunciis sollicite tractare incipit, et dilationis impaciens, duos fratres ordinis Predicatorum, discretos, providos et honestos, super prefato negotio sufficienter instructos, et ipsius regis litterarum, ut oportebat, patrocinio communis, ad Constantinopolitanas partes, associatis sibi quibusdam aliis, mittere non postponit;" GERARD DE SAINT-QUENTIN, *Translatio Sancte Corone (Exuvia)*, p. 104.

called the ‘right persons,’ showed them the letters of the king of France and requested the relic. Only in this place does the reader learn that it had been pawned.<sup>91</sup> The previous owners of the Crown – but it is impossible to guess whom Gerard meant: the nominal owners, i.e., the Franks from Constantinople or the creditors with whom the relic was pawned – very unwillingly handed the relic over to the envoys of the king of France, but were not paid money for it (*sic!*).<sup>92</sup> After the successful conclusion of the negotiations the royal envoys returned with the relic to France.<sup>93</sup>

The uselessness of the information about the events preceding the translation of the Crown of Thorns in the hagiography of Saint Louis has been discussed above. It is only worth briefly mentioning the *Beati Ludovici vita partim ad lectiones partim ad sacrum sermonem parata*. (Its author clearly used Gerard’s text, which we shall prove when analyzing the descriptions of the translation solemnities for he is the only life-writer who paid more attention to the historical circumstances of the translation; he went as far as to construct his own version of the events by reverting their course. According to him the relics of the Holy Cross were translated from Constantinople first<sup>94</sup> and the translation of the Crown of Thorns from Venice is described afterward, but he does not mention the Constantinopolitan background of that translation.<sup>95</sup>

### The Circumstances of the Translation of 1239 in the Light of French and Foreign Chronicles

The greatest contribution to the reconstruction of the events preceding the translation was certainly made by Alberic of Trois-Fontaines who described them very concisely but specifically. Although he is not interested in the details of Baldwin II’s stay in France and his negotiations with the king or the course of the consecutive embassies and the logistics of the whole undertaking, he briefly states that Baldwin pawned with Louis IX his family

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91 “Qui concomitante Domino iter suum cum Constantinopolim pervenissent, convocatis qui fuerant convocandi, negocium pro quo iverant proposuerunt in medium, plenam de omnibus fidem facientibus predictarum auctoritatibus litterarum. Lectis igitur eorum litteris et secundum juris ordinem approbatis, gloriosissimam Domini Coronam a creditoribus qui eam pignoris nomine detinebant, sibi tradi instantissime petierunt;” *ibid.*

92 “Quam et sibi, licet nimirum inviti, propositis prius hinc inde allegationibus, tandem refusa sibi pecunia, postulantibus tradiderunt;” *ibid.*

93 “Sicque consummato feliciter negotio, fideles nuncii cum gaudio in Franciam sunt reversi;” *ibid.*

94 *BEATI LUDOVICI VITA PARTIM AD LECTIONES*, p. 171.

95 *BEATI LUDOVICI VITA PARTIM AD LECTIONES*, p. 172.

castle in Namur for 50 thousand Parisian livres and the king also gave him 10 thousand livres for renouncing the Crown of Thorns which had been pawned in Venice; besides the king spent 2 thousand livres on the expenses connected with bringing the relic to France.<sup>96</sup> This account deserves attention: Alberic, the only author contemporary to the described events openly talks about the translation as an exchange of benefits, indeed, in his opinion Saint Louis simply bought the relic from Baldwin II.

In his *Chronique rimée*, Philippe Mouskès presents very briefly some general information entirely consistent with that provided by archbishop Cornut and not contributing anything to the reconstruction of the events preceding the translation: emperor Baldwin II who, at the advice of king John of Brienne went to France (to get help for the Empire), gave Louis IX, who insistently asked for it, the Crown of Thorns pawned by the Constantinopolitan barons with the Venetians. Mouskès does not describe the details of the embassy, he only states that it was necessary to go to Venice (he does not mention the journey of the Dominican monks, Jacques and André to Constantinople) and that it was an expensive undertaking.<sup>97</sup> In his *Memoriale omnium temporum* Vincent de Beauvais does not provide any details except the statement that the translation took place thanks to the assiduity (*industria*) of the king of France and with the consent (*annuente*) of Baldwin II.<sup>98</sup>

Slightly more attention should be paid to the chroniclers from Saint-Denis, but they did not concentrate on the events preceding the translation. Guillaume de Nangis presents the issue briefly: he says that Saint Louis, grateful to God for all His gifts, especially the peace given to him by the enemies of his kingdom, decided to bring to Paris the Crown of Thorns and sent a solemn embassy to Constantinople to that end.<sup>99</sup> In the Latin

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96 ALBERIC DE TROIS-FONTAINES, *Chronica*, p. 947 (RHF, vol. XXI, p. 626). About the expenses made by Louis IX in connection with bringing the Crown of Thorns to France and the value of the deposit: KOVAČ, *Die Dornenkrone Christi und die Sainte-Chapelle in Paris*, pp. 462–479, especially pp. 463–469.

97 “Quant l’emperère Bauduins / De Coustantinoble, orfenins, / Par le conseil del roi Jehan, / Se fu de là partis l’autr’an, / Cele Couroune proprement, / Dont courounés fu asprement / Li vrais Dieux, quant en croix fu mis, / En aporta de cel país, / L’emperère, et s’el mist en gages / A çaus de Venise plus sages, / Par le conseil de son clergiet, / Qui l’en orent donné congiet. / Al roi, son cousin, l’otroia / Ki moult durement l’en proia. / S’envoia pourvec en Venisse, / Mais grande ricoisse i ot mise;” PHILIPPE MOUSKÈS, *Chronique rimée*, v. 30581–30596, vol. II, p. 667.

98 VINCENT OF BEAUVAIS, *Memoriale omnium temporum*, p. 161.

99 “Videns autem Ludovicus rex Franciae, quod requiem de suis hostibus sibi Dominus tribuisset, non ingratus nec immemor beneficiorum sibi ab ipso

version of Guillaume's chronicle neither the situation of the Latin Empire nor the details of the rather complicated undertaking which the translation turned out to be are mentioned. The efforts of emperor Baldwin II in gaining Louis' help against the Greeks are hinted at only in the French version as if Baldwin II's arrival in France was only a pretext for the translation: Saint Louis, grateful to God for the peace which France had enjoyed for four years, wishing to maintain that peace forever, insisted that the emperor of Constantinople who had come to muster help against the Greeks, should give him the Crown of Thorns. When Baldwin II conferred to Louis IX the right to own the relic, the royal and imperial envoys went together to Constantinople and brought the most Holy Crown with great honours to France.<sup>100</sup> Thus, even the French version of the chronicle of Guillaume de Nangis does not mention pawning and redeeming from the Venetians of the relic by Louis IX. There may be a reason for this, which we shall soon show. The words describing the translation of the Crown of Thorns as a specific royal vote for the peace during his reign now and in the future are justified by the events of the 1230s: in 1234 Blanche of Castile and the young king managed to control the barons, troublesome during Louis IX's minority, but the chronicler knows that at the beginning of the next decade the Capetian monarchy was to encounter new troubles: the Lusignan rebellion in Poitou and Saintonge and the invasion of those provinces by the king of England, Henry III, victoriously repelled at Taillebourg and Saintes in 1242. It is evident that the interpretation of the translation of the Crown of Thorns as an action in the sphere of political theology presented by Guillaume de Nangis constitutes the ideological layer of his account and far from being but an illustration of the historical facts accompanying the event. The account in

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Domino collatorum, anno regni sui tertidecimo et aetatis suae XXIII, ab Incarnatione vero Domini M.CC.XXXIX, per solemnes et certos nuntios de partibus Constantinopolis fecit coronam sacratissimam, qua Christus filius Dei pro nostris enormitatibus in passione sua coronari voluit, apportari;" GUILLAUME DE NANGIS, *Gesta sancti Ludovici / Vie de Saint Louis*, p. 326.

A very similar account in the French version, see the next fn.

100 "Li roys Loys qui vit que Diex li ot ja donné IIII. ans et plus pays en son royaume et repos de ses anemis, si noublia pas les biens et les honneurs que i li avoit fait; ainçois, pource que gegnieur pais venit et feut tous jours en son royaume, il fit et pourchassa tant vers lenpereour de Constantinoble, qui lors estoit venus en France pour avoir secours contre les Griex qui li donna et otroia la sainte couronne despines dont nostre Sires fu couronnés au jour de sa passion. Li roy Loys envoa mesagiers certains et sollepmnez avesques les messages lempereour Baudouin, en Constantinoble, et fit aporter mout honnourablement la sainte couronne en France;" GUILLAUME DE NANGIS, *Gesta sancti Ludovici / Vie de Saint Louis*, p. 327.



the continuation of Sigebert of Gembloux' chronicle is still briefer: we only learn that the Crown was brought from Constantinople.<sup>101</sup> The *Breve chronicon Ecclesiae Sancti Dionysii ad cyclos paschales* does not deal with the historical circumstances of the translation in any way: the account begins with the description of bringing the relic to Paris.<sup>102</sup> In the French version of Primat's chronicle by Jean de Vignay there is no mention of the translation but only of founding Sainte-Chapelle in which Louis IX deposited the Crown of Thorns, the True Cross, the head of the lance which pierced the side of Christ and other holy relics which he had obtained from the emperor of Constantinople with great effort and at great expense.<sup>103</sup> Interestingly, the chronicle of Jean de Vignay is the only one which says that 'a large part' of the Crown of Thorns was deposited in Sainte-Chapelle, and not the whole Crown. This seems to indicate that the author was not merely a faithful translator of Primat's chronicle and his work can not be treated as just a French-language version of the former. The mention of the 'large part' of the Crown stored in Sainte-Chapelle is probably due to Jean de Vignay's empirical knowledge about the relic in his time when it must have been depleted by the thorns given away by the Capetians after the translation of 1239, which we shall discuss later on.

The other chronicles do not contribute much or anything at all, or give wrong information. In the chronicle of Saint-Médard in Soissons there is no mention of the events preceding the translation.<sup>104</sup> The chronicle of Rouen only confirms the translation of 1239 but does not mention the next ones.<sup>105</sup> Pierre Coral from the Abbey of Saint-Martial in Limoges does write that Saint Louis redeemed the relics pawned by the emperor of Constantinople but identifies the translation of 1239 with that of 1241 and dates it to 1240.<sup>106</sup> The chronicle of the Abbey of Saint-Taurin in Évreux does not mention the

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101 GUILLAUME DE NANGIS, *Chronicon*, p. 548.

102 *BREVE CHRONICON ECCLESIAE SANCTI DIONYSII*, p. 143.

103 "Et si fonda à Paris, el palès royal, une très noble et gracieuse chapele, et mist dedenz très dignement la Couronne d'espines de Nostre Seigneur une grant partie, et une partie de la vraie Crois et du fer de la lance qui aouvri le costé de Nostre Sauveur, et plusieurs autres très dignes et très precieuses reliques, lesquelles il out de l'emperere de Coustentinoble à grant travail et à granz despens;" PRIMAT / JEAN DE VIGNAY, *Chronique dite de Primat*, p. 66.

104 *CHRONICON SANCTI MEDARDI SUESSIONENSIS*, p. 250.

105 *CHRONIQUE DE ROUEN*, p. 338.

106 "Eodem anno [1240] idem Ludovicus rex recepit reliquias, quas redemit pro imperatore Constantinopolitano magna summa pecunie, scilicet Crucem Dominicam, Spongiam, Lanceam, Coronam et plures alias reliquias;" PETRUS CORAL, *Chronicon Sancti Martiali*, p. 765.

translation but a discovery (*inventio*) of the Crown of Thorns.<sup>107</sup> The chronicle by Geoffroi de Courlon from the Abbey of Saint-Pierre-le-Vif in Sens is a positive exception in this respect, because its author is the second French chronicler who openly says that Saint Louis redeemed the pawned relic.<sup>108</sup> The French-language chronicle written in prose, compiled at the beginning of the reign of Philip the Fair, informs about redeeming the Crown of Thorns from the Venetians, with whom it was pawned by the emperor of Constantinople, but, like Peter Coral's chronicle, contaminates all the translations into one and, not mentioning the date, places the translation after the events of 1257 in a larger passage discussing the piety of Louis IX, considering the translation as a proof of God's special love for the king. It was God who gave Louis IX sufficient power, authority, and will, which allowed him to redeem from the Venetians the Crown of Thorns, the True Cross, the Lance of Longinus, and Christ's nails and bonds from the Holy Cross.<sup>109</sup>

Guillaume Guiart, who wrote in ca. 1314, gives in his *La branche des royaus lingnages* the chronologically correct moment of the translation (without a date but using the sequence of events from Louis IX's reign), quoting an unknown chronicle: probably he meant the chronicles from Saint-Denis. Guiart even stresses the story of redeeming the relic, making it a reason for greater glory of Saint Louis. *Ceus de Grèce* (it is difficult to assess whether Guiart meant the Byzantines or the Franks) heavily in debt because of the wars they waged, they pawned the relics with the Venetians who lent them money *par mercheandise*, hoping that they would be able

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107 *CHRONICON MONASTERII SANCTI TAURINI EBROICENSIS*, pp. 465–467.

108 “Videns Iohannes imperator quod sine Francis non resistere posset, misit Balduinum, imperii heredem, ad generositatem suam in Frantiam. Consanguineus erat idem Balduinus regis et regine Blanche, et neptem habebat illius Blanche in uxorem. ... Balduinus et barones Constantinopolitani, necessitate urgente, posuerunt apud Uenetos pro pignore sanctam coronam Domini spineam. Quo agnito in Frantia, rex Ludouicus prece obtinuit a Balduino, ut coronam redimeret, et Parisius reconderet;” GEOFFROI DE COURLON, *Chronique de l'abbaye Saint-Pierre-le-Vif*, p. 514.

109 “Dieus l'amoit, quant il li presta force et povoir et volenté de racheter de ceus de Venisse la sainte crois où Dieus fu travelliés, et la sainte couronne d'espines qu'il ot en son chief, et la sainte glaive dont Longis le féri ou costé, et les sains cloz qui li furent férus parmi les paumes et parmi les piés, et les sains liens dont il fu liés à l'estache. Tot ces précieux saintuaires racheta li rois Loois des Venisiens, là où li emperères de Constantinoble les avoit engagiés;” *CHRONIQUE ANONYME FINISSANT EN 1286*, pp. 84–85.

to get the Crown of Thorns. The king redeemed the relic, wishing to serve God, that is why he also bought the Holy Lance, the True Cross and the sponge dipped in vinegar which was given to the Crucified to drink. The author's dismay and condemnation for the peddlers of relics are clearly noticeable in the poem whereas Louis IX is presented as a pious king who prevented these dealings.<sup>110</sup>

The French chronicle containing the most information about the historical background of the translation of 1239 is the chronicle of the Benedictine nuns of Sainte-Catherine-du-Mont in Rouen, but this information is an abridged version of Gautier Cornut's *libellus*,<sup>111</sup> undoubtedly derived from the lessons of the breviary office for the Feast of the Crown of Thorns, which took place in the octave of 11–18 August. The first in Rouen thorn from the Crown bought by Louis IX was brought to the monastery of Dominican Sisters in Rouen; the monarch was the founder of that monastery and almost certainly gave the relic to it. The arrival of the Holy Thorn was most probably accompanied with a Feast in honour of the Crown of Thorns and an office following the Parisian liturgy; this is where the author of the chronicle from the Saint Catherine monastery in Rouen drew her information from.

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In his *Chronica majora*, Matthew Paris talks about the translation of the Crown of Thorns and its historical background in three different places. Altogether in all his chronicles, he mentions the translations of relics during the reign of Saint Louis in four places. He first mentions this subject when describing the trip Baldwin II took from Europe to Constantinople in order to take the power there. He says, not specifying the relics, that, in order to enrich his own treasury, Baldwin II sold to the king of France and pawned

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110 "III anz après cel mariage [1239] / Fu (par quoi France est confortée) / De Constentinoble aportée / (Si con la cronique me donne) / La très précieuse couronne / La très digne, la très honeste / Que Jésu Crist ot en sa teste / ... / De ceus de Grèce, dont la gent / Iert adont par guerre endéttée, / L'avoit sains Loïs achetée. / A Paris, quant on li tramist, / Dedans sa chapèle la mist; / Iluec la fist-Il encagier. / Après fist li roi desgagier / (De Dieu servir en espérance) / Le glorieus fer de la lance / Dont Longis la char Dieu sevrà, / L'esponge à quoi l'en l'abevra, / Et grant part de cèle crois sainte / Où sa char fu pour nous destrainte / Des mains au commun de Venise, / Qui, comme par marcheandise, / Orent presté, pour les avoir, / Aus Grezois grant plenté d'avoir, / Duquel ge ne sai dire somme;" GUILLAUME GUIART, *La branche des royaus lignages*, v. 9178–9184, 9189–9205, pp. 180, 181.

111 *CHRONICUM S. CATHARINAE DE MONTE ROTHOMAGI*, pp. 399–400.

the relics dearest to him before leaving.<sup>112</sup> He returned to Constantinople in 1238 (for a short time for, as we know, he soon went back to travel around Christian Europe collecting funds) thus the account may concern the initial negotiations between Louis IX and Baldwin II about the financial aid and relics. This is the only known account according to which the talks were held before the emperor went back to the West. Matthew Paris informs earlier on that the emperor had looked for help against the Greeks in Western Europe, including England,<sup>113</sup> thus the hypothesis is quite probable. In another place, describing the events of 1247, the chronicler claims that Baldwin, having been defeated by the Greeks, had to sell all the relics he possessed.<sup>114</sup> More exact information can be found in those parts of the chronicle concerning the years 1240–1241. Describing the events of 1240, Paris says that the emperor of Constantinople, whose treasury was depleted due to the wars, suggested that if the King of France filled it again, he would, due to their long-lasting kinship and love between their houses, hand the Crown of Thorns over to Louis IX.<sup>115</sup> The king of France gladly agreed and gave Baldwin II an important sum of money (at the queen mother's intercession). Certain of his quick victory, the emperor, fulfilling the agreement (*juxta pacta et pollicita*) and wishing to compensate for (*pro premio retributionis*) such a great benefaction (*pro tanto beneficio*) gave Louis IX the Crown of Thorns in return.<sup>116</sup> It seems that the words *premium retributionis* were used intentionally to denote the transaction between the two parties: this topic will be analyzed in greater detail below. Next, in the description of the year 1241 Matthew includes a chapter *On the three*

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112 “Qui etiam, ut thesaurus accumularet et adaugeret, reliquias carissimas et certissimas vendidit Regi Francorum, nencnon et quaedam sibi carissima impignoravit;” MATTHEW PARIS, *Chronica majora*, vol. III, pp. 517–518.

113 MATTHEW PARIS, *Chronica majora*, vol. III, pp. 386, 480–481, 486.

114 MATTHEW PARIS, *Chronica majora*, vol. IV, p. 626.

115 “Necessitate enim ingruente, et thesauri carentia, ut moris est bella gerentibus, cor Baldewini imperatoris Constantinopolitani perurgente, significavit regi Francorum ipse imperator B[aldewinus] quod si ipsum jam pecunia destitutum vellet de thesauro efficaciter juvare, ipsi regi pro antiquo dilectionis et consanguinitatis foedere conferret coronam Domini;” MATTHEW PARIS, *Chronica majora*, vol. IV, p. 75.

116 “Quo rex Francorum, fretus consilio naturali, gratanter accepit; et materno favore aspirante, ipsi imperatori B[aldewino], cujus continua praelia thesaurum exhauserant, largiter pecunia non parva transmissa, aerarium restauravit, familiamque suam et exercitum exhilaravit; ipsumque B[aldewinum] in spem certam optinendi victoriam contra Graecos erexit. Ipse vero pro tanto beneficio a rege optento, juxta pacta et pollicita, super aurum et topazion preciosam coronam Christi fideliter ipsi contulit pro premio retributionis;” *ibid.*

*favours given by the will of Heaven upon the Kingdom of France*, i.e., the relics: the Crown of Thorns, the Holy Cross, and the canonization of Saint Edmund Rich; this detail indicates that Paris probably wrote, or perhaps edited this chapter, not earlier than in 1246 when Edmund had already been canonized, although the opinion that the archbishop should be a saint had appeared immediately after his death in 1240.<sup>117</sup> The chapter concerns the translation of 1241, described in the greatest detail by Gerard of Saint-Quentin (or is an outcome of a contamination of the two translations of 1241–1242); Matthew Paris reminds in it about a translation of the Crown of Thorns performed, according to him, a year earlier (*anno praeterito*).<sup>118</sup> As he dates the translation of 1241 to Good Friday, which fell on March 29 in that year, we can assume that Paris based his text on the French accounts. According to the calendar used at that time in France the first day of the year was Easter Sunday. Thus, the translation, which would, according to the Julian calendar and the *circumcisio* style used in England (the New Year begins on January 1), take place in 1241, happened at the very end of the preceding year according to the French calendar. Therefore, the translation of the Crown of Thorns to France of August 11–18, 1239, according to the French calendar would have in fact taken place in the year preceding (*anno praeterito*) the translation of 1240 (1241). However, we have to reject this explanation and assume that Paris simply made a mistake in the dates because he says that the translation of the Crown of Thorns took place in the same year as the consecration of Pierre d'Aigueblanche (Peter of Acquablance) as the bishop of Hereford (December 23, 1240). Although the problem of reliability of Matthew Paris's details concerning the translation of Passion relics to France in Louis IX's times may seem insignificant now, it is important for more reasons than the reproduction of the historical

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117 "De tribus beneficiis regno Francorum caelitus his duobus annis collatis, videlicet corona et cruce Domini et corpore Sancti Aedmundi Cantuariensis archiepiscopi;" MATTHEW PARIS, *Chronica majora*, vol. IV, p. 90. It is the body of Edmund Rich, the archbishop of Canterbury in 1233–1240, who died in 1240 at a voluntary exile in Pontigny Abbey, France. Because of his conflict with Henry III Plantagenet (1216–1272) Rich was trying to pose as a successor of Thomas Becket: a victim of prosecution by a tyrant king. There were miracles at his grave in Pontigny and, although his pontificate was marked by the controversy with the Roman Curia and Gregory IX (1227–1240), the next pope, Innocent IV (1241–1254), declared him a saint. The solemn elevation of Edmund's relics took place in 1247 in Pontigny and Louis IX took part in it.

118 "Portabant etiam ipsi coronam spineam, quam simili schemate in propatulo elevantes, populi conspectibus praesentarunt, quam divina regno Francorum anno praeterito misericordia contulerat, prout prius enarratur;" MATTHEW PARIS, *Chronica majora*, vol. IV, p. 91.

background of the translation: it is going to be crucial for the quite complex issues connected with the public liturgy of these relics in France.

The chronicles of Matthew Paris clearly indicate that he treated the relic of the True Cross much more seriously than the Crown of Thorns; this is indicated not only by a comparison of the account of the translation in the *Chronica majora*, much more detailed for 1241 than<sup>119</sup> for 1239, but also the account from the *Historia minor* where the translation of 1239 is not mentioned in that year. Only in 1241 do we find a brief account of the translation of the True Cross to France on Good Friday of 1241 along with a mention that recently France was enriched, thanks to God's grace, also by the body of Saint Edmund of Canterbury, the Crown of Thorns, the True Cross, the sponge and other very valuable memorabilia.<sup>120</sup>

The last presentation of the historical background of the translation of the Crown to be discussed here is to be found in the universal chronicle *Mare historiarum* by Giovanni Colonna.<sup>121</sup> Although it comes from the end of the first half of the fourteenth century, it is very important for the interpretation of the political and sacral importance of the translation and cult of the Crown of Thorns. Colonna first talks about the Holy Land and the efforts undertaken by pope Gregory IX to defend the Kingdom of Jerusalem<sup>122</sup> then he moves on to the military problems of the Latin Empire of Constantinople caused by the Greek reconquest. His information in its majority tallies with the account of Gautier Cornut: Baldwin II went to the West to look for help leaving the Empire to his father in law, John of Brienne, the former king of Jerusalem; when the latter died, the incursions of John III Doukas of Nicaea increased so much that the Crusaders feared that their capital would be soon besieged.<sup>123</sup> Guided by compassion for the Latin East, the

119 MATTHEW PARIS, *Chronica majora*, vol. IV, pp. 90–92. See below.

120 MATTHEW PARIS, *Historia Anglorum*, vol. II, pp. 446–447.

121 GIOVANNI COLONNA, *Mare historiarum* (RHF) (fragments): pp. 106–123, here: p. 110.

122 GIOVANNI COLONNA, *Mare historiarum* (RHF), pp. 109–110.

123 GIOVANNI COLONNA, *Mare historiarum* (RHF), p. 110: “Eodem tempore, Auxentius et Vastachus, Graecorum principes, collecta suorum manu valida et, ut dicitur, cum infidelibus inita societate contra Latinos, Constantinopolitanum imperium plurimum infestare coeperunt. Unde Balduinus secundus, dicti Imperii heres, de consilio principum ac praelatorum Latinorum dicti Imperii, ad regem Francorum Ludovicum, consanguineum suum, venit ab eo auxilium petiturus, Johanne de Brenna, rege Jerosolimitano, viro strenuo ac fideli, socero scilicet suo, dicti Imperii gubernatore ac tutore relicto; sed eo pro dictis negotiis redire tardante, dictus Johannes de medio est sublatus. Quo mortuo, Constantinopolitanae civitatis et totius Imperii status ita est per incursus hostium arctatus ut ipsi civitati obsidio pararentur.”

king of France and his mother gave Baldwin a large sum of money and sent knights, famous warriors, and mercenaries to Constantinople.<sup>124</sup> Baldwin II, in turn, having considered the dedication of Louis and Blanche of Castile to God and the Empire, gave them the *stabilimentum Imperii*: the Crown of Thorns which, however, the king of France had to redeem from the Venetians through the mediation of an embassy he had sent immediately.<sup>125</sup>

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A recapitulation of the historical circumstances of the translation of the Crown of Thorns as presented in the period starting from the contemporary up to one hundred years later should concentrate on three main topics. The first one is the lack of consistency in the presentation of the facts in the basic accounts and its causes; the second one is the financial aspect of the undertaking. The third one, concerning the aid the king of France extended to the Latin Empire, is connected with the question about the ideological meaning of the translation, namely, can we seek the references to the legendary Carolingian translations in the translation of the Crown of Thorns to France in 1239?

Undoubtedly the only first-hand source for the translation of the Crown of Thorns is Gautier Cornut's account. The authors of the other texts are either more interested in other events, e.g., Gerard of Saint-Quentin, whose main aim is to describe the translation of the Holy Cross which happened a few years later. Either the affairs connected with the Crown of Thorns are of secondary importance to them, or they write much later or in a distant place, like the chroniclers from the Abbey of Saint-Martial or Rouen. For them the translation was an interesting event, since it concerned the French monarchy and thus indirectly all its subjects, but it was distant enough to discourage them from going into details. There was a marked tendency to merge the three translations into one, like it was done in the Lives of Saint Louis, into one or to consider one of them as more important than the other ones, like Matthew Paris. Whereas Gerard of Saint-Quentin devoted several dozens of sentences to the Crown of Thorns at the beginning of

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124 Ibid.: "Quare dominus rex et regina mater ejus, urbi et Latinis habitantibus compatientes, magnam pecuniae quantitatem Balduino conferunt, stipendiarios et milites adjungunt et strenuos bellatores."

125 Ibid.: "Perpendens igitur Balduinus devotionem regis et matris erga Deum et dictum Imperium, venerabilem illum thesaurum, scilicet Coronam spineam, quae in Constantinopoli a longis retro temporibus ad stabilimentum Imperii conservata fuerat – quae totius Imperii titulus erat et gloria, pro speciali gratia eis donat. Quae statim missis nunciis Venetiis ac pecunia pro qua obligata fuerat persoluta, Parisius in vigilia beati Laurentii est cum multa sollempnitate recepta, ac in capella regia collocata."

his narrative, the chroniclers from Saint-Denis, who wrote after at least more than a decade after the event, were basically not interested in the translations of 1241–1242. Guillaume de Nangis mostly synthesized the chroniclers' accounts of the translations of the Passion relics, similarly to the authors of the Lives of Saint Louis, which in their case was obvious, whereas for him the Crown of Thorns was the most important, due to the Carolingian tradition of that relic connected with his home Abbey. The chroniclers from other, usually Benedictine, abbeys mention the translation briefly and it is evident that its historical circumstances are not important for them: what matters is that a cult of new Passion relics has been established. The chronicler from Saint-Taurin in Évreux even writes about finding (*inventio*) of the Crown of Thorns rather than its translation. An exception among these texts is the one hundred years later chronicle of the Benedictine nuns of Rouen, but, as we know, their account was inspired by the text by Gautier Cornut found in the liturgical office in honour of the Crown. The chroniclers, not only in the monasteries, confused the dates and facts, especially when they wrote many years after the events, although this is not a rule: a good example of that is *La branche des roiaus lignages* by Guillaume Guiart who wrote toward the end of the reign of Philip IV the Fair and dated the translation correctly. However, an anonymous French chronicler writing at the beginning of Philip's reign did not seem to have attached any importance to the date and placed his description of the translation after the events known from 1257 in the same way as the biographers presenting the veneration of the Crown of Thorns and the Holy Cross within the broader context of Louis IX's piety.

There is no reason to question the veracity of the historical circumstances of the translation discussed in detail by Gautier Cornut, a man close to the king, who took active part in at least some of the described events. We consider his account as a faithful representation of the facts. However, it is worth noting also the things he did not say and which the other accounts reveal, or, on the contrary, which consistently distort the truth. I mean here especially the delicate issue of the financial transaction connected with cession and redeeming the Crown of Thorns. The archbishop of Sens would not even speak about it: he claims that the king of France extended to the Latin Empire financial and military help due to the kinship between the two dynasties, the seigneurial bonds linking Louis IX and Baldwin II and the Christian sense of duty (suggested by the pope's letters of indulgence), yet, he alludes that Baldwin was ready to sell the relics. In other words the issue of the financial transaction connected with obtaining the Crown of Thorns by Louis appears in Gautier Cornut's account only as an allusion made by the emperor of Constantinople. The king of France is not a relic peddler: he sends money and knights to the emperor to help him in his war with the



schismatics, but he does it as a good Christian and a good relative. He only accepts the Crown of Thorns as a gift only (*munus*) from Baldwin II. For his love of Christ Louis IX does not spare money to redeem the insignia of the Passion but, notably, when the king's envoys meet the French merchants in Constantinople, they make use of the credit given by the latter to redeem the relic. This frees Louis IX from the suspicion that he traded the relics: the Crown of Thorns is not redeemed with the use of the king's gold, which will be used later on to pay the credit back. Several years later Gerard of Saint-Quentin went a step further in this pious construction: not only did he say that Baldwin II *gave* the relic to Saint Louis due to the kings' piety (adding that he was also motivated by his gratitude for the king's generous support), but also that the king's envoys did not pay any money for redeeming the relic, even though they made such an offer. However, Gerard either knew very little about the negotiations concerning the acquisition of the Crown of Thorns in Constantinople or he intentionally presents them in obscure terms: he does not name the other party in the transaction saying that the French envoys met the "the right people."<sup>126</sup>

We know that it was not how it went: Saint Louis agreed to lend his cousin money against the collateral of the Crown of Thorns but it turned out that it had already been pawned by the regents ruling in Constantinople during Baldwin II's absence. According to Chiara Mercuri<sup>127</sup> it had been sent to Venice and was there from November or December 1238. This is indicated by the document from September 4th, 1238, issued by the constable, marshal and bailiff of the Empire for Nicolo Quirino, confirming that he had lent them 13134 hyperpera for paying off the debts made under the collateral of the Crown of Thorns and that if they did not pay them back before November 10th, he will have the right to take the Crown to Venice.<sup>128</sup> A letter from December of that year shows the same dignitaries asking the Venetian creditor to hand the relic over to Louis's envoys: the Dominicans Jacques and André and knight Michael de Sorello, who carried

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126 "Qui concomitante Domino iter suum Constantinopolim pervenissent, convocatis qui fuerant convocandi, negotium pro quo iverant proposuerunt in medium, plenam de omnibus fidem facientibus predictarum auctoritatibus litterarum. Lectis igitur eorum litteris et secundum juris ordinem approbatis, gloriosissimam Domini Coronam a creditoribus qui eam pignoris nomine detinebant, sibi tradi petierunt. Quam et sibi, licet nimirum inviti, propositis prius hinc inde allegationibus, tandem refusa sibi pecunia, postulantis tradiderunt;" GERARD DE SAINT-QUENTIN, *Translatio Sancte Corone (Exuviae)*, p. 104.

127 MERCURI, *Corona di Cristo, corona di re*, pp. 106–108.

128 LAYETTES DU TRÉSOR DES CHARTES (II), no. 2744, pp. 391–392.

the letter, after they have paid off the debt.<sup>129</sup> Indeed, this turn of affairs was quite advantageous for Louis IX: he could treat the collateral and his loan as an exchange of gifts and redeeming the relic from the Venetians as in fact freeing the Crown, thus an act of piety. The Crown was bought out, according to Gautier Cornut, with the money credited to the king's envoys by the French merchants in Constantinople, and the credit was paid with the royal gold brought to Venice. This specific double accounting allowed to present the affairs slightly differently from what they really were: Saint Louis could believe that he was given the *instrumenta Passionis* by Baldwin and the royal money was used only to pay back the emperor's debts, so as to redeem the relic and to cover the additional costs connected with the whole undertaking. The fact that Louis IX did believe that his rights to the relic from Constantinople were the result of a gift made by Baldwin II is proved by the act of assignment of 22 relics made out by the emperor in June, 1247, in Saint-Germain-en-Laye, after the next translation of the Constantinopolitan relics in 1241–1242.<sup>130</sup> One should, however, note that the financial documents of the transaction between Constantinople and Venice connected with the redeeming of the relic were carefully preserved in the royal archives in Sainte-Chapelle. Thus, even though the archbishop of Sens (and Louis himself, too) took care to remove from the public knowledge any information suggesting the commercial aspect of the undertaking, particular care was taken to retain the financial documents confirming the actual state of affairs. Was it due to a foresight, or perhaps a certain axiological ambivalence, of Saint Louis, or rather to the development of the bureaucratic apparatus whose duty (intentionally assigned by the king) was to archive, in the interests of the monarchy, all the documents related with its functioning? We can not answer this question here.

To conclude the discussion of the commercial side of the translation of the Crown of Thorns it is worth mentioning the instructive account of Matthew Paris, which in an interesting way undermines the positivist research optimism in this respect. As we have stated above, this chronicler mentioned that emperor Baldwin sold relics to the king of France twice. However, when describing the arrival of the Crown of Thorns to France, Matthew Paris says that the Saint Louis gave Baldwin II a substantial amount of money

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129 *LAYETTES DU TRÉSOR DES CHARTES* (II), no. 2753, p. 395.

130 Baldwin's original charter has not been preserved but it is known from numerous copies, including the *vidimus* from 1315; *TRÉSOR DE LA SAINTE-CHAPELLE*, no. 11, pp. 49–50; edition: *EXUVIAE SACRAE CONSTANTINOPOLITANAE*, vol. II, no. 79, pp. 133–134.

and also that the emperor – albeit reciprocally and *pro premio retributionis* but also, and, characteristically, this motif is mentioned at the first place – offered the king the relics “due to the ancient relation of love and kinship between them.”<sup>131</sup> Thus describing the background of the transaction in detail, Paris presents it as a mutual exchange of gifts (even if forced by the miserable state of the emperor’s finances) not as a simple sale, especially as he also presents Louis IX’s agreement as a consequence of a decision made by the whole family and acting in its interests (*fretus consilio naturali*). In turn, Baldwin II hands the Crown of Thorns to the king “in return for such a great benefice.”<sup>132</sup> This term may be, of course, translated as ‘benefaction’ but it should be remembered that Baldwin de Courtenay was also the Capetian’s vassal. Thus the *benefice* may be interpreted as a financial help the senior extended to his vassal in return for which he obtained goods of a different, incorporeal, value. The Crown of Thorns was, as Paris says, more precious than gold and topazes, the king of France could not just purchase it. A trade exchange was epistemologically impossible.

### 3. Reconstruction of the Translation of the Crown of Thorns in August 1239

The accounts contemporary to the translation where it was understood as a formalized liturgical ritual are rather scarce. They include first of all the *booklet* of the archbishop of Sens, Gautier Cornut, the account of Gerard of Saint-Quentin, the chronicle of the Saint Louis’s reign by Guillaume de Nangis, the *Treatise on the translation of Saint Geneviève the Virgin* by Jacques de Dinant, and the *Chronica majora* by Matthew Paris. The other contemporary authors who dealt with the translation of the Crown of Thorns did not mention the course of the celebrations or described it in a very conventional and brief manner.

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131 “Necessitate enim ingruente, et thesauri carentia, ut moris est bella gerentibus, cor Baldewini imperatoris Constantinopolitani perurgente, significavit regi Francorum ipse imperator B[aldewinus] quod si ipsum jam pecunia destitutum vellet de thesauro efficaciter juvare, ipsi regi pro antiquo dilectionis et consanguinitatis foedere conferret coronam Domini;” MATTHEW PARIS, *Chronica majora*, vol. IV, p. 75.

132 “Quod rex Francorum, fretus consilio naturali, gratanter accepit; et ... ipsi imperatori B[aldewino], cujus continua praelia thesaurum exhauserant, largiter pecunia non parva transmissa, aerarium restauravit .... Ipse vero pro tanto beneficio a rege obtento, juxta pacta et pollicita, super aurum et topazion preciosam coronam Christi fideliter ipsi contulit pro premio retributionis;” *ibid.*

The first French town in which, according to the archbishop of Sens, the relics were stationed, and the king was notified of their arrival there, was Troyes in Champagne. Overjoyed, Louis IX set off to meet them, together with his mother, Blanche of Castile, brothers, Gautier Cornut, and the bishop of Le Puy, as well as many barons and knights as he could hastily gather. The king met the relics in the archbishop's city of Villeneuve-l'Archevêque located several miles away from Sens. There the chest in which the relics were transported was opened and a silver vessel sealed by the barons of the Latin Empire was found inside. When the seals were compared with those on the letters patent of the dignitaries of the Empire, showed by the envoys, they were considered authentic, thus it was understood that the silver vessel must contain the expected relics.<sup>133</sup> Next, the barons' seals and the seal of the Venetian doge were broken (the last mentioned one was, as Cornut specifies, added for greater certainty) and the silver vessel was opened. Inside there was another one made of gold, in which the Crown of Thorns was deposited. It was opened and the relic was shown to all: the king, the queen mother, certainly to the archbishop of Sens, possibly also to bishop of Le Puy and the king's brothers. Cornut then goes on to say that everyone felt pious ardor as if they had seen the Saviour himself crowned with thorns, on the Cross. Then the Crown was put back into the vessel which was resealed; this time with the seal of Louis IX.<sup>134</sup> This happened the day after the feast of Saint Lawrence, i.e., on August 11th, 1239. This fragment proves that the king prepared the translation with great care: the customary authentication procedure was performed in Sens and the great importance attached to it indicates that the anniversary liturgy established later on (probably from 1240) for the Holy Crown Feast had its eve on August 11th.

On August 12th the liturgical introduction of the relic to Sens took place. Gautier Cornut says that it was witnessed by crowds of the faithful, thus it

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133 "Facta igitur collatione ipsorum cum sigillis quibus erat sacrae Coronae vas signatum, inveniunt vera esse;" GAUTIER CORNUT, *De susceptione Coronae Domini*, p. 30.

134 "Fractis itaque signaculis hujusmodi, necnon sigillo ducis Venetiae, quod ad maiorem certitudinem appositum fuerat, argenteum vas recludunt. Inveniunt de auro purissimo loculum pulcherrimum, in quo sancta Corona jacebat; sublato hujus operculo, visa est ab omnibus qui aderant inaestimabilis margarita. Quanta itaque devotione, quantis fletibus et suspiriis inspecta fuerit a rege et regina et aliis, vix posset perpendi. Commorantur in aspectu prae amoris desiderio, tam devotum sentientes fervorem mentium, quasi viderent coram se Dominum spinis praesentibus coronatum. Post paululum, ipsam includunt in vasculis; consignatur sigillo regio: quod in festo beati Laurentii martyr is est completum;" GAUTIER CORNUT, *De susceptione Coronae Domini*, pp. 30–31.

was public liturgy. At the very beginning of the ingress of the relics, Louis IX with his eldest brother Robert, count of Artois, barefoot, wearing only tunics, took the relics on their shoulders and brought them to the town; they were followed by a procession of barons and knights, also barefoot. To meet the solemn procession the clergy set off from the cathedral, monks carrying the relics from the Sens monasteries and the populace wishing to greet Christ present in his relics. The Sens burghers decorated their houses with rich fabrics hanging out of the windows, the bells were tolling in the whole town and people were singing; on some streets and squares (probably those along which the pageant was to go) burning candles in candelabra were displayed.<sup>135</sup> In this festive setting the Crown of Thorns was introduced to Saint Stephen's Cathedral in Sens. Unfortunately, the archbishop does not describe the liturgy performed there: one may presume that a pontifical mass was celebrated and the relics were displayed on the altar for public adoration. This description is an excellent example of the intentional continuation of the tradition of presenting the translations of relics as imitations of the entry of Christ to Jerusalem, as well as of the *adventus imperatoris*.<sup>136</sup>

On the next day, Saint Louis, *carrying the splendid vessel*, went to Paris where the relic arrived on August 18th. The royal accounts show that the journey was made by boat and the relic was escorted by Brother Jacques: probably the same Dominican monk who went to Constantinople to get the Crown.<sup>137</sup> Possibly the major part of the royal pageant (and perhaps the king himself?) went to Paris by the river. The relic was probably given a certain

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135 "In primo civitatis ingressu, rex, nudis pedibus, sola indutus tunica, cum fratre suo, Roberto comite, humiliato similiter, sacrum onus humeris suis suscipit deportandum .... Exiit obviam iocunda civitas, clericorum conventus processionaliter veniunt: clerici matricis ecclesiae sericis ornati, monachi cum ceteris religiosus sanctorum corpora deferunt, et reliquias quas imaginatur hominum devotio, tanquam sancti desiderant occurrere Domino venient. Certatim concrepant laudes Domini; tapetibus et palliis ornata civitas res suas pretiosas exhibet, campanis et organis resonat, et populi iocundantis applausu: cerei cum candelis tortilibus per plateas et vicos singulos acceduntur;" GAUTIER CORNUT, *De susceptione Coronae Domini*, p. 31.

136 See: DUFRAIGNE, *Adventus Augusti, Adventus Christi*; MACCORMACK, *Change and Continuity in Late Antiquity. The Ceremony of 'Adventus'*, pp. 721–752; also: BOZÓKY, *La politique des reliques de Constantin à Saint Louis*, pp. 206–208. One of the earliest examples of such a theological construction is the work of Victricus, the bishop of Rouen, from the turn of the fourth and fifth century; cf. Victricus OF ROUEN, *De laude sanctorum*; CLARK, *Victrius of Rouen. Praising the Saints*, pp. 365–399; CLARK, *Translating Relics. Victricus of Rouen and Fourth-Century Debate*, pp. 161–176.

137 ITINERA, DONA & HERNESIA LUDOVICI IX, p. 601.

liturgical setting, probably minimal, but it must have been at least surrounded with burning candles, which is also confirmed by the royal accounts.<sup>138</sup>

The ingress of the Crown of Thorns to Paris took place on the 18th or 19th of August<sup>139</sup> and had a similar course as in Sens, but with some important differences: the liturgy was much more extended and spectacular. The king carrying the relic was greeted, as the archbishop of Sens says, by an exclamation: “Blessed is the one who comes in God’s glory and whose rule (*ministerium*) caused the Kingdom of France to be exalted by the presence of such a great treasure”<sup>140</sup> made by many voices. In the fields at Parisian suburbs, near the Abbey of Saint-Antoine<sup>141</sup> a special high pedestal had been built on which the Crown of Thorns was displayed, surrounded by the relics of the saints (probably brought from Paris to welcome the Crown) so that the populace could see it before it was brought into the town. The relic – which was accompanied by the bishops and monks from the Parisian monasteries – probably enclosed in the gold lipsanoteca<sup>142</sup> was shown to the faithful; a sermon was also said explaining what joy it was to everyone.<sup>143</sup> Then, Saint Louis and count of Artois carried the Crown of Thorns to the

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138 Ibid.

139 Fernand de Mély (*EXUVIAE SACRAE CONSTANTINOPOLITANAE*, vol. III, pp. 273–274) opts for August 19, Jannic Durand (DURAND, *La translation des reliques impériales de Constantinople à Paris*, p. 39) believes that the relic was brought to its destination (Vincennes) on August 18 and its solemn translation to Paris took place the next day, Friday, August 19; similarly: CHARANSONNET, MORENZONI, *Prêcher sur les reliques de la Passion à l’époque de Saint Louis*, pp. 63–64.

140 “Omnium voce laudatur dicentium: ‘Benedictus qui venit in honore Domini, cuius ministerio regnum Franciae tanti praesentia muneris exaltatur!’”; GAUTIER CORNUT, *De susceptione Coronae Domini*, p. 31.

141 The Abbey of Saint-Antoine-des-Champs, established in 1198 by Fulk of Neuilly as a hermitage was designed to return fallen women to life in virtue. In 1204 the Abbey adopted the Cistercian Rule, and from 1229 it was under protection of Louis IX and became a royal abbey. Cf. BONNARDOT, *L’Abbaye royale de Saint-Antoine des Champs*; RAUNIÉ, *Abbaye royale de Saint-Antoine-des-Champs*, pp. 127–145; SZOLLOSI, *Les moniales de Saint-Antoine-des-Champs*.

142 This seems to be indicated by the word *loculus* used by Gautier Cornut, which earlier on he used to denote the gold lipsanoteca.

143 “Octava die, extra muros, juxta ecclesiam B. Anthonii, in campi planitie construitur eminens pulpitem, astantibus pluribus praelatis, ecclesiarum conventibus indutis sericis, exhibitis sanctorum pignoribus, in tanta populorum frequentia quantam Parisius exierit. Monstratur loculus ex pulpito, diei felicitas et causa gaudii praedicatur;” GAUTIER CORNUT, *De susceptione Coronae Domini*, p. 31.

town; like in Sens they were barefoot and wore tunics. This time, however, the pageant of prelates, monks, and lay clergy, accompanied by the knights and barons, preceded them instead of following the king. Thus the order of the procession was reversed in Paris: now Louis IX carrying with his brother the feretrone with the relic<sup>144</sup> walked at the very end. The Crown was first taken to the Notre-Dame Cathedral and, having sung the lauds in honour of Our Lady, the procession with the Crown of Thorns went to the royal palace. The relic was solemnly deposited in the royal oratory of Saint Nicholas.<sup>145</sup> As the ceremony became famous far beyond Paris, at the Fields of Saint Anthony where the *ostensio* of the Crown of Thorns had been performed, people gathered to venerate the place where the Crown of Thorns had stayed, kissing the pedestal on which the relic had been displayed. According to archbishop Cornut, because of the power of this holy diadem (*sacri diadematis*) and the strength of the faith of the pious people numerous miraculous took place there.<sup>146</sup> This is how Gautier Cornut's account ends, and the only scant details which may be added to it come from Jacques de Dinant: the town was decorated with silks, carpets and canopies, all over Paris one could hear the bells and singing in the organum style and other styles, the sounds of musical instruments (*cymbalis et campanis*) and smell incense.<sup>147</sup> The king and count of Artois together with the bishops, barons, lay clergy and the monks left, according to Jacques, Paris to meet the Crown of Thorns. Thus either the author made a mistake, not being informed well enough to know that the king accompanied the relic from Sens (he does not mention that at all) or, vice versa: it is a new piece of information indicating that during the public display of the relic in the fields around the Church of Saint Anthony, Saint Louis went to his palace and then left it to greet the Crown of Thorns in his capital.<sup>148</sup>

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144 The fact that such a procession float with fittings (*archa ferrata*) was made is confirmed by the royal accounts; *ITINERA, DONA & HERNESIA LUDOVICI IX*, p. 601.

145 "Post haec intra muros civitatis infertur a rege et fratre suo, discalciati ut prius, et praeter tunicas vestimentis depositis. Omnes etiam praelati cum clericis et viris religiosis, necnon et militibus, nudis pedibus antecedunt. ... In potificalem ecclesiam beatae Virginis inducitur, ubi persolutis Deo et beatissimae Matri ejus devotis laudibus, cum thesauro nobili solemniter ad regis palatium revertuntur. Collocatur in capella regia beati Nicolai cum multo gaudio Domini corona;" GAUTIER CORNUT, *De susceptione Coronae Domini*, p. 31.

146 "... per virtutem sacri diadematis et propter devotionem fidelium;" *ibid.*

147 JACQUES DE DINANT, *Tractatus de translatione beatae Genovefae*, p. 141.

148 *Ibid.*

The account of Gerard of Saint-Quentin is a few years later than the two discussed above. It was certainly written after Sainte-Chapelle had been consecrated, which is not mentioned either by Gautier Cornut or Jacques de Dinant, but it presents many details of the ideological interpretation of the course of the translation liturgy which are completely absent from the writings of Cornut and Jacques. It describes the course of the celebrations in much less detail than the booklet of the archbishop of Sens. Gerard only describes the ritual of translation performed in Paris, mentioning the earlier events and providing no dates. We do, however, learn from his text that the day of the translation and displaying the relic to the public (he certainly means the *ostensio* outside the Saint Anthony's Gate described by Cornut) was determined by Louis IX himself. At that time the people of Paris and from all over the kingdom flocked there (this is a contradiction with the account of the archbishop of Sens who said that the inhabitants not living in Paris arrived after the translation and, not being able to see the relic, adored the pedestal on which the Crown of Thorns had been displayed); the bishops from various towns, wearing the pontifical gowns (again, no details), the monks and lay clergy from Paris and the nearby churches and monasteries came also to worship the Holy Crown. Among those present at the *ostensio* was Louis IX called "our David, not mounted on a precious and tall horse wearing rich tackle, but walking on his own bare feet to joyfully introduce the Lord's Ark to his city, Paris."<sup>149</sup> When everyone had come to the place where the Crown of Thorns was displayed, a sermon was delivered to the people, calling to renounce the old sins and to avoid them in future. Later, when everyone had been able to see the relic, it was carried around the pedestal.<sup>150</sup> Then the king placed the Crown of Thorns on his own shoulders, introduced it to Paris and, following the procession of the lay and monastic clergy, the rich and the poor, accompanied by lauds and hymns, surrounded by candles, and carried it to the royal palace in which the relic is stored in a beautiful basilica built by the king soon afterward.<sup>151</sup>

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149 "... adest inter eos et noster David rex Ludovicus, non precioso et eminente equo subvectus, non phaleris adornatus, sed pedes incedens et discalciatis pedibus, quasi archam Domini in civitatem suam Parisiensem cum gaudio mox ducturus;" GERARD DE SAINT-QUENTIN, *Translatio Sancte Corone (Exuviae)*, p. 105.

150 "Finita itaque predicatione, pretiosissima illa margarita ut ab omnibus videri valeat honorifice per loci ambitum circumfertur;" *ibid.*

151 "Quibus ita gestis, universis clericorum ac religiosorum choris precedentibus ac civitatem Parisiensem cum cantu et hymnis ingredientibus, necnon et ceteris tam nobilibus quam aliis qui turmatim advenerant cum luminarium multiplicitate et laudum immensitate comitantibus, rex ipse discalciatus incedens, et



The last author describing the translation who may certainly be considered as contemporary to the events (but not an eyewitness) is the English Benedictine monk, Matthew Paris. His account, however, does not contribute much: he merely says that the relic was solemnly introduced to Paris in a procession to the sound of the bells and reverently deposited in the chapel royal.<sup>152</sup> Matthew Paris provides some more information about the Crown of Thorns when describing the translations of the Passion relics in 1241–1242 from Constantinople and the Holy Land, which will be described in the later part of this study.

The three accounts presented above are the only ones which are undoubtedly contemporary to the translation. We shall also discuss the chronicles from Saint-Denis even though their authors almost certainly were not eyewitnesses of the translation. However, they had at their disposal important information collected in the historiographic atelier of the Capetian monarchy. Their perceptions may prove valuable because they present the events from the point of view of Saint-Denis, an institution not involved directly in the translation but close to it, or even, subjectively an vulnerable party. Namely, the Crown of Thorns brought by Louis IX temporarily overshadowed the Passion relics from Saint-Denis and besides, although for the duration of construction works of Sainte-Chapelle Louis IX deposited all the relics obtained in 1239–1242 in the Abbey,<sup>153</sup> he was in fact the first Capetian who instead of giving the relics to the Abbey of Saint-Denis (like, e.g., Philip Augustus in 1205) kept them in his own palace chapel.

In the thirteenth-century Paschal chronicle from Saint-Denis (until 1292), the information about the translation of the Crown of Thorns is quite specific: it took place on the fifteenth calendas of September (August 18th) on Friday, the day commemorating the Passion, after the Assumption of the Virgin Mary. The participation of the convent of Saint-Denis in the celebration is highly stressed. The monks headed by abbot Eudes Clément (the one during whose time the Holy Nail went missing) waited from dawn for the beginning of the procession, dressed in their albs and precious copes worn, as the chronicler says, to make their pageant look statelier than the others. The procession of Saint-Denis set off from Vincennes in the eastern part of

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Coronam dominicam in humeris suis gestans, humiliter et devote subsequitur, sicque cum plausu omnium ad ipsius regis palatium deportatur ubi in edificata non multo post per eundem regem basilica, precioso scemate constructa, honorifice reservatur;" *ibid.*

152 MATTHEW PARIS, *Chronica majora*, vol. IV, pp. 75–76.

153 On October 3, 1239, 70 solidi were paid to Rainier de Testa Cocta for the candles arranged around the Crown of Thorns when the latter was transported to Saint-Denis; *ITINERA, DONA & HERNESIA LUDOVICI IX*, p. 605.

Paris (there was a royal castle surrounded by a wood). When the procession reached the cathedral, the monks from Saint-Denis stood in the centre of the nave and the abbot, wearing the miter, the ring and carrying the crozier, stood among the archbishops, bishops and other abbots on the right side of the altar of Virgin Mary. The cantor from Saint-Denis distinguished himself by the magnificence of his singing during the whole procession and intoned the antiphon *Ave Regina caelorum* so loudly that all those present were amazed. Next, the Crown of Thorns was taken, to the accompaniment of singing (the cantor from Saint-Denis was certainly the best singer), from the cathedral to the chapel in the royal palace which, like the whole edifice, was decorated with fabrics and ornaments brought from Saint-Denis.<sup>154</sup>

The account in the Paschal chronicle of Saint-Denis is so insistently centred that it makes the reader smile, especially as the author does not even try to hide that his aim and also the abbot's and the monks' present at the translation was to shine in contrast to the other participants. King Louis and even the relic are at the background. The main heroes are: the decked out abbot, the cantor with a very powerful voice, and the tinsel and fabrics from Saint-Denis. This seems to suggest a wounded pride of the Abbey worried that the king's new relics were not to contribute to its glory.

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154 *BREVE CHRONICON ECCLESIAE SANCTI DIONYSII*, pp. 143–144: “MCCXXXIX. Hoc anno, regnante Ludovico rege filio Ludovici regis, fuit conventus ecclesiae Beati Dionysii apud Vicenas, feria V post Adsumptionem Beatae Mariae virginis, quae tunc erat XV Calendas Septembris; et illuscente aurora, induerunt se albis et pretiosissimis cappis, ut honestius ceteris processionibus, cum Corona Dominica, de Constantinopoli ad regem per certissimos nuncios asportata, usque ecclesiam Beatae Mariae Virginis Parisius deveniret; ubi domnus Odo Clementis, tunc temporis ecclesiae Beati Dionysii abbas, cum ceteris archiepiscopis, episcopis, abbatibus, ornatus episcopalibus indumentis, mitram habens in capite, annulum in digito, et manu baculum pastorem, ad dextram altaris Beatae Virginis adstitit. Processio vero nostra, a ceteris separata, in medio navi ecclesiae Beatae Virginis remansit. Guillelmus vero, cantor tunc temporis ecclesiae Beati Dionysii, a Vicenis usque ad dictam ecclesiam Beatae Virginis omnes cantus, tamquam inter ceteros cantores specialis praecentior, mirabiliter inchoavit, maxime in navi ecclesiae Beatae Virginis ‘Ave Regina caelorum’ intonans ita alte quod omnes stupefacti sunt audientes. Inde usque ad regis palatium Coronam Dominicam cum divinis responsoriis deducentes, in capella domini regis cereos, quos in manibus portabant in honore[m] dictae Coronae, similiter obtulerunt; et a capella et etiam dicta sacrosancta Corona, cum toto palatio, palliis et ornamentis pretiosissimis, de domo nostra ad hoc Parisius delatis, cunctis aliis ornamentis vilipenis decentissime fuerunt ornatae.”

Also Guillaume de Nangis, the chronicler from Saint-Denis, active in ca. 1300, can not have been an eyewitness of these events. Like Jacques de Dinant and the Paschal chronicle, he omitted in his Latin chronicle the part of the translation which took place in Sens. It is quite obvious since the introduction of the relics to Paris was the most spectacular and essential part of the undertaking. For Gautier Cornut, who was the archbishop of Sens, the ingress of the Crown of Thorns to his metropolitan see was very important so he described it. The other authors had no reasons to focus on that subject. The information provided by Guillaume de Nangis is very similar to that from the Paschal chronicle, but there are some significant differences in comparison with both Gautier Cornut's account and the other ones. Guillaume states that Louis IX walked barefoot carrying the relic to the Wood of Vincennes (located on the axis of the Porte Saint-Antoine mentioned by the archbishop of Sens, but quite far away from it) together with the Parisian clergy and brothers (and not, as Cornut says, only with Robert d'Artois) to Notre-Dame Cathedral.<sup>155</sup> At the king's order in the procession participated the monks from Saint-Denis with abbot Eudes Clément, all dressed in albs and copes, carrying large candles and, according to the chronicler, standing out from the other members of the clergy owing to their magnificent attire. The cantor from Saint-Denis led the procession chants on the way from the Wood of Vincennes to the Cathedral. Like the Paschal chronicle, Guillaume says that the procession from Saint-Denis went as a separate group and in the nave the cantor intoned *Ave Regina caelorum* so beautifully that all those present were struck dumb with awe. Then, it was the monks from Saint-Denis who formed the pageant which carried the Crown of Thorns to "a precious and wonderfully beautiful chapel which the king built in his house," singing hymns.<sup>156</sup>

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155 "... a nemore Vicenarum, quinta feria post Assumptionem beatissimae Mariae Virginis, ipsam rex et fratres sui cum maximo cleri plebisque tripudio, nudis pedibus usque ad ecclesiam sacratissimae Mariae Virginis matris Domini Parisius attulerunt;" GUILLAUME DE NANGIS, *Gesta sancti Ludovici / Vie de Saint Louis*, p. 326.

156 "Ibi enim ex praecepto regio Odonem Clementis, abbatem ecclesiae Sancti Dionysii, cum suis monachis oportuit interesse. Qui monachi, illuscente aurora, in nemore Vicenarum quinta feria praelibata se albis et capis induentes, grossos in manibus tenentes cereos, honestius caeteris cunctis processionibus, qui ibi aderant, cum rege et clero Parisius devenerunt. Processio quidem monachorum beati Dionysii in media navi ecclesiae beatae Mariae Parisiensis remansit, a caeteris processionibus separata. Cantor vero ecclesiae Sancti Dionysii a nemore Vicenarum usque ad ecclesiam sacratissimae Virginis, tanquam specialis cantor prae caeteris cantoribus aliarum processionum omnes cantus incipiebat. Et

The French-language chronicle of Guillaume de Nangis differs from its Latin version only in a few details. Nangis says in it that Louis IX went out to meet the Crown of Thorns to Sens; the brothers accompanying the king during the translation are mentioned by name: Robert, Alphonse, and Charles; the antiphon sung by the Saint-Denis cantor in Notre-Dame was *Salve Regina*; there is no mention of the wonderfully beautiful royal palace chapel.<sup>157</sup> Finally, what is not important for us, but what shows the distinctness of the French and Latin chronicles written by Guillaume de Nangis: the French version chapter also provide information about an expedition against the Albigensian heretics.

At first glance it may seem that this account, like the one in the Paschal chronicle, only adds some details to Gautier Cornut's text concerning the participation of the Saint-Denis convent in the translation. However, the mention of the Sainte-Chapelle and the different starting point of the procession: the Wood of Vincennes instead of the Saint Anthony Abbey and the important part played by the convent of Saint Denis, suggest that Guillaume de Nangis most probably intertwined in his chronicles the actual translation of 1230 and the next one, which took place indeed at the newly consecrated Sainte-Chapelle. During this second translation of 1248, the relics temporarily deposited in the Abbey were taken back to the royal palace, and thus to the Sainte-Chapelle. The contamination hypothesis seems to be confirmed by the third chronicle written by the same

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tunc maxime in navi ecclesiae matris Domini, antiphonam ad honorem ejusdem matris et Virginis Mariae, scilicet Ave Regina caelorum, ita alte intonans inchoavit, quod omnes obstupuerunt audientes. Inde usque ad capellam, quam dominus rex in sua domo Parisius, mirabili et sumptuoso opere, sibi construi fecerat, monachi Sancti Dionysii sacrosanctam coronam cum hymnis et canticis dulcisonis deduxerunt;" GUILLAUME DE NANGIS, *Gesta sancti Ludovici / Vie de Saint Louis*, p. 326.

157 "Il ala encontre jusques a Sens, et la reçut mout honnourablement a grant joie et a grant leesce; et puis la fit aporter moult solempnement jusques au bois de Vicennes nus piez et desçains en pure sa cote, et ses freres Robers, Aufours et Charles; aporterent les saintes reliques de la sainte couronne moult honnourablement, a grant compangnie de pueple et de clergie et de religieus faisans grans melodie de chans, et vindrent a grans processions jusques a leglise Nostre Dame de Paris. A celle procession sollempnel fu, dou commandement le roy, Eudes Climens qui estoit lors abbés de Sain Denis en France, et tout son couvent, mout honnourablement revestus daubes et de chapes de soie precieuses et riches, et tenoient en leurs mains gros sierges. Plus honnourablement vint la pourcession de Saint Denis que nule des autres jusques en leglise Nostre Dame de Paris. Le chantre de Saint Denis commença dès le bois de Vicennes jusques a leglise Nostre Dame, aussi comme especiaus chantres par dessus tous les autres des pourcessions, tous les chans qui adonc furent chanté, comme antenes et respons;

author: the one continuing the universal chronicle of Sigebert de Gembloux covering the years 1113–1300. It repeats not only the information that the relics were deposited in Sainte-Chapelle but also combines two translations into one: Guillaume talks about the translation not only of the Crown of Thorns but also of a large piece of the True Cross, the head of the Lance of Longinus and the sponge which, soaked with vinegar, was given to Christ on the Cross.<sup>158</sup> These relics were indeed brought from Constantinople by Saint Louis, but in 1242, which is stated clearly in the account of Gerard of Saint-Quentin.<sup>159</sup> It should be added that both in the French and Latin version of the chronicle of the reign of Louis IX the whole chapter is entitled: *How the Holy Crown and a large part of the Holy Cross, and the blade of the lance, which was pushed into Christ's side, were brought to Paris* (in the French version the author added the sponge).<sup>160</sup> Although Guillaume

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et si commença en la nef de leglize Nostre Dame lantene que len clame Salve regina, en lonnour Nostre Dame; si haut le commença, que tuit cil qui loirent, furent esmerveillié. Après ce, li abbés et li couvens de Saint Denis, dès leglize Nostre Dame jusques a la meson le roy convoierent a pourcession la sainte couronne en chantant hymnes et cantiques espritueues;” GUILLAUME DE NANGIS, *Gesta sancti Ludovici / Vie de Saint Louis*, p. 327.

158 “MCCXXXIX. Sanctus Ludovicus rex Franciae fecit sibi coronam spineam sacratissimam, qua Christus filius Dei voluit in passione sua pro nostris enormitatibus coronari, de Constantinopolitanis partibus Parisius asportari, et a nemore Vicenarum, milliario ab urbe distante, quinta feria post Assumptionem beatae Virginis matris Domini ipsam rex et fratres sui cum maximo cleri plebisque tripudio nudis pedibus incedentes, primo usque ad majorem beatae Mariae ecclesiam, et inde ad capellam domus suae, quam ipse mirabili et sumptuoso opere construi de novo fecerat, cum hymnis et canticis dulcissimis deportaverunt. Eodem tempore Iohannes Constantinopolitanus imperator multum a suis depressus adversariis, deficiente sibi pecunia, quamdam summam pecuniae a Venetis mutuo sumpsit, et loco pignoris vexilla posuit Dominicae Passionis, scilicet maximam partem sanctae crucis, et ferrum lanceae qua fuit latus Dominicum perforatum, et spongiam cum qua aceto potatus est; quod audiens devotissimus rex Franciae Ludovicus, permissu et dono ipsius imperatoris et ejus generi Balduini, tantas reliquias suis redemptas opibus procuravit Parisius deportari, et in capella domus suae fecit honorifice collocari;” GUILLAUME DE NANGIS, *Chronicon*, p. 548.

159 GERARD DE SAINT-QUENTIN, *Translatio Sancte Corone (Exuviae)*, pp. 105–110; cf. DURAND, *La translation des reliques impériales de Constantinople à Paris*, pp. 37–41.

160 “Quomodo sancta corona Domini, ac magna pars sanctae crucis, et ferrum lanceae, quod lateri Domini infixum fuit, allata sunt Parisius / Coument la sainte couronne, et grant partie de la vraie crois, et lesponge de quoi Dieu fu abeurés en la crois, vindrent;” GUILLAUME DE NANGIS, *Gesta sancti Ludovici / Vie de Saint Louis*, p. 326 (Latin version) and 327 (French version).

de Nangis writes that the successive translations took place slightly later, he does not specify when exactly and in the universal chronicle all of them are dated to 1239. This seems to confirm the supposition that the description in Guillaume de Nangis' chronicles reflects in fact the course of the the secondary translation in 1248: from Saint-Denis to Sainte-Chapelle. Vincennes, from which according to the Paschal chronicle the procession of the Saint-Denis monks set off in 1239, in Guillaume's account became not only the Wood of Vincennes (which is not the same<sup>161</sup>) but also the starting point of the translation pageant from which Louis IX carried the relics to the cathedral. This seems impossible: the more reliable account of an eyewitness, Cornut, mentions the Porte Saint-Antoine and it is difficult to confuse these two locations: from Vincennes to the Notre-Dame it is about 8 kilometers. It is improbable that the king, even as pious as Louis IX, could walk such a distance barefoot; the distance from the Porte Saint-Antoine to the cathedral it is one and half kilometer which is much more realistic.<sup>162</sup> There is almost no information about the secondary translation of the Passion relics from Saint-Denis to Sainte-Chapelle; no accounts devoted specifically to it have been preserved since it did not have any particular ideological importance: from the point of view of political theology it was a technical event. However, it was probably a solemn ceremony with a procession fitting for a translation of a relic to a new place of worship. Most probably the pageant with the relics was composed of the monks from Saint-Denis and it is possible that since in 1239 they set off from Vincennes, ten years later they chose the same place where the relics, all of them, not only the Crown of Thorns, returning to the royal palace, were greeted by

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161 One can, but without any proof, speculate that the monks of Saint-Denis were given by the king the station in Vincennes for the night preceding the translation in order to shorten the distance and help the monks reach the translation on time. The Abbey of Saint-Denis is located ca. 15 km from Notre-Dame, Vincennes, 8 km. However, even for the latter distance it is not surprising that the monks had to start the pageant at dawn.

162 Matthew Paris admired Henry III for walking the distance from Saint Paul's Cathedral to the Westminster Abbey when translating the Holy Blood in 1247, but the hands of the king carrying the ampoule with the relic had to be supported as the distance was ca. 3 kilometers. The monks from the Westminster awaited the king near the palace of the bishop of Durham (today: Whitehall) and joined the pageant there, so the monks walked only 1 km; MATTHEW PARIS, *Chronica majora*, vol. IV, pp. 641–642.

Saint Louis. There is also a simpler explanation, i.e., the contamination of several translations in Guillaume de Nangis' account is due to the fact that the author wrote more than half a century after the events and not having witnessed the events, he made a false assumption that since Sainte-Chapelle was a place where the Passion relics of the kings of France were kept, it is there that Louis IX had deposited them already in 1239.

#### 4. Translations of Passion Relics to Paris in 1241–1242. A Tentative Reconstruction

In 1241–1242, Saint Louis increased his collection of relics owing to two more translations: one from the Holy Land and the other from Constantinople. All the relics came from the imperial treasury in Constantinople and again were handed over by Baldwin II, desperate for money, to the king of France who once again saved the Latin Empire from bankruptcy. The detailed information about that subject can be found in the account of Gerard of Saint-Quentin.<sup>163</sup>

Emperor Baldwin offered Louis IX the opportunity to redeem the Holy Cross, pawned with the Knights Templar and stored in the seat of the order in the Holy Land, and more precisely, that part of it from which the emperors used to allot the particles they gave away.<sup>164</sup> This time Louis IX sent to Constantinople two Franciscan monks, but the French knight, Guido, who was then in Constantinople, having learnt that the emperor had ceded the pawned relics to Saint Louis and having obtained a bull from Baldwin confirming that the king of France was taking over the obligations of the imperial treasure with respect to the order, set off to the Holy Land, regained the relics on behalf of the king and brought them to Paris, out-running the Franciscans.<sup>165</sup> During the first translation, besides the relic of the True Cross, also the relics of the Lord's Blood, Holy Child's swaddling clothes, the blood from the miraculous *effluuium* from the Beirut icon of Christ desecrated by the Jews, the chains with which Christ was shackled to the column during the Flagellation, the wooden Mandyion on which

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163 GERARD DE SAINT-QUENTIN, *Translatio Sancte Corone (Exuviae)*, pp. 105–110. Cf. DURAND, *Les reliques et reliquaires byzantins acquis par saint Louis*, pp. 52–95.

164 "... frustum magnum Crucis dominice, non tamen ad formam crucis redactum, de quo imperatores Constantinopolitani amicis et familiaribus suis dare consueverant;" GERARD DE SAINT-QUENTIN, *Translatio Sancte Corone (Exuviae)*, p. 107.

165 GERARD DE SAINT-QUENTIN, *Translatio Sancte Corone (Exuviae)*, pp. 106–107.

the image of Christ's face was imprinted after he was taken down from the cross, as well as a stone from the Holy Sepulchre, milk of Our Lady, the upper part of the head of John the Baptist and heads of Saint Clement and Saint Simeon.<sup>166</sup> These relics were probably brought to Paris on September 30, 1241, and were solemnly welcomed by the king,<sup>167</sup> as Gerard of Saint-Quentin says, with even greater reverence than the Crown of Thorns, although the description of their translation is slightly shorter than of the former.

[Louis IX] took [the relics] with humility and with the same or even greater reverence and during equally magnificent or even more magnificent celebrations. On the set day, when the people gathered in the place outside the walls of Paris prepared for the event, a solemn demonstration of the relics was performed; a sermon was said and the people were blessed with the sign of [the] Cross, and the bishops granted indulgence. To great cheers of the clergy and people, singing lauds, the king walked, carrying the bare Cross, into the town and in this way arrived at the royal palace. There he deposited reverently that very [relic of the Holy Cross] and the other relics which we have mentioned, together with the Lord's Crown, in the year 1241.<sup>168</sup>

When the king's Franciscan envoys arrived in Constantinople, they could only finish the task by depriving Byzantium of the remaining relics of Christ. Gerard of Saint-Quentin claims that the Franciscans learned about the arrival of the relics redeemed from the Knights Templar to Paris even before they had reached Constantinople, yet, having analyzed the situation, continued their mission, inspired by God, to get more relics. They knew that the imperial treasury had also the head of the Lance of Longinus which was used to pierce the side of Christ when at the Cross, and a small cross but with great power: the Triumphal Cross of Constantine

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166 GERARD DE SAINT-QUENTIN, *Translatio Sancte Corone (Exuviae)*, p. 107.

167 DURAND, *Les reliques et reliquaires byzantins acquis par saint Louis*, pp. 61–62.

168 “Quibus humiliter et eadem et majori qua de sanctissima Corona dictum est reverentia et sollempnitate ab eodem rege receptis, et constituta die confluentibus undique et accurrentibus populis in loco ad hoc extra civitatem Parisiensem parato sollempniter ostensis, facta verbi predicatione et consignato populo signaculo sancte Crucis, dataque ab astantibus episcopis indulgentia, cum applausu nimio tam cleri quam populi laudes undique acclamantis, idem rex pedes incedens, nudamque crucem in manibus suis gestans, civitatem introivit, et sic usque ad regale palatium veniens, ipsam ceterasque quas prediximus reliquias cum Corona dominica honorifice collocavit anno incarnati verbi M<sup>o</sup>. CC<sup>o</sup>.XLI<sup>o</sup>.;” GERARD DE SAINT-QUENTIN, *Translatio Sancte Corone (Exuviae)*, pp. 107–108.



the Great.<sup>169</sup> It was the same cross which the emperor had made to commemorate his vision *In hoc signo vinces* before the battle at the Milvian Bridge. It was made of the wood from the True Cross found and brought to Constantinople by Saint Helena, on which the arms of Christ himself were imprinted. The Cross, called the Victory Cross or Triumphal Cross, was carried by all the later emperors in battle as a palladium.<sup>170</sup> Thus, the Franciscans, having arrived at Constantinople and shown the emperor letters from Saint Louis, persuaded Baldwin to cede all the pawned relics to the king of France, on condition that he redeems them from the creditors. Having redeemed them with the king's money, the Franciscans also obtained from the emperor, as well as the Constantinopolitan barons and clergymen, letters and seals confirming the authenticity of the relics and set off back to France.<sup>171</sup> The monks brought to Paris: the Holy Lance, the Triumphal Cross, the purple gown which Christ wore before the Passion, and the reed given to him when he was mocked; the sponge soaked with vinegar which he had to drink at the Cross; a part of the shroud which he wore in the Tomb; a linen cloth he was wrapped with during the Last Supper and with which he wiped the apostles' feet; a part

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169 "Erat ibi gloriosissimum Lancee ferrum omnibus tremendum, omnibus reverendum, in Christi latere consecratum, immaculati agni sanguine rubricatum, quo ipsius in cruce pendentis latere perforato, redemptionis humane exivit precium. Erat cum hoc quedam crux mediocris, sed non modice virtutis, que propter causas inferius annotatas dicitur triumphalis;" GERARD DE SAINT-QUENTIN, *Translatio Sancte Corone (Exuviae)*, pp. 108–109.

170 "Cum enim olim invictissimus et Deo acceptissimus imperator Constantinus se quadam vice ad preliandum contra incredulos prepararet, et de progressu suo sollicitus procuraret, datum est ei a Domino certum et omnino infallibile victorie ac future salutis indicium, quia manifestissime ostensum est ei in celo victoriosissime crucis signum, et statim vox celitus emissa subsecuta est dicens: 'In hoc signo vinces.' Ad cuius rei ostensionem et stupendi oraculi visionem effectus hylarior miles Christi, hostium cuneos securus aggreditur, ac superatis eis victor in pace revertitur. Unde factum est ut, cum multo post sanctissima mater ejus Helena ad hebendum dominice crucis vexillum hanelans Iherosolimam pergeret, et in hoc perseverans proposito divina eam revelatione reperisset, in signum et memoriam dicte visionis et concesse a Deo victorie, de loco cui sanctissimi humeri Salvatoris in cruce pendentis impressi sunt crux predicta fieret, quam indito vocabulo, quasi per quandam anthonomiasiam triumphalem atque victricem vocaverunt, ac deinceps procedentes ad bella imperatores eam successionem perpetua sub spe optinende victorie secum ferre consueverunt;" *ibid.*

171 GERARD DE SAINT-QUENTIN, *Translatio Sancte Corone (Exuviae)*, pp. 110–111.

of Our Lady's cloak and the staff of Moses.<sup>172</sup> The third, final batch of Constantinopolitan relics arrived in Paris at the end of 1241 or in 1242. Some researchers believe the most probable date is August 3, 1242:<sup>173</sup> the problems with dating the two later translations are caused by the inaccuracies and discrepancies in the sources which will be analyzed after the reconstruction of the translations.

According to Gerard of Saint-Quentin, Saint Louis, wishing to welcome the relics in Paris appropriately, gathered "almost all the bishops and prelates of his kingdom" and the town was beautifully decorated "like the second Jerusalem." The description of the translation itself is, however, brief: we only learn that a public *ostensio* of the relics was performed, a sermon was said and the bishops granted an indulgence. The hagiographer does not describe the topography of the translation ceremony so we do not know where from and along which way the relics were carried by the king and his brothers to the town. Gerard does say that the relics were deposited in Paris, but, as we know from the description of the translation of the Crown of Thorns, he wrote after Sainte-Chapelle had been built. Since he does not say where the king deposited the relics in 1241 or 1242, we do not know whether they were temporarily deposited in the royal palace chapel or in Saint-Denis.<sup>174</sup>

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172 GERARD DE SAINT-QUENTIN, *Translatio Sancte Corone (Exuviae)*, pp. 108–110. Cf. DURAND, *Les reliques et reliquaires byzantins acquis par saint Louis*, pp. 82–89.

173 This date is made plausible by the Feast of the Triumph of the Cross, known from the Parisian, royal, and Sainte-Chapelle breviaries from the thirteenth to fifteenth century and from 1778. The first researcher to opt for this date was FROLOW, *La relique de la Vraie Croix*, no. 530, pp. 427–428; similarly: BILLOT, *Le message spirituel et politique de la Sainte-Chapelle de Paris*, p. 126; BILLOT, *Des reliques de la Passion dans le Royaume de France*, p. 240; DURAND, *La translation des reliques impériales de Constantinople à Paris*, p. 40 (it is quite vexing that Claudine Billot and Jannic Durand, when establishing the date of the translation to 1242 quote each other); BOZÓKY, *La politique des reliques de Constantin à Saint Louis*, p. 166; CHARANSONNET, MORENZONI, *Prêcher sur les reliques de la Passion à l'époque de Saint Louis*, pp. 63–64.

174 "Nec mora, congregatis ad urbem Parisiensem universis fere regni presulibus et prelatibus, ipsa civitas quasi altera Iherusalem tantis oppigneranda magnalibus cum omni apparatu et decencia adornatur, receptisque omnibus tam imperiali bulla quam sigillis aliis que prediximus consignatis, factaque predicatione et generali ab omnibus prelatibus data indulgentia, quedam eorum, prout in tanta populi adunatione commode fieri potuit, ostenduntur, et deinceps a dicto rege et fratribus suis cum eadem humilitate et reverentia qua supra de aliis dictum est, in urbe, cunctis Deum laudantibus, inferuntur, ubi ad Domini gloriam et regni protectionem cum Corona et Cruce aliisque superius nominatis cum debita honorificentia reservantur;" GERARD DE SAINT-QUENTIN, *Translatio Sancte Corone (Exuviae)*, p. 111.

A source important in reconstructing two consecutive translations of the Passion relics to Paris is Matthew Paris's *Chronica majora*,<sup>175</sup> however, they introduce a certain chronological confusion. Besides the introduction of the Crown of Thorns to Paris, Matthew Paris describes only one translation: of the True Cross, and dates it to Good Friday, 1241, which contradicts with the date generally adopted by modern researchers, August 3rd, 1242. Matthew's information is discrepant with the account of the best informed, although sometimes vexingly imprecise witness, Gerard of Saint-Quentin, not only in that one point. Contrary to the chronology, for 1241 Matthew describes three favours bestowed by God on France: the Crown of Thorns, the True Cross and the relics of the archbishop of Canterbury, saint Edmund Rich, exiled from England.<sup>176</sup> Paris begins his narrative with the story of the Jerusalem relic of the True Cross, the palladium of the kings of Jerusalem lost in the battle of Hattin (1187).<sup>177</sup> According to him, after Saladin's death it was taken to Damietta. Regained during the Fifth Crusade (1217–1221), it became the property of the Venetians, who obtained it from the daughters of John of Brienne, first the king of Jerusalem and then the Latin emperor of Constantinople and father in law of Baldwin II. Bought out by the Franks, it was pawned by Baldwin II and then, at the price of 25 thousand livres, sold to the king of France.<sup>178</sup> In other words, Matthew Paris's account of the history of the relic of the Cross

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175 MATTHEW PARIS, *Chronica majora*, vol. IV, pp. 90–92.

176 Edmund Rich died in 1240 in the Regular Canons' Abbey in Soisy and his body was transported to the Cistercian Abbey in Pontigny (where Rich had initially stayed) and buried there. Contrary to the title of the chapter, Matthew does not describe there the translation of Edmund Rich which took place in Pontigny in 1247 with the participation of Louis IX and Blanche of Castile. However, since Matthew probably wrote this chapter not earlier than in ca. 1248 (for he mentions Sainte-Chapelle, consecrated that year) and thus after Edmund's canonization (1246) he undoubtedly assumed that the very fact of Edmund's death resulted in his relics becoming the property of France.

177 LIGATO, *The Political Meanings of the Relic of the Holy Cross among the Crusaders*, pp. 315–330.

178 "Eodem anno, crux sancta, quae post tempora Saladini reposita fuerat apud Damiatam, usque ad guerram infelicem, per quam ipsa civitas primo adquisita et postea flebiliter amissa cessit in potestatem Sarracenorum, est in regnum Francorum delata; rege Francorum et matre ejus B[lanchia] id prudenter procurantibus, et potestati eorum Christo propitiante, et pro eadem cruce multa data pecunia, est feliciter mancipata, videlicet viginti quinque milibus librarum. In prima emptione empta fuit crux a Venetis, qui eam tenuerunt a duobus filiis regis Jerusalem J[ohannis], qui indigentes pecunia Graecos impugnarunt. Et postea B[aldewinus] ipsam plus obligavit, et postea vendidit eam regi Francorum Lodowico;" MATTHEW PARIS, *Chronica majora*, vol. IV, p. 90.

is completely different from Gerard of Saint-Quentin's. The same can be said on the the dates: according to Gerard the relics brought by knight Guido were translated in 1241 and the 'Franciscan' translation was slightly later; it can not have been on Good Friday 1241 as Matthew Paris says, because the English Good Friday of 1241 fell in 1240 according to the French Easter style. Nor is it possible to assume that Paris wrote about French Good Friday of 1241, which, according to the English *circumcisio* style (in which the New Year is on January 1) would be in 1242, since, as we have already established, Matthew Paris places the translation in the year in which a new bishop of Hereford was consecrated (December 23, 1240).

Thus, the only possible hypothesis is that the English chronicler simply confused the dates or calendar styles. This interpretation is also supported by the problems with dating, according to the *Chronica majora*, of the translation of the Crown of Thorns which we have discussed above.

Having presented his version of the history of the relics, Matthew describes their translation in Paris. He says that the True Cross was brought to the Church of Saint-Antoine-des-Champs outside the city walls. A *machina* was built there, on which Louis IX climbed with the two queens and his brothers. Also, the archbishops, bishops, abbots, monks, barons, and a large group of the populace were present, crying with joy. The king raised the True Cross and showed it to everyone, and the prelates loudly intoned the antiphon *Ecce crucem Domini*.<sup>179</sup> Next, when everyone had paid their respects to the relic, Louis IX, who had fasted during the three preceding days, barefoot, wearing only a woolen tunic, without a belt, bareheaded, carried the relic to Paris, up to the Notre-Dame cathedral.<sup>180</sup> The chronicler adds that Louis followed the example of emperor Heraclius (meaning Heraclius introducing the Holy Cross to Jerusalem in 630). The king was followed by his brothers and

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179 "Die siquidem Veneris quae proxima diem Paschae precedit ... apportabatur eadem crux Parisius, scilicet ab ecclesia Sancti Antonii, juxta quam composita fuit cujusdam stationis machina, in quam rex ipse ascendens cum utraque regina, scilicet matre sua B[lanchia] et uxore sua M[argareta], cum fratribus ejusdem regis, praesentibus archiepiscopis, episcopis, abbatibus, et aliis viris religiosis, necnon et nobilibus Francorum magnatibus, cum innumerabili populo circumstante, cum cordis júbilo tam gloriosum spectaculum exspectante, crucem ipsam in altum elevavit lacrimis abortis, incipientibus qui praesentes erant praelatis voce altissima 'Ecce crucem Domini;'" *ibid.*

180 "Et cum omnes veneranter ac devote ipsam adorassent, rex nudus pedes, in laneis, discinctus, capite discoperto, triduo jejunio anticipato, edoctus exemplo nobilissimi triumphatoris Eraclii Augusti, versus Parisiacam urbem et usque ad ecclesiam beatae Virginis cathedralem bajulavit;" MATTHEW PARIS, *Chronica majora*, vol. IV, pp. 90–91.

the two queens who had fasted, prayed and confessed in the recent days, also, as one may guess, barefoot and in penitential attire.<sup>181</sup> They carried (the king's brothers, not the queens, as one may guess) the Crown of Thorns brought to France a year earlier which they showed to the people, like king Louis was showing the Holy Cross.<sup>182</sup> The king and his brothers had their arms carrying the holy relics supported by the barons, lest they become weary.<sup>183</sup> When the pageant reached the cathedral, all the bells in the city began to toll and after the prayers were said, the king carried the True Cross and his brothers, the Crown of Thorns, to the royal palace. All the time they were accompanied by the most solemn procession of the clergy that had ever been seen in the kingdom of France.<sup>184</sup>

In the autograph of the *Chronica majora*, there is a drawing by Matthew Paris representing Louis showing the relics of the Holy Cross. The king holding with both hands a four-armed cross (thus corresponding to the triumphal staurotheke cross) stands on a pedestal lined with fabric and resembling a tower and from his mouths come out the words: *Ecce cruce[m] d[o]m[ini]*; next to Saint Louis, recognizable by the crown on his head (although in all the accounts, including Matthew's the king got rid of all his regal attributes), two more, smaller, figures are presented: a bareheaded youth holding the Crown of Thorns (we may guess that it is one of the king's brothers) and a clergyman with his hands folded in prayer.<sup>185</sup> Besides the royal crown on the king's head, this is a faithful illustration of the text it accompanies.

There are some difficulties in making a heuristic interpretation of Matthew Paris's text, one of them being the above-discussed problem with dating. If we reject the date of translation mentioned by Matthew, it may be possible that the remaining information from his chronicle is partially or perhaps entirely

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181 MATTHEW PARIS, *Chronica majora*, vol. IV, p. 91.

182 "Et cum consimili devotione, confessionibus, jejuniis, et orationibus expiati, fratres dicti regis cum reginis supradictis pedetentim sequabantur. Portabant etiam ipsi coronam spineam, quam simili schemate in propatulo elevantes, populi conspectibus presentarent, quam divina regno Francorum anno prae-terito misericordia contulerat, prout prius enarratur;" *ibid.*

183 *Ibidem.*

184 "Cum igitur perventum esset ad ecclesiam cathedralem, pulsatis omnibus in civitate signis, orationibus quoque specialibus sollempniter perlectis, reversus est rex ad majus palatium suum, quod est in media urbe, deferens crucem suam gloriose, fratribusque ejus coronam, consequente praelatorum ordinata processione, qua nunquam visa fuit in regno Francorum sollempnior aut jocundior;" *ibid.*

185 Matthew Paris, *Chronica majora*, Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS. 16, fol. 141v°.

unreliable. Indeed, none of his data, besides the fact that the translation took place, which we know without Matthew's chronicle, can be confronted with the other sources, because the latter, unlike the *Chronica majora* are very brief in their descriptions or use the conventional description which can be applied to any translation of a relic. Thus it is not possible to falsify or verify them. It is a great pity because the information on the course and route of the translation procession given by Matthew Paris is the only available, as the main French author writing on the two later translations, Gerard of Saint-Quentin, did not provide any specific information except for the year in which the ingress of the relics brought by knight Guido to Paris took place. In the *Treatise on the translation of Saint Geneviève the Virgin* Jacques de Dinant probably contaminates the translations: he writes about two of them, not distinguishing the translation of the Crown of Thorns (which, according to the most reliable witness, Gautier Cornut, was not accompanied by any other relics) from the translation of the Holy Cross, the head of the Lance of Longinus, Christ's sponge and perizoma, "and many other relics" which, as we know, took place "in different times." This is what Jacques says, but nothing else. He does add that the lance, sponge and "many other relics" were brought to Paris in 1242, but he does not mention in that year the relic of the Holy Cross, as if it was not brought together with the sponge and lance. He does not provide the date for the *ostensio* of the relics, the sermon, granting the indulgences to those present at the liturgy, on the wooden pedestal near the Church of Saint-Antoine or the fact that king Louis with his brothers, all in penitential attire, carried the relics first to the cathedral and then to the royal palace where they are still deposited.<sup>186</sup>

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186 "Omnibus hiis, diversis temporibus, rex devotus cum fratribus suis, episcopis, baronibus, religiosorum, clericorum et laicorum multitudine copiosa, nudo capite, nudis pedibus reverenter, humiliter occurrit et portavit, civitate pannis sericis, tapetis, cortinis variorum vestimentorum et aliorum (quaequae pretiosa et pulchra videbantur) praeornata, resonantibus vocibus ad laudem divinam pertinentibus; necnon et organis et aliis hujus modi instrumentis, thuribus odore redolentibus, luminaribus accensis quasi stellis novis coruscantibus, et cymbalis et campanis pulsatis. Fuerunt autem ostensae reliquiae sanctae populo, praedicatione praemissa, indulgentia concessa, juxta Beatum Antonium in gradu ligneo ad loquendum et ostendendum parato, et postmodum ad Beatam Virginem, tandem usque ad domum regiam conductae ubi ad honorem Dei honorifice reservantur. ... Anno M.CC.XLII. ab incarnatione Domini numerando, Parisius allatum est ferrum Lanceae praedictum cum Spongia et multis aliis reliquiis;" JACQUES DE DINANT, *Tractatus de translatione beatae Genovefae*, pp. 140–141.



9. Louis IX performs the *ostensio* of the Holy Cross, drawing by Matthew Paris, 1244–1253, *Chronica majora*, Corpus Christi College, MS. 16, fol. 141v<sup>o</sup>

The writings of Guillaume de Nangis are the only French chronicle which can be used to reconstruct the translation of the Passion relics in 1241–1242, because almost all the remaining ones focus on the translation of the Crown of Thorns of 1239.

Guillaume de Nangis describes in a much simpler way than Gerard of Saint-Quentin how Saint Louis came to obtain and bring the Passion relics to Paris. In the same chapter in which he writes about the translation of the Crown of Thorns, Guillaume de Nangis says that “soon after” that translation, the king, having learned that the emperor of Constantinople had pawned more relics and fearing that the insignia of the Passion would be lost, he redeemed them for the love of Christ. However, he does not mention all of them, only the large part of the Holy Cross, the sponge, and the head of the lance of Longinus.<sup>187</sup> Next, having brought them to Paris, like the Crown of Thorns, he carried them to his palace chapel in a pageant of archbishops, bishops, abbots, clergy, and the populace, and placed them in a beautiful reliquary of gold, silver and precious stones.<sup>188</sup>

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187 “Non multum post audiens et intelligens devotissimus rex Ludovicus, quod Constantinopolitanus imperator quandam summam pecuniae mutuo sumpserat, et posuerat in loco pignoris vexilla Dominicae passionis, scilicet maximam partem sanctissimae crucis, in qua Christus pro nobis pependit, et spongiam cum qua aceto in siti sua suspensus potatus fuit, et ferrum lanceae sanctissimum pro nostrarum sanandis animarum vulneribus perforavit: tantarum reliquiarum metuens alienationem, vilipensis hujus mundis divitiis, ut Christum lucrifaceret, per personas authenticas et honestas, redemptas suis opibus sacrosanctas reliquias, quae nostrae sunt verissima redemptionis insignia, sibi fecit Parisius apportari. / Enprès ce en poi de temps, li roys Loys entendi que les gens lempereour Baudouin dessus dit, estoient en si grant poureté en Constantinoble, que il avoient baillé en gages pour une grant somme d’argent, grant partie de la sainte crois ou Diex fu crucefiez, et lesponge de quoi il fu abeurez en la crois, et le fer de la lance dont Longis le feri el costé. Si se douta forment li bons roys que si saintes reliques ne feussent perdues par defaute de paiement ou estrangies. Li bon roys, qui prisa poi les richesses du monde pour gaignier lamour de Dieu, fit tant par devers lempereour Bauduin, quil envoia personnes honnestes et autentiques a ceus qui les reliques tenoient en gages, et les desgena de ses propres richesses;” GUILLAUME DE NANGIS, *Gesta sancti Ludovici / Vie de Saint Louis*, p. 326 (Latin version) and 328 (French version).

188 “Et sicut sanctam coronam, ut superius dictum est, sic et istas pretiosas reliquias, archiepiscoporum, pontificum et abbatum caterva vallatus mirabili, usque ad capellam domus suae cum processione cleri et populi devotissime et humiliter deportavit, et capsam pretiosam et admirabilem ex auro et argento, lapidibus pretiosis intextam, ad predictas sacras reliquias honorifice recondendas fecit subtili et admirabili operum varietate fabricari. / Il les fit apporter mout honnorablement en France, et les fit mestre a grant pourcession et sollempnel darcevesques, de evesques, de abbés et de religieux, a Paris en la chapele avec les autres reliques, en une merveilleuse chace dor et dargent, ouvree et par entour avironnee de pierres precieuses;” GUILLAUME DE NANGIS, *Gesta sancti Ludovici / Vie de Saint Louis*, p. 326, 328 (Latin version) and 327 (French version).



In Guillaume de Nangis' account, the translation of the relics brought by knight Guido was most probably contaminated with the 'Franciscan' translation, as the expression *a large part of the Holy Cross* probably refers to the relic bought out from the Knights Templar and brought from the Holy Land whereas the sponge and the lance head was obtained by the Franciscans in Constantinople. In Guillaume de Nangis' perception these translations are clearly less important than that of the Crown of Thorns, which is indicated by his failure to mention that the monastery from Saint-Denis took part in it. Let us also remind that in his universal chronicle Guillaume de Nangis presented both translations in one narrative. He does not mention in any of his accounts of the translations from 1241–1242 any topographical details besides the royal palace; he does not even mention Paris Cathedral. Thus only Matthew Paris points to the Saint-Antoine-des-Champs Abbey as the place where the relics were demonstrated and the starting point for the translation pageant of 1241, giving the date not mentioned in the other sources and one that is self-contradictory. However, Matthew was confident about these details because he repeated them in the *Historia Anglorum*.<sup>189</sup>

Thus, one must ask the question whether Matthew Paris's narrative is really a faithful account based on the reliable sources of information or it is rather a contamination of various accounts of several translations, full of errors. Of course, it is possible that in 1241–1242, like in the case of the Crown of Thorns, the translation liturgy began near Saint-Antoine-des-Champs Abbey and that the relics were also demonstrated to the public. However, there is no way to confirm such a supposition. None of the other sources describing the translations of the Passion relics in 1241–1242 says that the king came to meet the new relics bringing the Crown of Thorns. Omitting this detail would be surprising, it is also difficult to assume that the French authors describing the translation of the relic of the Wood of the Cross to Paris should neglect such an important ideological issue as the introduction of the True Cross to Paris on Good Friday. It thus seems probable that Matthew's text is composed of the accounts of all the three translations from 1239–1242, and possibly also the tradition of performing the ostension of the Passion relics on Good Friday, introduced by Louis IX, which is confirmed by Jean de Joinville for 1270<sup>190</sup> and which we shall discuss below. This would explain both the chaos in Matthew's chronicle as

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189 MATTHEW PARIS, *Historia Anglorum*, vol. II, p. 446.

190 JEAN DE JOINVILLE, *Vie de Saint Louis*, cap. 733, pp. 362, 364: "Je alai en la chapelle le roy et trouvai le roy qui estoit montez en l'eschaffaut aux reliques et fesoit apporter la Vraie Croix aval."

regards the dates of the successive translations and placing the translation and the ostension of the relics of the True Cross in Good Friday, 1241.<sup>191</sup>

## 5. The Feast of the Crown of Thorns and Other Festivities in Honour of the Passion Relics Brought by Louis IX

During the reign of Louis IX and, as we shall find, at his request, several liturgical feasts in honour of the Crown of Thorns and other Passion relics he had brought to France, were established. They were aimed not only at suitable veneration of the Passion insignia, but also at commemoration of their translation and showing to the people the ideological significance Louis IX gave to the cult.<sup>192</sup>

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191 DURAND, *La translation des reliques impériales de Constantinople à Paris*, p. 39, mentions as a fact that Louis IX took the Crown of Thorns to meet the Holy Cross and the relics brought by knight Guido on September 30, 1241, basing on the *Chronica majora*.

192 Concisely and substantially, albeit briefly on the Feast of the Crown of Thorns: MERCURI, *Corona di Cristo, corona di re*, pp. 116–123. The author merely browsed a few offices and missals with the offices or mentions of the liturgy of the Crown of Thorns. She does not know the earliest liturgical books crucial for the origins of this liturgy: the earliest breviary from Sainte-Chapelle – BRUSSELS KBR, Ms. IV 472 (she is justified by the fact that this manuscript is not well known in research), but also the gradual-prosarium from Sainte-Chapelle stored from the late thirteenth century in the Basilica of San Nicola in Bari (BARI SAN NICOLA, Ms 3, olim 81), which was described in detail 50 years before Mercuri's book was written: HESBERT, *Le Prosaire de la Sainte-Chapelle*, edition of the sequence in honour of the Crown of Thorns on pp. 57–61 (reproduction of the manuscript on pp. 166–183 and 300–303), in honour of the remaining Passion relics pp. 65–73. The gradual-prosarium from Bari was also discussed in: BRANNER, *Two Parisian Capella Books in Bari*, pp. 14–19. Recently the monument has been studied in detail and issued in its main part in: CIOFFARI, *La sacra spina. Il dono di Carlo II d'Angiò e la liturgia parigina in S. Nicola*, pp. 5–73; TRÉSOR DE LA SAINTE-CHAPELLE, no. 40, p. 170. Cf. KOPEĆ, *Przemiany ideowe pobożności pasyjnej na przykładzie kultu Cierniowej Korony Chrystusa*, pp. 160–164, about the Feast of the Crown of Thorns in Polish lands on pp. 165–169; PYSIAK, *Królewski kult Korony Cierniowej we Francji*, pp. 12–15; PYSIAK, *Kult relikwii Męki Pańskiej w ideologii władzy monarszej we Francji i w Anglii*, pp. 288–289. Mercuri analysed in greatest detail the office from the breviary of Sens (BnF, Ms. Latin 1028), showing very clearly the sacralizing aspect of the Capetian monarchy (pp. 123–135),

Paradoxically enough, the greatest difficulty lies in finding out the apparently simplest thing, namely, the actual number of these holidays, since some sources claim there were two of them, other ones, that three; as a result also some of their dates may be questionable. There is no doubt only about the Feast of the Crown of Thorns, the *festum Sanctae Coronae* (*anniversarium adventus Sanctae Coronae* or *Susceptio Sanctae Coronae*) which was celebrated at the royal court in Paris and in the whole Sens ecclesiastical province, i.e., in the dioceses of Sens, Paris, Auxerre, Chartres, Meaux, Nevers, Orléans, and Troyes from 1240 (from the first anniversary of the translation) as an octave starting *in crastino sancti Laurentii*, i.e., on August 11th, the anniversary of bringing the Crown of Thorns to Sens and ending at the anniversary of the translation of the Crown to Paris, i. e. on August 18th. In the Sens province the Feast of the Crown of Thorns was a *festum fori*: an obligatory feast for all the clergy in the *duplex* or *semiduplex* rite as well as to all the faithful as a day free of work.<sup>193</sup>

The feast can be found in many breviaries, especially in the earliest existing or perhaps the very earliest Sainte-Chapelle breviary (Bruxelles, Bibliothèque Royale de Belgique, Ms IV 472), made soon after the translation of the Passion relics of 1241–1242. This is a very well preserved liturgical book supplementing the ordinary breviary and containing only the offices in honour of the relics from Sainte-Chapelle with full texts of the prayers, lessons, parts meant *ad missam*, sermons, antiphones, hymns, with full musical notation. It is decorated with red and blue initials, some of which are additionally ornamented with filigree (the red ones – with blue, the blue – with red). The book was written in beautiful calligraphic bastarda; the melismas were marked in the text with dashes between the

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however, she did not extend her analysis with substantial studies on other liturgical manuscripts from Sainte-Chapelle and royal breviaries of the fourteenth century (she only compared the BnF, Ms. Latin 1028 with the BnF, Ms. Latin 1052, i.e., so-called Breviary of Philip the Fair, BnF, Ms. Latin 1023, where the content of the office is different), where the topic of sacralization of the royal power in France thanks to the cult of the Crown of Thorns is clearly visible; besides, the anti-Semitic content in the liturgy of the Crown of Thorns, pp. 135–147. The missal and breviary office for the day of the Crown of Thorns in the Polish lands are reconstructed by KOPEĆ, *Przemiany ideowe pobożności pasyjnej na przykładzie kultu Cierniowej Korony Chrystusa*, pp. 169–189.

193 KOPEĆ, *Przemiany ideowe pobożności pasyjnej na przykładzie kultu Cierniowej Korony Chrystusa*, p. 161. In the Parisian breviary of 1778, this holiday has the rank of *festum duplex maior*.

syllables and sometimes connected with a red wavy line.<sup>194</sup> The fact that the manuscript was probably written after the ‘Franciscan’ translation of 1242 is evidenced by its liturgical structure itself: before the new liturgical books including the offices in honour of the Christ’s and Saints relics from the palace chapel were compiled this manuscript was to serve as an addition to the plain Parisian breviary, which had to be used initially. The feast is also present in the so-called first Gospel book of Sainte-Chapelle from 1230 and 1240–1248 which was complemented with a file describing its liturgy,<sup>195</sup> in the second Gospel Book of Sainte-Chapelle of 1239–1241,<sup>196</sup> in the ordinaries of Sainte-Chapelle from the fourteenth–fifteenth century<sup>197</sup> and from 1471,<sup>198</sup> the breviary from Sainte-Chapelle from the years after 1459,<sup>199</sup> in the missal from the thirteenth century which is said to have been the property of Saint Louis<sup>200</sup>, and also in the missal from Sainte-Chapelle from the early fourteenth century.<sup>201</sup> They can be also found in the royal breviaries: the so-called Breviary of Philip the Fair<sup>202</sup>, and of Charles V.<sup>203</sup> There exist also numerous Parisian breviaries and those from Sens, Auxerre and Troyes, single specimens from Amiens, Arras, Autun, Clermont, Chartres, Coutances, Évreux, Lyons, Meaux, Poitiers, Verdun and Strasbourg, in which the holiday of the Crown of Thorns is included in the *duplex* or *semiduplex* rite.<sup>204</sup>

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194 The edition of this manuscript, accompanied by a brilliant and extensive commentary by M. Cecilia Gaposchkin is forthcoming: GAPOSCHKIN, *Vexilla Regis Glorie: Liturgy and Relics at the Sainte-Chapelle in the Thirteenth Century*. Although the Author has generously provided me with the manuscript, I was not able to include or discuss the results of her research in this book.

195 BnF, Ms. Latin 8892, fol. 29r<sup>o</sup>-v<sup>o</sup>. On fol. 31v<sup>o</sup> also *festum reliquiarum*.

196 BnF, Ms. Latin 9455, fol. 109r<sup>o</sup>-112 r<sup>o</sup>; *festum reliquiarum* on fol. 112v<sup>o</sup>.

197 BnF, Ms. Latin 1435, fol. 33r<sup>o</sup>-33v<sup>o</sup>.

198 BnF Arsenal, Ms. 114, fol. 54v<sup>o</sup>.

199 BnF, Ms. Latin 13238, fol. 259r<sup>o</sup>-290r<sup>o</sup>, on fol. 351v<sup>o</sup>-367v<sup>o</sup> *festum reliquiarum*.

200 BnF, Ms. Latin 830, fol. 367r<sup>o</sup>-v<sup>o</sup>. The missal was compiled after 1253 (it contains the office in honour of Saint Peter Martyr established that year), it is written in two characters: the thirteenth century textura and, in its later part, with the fourteenth-century hand. It probably came from the Abbey of Saint-Germain-des-Prés because it contains numerous officia in honour of their relics; cf. LEROQUAIS, *Les sacramentaires et les missels manuscrits*, p. 137.

201 BnF, Ms. Latin 8890, fol. 34v<sup>o</sup>-38r<sup>o</sup>.

202 BnF, Ms. Latin 1023, fol. 388v<sup>o</sup>-393v<sup>o</sup>.

203 BnF, Ms. Latin 1052, fol. 289r<sup>o</sup>-292r<sup>o</sup>.

204 Some of them are mentioned by KOPEĆ, *Przemiany ideowe pobożności pasyjnej na przykładzie kultu Cierniowej Korony Chrystusa*, p. 161, after: LEROQUAIS, *Les sacramentaires et les missels manuscrits*; LEROQUAIS, *Les bréviaires*

Another important liturgical book containing the liturgy in honour of the Crown of Thorns is the gradual-prosary from Sainte-Chapelle which was, according to Dom Hesbert, part of the first liturgical books made specially for Sainte-Chapelle, stored in the Basilica San Nicola in Bari since the end of the thirteenth century.<sup>205</sup> It was probably a gift to one of the kings of Sicily, Charles I of Anjou or his son, Charles II, made by Philip III the Bold or Philip IV the Fair in the 1280s and handed by Charles II over to the Basilica San Nicola, which was intended by the Sicilian Anjou dynasty to become a privileged chapel royal in Apulia, modelled on the Parisian Sainte-Chapelle. In 1296, Charles II gave the basilica a richly decorated breviary made in Paris (in the atelier of Master Honoré, thus so possibly contemporary to the Breviary of Philip the Fair also made in that workshop) which contains an office in honour of the Lord's Crown,<sup>206</sup> and probably in 1301, gave the church a thorn from the Crown, a gift of Philip the Fair.<sup>207</sup>

Already in 1240, at the request of Louis IX, the Cistercian order adopted the *festum Sanctae Coronae* as their own (*festum proprium*): it was given a very high rank (*XII lectiones et II missae*: only Christmas, Easter, Pentecost, and some of the Marian feasts: the *XII lectiones et III missae* had a higher status) and it was decided that it would be celebrated in all the Cistercian abbeys in the Kingdom of France.<sup>208</sup> Also the Dominicans adopted the feast

*manuscripts* and LEROQUAIS, *Les psautiers manuscrits*. A discussion of all the breviaries containing mentions of the feasts in honour of the Crown of Thorns and other Passion relics can be found in: LEROQUAIS, *Les bréviaires manuscrits*, vol. II: no. 395, 422, 449, 452, 453, 481, vol. III: no. 486, 511, 598, 600, 614, 617, 624, 694, vol. IV: no. 727, 788, 789, 913. One should, however, bear in mind that Victor Leroquais does not analyse the content of the liturgical books but only catalogues them and briefly describes their content.

205 BARI SAN NICOLA, Ms 5, olim Ms 85.

206 CIOFFARI, *La sacra spina. Il dono di Carlo II d'Angiò e la liturgia parigina in S. Nicola*, p. 35.

207 CIOFFARI, *La sacra spina. Il dono di Carlo II d'Angiò e la liturgia parigina in S. Nicola*, pp. 12–18. In the archives of the Basilica of San Nicola the Parisian antiphony from the thirteenth century can be found: BARI SAN NICOLA, Ms. XIII.96.

208 “Petitio domini regis et reginae Franciae de festo Sanctae Coronae Spineae in crastino beati Laurentii faciendo in abbatibus regni sui, exauditur; tam de legenda quam de ceteris ad festum pertinentibus; Statute III of the General Chapter of 1240,” in: *STATUTA CAPITULORUM GENERALIUM ORDINIS CISTERCIENSIS*, p. 216. On Cistercian liturgy in honour of the Crown of Thorns see: MAÎTRE, *Le Bréviaire Cistercien Troyes Bibliothèque municipale, ms. 2030*, Spicilegium Friburgense. Textes pour servir à l'histoire de la vie chrétienne, Vol. 46, Fribourg 2015; MAÎTRE, “Corona spinea cistercienne”, in: *Amicorum societas*, pp. 435–460.

of the Crown of Thorns as the *festum proprium* but it was not very easy to include it in the liturgical calendar because a feast in honour of the Crown of Thorns had already been observed by the Dominicans for a long time on May 4, i.e., *in crastino Inventionis Sanctae Crucis* on the day following the Day of Finding the Cross. Moreover, on August 5 there was the Feast of Saint Dominic, celebrated with the octave on August 12th, which practically excluded the possibility of devoting at the same time the liturgical attention to the celebrations of the Crown of Thorns, which should occur on the eve of Saint Dominic's octave. In 1254, at the general chapter, the Dominicans did adopt the *Susceptio Sanctae Coronae* as a *festum proprium*<sup>209</sup> taking place on August 11, but the implementation of this decision was slow.<sup>210</sup>

The second feast was the *festum Reliquiarum* celebrated with the *festum duplex* rite probably from 1245 *in crastino Sancti Michaeli Archangelis*, i.e., on September 30, in honour of the relics of the Holy Cross and all the holy relics brought in 1241–1242 by knight Guido and the Franciscan mission. As there is no such information in any contemporary French source, the date of the feast is one of the main premises indicating the date of at least one of the two translations. In the light of the hagiographic narratives, that feast had the status of a *festum fori*, obligatory both for the lay and regular clergy, and for the ordinary faithful. As we shall see, the importance of that feast, in contrast to the feast of the Crown, gradually diminished. Already in the breviaries from the reign of Philip the Fair, in Paris it was moved and combined with the feast of the relics in Paris Cathedral, celebrated on December 4: this may have been due to the strong competition of another important feast, the Saint Michael's Day, or perhaps due to the fact that it had a less clear than the *festum Sanctae Coronae* main ideological message, which did not concentrate on one relic symbolizing the royal power like the Crown of Thorns. The fact that it was moved in the liturgical calendar and combined with a similar feast of Paris Cathedral clearly indicates that that

209 DIRKS, *De liturgiae dominicanae evolutione*, p. 95.

210 For example, the fourteenth-century breviaries: BnF, Ms. Latin 1305, fol. 384v<sup>o</sup>-386r<sup>o</sup>; BnF, Ms. Latin 10484; BnF, Ms. Latin 10483 (fourteenth century), May 4 with the old Dominican office; TOULOUSE, BM, Ms. 78 (III, 167), fol. 415v<sup>o</sup>; TOULOUSE, BM, Ms. 79 (I, 332), fol. 361r<sup>o</sup>. Cf. KOPEĆ, *Przemiany ideowe pobożności pasyjnej na przykładzie kultu Cierniowej Korony Chrystusa*, pp. 162–163. However, there are also Dominican breviaries where the Feast of the Crown of Thorns is on August 11, e.g., MUSÉE CONDÉ, Ms. 804, fol. 459v<sup>o</sup> (fourteenth century).

liturgy was much less interesting for the Capetian monarchy already in the late thirteenth century.<sup>211</sup>

It is difficult to establish when the third feast honouring the relics took place and which relics it focused on. We do not even know if it existed already during the reign of Louis IX and if it was a separate ceremony. The first hagiographers of Saint Louis, Geoffroi of Beaulieu and William of Chartres, mention two feasts which we find in the breviaries contemporary to the Saint Louis's reign, including the ones Louis IX commissioned for Sainte-Chapelle: the *festum Sanctae Coronae* and the *festum Reliquiarum*. The third feast appears only in the Life written by Guillaume de Saint-Pathus and the offices in honour of Saint Louis created at the same time. Unfortunately none of these sources gives the names or dates of these feasts. One should account for two celebrations known from the later breviaries. The first one is the feast of the Triumph of the Cross (*festum Crucis triumphalis*) celebrated in Sainte-Chapelle on August 3 according to a breviary of 1778, which allows to suppose that it was the annual celebration of the third translation, i.e. that of the relics brought by the Franciscan mission from Constantinople, since it was the Franciscans who, according to the account of Gerard of Saint-Quentin, brought the *Crux triumphalis* to Paris. In a supplement to the breviary for Sainte-Chapelle from Brussels, however, there is an office "in honour of the feast of the Holy Cross, celebrated on the first Sunday of August" (*in festo sancte Crucis quod celebratur prima die dominica augusti*)<sup>212</sup> which is a commemoration of the translation of the relics of the True Cross to Notre-Dame Cathedral in 1120, celebrated in Paris till the end of the first quarter of the twelfth century on August 1,<sup>213</sup> which is proved by the lesson for the office (*lectiones historicae*) describing that translation. In the earliest liturgical manuscript from Sainte-Chapelle, the celebrations in honour of the Holy Cross in Sainte-Chapelle is a movable feast and certainly is not related to the third translation of the Passion relics of 1242. All the Passion relics brought to Paris in 1241–1242 are venerated in an office found in the description of the liturgy of the Relics Feast on September 30.<sup>214</sup> It may also have been the anniversary feast of

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211 Some liturgical manuscripts in which the *festum reliquiarum* occurs on September 30 are mentioned in the fn. above. Already in the breviary of Philip the Fair (BnF, Ms. Latin 1023) the *In sollemnitare s. reliquiarum* is on December 4 – fol. 267v°.

212 BRUSSELS KBR, Ms. IV 472, fol. 128v°-132v°.

213 BRESC-BAUTIER, *L'envoi de la relique de la Vraie Croix à Notre-Dame de Paris*, p. 388.

214 BRUSSELS KBR, Ms. IV 472, fol. 31v°-81r°.

consecration of Sainte-Chapelle (*festum dedicationis Sanctae Capellae*) which can be found in some Parisian breviaries and in the fourteenth and fifteenth century liturgical books from Sainte-Chapelle, celebrated on April 26.<sup>215</sup> It is, however, uncertain whether that feast was celebrated earlier than in the fourteenth century. The accounts of the royal bailiffs of 1285 contain records of the monies paid to the superior of Sainte-Chapelle (*magister Capellae*) for the Feast of the Crown of Thorns and the Relics Feast. There is no mention of a feast celebrating the consecration of Sainte-Chapelle.<sup>216</sup> In the fourteenth century this feast was known only in Paris in the *duplex* or *semiduplex* rite and was observed by the regular and lay clergy but was not obligatory for the population (*festum chori*). We find it only in very few Parisian breviaries.

The liturgy of the *festum Sanctae Coronae*, celebrated in the royal Palais de la Cité, which, according to the first two hagiographers of Louis IX, was the most important celebration in honour of the Crown of Thorns, was granted to the Dominicans.<sup>217</sup> The liturgy of the *festum Reliquiarum* was performed by the Franciscans. These feasts were added to the calendars of both orders.<sup>218</sup>

According to the account of Geoffroi of Beaulieu, the author of the first Life of Saint Louis, during the matins on the day of the Feast of the Crown of Thorns and during the feasts of the other Passion relics (most probably the *festum Sanctae Coronae* and the *festum Reliquiarum* for both these feasts are discussed in the Life) the lessons consisted of reading fragments of the

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215 BnF, Ms. Latin 745 (after 1366 r.), fol. 191v<sup>o</sup>; BnF, Ms. Latin 1023 (so-called Breviary of Philip the Fair), fol. 1r<sup>o</sup>-6r<sup>o</sup>; BnF, Ms. Latin 1051 (only in the calendar); the liturgical manuscripts from Sainte-Chapelle from the fourteenth and fifteenth century are mentioned in fn. above.

216 *COMPOTUS BALLIVORUM FRANCIAE*, pp. 622–672, art. 101, no. 177; *COMPOTUS DOMINI ODONIS*, p. 667.

217 GUILLAUME DE SAINT-PATHUS, *Vie de Saint Louis* (DELABORDE), p. 75: “li benoiez rois establi en ladite chapele trois solemnitez chascun an; en la premiere solennité il fesoit estre le covent des freres preecheurs de Paris; en la seconde le covent des freres meneurs; et en la tierce, il fesoit estre des uns et des autres freres des devant diz religieux et des autres ordres ausi qui sont a Paris;” *VITA BEATI LUDOVICI AD LECTIONES*, p. 161; *BEATI LUDOVICI VITA E VETERI LECTIIONARIO*, ca. 1297–1298, p. 163; cf. *EXUVIAE SACRAE CONSTANTINOPOLITANAE*, vol. II, appendix: *Kalendarium festivitatis*; this is also confirmed by the accounts of the bailiffs from the reign of Saint Louis; *COMPOTUS DOMINI ODONIS*, p. 667.

218 GUILLAUME DE SAINT-PATHUS, *Vie de Saint Louis* (DELABORDE), p. 75; *VITA BEATI LUDOVICI AD LECTIONES*, p. 163.



booklet describing the translation.<sup>219</sup> The nineteenth-century editor of the sources connected with the Crown of Thorns, count Riant, claims that this meant the account by Gautier Cornut made into a lectionary; this identification is based on the fact that in the majority, but not all, the known offices in honour of the Feast of the Crown of Thorns established at the request of Louis IX contain fragments of Gautier Cornut's account.<sup>220</sup> Geoffroi of Beaulieu also says that a college of canons was established at Sainte-Chapelle and chaplains were nominated.<sup>221</sup> This is confirmed by other authors<sup>222</sup>, including Guillaume de Saint-Pathus who mentions the annuities Saint Louis set up for the canons of Sainte-Chapelle and houses built for them near the palace chapel.<sup>223</sup> Guillaume's account also tells us that the pope established special indulgences connected with the feasts of the Crown of Thorns and other Passion relics.<sup>224</sup> William of Chartres and Guillaume de Saint-Pathus also describe the solemn processions with the relics which took place during the feasts established by Saint Louis; they say that the Parisian clergy, the court and the king himself participated in it, and the king:

...ordered to celebrate every year ... ordered that [the Crown of Thorns], decorated with gold and precious stones, be publicly carried in a procession during

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219 "... testis est libellus qui diligenter super iis est confectus, de quo ad Matutinas legitur in solemnitatibus dictae Coronae, caeterarumque reliquiarum;" GEOFFROI DE BEAULIEU, *Vita sancti Ludovici (Acta Sanctorum)*, cap. V, 42, p. 551; GEOFFROI DE BEAULIEU, *Vita sancti Ludovici (RHF)*, cap. 24, p. 15.

220 *EXUVIAE SACRAE CONSTANTINOPOLITANAE*, vol. I, p. cxl.

221 "... in qua capella canonicos ac capellanos instituit ..., ut ibidem Domino in perpetuum in divino officio serviretur;" GEOFFROI DE BEAULIEU, *Vita sancti Ludovici (Acta Sanctorum)*, cap. V, 42, p. 552; GEOFFROI DE BEAULIEU, *Vita sancti Ludovici (RHF)*, cap. 24, p. 15.

222 "Et ordena avecques ce en ladite chapele chanoines et autres clercs, pour fere a toziers mès en ladite chapele le service Nostre-Seigneur devant les saintes reliques desusdites;" GUILLAUME DE SAINT-PATHUS, *Vie de Saint Louis (DELABORDE)*, p. 75; cf. also: *BEATI LUDOVICI VITA PARTIM AD LECTIONES*, p. 172.

223 "... et leur assigna et ordena tant de rentes perpetuels, a prendre chascun an en deniers, en blez et en autres choses, que chascun de ces chanoines, qui sont dix ou douze, reçoit dan en an cent livres de tornois; et sont mesons soufisanz, desqueles trois li benoiez rois Loys fist fere delez ladite chapele, ... il fesoit estre des uns et des autres freres des devant diz religieus et des autres ordres ausi qui sont a Paris, grant plenté des freres qui gisoient en une meson delez le palès le roi et empres cele meemes chapele, pource que il fussent lors a matines a la requeste du benoiet roi;" GUILLAUME DE SAINT-PATHUS, *Vie de Saint Louis (DELABORDE)*, p. 75.

224 *VITA BEATI LUDOVICI AD LECTIONES*, p. 163; *BEATI LUDOVICI VITA E VETERI LECTIIONARIO*, p. 163.

these feasts, and that the prelates, monks, and clergy, wearing silk copes and loudly singing the lauds praising the Lord should take part in them; the king himself, together with the barons should walk humbly following the procession and all the populace should piously venerate these holy relics.<sup>225</sup>

The procession with the Crown of Thorns also took place in the royal palace:

On the day of each of these three feasts, after a very solemn mass, the brothers [monks] who were present at the mass, had a meal together with the king in a chamber of the [palace] of the holy king; [and during the meal] the lessons were read in accordance with the custom of these brothers. Besides, the holy king called to these feasts all the bishops who could come and ordered to make a procession composed of the bishops and monks in the royal palace.<sup>226</sup>

The majority of the narratives very strongly stress the main part played by Louis IX during the translation of the Crown of Thorns and other Passion relics, highlighting the fact that the king carried the insignia of the Passion to his capital with his own hands, and the feasts in their honour, when on his own shoulder he carried them in a procession in his palace, as it was depicted in the iconography of the translation,<sup>227</sup> and Matthew Paris not only described how the king demonstrated the relics to his people but also

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225 “Porro quanta honorificentia et reverentia Salvatoris, cum quanta frequentia ac devotione plebis, solemnitates illas, quas instituerat in Capella sua regia, unam sacrosanctae Coronae Domini in crastino S. Laurentii, quae in tota Senonum provincia, celebratur, aliam sanctarum aliarum reliquiarum in crastino S. Michaelis celebrari fecit annuatim; quam solemniter ac reverenter ac pretiosum illud lignum Crucis Dominicae, sacrosanctam eius Coronam spineam, ac venerandum ferrum lanceae, quod latus Domini perforavit, auro et gemmis preciosissimis adornata [corona] processionaliter ac publice deportari fecit in singulis solemnitatibus antedictis; praelatis, et Religiosis, cum clero, capis indutis sericis, laudes divinas altissime decantantibus, ipso pio Rege cum suis magnatibus humiliter subsequente, ac universo populo devote sacras ipsas reliquias adorante;” GUILLAUME DE CHARTRES, *De Vita sancti Ludovici (Acta Sanctorum)*, cap. I, 5, pp. 559–560; GEOFFROI DE BEAULIEU, *Vita sancti Ludovici* (RHF), p. 29.

226 “Et a chascune des trois dites solempnitez, quant la messe estoit chantee tres solempnement, li frere qui avoient esté a cele messe mengoient en la sale du benoiet roy, et li rois avec eus, et lisoit len continuellement au mengier, ausi com il est accostumé as refertoiers des diz freres. Et encore fesoit apeler li benoiez rois as dites festes aucuns evesques que il pooit avoir, et fesoit fere procession de ces evesques et des freres par le palès roial;” GUILLAUME DE SAINT-PATHUS, *Vie de Saint Louis* (DELABORDE), p. 75.

227 The stained glass window of Sainte-Chapelle, so-called Relics Window (or Royal Window), panel A-70. More about stained glasses presenting the translation and cult of the Crown of Thorns see below.

illustrated it on the margin of his chronicle. The iconographic representations of the translation of the Crown of Thorns which can be called official (i.e., the windows from Sainte-Chapelle and the Tours Cathedral) although include the king carrying the feretrone with the relics, in the scene of the *ostensio reliquiarum*, present Louis only as a venerating orant whereas the relics are demonstrated by the archbishop, who, as it may be supposed, was the archbishop of Sens, Gautier Cornut. Although Gautier Cornut does not say in his booklet who performed this task, since he describes the *ostensiones* using impersonal plural or passive voice, one can not assume that the representation of an archbishop showing the relic to the king in the window in Sainte-Chapelle was inconsistent with reality.<sup>228</sup> In other words, the king's liturgical prerogatives with respect to the relics were limited and Louis IX clearly took care not to cross the thinly drawn line between the *regnum*, even if anointed by God, and the sacerdotium.

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228 The stained glass from Sainte-Chapelle, so-called Relics Window (or Royal Window), panel A-69 and A-73 (terminology after: GRODECKI, AUBERT, LAFOND, VERRIER, *Les vitraux de Notre-Dame et de la Sainte-Chapelle de Paris*, especially pp. 295–309). An excellent work about the 'Relics Window' in Sainte-Chapelle: JORDAN, *Visualizing Kingship in the Windows of the Sainte-Chapelle*, especially pp. 57–69 and 124–126, fig. 61 on p. 244; with extensive literature. Stained glass from the Tours Cathedral: New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, The Cloisters Collection, no. 37.173.3 and 37.173.4.



## Chapter 2. Importance of the Translation of the Crown of Thorns and the Passion Relics and Their Cult for the Royal Ideology of Louis IX and the Capetian Monarchy

### 1. Narrative Sources

The number of accounts of the translations of the Crown of Thorns and other Passion relics to France in 1239–1242 and their geographical distribution indicate that these events sparked a considerable interest in France. Also, one cannot fail to note the provenance and relative diversity of the sources containing the accounts of the translations. The most important are, of course, the contemporary hagiographical narratives of the eyewitnesses, participants, or concelebrants of the translation liturgy, such as Gautier Cornut. Most of the texts were written by monks, especially Benedictines, Cistercians, Dominicans, and Franciscans: chroniclers and hagiographers. Some were learned men, such as Jacques de Dinant or Vincent of Beauvais, others were hagiographers; there were also lay poets: Philip Mouskès and a *jongleur* Guillaume Guiart, as well as monastery chroniclers, some of whom can be certainly called professional medieval historians (Matthew Paris, Alberic of Trois-Fontaines, or Guillaume de Nangis). Undoubtedly, the connections those authors had (or did not) with the Capetian court are important. Gautier Cornut, being the metropolitan bishop of Sens, the superior of the Parisian diocese, must certainly have presented in his account the views of at least part of the Capetian episcopate, which were acceptable for the royal court. It may be even assumed that Cornut's text, which, as we remember, is composed of the account of the events and an anniversary sermon, the large fragments of which were later on included in the readings (*lectiones historicae*) of the office celebrated on the day established at Louis IX's request as the feast of the Crown of Thorns, was the official ideological interpretation of the translation accepted by the king. We can also learn about the views of the king and his milieu reading the accounts written by the hagiographers of Saint Louis: all the three of them were closely connected with the royal family; the first two: Geoffroi of Beaulieu and William of Chartres were close acquaintances of Louis IX, Geoffroi as his long-term confessor and William as his personal secretary and his confessor during

the Tunisian Crusade.<sup>1</sup> Guillaume de Saint-Pathus, in turn, who came to the court after Louis IX's death, is one of the main 'creators of the memory' about the holy king,<sup>2</sup> who used fairly reliable sources, shows how Philip the Fair wished to present Louis's piety, since one can not believe that the author of the official Life of the holy king could have written it without the acceptance of his grandson, who proved that he had his own vision of the relationship between the Church and the Capetian monarchy, and also of the religious orthodoxy, and was able to impose it on the Church. The chronicles of Guillaume de Nangis, the historiographer from the royal Abbey of Saint-Denis, present to a considerable extent the official standpoint of the Capetian historiography,<sup>3</sup> albeit clearly seen from the point of view of the Abbey of Saint-Denis. A confrontation of the accounts of these authors with the accounts of independent writers not connected with the Capetian court, such as Guillaume Guiart or Matthew Paris, will allow to find out if the texts devoted to the translation of the Crown of Thorns present a relatively coherent ideological program. To that aim I will also look at the offices for the feast of the Crown of Thorns preserved in the thirteenth century Parisian breviaries.

The authors of the French and some of the foreign accounts of the translation of the Crown of Thorns to Paris stress the fact that France was particularly singled out by God thanks to these magnificent relics. The Kingdom of France becomes in these texts a new *Terra Promissionis*, a holy kingdom of holy people, singled out by God. According to Alberic of Trois-Fontaines, the translation of the Crown to Paris was another God's favour after many other privileges and gifts with which Christ had honoured the kings of France.<sup>4</sup> Matthew Paris believed that due to owning many magnificent relics, France was elevated and flourished (let us remind that besides the Passion relics he means the relics of Saint Edmund). Paris also states that God extends over France a particular care and bestows special love on it,<sup>5</sup>

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1 Cf. CAROLUS-BARRÉ, *Le procès de canonisation de Saint Louis 1272–1297*, pp. 17–18; LE GOFF, *Saint Louis*, pp. 333–337; PYSIAK, *Ludwik Świąty: portret hagiograficzny idealnego władcy*, pp. 57–58.

2 Cf. CAROLUS-BARRÉ, *Les enquêtes pour la canonisation de Saint Louis et la bulle „Gloria Laus”*, pp. 19–29; CAROLUS-BARRÉ, *Le procès de canonisation de Saint Louis 1272–1297*; LE GOFF, *Saint Louis*, pp. 337–344.

3 CHAZAN, *L'Empire et l'histoire universelle de Sigebert de Gembloux à Jean de Saint-Victor*, pp. 379–386; DELISLE, *Mémoire sur les ouvrages de Guillaume de Nangis*, pp. 287–372; LE GOFF, *Saint Louis*, pp. 357–362; SPIEGEL, *The Chronicle Tradition of Saint-Denis*, pp. 98–108.

4 ALBERIC DE TROIS-FONTAINES, *Chronica*, p. 947.

5 “Eodem anno, geminato Domini nostri Iesu beneficio, Francia floruit et exaltavit. Preter enim hoc meruit, ut predictum est, confessorem Edmundum, ab

greater than on other kingdoms. Jacques de Dinant writes in his *Treatise on the translation of Saint Geneviève the Virgin*<sup>6</sup> that France is now enjoying a *pleasant time, the day of redemption* (2 Corinthians 6,2) for due to the divine decree the signs of the salvific Passion (*insignia, arma, vexilla, fidei munimenta, spei praeludia, caritatis exenia*) have been brought to this “blessed kingdom.”<sup>7</sup> However, the greatest impact on the perception of the translation and the cult of the Crown of Thorns among the ecclesiastical and court elites was exerted by the sermon of archbishop Gautier Cornut, which was included in numerous fragments in the majority of the breviary offices in honour of the Crown of Thorns.<sup>8</sup>

We have already analyzed Gautier Cornut’s account of the translation and its historical circumstances. Now it is time for the homiletical part of *De susceptione*. First the archbishop encourages the Church of Gaul and all the people of the Franks to thank God for He has bestowed on the Kingdom a marvelous treasure.<sup>9</sup> The Crown which Christ, the head of Christianity (*caput nostrum*), allowed to put on his head for the sake of the salvation of humanity, God has now given to the French people.<sup>10</sup> Like Christ chose the

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Anglia sublatum, obtinere Coronam Domini Spineam, apud Constantinopolim adeptam, est gavisus possidere [...] reversus est rex ad maius palatium suum, quod est in media urbe, deferens crucem suam gloriose, fratribus eius coronam, consequente prelatorum ordinata processione, qua nunquam visa fuit in regno Francorum solennior aut iocundior ... [Dominus], qui regnum Francorum, pro omnibus aliis, speciali complectitur dilectione, consolatur et tutetur ... Sic igitur Dominus noster Iesus Christus, rex regum et dominus dominantium, in cuius manu corda sunt regum, dans salutem quibus vult, ipsum regnum Francie his tribus dotavit et ditavit ... videlicet corona predicte et cruce Domini ... et corpore beati Edmundi;” MATTHEW PARIS, *Chronica majora*, vol. IV, p. 631.

6 JACQUES DE DINANT, *Tractatus de translatione beatae Genovefae*, p. 140.

7 “Contigit tempus acceptabile, diem salutis, nam ... non tam humana industria quam dispositione divina. Christi enim patientis insignia, arma, vexilla, fidei munimenta, spei praeludia, caritatis exenia, quibus diabolum triumphavit, mortem superavit, genus humanum redemit, infernum spoliavit, paradysum ditavit, angelos laetificavit, in regnum beatum allata. Sic haec, labore gravi, multis intercedentibus periculis, maxime sollicitudine, sumptibus immensis, modo mirabili, dictus rex iunior Ludovicus, bonitate conspicuus, fidei pollens integritate, multimodis virtutibus incessanter insistens .... Primo fuit spinea Corona sancto capite superni Regis imposita;” *ibid.*

8 See below.

9 “Gratias tibi Deus cuius immensa bonitas ... terram nostram incomparabili thesauro ditavit, genti et regno quasi summum post multos accumulavit honorem! Laetetur in iis sacris solemnibus Ecclesia Gallicana, et tota gens Francorum; GAUTIER CORNUT, *De susceptione Coronae Domini*, p. 27.

10 “Haec est illa praeclara festivitas, in qua missum sibi a Domino pretiosissimum munus Francorum terra suscepit, illam videlicet sacrosanctam spineam

Promised Land to show mankind the mystery of Redemption, we read on, He chose Gaul to show the triumph of the Passion so that the whole world, from the East to the West, could venerate their Saviour.<sup>11</sup> France was distinguished in this way owing to the zeal of king Louis IX<sup>12</sup> whose authority (*imperium*) has been legitimized in the greatest possible way, confirmed by God himself, who deigned to crown France and its king with the crown he had worn himself.<sup>13</sup> The king has to be obeyed because such is the apostolic order.<sup>14</sup> When participating in the translation of the Crown of Thorns, an annual feast in its honour, or may be even having the privilege of looking at this salvific relic, the faithful should imagine Christ crowned with the thorns, considering the words of the Song of Songs inspired by the Holy Spirit: "... Go forth, o ye daughters of Zion, and behold king Solomon with the crown wherewith his mother crowned him."<sup>15</sup> The reign of Louis IX, understood as a royal *ministerium*, brought great joy from obtaining this magnificent relic, which, according to the archbishop, was well known to the crowds of the faithful who came to the translation and greeted the king bringing the Crown of Thorns to Paris with a cry: "Blessed is the one who comes in God's glory and thanks to whose rule (*ministerium*) the kingdom of France is elevated by the presence of such a great treasure."<sup>16</sup> Louis IX, in turn, believed that the entire merit was owed to the special grace of God.

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Coronam, quam caput nostrum, Dominus Iesus Christus, pro nobis factus obediens Patri usque ad mortem crucis, tempore Passionis ipsius, venerando capiti suo per manus impiorum permisit imponi;" *ibid.*

- 11 "Sicut igitur Dominus Iesus Christus ad suae Redemptionis exhibenda mysteria terram promissionis elegit, sic ad Passionis suae triumphum devotius venerandum nostram Galliam videtur et creditur specialiter elegerisse, ut ab ortu solis ad occasum laudetur nomen Domini, dum a climate Graeciae, quae vicinior dicitur Orienti, in Galliam, partibus Occidentis contiguam et confinem, ipse Dominus ac redemptor noster suae sacratissimae Passionis sancta transmitteret instrumenta;" *ibid.*
- 12 "Honoratum enim gestis insignibus per multa tempora regnum Franciae, tempore nostro, per sedulam regis Ludovici, necnon et religiosae matris suae Blanchae vigilantiam;" GAUTIER CORNUT, *De susceptione Coronae Domini*, pp. 27–28.
- 13 "[Deus] Corona capitis sui cum multa gloria et honore multiplici dignatus est coronare;" GAUTIER CORNUT, *De susceptione Coronae Domini*, p. 28.
- 14 "Verum, quia regis ad hoc accessit imperium, cui, tanquam praecellenti, secundum apostolum oportet obedire;" *ibid.*
- 15 *Egredimini & videte, filie Syon! Regem Salomonem in diademate quo coronavit eum mater sua;* Canticle 3,11.
- 16 "In die crastina, rex versus Parisius, urbem regiam, dirigit iter suum, insigne vasculum deferens. Omnium voce laudatur dicentium: 'Benedictus qui venit in honore Domini, cuius ministerio regnum Franciae tanti praesentia muneris exaltatur!'" GAUTIER CORNUT, *De susceptione Coronae Domini*, p. 31.



Christ wishes that His crown be specially venerated by the faithful on Earth because when he comes back to the Last Judgement, he will wear it again to show his regal insignia to all.<sup>17</sup> Louis IX rejoiced that God has chosen his very kingdom, Gaul, in which due to God's grace the faith blossoms stronger than elsewhere and the mystery of Salvation is venerated in the most pious way, to show to the human eyes this great treasure and honour.<sup>18</sup> As Cornut uses the word *praelegerat*, one may venture an almost eschatological interpretation: God had chosen Gaul as a country where the work of Salvation is to be ultimately done. The discourse of the archbishop of Sens aims at a sanctification of the whole France as the new Promised Land or the Chosen People. This is suggested by the statement that Gaul "had been chosen" by God as the place where Christianity was particularly ardent, which is also a sign of His grace, as the place where the Passion insignia were revealed, including the Crown of Thorns which is to be venerated in France until the end of time, Christ's Second Coming, and the Final Judgement. It is in this way that France becomes the New Israel:

Like He had chosen the Promised Land to reveal the mystery of Redemption, as it can be seen and should be believed, Our Lord, Jesus Christ, had chosen our Gaul so that the triumph of His Passion is piously venerated there, so that the Lord's name is praised from the East to the West. For Our Lord and Saviour brought the holy signs of His Passion from Greece which, as they say, neighbours with the East, to Gaul, which neighbours with the West. And so, thanks to the participation in this honour he made these two countries equal.<sup>19</sup>

Finally, we should note that in *De susceptione* the Crown of Thorns is directly identified with the royal diadem: when Cornut describes the miracles God made in the place of the *ostensio* of the Crown of Thorns near

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17 "His auditis, rex prudenter intelligens id a Domino fieri, gavisus est in hoc quod ille qui Coronam eandem pro nobis gesserat in opprobrium, volebat eam a suis fidelibus pie et reverenter honorari in terris, donec ad iudicium veniens eam suo rursus imponeret capiti iudicandis omnibus ostendam;" GAUTIER CORNUT, *De susceptione Coronae Domini*, p. 29.

18 "Gaudebat igitur quod ad exhibendum honorem huiusmodi suam Deus praelegerat Galliam, in qua per ipsius clementiam fides viget firmiter, et cultu devotissimo salutis nostrae mysteria celebrantur;" *ibid.*

19 "Sicut igitur Dominus Jesus Christus ad suae redemptionis exhibenda mysteria terram promissionis elegit, sic ad passionis suae triumphum devotius venerandum nostram Galliam videtur et creditur specialiter elegisse, ut ab ortu solis ad occasum laudetur nomen Domini, dum a climate Graeciae, quae vicinior dicitur Orienti, in Galliam, partibus Occidentis contiguam aut confinem, ipse Dominus ac Redemptor noster suae sacratissimae passionis sancta transmitteret instrumenta. Et sic, veluti compartitis honoribus, terrae alteri alteram adequavit;" GAUTIER CORNUT, *De susceptione Coronae Domini*, p. 27.

the Church of Saint-Antoine-des-Champs, he specifies that they occurred thanks to the power of the *holy diadem* (and to the piety of the faithful assembled there whose faith was rewarded).<sup>20</sup> Thus, the archbishop stresses very strongly the merits of Louis IX for the translation of the Crown of Thorns and also the similarity of the king to Christ: the call with which Saint Louis was greeted when he was bringing the Crown of Thorns to Paris is modeled after the words uttered according to the Gospel of Matthew (Mt 21,9) by the populace when Christ was entering Jerusalem: *Benedictus qui venit in nomine Domini*. It may be, of course, understood as a hagiographic reference to the translation of the relics, especially Christ's relics, as a symbolic repetition of Christ's entrance to Jerusalem. However, the archbishop develops the quotation from the Gospel of Matthew so that it clearly refers to king Louis and makes him into an image, almost a figure, of Christ on the Earth. In the homiletical part of his booklet, Gautier Cornut included also a fragment from the Gospel of Saint John, indicating the concordance with the Gospel of Saint Mark and Saint Matthew (J 19,2; Mk 15,17; Mt 27,29), which describes clothing Christ with a purple mantle and crowning Him with the thorns. He also added the quotation from Saint Augustine's *The City of God* (XVIII, 23) where it is said that in this way the prophecy of the Erythraean or Cumaean Sibyl is fulfilled.

Some of the ideological threads present in Cornut's *De susceptione Coronae Domini* were developed in the description of the three translations of the Passion relics written by Gerard of Saint-Quentin, but it also contains other ones, equally interesting and important for the ideology of the royal sacral power of the Capetians. When describing the translation of the Crown of Thorns, Gerard presents Saint Louis as the new David (calling him: "our David, king Louis") who brings the Crown to Paris, like the Biblical king of Israel brought the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem.<sup>21</sup> When describing the translation of the relics brought to Paris by the Franciscan embassy in 1242, Gerard once again compares the Capetian capital to Jerusalem.<sup>22</sup> Thus also in this account Louis IX as the author and performer of the translation becomes a figure of Christ (like David before him), Paris is the New Jerusalem, and France, the new Israel.

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20 "... per virtutem sacri diadematis et propter devotionem fidelium;" GAUTIER CORNUT, *De susceptione Coronae Domini*, p. 3.

21 "... adest inter eos et noster David rex Ludovicus, non precioso et eminente equo subvectus, non phaleris adornatus, sed pedes incedens et discalciatis pedibus, quasi archam Domini in civitatem suam Parisiensem cum gaudio mox ducturus;" GERARD DE SAINT-QUENTIN, *Translatio Sancte Corone (Exuviae)*, p. 105.

22 "Nec mora, congregatis ad urbem Parisiensem universis fere regni presulibus et prelatibus, ipsa civitas quasi altera Iherusalem tantis oppigeranda magnalibus cum omni apparatu et decencia adornatur;" *ibid.*

Due to the translation of the Passion relics, the topic of translation of Jerusalem to Paris can also be found in the *Chronica majora* by Matthew Paris. However, it is developed in a different way: the example of emperor Heraclius, an emblematic figure and model of a Christian monarch embracing and organizing the cult of the Passion relics, is quoted. The choice of Heraclius as the historical model of a ruler who organized the cult of the Passion relics is particularly apt, but not original: he was quite frequently indicated as the one who venerated the Cross and established a feast in its honour, the Exaltation of the Cross (*Exaltatio Crucis*), already by the Carolingian authors.<sup>23</sup> However, in his comparison of the modern French ruler to Heraclius, Matthew does not use the idea of establishing feasts in honour of the relics, but stresses the analogies concerning the translation ceremonies. He writes that during the translation of the Holy Cross on Good Friday, 1241, when the True Cross was piously venerated by all the faithful, the king, after having served the prescribed penance practices, following the example of the noblest and victorious Heraclius Augustus, took [the Cross] “to the city of Paris.”<sup>24</sup> During the procession to Paris Cathedral, in which Louis carried the relic himself, he imitated Heraclius, too: “Everyone saw it and the [there present] bishops wished that the [king] thanks to whose wisdom such great glory [The Holy Cross] was obtained, in the presence of the populace, in that way, like Heraclius, held with piety [The Holy Cross].”<sup>25</sup>

Saint Louis is the new Heraclius and like him brings the Holy Cross to (the new) Jerusalem for, like Heraclius, it was the king who made the translation possible. For that reason, and this is also the opinion (according to Matthew

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23 On the emperor Heraclius (610–641) in connection with the translation of the Holy Cross to Jerusalem, see Part 2, Chapter 1. As Cecilia Gaposchkin remarks, “By the early part of the fourteenth century, and possibly before, the canons of the Sainte Chapelle performed a special Octave celebration of the Feast of the Exaltation of the Cross which styled Louis IX (r. 1226–1270) as a new Heraclius, and the bringing of the relic(s) of the True Cross to Paris as evidence of the *translatio imperii*”, see: GAPOSCHKIN, “Louis IX, Heraclius, and the True Cross.” I would like to express my gratitude to Cecilia Gaposchkin for having generously provided me with this forthcoming paper.

24 “... cum omnes veneranter ac devote ipsam [Crucem] adorassent, rex nudus pedes, in laneis, discinctus, capite discoperto, triduo jejunio anticipato, edoctus exemplo nobilissimi triumphatoris Eraclii Augusti, versus Parisiacam urbem et usque ad ecclesiam beatae Virginis cathedralem bajulavit;” MATTHEW PARIS, *Chronica majora*, vol. IV, pp. 90–91.

25 “Et hoc circumspecto ipsis praelatis sic volentibus factum est, ut [ab] ipsi[s], quorum prudentia tanta gloria fuerat adquisita, esset etiam circumstante populo ad instar Eraclii, de quo fecimus mentionem, illo modo veneranter attractata;” MATTHEW PARIS, *Chronica majora*, vol. IV, p. 91.

Paris) of the hierarchs, the king has the right to touch the Cross and bring it to his town and temple. Paris includes a similar description in the *Historia minor*.<sup>26</sup> The analogies between Louis and Heraclius are not expressed explicitly: the *descriptio* of the *ostensio* of the relics at the suburb of Saint-Antoine where Saint Louis personally demonstrated the True Cross to the faithful assembled there, also brings to mind the descriptions of the Heraclius's translation of the True Cross in Jerusalem. Paris mentions the cry *Behold the Cross of the Lord (Ecce Crucem Domini)* which was uttered during the *ostensio* by the bishops assembled around it: the same cry was said to have been heard when Heraclius was bringing the Holy Wood freed from the Persian rule to Jerusalem. It should be, however, added that the text of the chronicle differs from the picture which Paris added to it, as it clearly shows the cry *Ecce Crucem Domini* coming out of the mouth of the king holding the relic.<sup>27</sup>

The parallel between Heraclius and the king performing the translation of the Passion relics was certainly not accidental for Matthew and does not concern only the king of France but also the model situation. Namely, Matthew used it also with respect to the translation of the Lord's Holy Blood, which was performed in 1247 by the English king Henry III.<sup>28</sup> Also this king was like Heraclius when he was performing the translation of the relics to Westminster Abbey. However, the chronicler states clearly that the king of England followed the example of both Heraclius and Saint Louis:

Our lord the king, being the most Christian ruler, taking an example of the most pious and victorious emperor Heraclius Augustus, who performed the Exaltation of the Cross, and of the contemporary king of the Franks, who honoured the Cross in Paris, as we have it described above, full of piety and regretting his sins, on the eve of Saint Edward's Day fasted on bread and water and took nightly

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26 "... dominus rex Francorum Crucem Domini, quam ab imperatore Constantinopolitano B[aldewino] sibi pro maximo thesauro comparaverat, ab ecclesia Sancti Antonii nudus pedes et in laneis cum summa humilitate ac sollempni processione portavit; edoctus exemplo Christianissimi imperatori Eraclii;" MATTHEW PARIS, *Historia Anglorum*, vol. II, p. 446.

27 "... crucem ipsam in altum [rex] elevavit lacrimis abortus, incipientibus qui praesentes erant praelatis voce altissima, 'Ecce crucem Domini;'" MATTHEW PARIS, *Chronica majora*, vol. IV, p. 90. The drawing is conserved in Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 16, fol. 141r<sup>o</sup>.

28 On the translation of the Lord's Blood to Westminster in 1247: VINCENT, *The Holy Blood. King Henry III and the Westminster Blood Relic*; GUERRY, „Failure and Invention: King Henry III, the Holy Blood, and Gothic Art in Westminster Abbey”, pp. 66–87; GUERRY, BINSKI, “Seats, Relics, and the Rationale of Images in Westminster Abbey, Henry III to Edward II”, pp. 180–204; PYSIAK, *Kult relikwii Męki Pańskiej w ideologii władzy monarszej we Francji i w Anglii*, pp. 290–303.

vigils praying in the light of many candles, and prudently prepared himself for the celebrations on the morrow.<sup>29</sup>

Thus, Matthew views Louis IX not only as an imitator of emperor Heraclius; his own activeness with respect to the cult of Passion relics makes him a new Heraclius. Not only does he follow the example of the old kings but himself becomes an example for his contemporaries.

Let us go back to Gerard of Saint-Quentin. In his account we find also another very interesting topic connected with the elevation of France, described earlier by Gautier Cornut. Gerard continues (in a way) the topic of France as the new Chosen People, among other things, by comparing the celebrations of the translation of the Passion relics to the introduction of the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem by king David and calls Paris New Jerusalem. However, God's grace was also bestowed on the Kingdom of France earlier on and again it was an unquestionable merit of Louis IX:

When the most Christian king, Louis ... whose nobility of the spirit was no lesser than the perfection of his body, increased the power (empire) of his kingdom and multiplied its wealth much more than his predecessors, [he] was elevated by the Lord [and], he obeyed the commandments of the Lord Supreme in the humility of spirit, following the principles of justice [and was] both the expander and protector of the freedom of the Church. And as it is said in the Divine law: And when the Lord gave you the cities big and strong, houses full of all the riches, and thou shalt eat and be full, beware lest thou forget the Lord<sup>30</sup> ..., the more praiseworthy was his [Louis's] gentleness and the more pleasing to God, his humility. ... So it came to pass that He who knew from the beginning the work of every man and who rewards everyone according to their merit, as if already approving the ways of his [life], gave him a sign of special love, which appears to be an indication of stability of the kingdom and a sufficient sign of the probable, if he perseveres in doing good, future happiness in Heaven.<sup>31</sup>

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29 "Dominus autem rex, utpote princeps Christianissimus, ab Augusto Eraclio victoriosissimo ac piissimo imperatore, crucem sanctam exaltante, et a rege Francorum tunc superstite, crucem eandem, ut praescribitur, Parisius honorante, sumens exemplum, devoto spiritu ac contrito in vigilia sancti Æ[dwardi] in pane et aqua jejunans, et nocte vigilans, cum ingenti lumine et devotis orationibus se ad crastinam sollempnitatem prudenter praeparavit;" MATTHEW PARIS, *Chronica majora*, vol. IV, p. 641. Cf. *Historia minor: Revocavit enim ad memoriam historiam de imperatore Eraclio Crucem ad portas Jerusalem bajulante*, MATTHEW PARIS, *Historia Anglorum*, vol. III, p. 302.

30 Deuteronomy 6,10–12 (with minor changes).

31 "Cum christianissimus Francorum rex Ludovicus ... non minus animi nobilitate quam carnis generositate conspicuus, super predecessorum suorum magnificentiam dilatato regni imperio et multiplicata rerum opulentia esset a Domino sublimatus, in preceptis Altissimi ambulavit, in humilitate spiritus, justicie norma, libertatis ecclesiastice promotor pariter et patronus. Et sicut in divina lege precipitur: Cum dederit tibi Dominus civitates multas et firmas, domos plenas

After this apology of the perfect reign of Louis IX, Gerard of Saint-Quentin begins the account of the translation of the Crown of Thorns to France. Thus, bringing the relic to the Capetian capital was not only a result of the prudence and thrift of the king who took advantage of, as it may seem, accidental circumstances to obtain such a magnificent relic, free it from the hands of the creditors and prevent Christianity from losing it. In fact it was king Louis's virtues that were rewarded by God who, seeing his merits granted him and the Kingdom of France the greatest prize. God gave Louis IX the Crown of Thorns as an indication that his kingdom would continue to prosper and even, if the king kept to God's paths, the king would become a saint (*futura beatitudo*).

The topic of the prosperity of the kingdom resulting from the translation of the Crown of the Lord appears also, although in a different way in the chronicles of Guillaume de Nangis. This author points at the cause and effect relation between the peaceful reign of Louis IX and bringing the Passion relics to France:

Louis, the king of France, seeing that the Lord had given peace to his kingdom for more than four years and let him rest from his enemies, bearing in mind the favours and honours the Lord bestowed on him and in order to make even greater peace which would remain in his kingdom forever, sent envoys to the emperor of Constantinople who gave him and ceded to him the holy Crown of Thorns with which our Lord was crowned on the day of his Passion (in the Latin chronicle: the solemn and trustworthy envoys brought from Constantinople the holiest Crown with which Christ, the son of God, wished to crown himself during his Passion, which he suffered for our sins).<sup>32</sup>

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cunctarum opum, et comederis et saturatus fueris, cave ne obliviscaris Dominum Deum tuum ... tanto laudabilior esset ipsius mansuetudo et acceptabilior apud Dominum humilitas. ... Unde factum est ut ille qui ab inicio novit opera singulorum et unumquemque remunerat secundum suorum exigentiam meritorum, quasi vias ejus jam approbans precipue dilectionis eidem tribueret intersignum, quod et regni videbatur stabilimenti presagium, et satis probabile si perseveret in bono future beatitudinis argumentum;" GERARD DE SAINT-QUENTIN, *Translatio Sancte Corone (Exuviae)*, pp. 102–103.

- 32 "Li roys Loys qui vit que Diex li ot ja donné IIII. ans et plus pais en son royaume et repos de ses anemis, si noublia pas les biens et les honneurs que il li avoit fait; ainçois, pource que gegnieur pais venit et feut tous jours en son royaume, il fit et pourchassa tant vers lenpereour de Constantinoble ... qui li donna et otroia la sainte couronne despines dont nostre Sires fu couronnés au jour de sa passion. Li roy Loys envoya mesagiers certains et sollempnez avesques les messages lempereour Baudouin, en Constantinoble, et fit aporter mout honnourablement la sainte couronne en France. / Videns autem Ludovicus rex Franciae, quod requiem de suis hostibus sibi Dominus tribuisset, non ingratus nec immemor beneficiorum sibi ab ipso Domino collatorum, anno regni sui terdecimo et aetatis suae XXII, ab Incarnatione vero Domini M.CC.XXXIX, per solemnes et certos nuntios de partibus Constantinopolis fecit coronam sacratissimam, qua Christus filius Dei pro nostris enormitatibus in passione sua coronari voluit,

Then, Guillaume de Nangis describes the course of the translation and founding Sainte-Chapelle to finally conclude:

In that chapel he nominated the canons and chaplains who were to serve God forever and gave them great revenue so that they could live in style fitting the royal grandeur. As a reward for that and other similar good deeds, Louis, the king of the Franks, was bestowed the grace by God, Lord of the kings and thanks to it he could either make peace with his enemies or completely defeat those who hated peace.<sup>33</sup>

Thus, Guillaume de Nangis elaborates the view we know from the apology of the reign of Saint Louis found in the work by Gerard of Saint-Quentin: the *stabilitas regni* about which Gerard wrote is the peace enjoyed by France during the reign of Louis, who is presented as a veritable *rex pacificus*. The peace is God's special grace given to the Capetian king and France, which is ruled by him. Similarly to Gerard, Guillaume sees in the translation of the Crown of Thorns carried out by Louis an intentional act, aimed at assuring that the special grace bestowed by God upon the kingdom perdures. This intention, as Guillaume de Nangis says, was entirely fulfilled: the veneration of the Passion relics in a way appropriate for the monarch: founding a magnificent chapel and establishing a college of canons whose duty was to provide the sanctuary with liturgy for centuries, made Louis IX a *rex pacificus* like new Solomon, although Guillaume de Nangis does not make a direct reference to the Biblical model of the peace-loving king in his chronicle.

## 2. The Crown of Thorns as the Holy Crown and the *titulus Imperii*

Another aspect which should be discussed when analyzing the sources devoted to the Crown of Thorns is how it is called. The relic is called the

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apportari;" GUILLAUME DE NANGIS, *Gesta sancti Ludovici / Vie de Saint Louis*, pp. 327, 329 (French version) and 326, 328 (Latin version).

33 "In eadem vero capella canonicos et capellanos, qui ibidem divinum servitium in perpetuum celebrarent, instituit, atque magnos redditus eisdem, ut inde sustentaretur, sicut decebat majestatem regiam, assignavit. Pro his et consimilibus bonis operibus invenit gratiam in oculis Regis regum Domini Ludovicus rex Francorum, qua meruit hostes suos vel ad pacem convertere, vel hos qui pacem oderant penitus debellare. / En icelle chapelle, qui est la plus belle que nus veit onques, fit mestre li roys chanoines et chapelains et clers, qui nuit et jour font le service de Nostre Seigneur; et establi rentes dont il pueent estre soufisaument et honnourablement soustenu. Pur ces chouses et autres bonnes euvres deservi li roys Loys lamour et la grace Nostre Seignour, dont il trait a paiz ses anemis et ot victoire de ceus qui namoient mie pais;" GUILLAUME DE NANGIS, *Gesta sancti Ludovici / Vie de Saint Louis*, p. 328 (Latin version) and 329 (French version).

Crown of Thorns quite rarely. The authors prefer to use such terms as “the Crown of the Lord,” “the Holy Crown,” or even “the Holy diadem.” This highlights the monarchic character of the relic and its cult, for it not only stresses the Messianic, royal majesty of Christ but also the similarity of the worldly king to Christ the King.<sup>34</sup> Archbishop Cornut calls the relic “the holiest Crown of Thorns of the Lord,”<sup>35</sup> but more often, simply, “the Crown,”<sup>36</sup> “the Crown of the Lord”<sup>37</sup> or “the holy diadem.”<sup>38</sup> The Flemish chronicler and poet, Philip Mouskès speaks of “the crown with which the Lord was crowned on the Cross.”<sup>39</sup> Jacques of Dinant writes about the Passion relics as if they were knightly insignia, also stressing their eschatological meaning; talking about the arrival of the relics in France, which he calls the “blessed kingdom” he says that “first the Crown of Thorns was placed on the head of the Highest King.”<sup>40</sup> Gerard of Saint-Quentin usually calls the relic “the Crown of the Lord”<sup>41</sup> and Guillaume de Nangis, “the holy Crown of the Lord” or “the holiest crown which Christ agreed to be crowned with during his Passion.”<sup>42</sup> The Parisian poet, Guillaume Guiart,

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34 The basic, still relevant monograph about the royal standing of Christ in the Middle Ages is: LECLERCQ, *L'idée de la royauté du Christ au Moyen Âge*.

35 “Sacratissima spinea Corona Domini;” GAUTIER CORNUT, *De susceptione Coronae Domini*, p. 29.

36 Ibid.

37 “Corona Domini / Domini Corona;” GAUTIER CORNUT, *De susceptione Coronae Domini*, pp. 29, 31.

38 “... per virtutem sacri diadematis;” GAUTIER CORNUT, *De susceptione Coronae Domini*, p. 31.

39 “Cèle couroune proprement / Dont courounés fu asprement / Li vrais Dieux, quant en croix fu mis, / En aporta de cel païs;” PHILIPPE MOUSKÈS, *Chronique rimée*, v. 30581–30584; other Passion relics: v. 30685–30878, RHF, vol. XXII, p. 73bis.

40 “Christi enim patientis insignia, arma, vexilla, fidei munimenta, spei praeludia, caritatis exenia, quibus diabolus triumphavit, mortem superavit, genus humanum redemit, infernum spoliavit, paradysum ditavit, angelos laetificavit, in regnum beatum allata .... Primo fuit spinea Corona sancto capito superni Regis imposita;” JACQUES DE DINANT, *Tractatus de translatione beatae Genovefae*, p. 140.

41 “Corona Domini;” GERARD DE SAINT-QUENTIN, *Translatio Sancte Corone (Exuviae)*, pp. 102, 103, 104.

42 “... sancta corona Domini;” GUILLAUME DE NANGIS, *Gesta sancti Ludovici / Vie de Saint Louis*, p. 326 (Latin version); “coronam sacratissimam, qua Christus filius Dei pro nostris enormitatibus in passione sua coronari voluit;” ibid. An almost identical account can be found in: GUILLAUME DE NANGIS, *Chronicon*, p. 548. *Sainte couronne*, but also: *sainte couronne despines*; GUILLAUME DE NANGIS, *Gesta sancti Ludovici / Vie de Saint Louis*, p. 327 (French version).



in his poem from around 1314, when describing the genealogy and deeds of the kings of France calls the relic “the crown Christ wore on his head.”<sup>43</sup> The English chronicler, Matthew Paris, recalling in one of his descriptions of the translation that Christ, “King of the kings and Lord of the lords,” gave the king of France a *Crown* (of thorns), which also stresses the royal character of the relic.<sup>44</sup> It should be noted that in another place of his chronicles Paris calls Louis IX *rex regum terrestrium*,<sup>45</sup> due to the fact that the king of France is given the *heavenly anointment* (but also thanks to the fact that he has the mightiest knights). Regardless of the circumstances, however (honorary precedence among other kings), the formula, modeled on the title commonly used to call the Saviour, evidently stresses the similarity of the king of France to Christ and suggests that he is His image on Earth. Thus, it seems obvious thus that also the relics of the Crown of Thorns, the *Crown of the Lord*, were entrusted by God to the king of France. Analyzing the selected examples of liturgical sources, we shall see that also their authors often used the term *corona* or *sancta, sacratissima corona*.

It is also worth reminding that the reliquary for the thorn of the Crown of Thorns from the Abbey of Saint-Denis was given, like many other thirteenth century reliquaries with a similar function, at least at the turn of the twelfth and thirteenth century, the shape of a royal crown, but, which is particularly important, it was almost identical to the coronation insignia of the Capetians and called the *Holy Crown* in the sources from that century. The analogy between the two ‘holy crowns’ is clear: the Crown of Thorns was made into an image of the royal crown. Indeed, the crown stored in the treasury of the Abbey of Saint-Denis was also called “Holy Crown” due to the relic placed in the diadem. During the reign of Louis IX the Crown of Thorns of Jesus, which the king kept in his palace, was called the Holy Crown. Evidently, Louis IX made intentional use of these associations or even created or strengthened them. He deposited the relic in the royal palace chapel instead of giving it, like his predecessors, to the Abbey of Saint-Denis or the Paris Cathedral. According to Guillaume de Saint-Pathus, during the feasts of the Crown of Thorns and other Passion relics established by the king, Louis, together with the bishops and members of

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43 “La très precieuse couronne / la très digne, la très honeste / Que Jesu Crist ot en sa teste;” GUILLAUME GUIART, *La branche des royaus lingnages*, v. 9182–9184, p. 180 ff.

44 “Sic igitur Dominus noster Iesus Christus, rex regum et dominus dominantium, in cuius manu corda sunt regum, ... ipsum regnum Francie his tribus dotavit et ditavit ... videlicet corona predictae et cruce Domini ... et corpore beati Edmundi;” MATTHEW PARIS, *Chronica majora*, vol. IV, p. 91.

45 MATTHEW PARIS, *Chronica majora*, vol. V, p. 480.

the clergy held solemn processions, personally carrying the reliquary with the Crown of Thorns. Such a procession, as Guillaume de Saint-Pathus says, brought to the royal palace the whole clergy and people of Paris.<sup>46</sup> Thus Louis was consistent in stressing the connection between the Capetian monarchy and the Crown of Thorns and his own royal person with the dignity of Christ and imprinting it in the consciousness and memory of his subjects.

The intended identification of the Crown of Thorns with the royal crown of the Capetians was quite successful, at least in the royal milieu, which is evidenced by the iconography of the Capetian liturgical sources created in the fourteenth century. In an illuminated copy of the *Life of Saint Louis* by Guillaume de Saint-Pathus, written in ca. 1320,<sup>47</sup> owned by Blanche, daughter of Louis IX, we find a miniature representing Louis IX praying in front of the Passion relics. The Crown of Thorns is depicted in exactly the same way as the crown worn by Saint Louis, yet it is several times larger.<sup>48</sup> This shows that the relic of the Crown of Thorns was treated literally as a Christ's holy royal insignia, handed over to the king of France because so God wished. The king must have understood the symbolic meaning of the Crown of Thorns in the same way, which is suggested by the fact that he kept the relic in the palace chapel and made processions with the Crown, carrying it on his shoulders in his royal palace. An analogous representation can be found in the Hours of Joan II, queen of Navarre (*Heures de Jeanne de Navarre*), Louis X's daughter, on a miniature illustrating the office in honour of Saint Louis.<sup>49</sup> The books used by the royal family of the Valois dynasty were also illuminated with representations of the translation: the pageant during which Louis IX carries on his shoulders the feretory with the Crown of Thorns represented as a gold royal crown (this may be also a representation of the reliquary, which seems less probable). Three almost identical illuminations can be found in the Hours of Joan II of Navarre,<sup>50</sup> in the so-called Breviary of Charles V of Valois (1364–1380),<sup>51</sup> and in the so-called

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46 "... fesoit apeler li benoiez rois as dites festes aucuns evesques que il pooit avoir, et fesoit fere procession de ces evesques et des freres par le palès roial, en revenant a la chapele; et a cele procession li benoiez rois portoit a ses propres epaules, avec les evesques, les reliques devant dites; et a cele procession sassembloit li clergie de Paris et li pueples;" GUILLAUME DE SAINT-PATHUS, *Vie de Saint Louis* (DELABORDE), p. 75.

47 Guillaume de Saint-Pathus, *Vie et miracles de Saint Louis*, BnF, Ms. Français 5716.

48 Ibid., fol. 67v°.

49 Probably made in 1336–1340. BnF, Ms. Nouvelles Acquisitions Latines 3145, fol. 150r°.

50 BnF, Ms. Nouvelles Acquisitions Latines 3145, fol. 102r°.

51 BnF, Ms. Latin 1052, fol. 450v°.

Savoy Hours (Heures de Savoie) made at the same time as that belonging to Joan II.<sup>52</sup> As it may be inferred from the preserved fourteenth and fifteenth century illuminations as well as those from the early sixteenth century from the liturgical books made for Sainte-Chapelle or the members of the ruling dynasty, probably commissioned by Saint Louis, the reliquary of the Crown of Thorns resembled an *ostensorium* on a foot with the royal crown at the top.<sup>53</sup> The most exact and probably best representing the actual appearance of the reliquary is the miniature from the Hours of Anne of Bretagne (ca. 1503–1508),<sup>54</sup> in which the crown at the top of the reliquary looks very similar in its arrangement and choice of the precious stones (rubies, spinels,

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52 The Savoy Hours (TURIN, BN, Ms. E.V.49, here: fol. 279r<sup>o</sup>), commissioned by the maternal granddaughter of Louis IX, Blanche of Burgundy, countess of Savoy (1288–1348) was later bought by king Charles V and in the seventeenth century became the property of the Savoy dynasty, later on of the University Library in Turin, and finally of the National Library in Turin where it was burnt in 1904. A facsimile has been preserved: *MONUMENTA PALAEOGRAPHICA SACRA; HEURES DE SAVOIE*. Recently reproduced in: GAPOSCHKIN, *The Making of Saint Louis*, fig. 11, p. 218. Cf. DURRIEU, *Notice d'un des plus importants livres de prières de Charles V*, pp. 500–555.

53 The Parisian breviary of the fifteenth century, made in ca. 1414 for Louis de Valois, duke of Guyenne (1397–1415), son of Charles VI, now in: CHÂTEAURoux, BM, Ms. 0002, fol. 350r<sup>o</sup>; missal from Sainte-Chapelle, BnF, Ms. Latin 8890, fol. 65v<sup>o</sup> (miniatures by Jean Fouquet?, ca. 1420 – ca. 1480, or the early sixteenth century); the non-existent Benedictionary of duke of Bedford (regent of France on behalf of Henry V Lancaster, 1422–1435) – a miniature known from a copy from 1837, MUSÉE DE CLUNY, CL 22847. Cf. so-called Breviary of Charles V (BnF, Ms. Latin 1052, fol. 468v<sup>o</sup>) in a miniature beginning the office in honour of Saint Louis (August 25), the ostensorium is represented in a slightly different way: around the circular ostensorium on a foot there is a stylized gold wreath or a solar corona. Possibly the representation is different because it is depicted in an unnatural perspective as if the illuminator wanted to show the reliquary as seen from above. Reproductions with comments: DURAND, *Les reliquaires de la Grande Châsse*, pp. 113–122 and no. 26–27, pp. 126–127.

54 BnF, Ms. Latin 9474, fol. 211v<sup>o</sup>. The faithfulness of the representation from the Hours of Anne of Bretagne is confirmed by other illuminations (The Psalter and Hours of the Petit family, ca. 1460, PIERPOINT MORGAN, Ms. 67, fol. 1r<sup>o</sup>; Prayer Book of the Petit family, ca. 1500 r., STONYHURST, Ms. 45, fol. 50v<sup>o</sup>; so-called Little Hours from Sainte-Chapelle, fol. 137v<sup>o</sup>, before 1506, private collection) and modern engravings: *La véritable représentation des Tres-Saintes et Tres-Précieuses Reliques, mises par S. Louys en la Sainte-Chapelle ...*, BnF, Estampes, Va 225 F, no. 2184; in a monumental volume: MORAND, *Histoire de la S<sup>te</sup>-Chapelle*, p. 40 and PARIS, AN, LL 630, fol. 11r<sup>o</sup>, 14r<sup>o</sup>, 17r<sup>o</sup>. Reproductions with comments: *TRÉSOR DE LA SAINTE-CHAPELLE*, pp. 113–122 and no. 28–32, pp. 128–137.

garnets or jacinths and sapphires and pearls, but no emeralds, as it seems) to the Holy Crown from Saint-Denis and the coronation crown, but it has twice as many lily blossoms (eight, alternatingly larger and smaller ones). This similarity is worthy of attention and can not be treated as accidental: undoubtedly it was inspired by the wish to show in this way the analogy of the Capetians' royal power and the royal status of Christ.

Duly appreciating the ideological importance of the iconographic representation of the Crown of Thorns as the royal crown, one should add that it was not the only way in which it was depicted during the reign of Saint Louis. Furthermore, it seems that the other style was gaining popularity, possibly under the influence of the liturgical texts written, as we shall show below, after Louis's death, especially in the iconography from the texts connected with his liturgical cult. The iconography of the relic of the Crown of Thorns contemporary to the reign of Louis IX is different. In the stained glasses from Sainte-Chapelle and the ambit of Saint-Gatien Cathedral in Tours – which were made almost at the same time (and also just a few years after the translation, 1245–1248) – the Crown of Thorns is represented as a green wreath.<sup>55</sup> As Chiara Mercuri has noted, the representations of the Crown of Thorns in liturgical manuscripts from Sainte-Chapelle belong to the new trend of the realistic iconography of the Passion: three Gospel Books and one missal made for the palace chapel during the reign of Louis IX<sup>56</sup> have on their bindings or in their illuminations, beside the earlier iconographic type (a cruciform halo) the images of Christ crowned with a realistically depicted wreath of thorns.<sup>57</sup> The author even claims that Louis IX's promotion of the cult of the Crown of Thorns in the long run resulted in the dissemination of that iconographic type. One should also add that at

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55 The stained glass from Sainte-Chapelle, the so-called Relics Window (or the Royal Window), panels A-69 and A-73; cf. JORDAN, *Visualizing Kingship in the Windows of the Sainte-Chapelle*. The stained glass from Tours Cathedral: New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, The Cloisters Collection, no. 37.173.3 and 37.173.4. About the influence of the translation of the Crown of Thorns and the artistic influence of Sainte-Chapelle on the stained glasses in the Tours Cathedral: MOREY PAPANICOLAOU, *Stained Glass from the Cathedral of Tours*, pp. 53–66.

56 The so-called first Evangeliary from Sainte-Chapelle – BnF, Ms. Latin 8892; the so-called second Evangeliary from Sainte-Chapelle – BnF, Ms. Latin 9455; the so-called third Evangeliary from Sainte-Chapelle – BnF, Ms. Latin 17326; the missal – MAZARINE, Ms. 422. About the evangeliaries from Sainte-Chapelle: LAFFITTE, *Les manuscrits repertoriés dans les inventaires du trésor de la Sainte-Chapelle*, pp. 144–146 and no. 35, 36, 37, pp. 149–163.

57 MERCURI, *Les reflets sur l'iconographie de la translation de la couronne d'Épines*, pp. 117–125.

the above-mentioned drawing from the *Chronica majora* of Matthew Paris, representing Louis IX performing the *ostensio* of the Holy Cross, the clergyman standing next to the king presents the Crown of Thorns also quite realistically represented as a wreath with spikes.

Calling the Crown of Thorns a “holy diadem” or the “holy crown” is not the only ideologically meaningful name used by the archbishop of Sens to denote the relic. Let us recall that he also called it the *totius Imperii titulus et gloria specialis*.<sup>58</sup> The expression *Imperii titulus* which also Giovanni Colonna used in the chronicle *Mare historiarum*<sup>59</sup> literally means ‘glory’. Thus, the Crown of Thorns was also the right to the glory of the Eastern Empire, the glory transferred to Capetian France. However, *titulus* may have other meanings, i.e., the sacral patronage (like the *titulus ecclesiae*), then it would mean that Christ’s special patronage over Constantinople was moved to the kingdom of France. This understanding may be connected with the consecutive argument of Gautier Cornut who explained the eschatological aspect of the translation: the Crown of Thorns was in his opinion moved to France owing to the specially arduous Christian faith in that kingdom and was to be venerated till the end of time when Christ would come for the Last Judgement. Then he would put the Crown of Thorns on his head again as an attribute of his royal power to judge. Thirdly, the *titulus* also means the legal title, understood as a legitimate legal claim: owning the Crown of Thorns as the *titulus Imperii* might have meant that the heritage of the Roman Empire became, due to the translation of the relic, the heritage of Louis IX and the Capetians. This way of thinking may probably be confirmed by an Austrian chronicle from the early fourteenth century in which the author, John of Viktring, wrote that in 1294 the German king, Adolf of Nassau requested that Philip IV the Fair should *return* the Crown of Thorns and the Kingdom of Arles.<sup>60</sup> In fact, the Kingdom of Arles, i.e., the former Kingdom of Burgundy, was from 1032 part of the Western Empire, but indeed, from the second half of the thirteenth century got into the political and cultural sphere of influence of the Capetians who made claims to it. The request of Adolf of Nassau, which combined the legally and historically legitimate claims for Arles with the demand to be given the Crown

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58 GAUTIER CORNUT, *De susceptione Coronae Domini*, p. 29.

59 “Perpendens igitur Balduinus devotionem regis et matris erga Deum et dictum Imperium, venerabilem illum thesaurum, scilicet Coronam spineam, quae in Constantinopoli a longis retro temporibus ad stabilimentum Imperii conservata fuerat ... quae totius Imperii titulus erat et gloria, pro speciali gratia eis donat;” GIOVANNI COLONNA, *Mare historiarum* (RHF), p. 110.

60 JOHN OF VIKTRING, *Liber historiarum*, p. 351; PAUK, *Królewski kult relikwii Świętej Korony Cierniowej*, p. 64.

of Thorns, *lege artis* ceded by the emperor of Constantinople to the king of France, may be explained only by the fact that the German king, a natural pretender for the imperial crown in the West, was convinced that Christ's Crown of Thorns was the legal heritage of the Empire to the same extent as Arles. Thus, it was in a way the *titulus Imperii*.

The topic of the *translatio Imperii ad Francos* appeared in the twelfth century Empire during the reign of Frederick Barbarossa, possibly as part of the already existing struggle with the papacy but also a sign of the rivalry between the Capetians and the Empire for the heritage of Charlemagne, which had begun in that period.<sup>61</sup> The Capetian claims for Carolingian affiliations are known already for the times of Philip I:<sup>62</sup> the use of the name Louis by the dynasty in the last quarter of the eleventh century is the best proof of this.<sup>63</sup> Between 1160 and 1180, a mystery play *Ludus de Antechristo, on the preparations of Christian Europe for the impending end of times*, was written in the milieu of Barbarossa's court.<sup>64</sup> The emperor appeals to the Christian rulers to acknowledge his superiority in the face of the coming end of times, which will help him to fulfill the duties of the eschatological ruler. The French king refuses, referring to the accounts of the historians who vouch that the Empire used to belong to the Gaul, so the French monarch is its rightful heir. Since the imperial dignity had been taken away from the Franks by force, it is out of the question for the king of France to humble himself before the robber.<sup>65</sup> The French, but not

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61 On the *translatio Imperii* in the imperial and French tradition, especially: FOLZ, *Le souvenir et la légende de Charlemagne dans l'Empire germanique médiéval*, pp. 56–60, 81–87, 160–169, 186–201, 267–295; GOEZ, *Translatio Imperii*; RUBEL, *Caesar und Karl der Große in der Kaiserchronik*, pp. 146–163; GRUNDMANN, *Sacerdotium – Regnum – Studium*, pp. 5–21; KIENAST, *Deutschland und Frankreich in der Kaiserzeit*, p. 495; SCHRAMM, *Der König der Frankreich*, vol. I, pp. 142–176.

62 See above, the chapter recounting the translation of the Holy Shroud in Compiègne.

63 LEWIS, *Royal Succession in Capetian France*, pp. 47–50.

64 *LUDUS DE ANTECHRISTO*; dating: *ibid.*, p. VI, and *PLAY OF ANTICHRIST*; cf. CHAZAN, *L'Empire et l'histoire universelle de Sigebert de Gembloux à Jean de Saint-Victor*, pp. 204–239 (Sigebert de Gembloux), pp. 311–396 (reception of Sigebert in chronicles till the thirteenth century), 473–494, 513–568, 676–702. HAUCK, *Zur genealogie und Gestalt des staufischen 'Ludus de Antechristo'*, pp. 21–25; KAMLAH, *Der Ludus de Antechristo*, pp. 53–87; KIENAST, *Deutschland und Frankreich in der Kaiserzeit*, pp. 481–484.

65 “Historiographis si qua fides habetur, / non nos Imperio sed nobis hoc debetur / Hoc enim seniores Galli possederunt / atque suis posteris nobis relinquerunt / Sed hoc inuasoria vi nunc spoliatur / Absit, inuasoribus ut nos obsequamur/;” *LUDUS DE ANTECHRISTO*, v. 69–74, p. 8.

only Capetian, claims for the imperial heritage appeared in the Arthurian legends at the turn of the twelfth and thirteenth century in a slightly different form: Chrétien de Troyes is the first known author who mentioned the *translatio studii* from Greece to Rome and from Rome to France. This subject was taken up in historiography in the times of Louis IX and his successors. According to the Capetian chroniclers the *translatio* was based on three premises, thanks to which the kingdom of the Franks had all the attributes of a true empire, taken over by France from Greece and Rome. These were: the greatest knights, the highest scholarship, and the ardor in the Christian faith, unequalled in the world.<sup>66</sup> The cult of the Crown of Thorns supported by the monarchy is certainly one of the proofs of the particular strength of the Catholic faith in France. However, it should be remembered that Gautier Cornut considered the translation itself as a sign of the grace God extended to the king of France because the Christian faith was embraced in his kingdom far more arduously than anywhere else: that is why God chose Gaul as the place where the relic should be deposited. As we shall see, these issues will appear also in the offices in honour of the Crown of Thorns, which will grant them a special sacral legitimation.

The anonymous chronicle of the years 1286–1314, written during the reign of Philip the Fair, confirms the belief that owing to the translation of the Crown of Thorns a kind of *translatio Imperii*. Even though this notion was not used, the chronicler's argumentation is quite clear. Namely, having transferred such valuable and holy relic to the Kingdom of France, or to the crown of France as the chronicler says, God proved his love for Saint Louis and France. The kings and kingdom of France were honoured by the translation of the Crown and if they persevere in their virtue, they will be in the future too, for the king of France is the head of the Christian rulers.<sup>67</sup>

The problem, well known in scholarship, of the *sui generis* 'translation of Jerusalem' from the Holy Land to the West<sup>68</sup> through the translation of the

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66 PRIMAT, *Les Grandes Chroniques de France*, RHF, vol. III, p. 154; GUILLAUME DE NANGIS, *Chronicon*, p. 546; cf. CHAZAN, *L'Empire et l'histoire universelle de Sigebert de Gembloux à Jean de Saint-Victor*, pp. 676–702.

67 "Là li moustra Diex qu'il amoit lui et le roiaume de France, quant il volt souffrir que si precieus saintuaire fussent aportez en la couronne ou roiaume de France. ... De quoi le roi de France et le roiaume ont puis esté hennorez et seront, se Dieu plect et il sont preudes hommes; que c'est le chief des princes crestiens;" *CHRONIQUE ANONYME FINISSANT EN 1286*, pp. 84–85.

68 On the notion of the translation of Jerusalem by the means of the translation of the Passion relics see MANIKOWSKA, *Translatio Jerozolimy do Wroclawia*, pp. 63–75; MANIKOWSKA, *Jerozolima – Rzym – Compostela*, pp. 310–339, with a list of the most valuable monographs on the subject. Also: GABRIELE, *An Empire of Memory. The Legend of Charlemagne, the Franks, and Jerusalem*

Passion relics, and the foundations destined for them, is another issue. The first 'translation of Jerusalem' was performed in Byzantium when emperor Heraclius took to Constantinople the Passion relics regained from the Persians from Jerusalem, still threatened with a Persian invasion. After the conquest of the Middle East by the Arabs, which took place during the following few years, the Byzantine history of philosophy considered this 'translation of Jerusalem' as a lasting result of God's plan.<sup>69</sup> In the tenth century, Byzantine emperors – unable defeat the countries adjoining them on the east and recover the lands which used to belong to the Empire – were satisfied with the triumphs justified by regaining the Christ's relics and moving them to Constantinople.<sup>70</sup> In the hagiographic narratives about the translation of the Crown of Thorns, the Cross and the other Passion relics, especially that written by Gerard of Saint-Quentin who speaks about it directly, and of Gautier Cornut who only alludes that Paris is like Jerusalem, the subject of transferring Jerusalem to Paris is clearly present. The hagiographers and chroniclers who described the translation of the Crown of Thorns believed that France was a new *Terra Promissionis* chosen by God and it was there that the triumphal insignia of the Passion were to be venerated. In this way, the translation of the Crown of Thorns the Holy Land was translated to the West.

The ideological content related to the translation and the cult of the Crown of Thorns, quite important from our point of view, can be found in two of the lives used for reading in the earliest offices in honour of Saint

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*before the First Crusade*, pp. 79–84. FROLOW, *La relique de la Vraie Croix*, pp. 76–92; KLEIN, *Constantine, Helena, and the Cult of the True Cross*, pp. 31–59; KLEIN, *Sacred Relics and Imperial Ceremonies at the Great Palace of Constantinople*, pp. 88–89; ORSELLI, *Simboli della città cristiana*, pp. 419–450; SOMMERLECHNER, *Kaiser Herakleios und die Rückkehr des heiligen Kreuzes nach Jerusalem*, pp. 319–360. Cf. MERGIALI-SAHAS, *Byzantine Emperors and Holy Relics*, pp. 41–60.

69 BAERT, *A Heritage of the Holy Wood*, pp. 133–193; BOZÓKY, *La politique des reliques de Constantin à Saint Louis*, pp. 94–99; DAGRON, *Naissance d'une capitale. Constantinople et ses institutions*; DAGRON, *Constantinople imaginaire*; FLUSIN, *Construire une nouvelle Jérusalem: Constantinople et les reliques*, pp. 51–70; FLUSIN, *Les reliques de la Sainte-Chapelle et leur passé impérial à Constantinople*, pp. 20–33; FROLOW, *La Vraie Croix et les expéditions d'Héraclius en Perse*, pp. 88–105;

70 ENGBERG, *Romanos Lekapenos and the Mandilion of Edessa*, pp. 123–142; PATLAGEAN, *L'entrée de la sainte Face d'Edesse à Constantinople*, pp. 21–35; WEITZMANN, *The Mandylion and Constantine Porphyrogenitus*, pp. 163–184.



Louis and the sermons delivered on his feast.<sup>71</sup> Both offices come from lectionaries probably written in ca. 1300. The former<sup>72</sup> presents the information about the translation of the Crown of Thorns in lesson seven: it briefly describes how the Crown of Thorns the Holy Cross, and the Holy Lance were brought from Constantinople, how they were translated, how Sainte-Chapelle was built, how the three feasts in honour of the relics were established and how the liturgical service was entrusted to the Dominicans and Franciscans.<sup>73</sup> The same content can be found in the sermon for the feast of Saint Louis allegedly written by Guillaume de Saint-Pathus.<sup>74</sup>

The story is much more detailed in a sermon for the feast of Saint Louis found in another lectionary.<sup>75</sup> A striking feature of this sermon is the confusion of the order of the translations: according to the author of the sermon first the True Cross was brought to Paris and only afterward, the Crown of Thorns. In the part describing the translation of the Holy Cross, the author compares king Louis bringing the True Cross to Paris to David bringing the

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71 On the sermons, especially those by Cardinal Odo de Châteauroux, on the Passion relic similar in their ideological aspect with the narratives, and the liturgy of the feasts in their honour (see below): CHARANSONNET, MORENZONI, *Prêcher sur les reliques de la Passion à l'époque de Saint Louis*, pp. 61–99.

72 BnF, Ms. Latin 10872.

73 *BEATI LUDOVICI VITA E VETERI LECTONARIO*, *Lectio septima*, p. 163: “Precipua vero devotione sanctas venerabatur reliquias; Dei cultum et honorem sanctorum iugiter augmentabat: (spacja) Parisius siquidem, in regali palatio, capellam speciosissimam construxit, in qua sacrosanctam Coronam Domini spineam, et maximam partem sanctae Crucis, ferrumque Lanceae quod latus aperuit Salvatoris, cum pluribus aliis reliquiis dignissime collocavit, quas a Constantinopolitano imperatore receperat cum i mmensis laboribus et expensis. Diem vero anniversarium quo in dicta capella huiusmodi reliquiae sunt receptae sollempnizari instituit, magnis ad hoc indulgentiis a Sede Apostolica impetratis; et tria festa in huiusmodi sollempnitate connectens, primum voluit fieri per Praedicatores, secundum per Minores, tertium vero per alios religiosos communes.”

74 GUILLAUME DE SAINT-PATHUS, *Sermon en l'honneur de Saint Louis*, cap. 22, p. 286: “Talis fuit beatus Ludovicus, ut patet devocione ejus ad sacras reliquias et ad divinum officium. Capellam speciosissimam pro sacris reliquiis miro scemate edificavit que XL millia librarum Turonensium et amplius constitit, et thecam speciosissimam, in qua ipsas reliquias posuit, fecit, que C millibus libris Turonensium et amplius constitit. Diem anniversariam pro ipsis sollempnizari instituit, unam per Predicatores, scilicet festum Corone sacre, et aliud per fratres Minores scilicet sancte Crucis et aliarum omnium insimul. Hec fuit ejus devocio ad sacras reliquias.”

75 BnF, Ms. Latin 11754.

Arch of Covenant to Jerusalem, and to Moses.<sup>76</sup> In his description of the translation of the Crown of Thorns, the author presents Louis IX performing the *ostensio* of the True Cross and calls him the second Constantine.<sup>77</sup>

### 3. Selected Liturgical Sources

By translating the relic of the Holy Crown of Thorns to Paris, Louis IX undoubtedly wished to make his capital one of the main cult centres in France. It is confirmed by the description of the celebrations of the *festi Sanctae Coronae* in which the people and all the Parisian clergy were to participate. Thus the translation of the Crown of Thorns to Paris and establishing the main feast in its honour in that city seem to be aimed at completing the image of the city as the capital of the Capetian monarchy, which has been rightly noted by Chiara Mercuri.<sup>78</sup> Since then, Paris, the centre of the royal power and economy as well as a seat of a University, gained the attributes necessary to obtain the status of the main sanctuary of the Capetian monarchy, and even of one of the main capitals of Christianity, equal – due to the presence of the Passion relics – in its religious rank to Rome, Constantinople, and Jerusalem. Thanks to the translation of the Crown of Thorns, Paris as the capital of the Kingdom gained a separate sacral status inseparable from the royal authority of the Capetian kings.<sup>79</sup> The image of Paris and France as the New Jerusalem and the ultimate Chosen People can be found in the narratives describing the translations of the Passion relics of 1239–1241.

An extremely important instrument, since it sends a symbolic message to every participant, that of sacralisation of the Capetian royal power through the cult of the Crown of Thorns, was the liturgy of the feast in its honour. We have already discussed the external forms of this liturgical sacralisation of the Capetian power, now we shall analyze the content of selected liturgical sources. Their tenor indicates the intentions of the authors of the

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76 “Rex autem, velut alter David ante archam ludens, thesaurum impreciablem propriis gestans humeris, et velut alter Moyses, quia sacrosanctum erat quod in terram suam venerat, sublatis calciamentis pedibus incedebat nudis;” *BEATI LUDOVICI VITA PARTIM AD LECTIONES*, p. 171.

77 “Et in procinctu itineris, vae facto ecclesiae congregatae, videre potuit clerus Parisiensis alterum Constantinum, non tumore superbiae sublevatum, sed crucifixum corde, signatum humero, nudis pedibus incedentem, gestantem in manibus dominicae Crucis ligneum;” *BEATI LUDOVICI VITA PARTIM AD LECTIONES*, p. 172.

78 MERCURI, *Stat inter spinas lilium*, pp. 497–512.

79 MERCURI, *Stat inter spinas lilium*, p. 499.

liturgy, but also of those who commissioned them, rather than of its reception by participating laymen. The offices were in Latin and contained subtle theological concepts, often expressed wordplay and subtle allusions – such participants, even some members of the dynasty, certainly did not understand it. The Lives of Louis IX inform that the king, who knew Latin well, sometimes gathered the members of his family to explain to the *illiterati* among them the Latin writings of the Doctors of the Church, for which he was highly praised by his hagiographers. Thus Louis IX must have known quite well not only Latin but also theology and must have also understood the text of the liturgy in honour of the Crown of the Lord. However, the life of her holy father had to be translated into French for his daughter, Blanche, which proves that the other members of the dynasty, especially women, usually could not read Latin. According to chroniclers, Philip III the Bold (1270–1285), the second son and successor of Louis IX to the French throne, could not read with ease. Charles IV the Fair (1322–1328), the last of the Capetian dynasty was called *illiteratus* by Charles IV of Luxembourg (1346–1378) in the latter's autobiography: the last great grandson of Saint Louis could not read Latin. It was probably because both Philip III and Charles IV were younger sons and, not being destined to be kings, did not receive suitable education. In other words, the liturgy in honour of the Crown of Thorns was understandable only to a narrow group of people, namely the clergy and some representatives of the dynasty, i.e., the kings, but not all of them. The others understood mostly the language of the ceremony: the symbols and the gestures. In Louis's times, these were not presented in the liturgical sources<sup>80</sup> but in the narratives.

The offices in honour of the Crown of Thorns or at least mentions of the *festum Sanctae Coronae* in the calendar became quite quickly popular in the Parisian breviaries and those from the Sens province in the first century after the translation, i.e., until the mid-fourteenth century. We know several dozen examples<sup>81</sup> of them, which is a proof of the relative success of the new feast. There are also quite numerous church songs, including hymns, in honour of the Crown of Thorns.<sup>82</sup> The particularly important liturgical

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80 Several later – written or iconographic – accounts from liturgical books dated to the fourteenth and fifteenth century are known, depicting the course of the rituals in honour of the Crown of Thorns and the Passion relics carried out in Sainte-Chapelle, including the role of the king of France. The issue is too broad to discuss here. It will be analyzed in greater detail in my next book on the royal cult of the relic of the Crown of Thorns in France and Europe in the thirteenth-fifteenth century.

81 See above.

82 Hymns to the Crown of Thorns from the fifteenth, sixteenth and eighteenth-century manuscripts are also known. The *ANTIPHONALE ROMANAE*

offices comprise, of course, those from the supplement to the breviary of Sainte-Chapelle and the Gradual-Prosary of San Nicola in Bari. The other liturgical books which shall be discussed in detail are the breviary from the Abbey of Saint Victor in Paris,<sup>83</sup> and two other thirteenth century Parisian breviaries,<sup>84</sup> as well as the thirteenth-century breviary from Sens, the office from which has been briefly analyzed by Chiara Mercuri.<sup>85</sup> We shall present them concisely and briefly, because the liturgical dossier of the cult of the Crown of Thorns is massive and deserves a separate study;<sup>86</sup> we shall focus on the ideological content of that cult in France presented in the liturgical texts.

We have repeatedly stressed in this book the strong presence in the royal theology of both royal priestly character of the person of Christ, resulting from the very nature of His messianic calling. For a Christian and especially for one living in the Middle Ages it was obvious. We have also repeated that the insignia of the Passion, *instrumenta Passionis*, were interpreted as the royal insignia of Christ already at the turn of the Antiquity and Middle Ages. We stressed the consequences of that fact for the cult of the Passion

*ECCLESIAE*, pp. 75–77, contains hymns which William Chester Jordan considered as coming from the thirteenth century, but none of them have been found in any thirteenth century prayer book; cf. JORDAN, *Louis IX and the Challenge of the Crusade*, p. 194; see *EXUVIAE SACRAE CONSTANTINOPOLITANAE*, vol. I, p. CXII, vol. II, pp. 47–49 (a Dominican and a Franciscan hymn). The majority of the hymns to the Crown of Thorns from the liturgical books from various European countries have been published in the consecutive volumes of the series *ANALECTA HYMNICA MEDII Aevi*, vol. IV, no. 18–23, pp. 21–23; vol. V, no. 8–11, pp. 37–47; vol. VIII, no. 15–16, pp. 21–23; vol. IX, no. 19, pp. 22–23; vol. XII, no. 18–20b, pp. 20–21; vol. XV, no. 28, p. 48; vol. XIX, no. 13, p. 18; vol. XXIII, no. 36, pp. 29–30; vol. XXIV, no. 8–10, pp. 30–39; vol. XXX, no. 31, pp. 81–82; vol. XXXIV, no. 18–21, pp. 23–26; vol. XXXIX, no. 12–13, pp. 23–24; vol. XLIII, no. 34–35, p. 25; vol. XLVa, no. 2, pp. 16–18; vol. LIV, no. 133–137, pp. 204–209.

83 BnF, Ms. Latin 14811, fol. 452r<sup>o</sup>-456v<sup>o</sup>. The breviary consists of two parts stitched together: fol. 1–79 and 565–585 come from the fourteenth, fol. 80–564, from the thirteenth century. A description of the breviary as a source in: LEROQUAIS, *Les bréviaires manuscrits*, vol. IV, no. 624, pp. 256–257.

84 BnF, Ms. Latin 15182 and BnF, Ms. Latin 13233, fol. 426v<sup>o</sup>-429v<sup>o</sup>. A description of the breviary as a source: LEROQUAIS, *Les bréviaires manuscrits*, vol. III, no. 624, pp. 256–257 and vol. IV, no. 614, pp. 235 ff.

85 MERCURI, *Corona di Cristo, corona di re*, pp. 123–135; MERCURI, *Stat inter spinas lilium*, pp. 497–508.

86 I am working on another volume devoted to the cult of the Crown of Thorns in Capetian France at a comparative background (with references to Norway, Bohemia, and England).

relics when discussing the reliquary for the thorn from the Crown from Saint-Denis, called the Holy Crown, and presented the cult of the Crown of Thorns as one of the ways in which the Capetian monarchy (and other medieval monarchies) could justify the *similarity* of the worldly king to Christ the King. There is thus no doubt that the translation of the whole Crown of Thorns to Louis IX's France could only strengthen this aspect of *similarity* of the king of France to Christ.

The kingly character of the cult of the Crown of Thorns is evident in the whole text of the office from the Brussels supplement to the breviary from Sainte-Chapelle. In the part dealing with the vespers on the eve of the feast<sup>87</sup> we read that the Passion insignia had a royal and priestly character in the antiphon:

*Gestat coronam spineam vestem habens purpuream rex in derisum traditus veneremur obprobrium per quod salus et gentium per quod celorum aditus.*<sup>88</sup>  
*Signum profert victoriae corona triumphalis simul et excellentie dignitatis regalis.*  
*Sub umbra legis veteris presignata per cydaris typum sacerdotalis.*<sup>89</sup>

The faithful are encouraged to enjoy the new feast thanks to which they can obtain the Crown of Joy in Heaven if they express joy for being able to venerate the Crown of Thorns and for their merits in earthly life:

*Adest nova solempnitas det laudes deo debitas fidelium devotio ut qui choro psallentium dat pro corona gaudium coronam dat pro gaudio ...*  
*Xpiste caput ecclesie qui transfers ad nos hodie tui coronam capitis sic exaudi nos domine ut in acto discrimine coronemur pro meritis.*<sup>90</sup>

In the hymn for the Compline we find a statement that the Crown of Thorns is a sign (*titulus*) of victory: *Tue corone circulus victoriarum tytulus in signe palme speculum que permanet in seculum.*<sup>91</sup> The prayer for Compline and the invitatory encourage to venerate the Passion insignia and rejoice with Christ, the King of Glory, who first gave them the Crown of Thorns but will change it into the crown of Salvation made of gold:

*Presta quesumus omnipotens Deus ut qui in memoria passionis domini nostri Ihesu Christi coronam eius spineam veneramur in terris ab ipso gloria et honore coronari mereamur in celis ...*

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87 BRUSSELS KBR, Ms. IV 472, fol. 1r<sup>o</sup>-2v<sup>o</sup>. All the abbreviations in the quoted text have been expanded.

88 BRUSSELS KBR, Ms. IV 472, fol. 1v<sup>o</sup>.

89 BRUSSELS KBR, Ms. IV 472, fol. 1v<sup>o</sup>-2r<sup>o</sup>.

90 BRUSSELS KBR, Ms. IV 472, fol. 1v<sup>o</sup>.

91 BRUSSELS KBR, Ms. IV 472, fol. 3r<sup>o</sup>.

*Iubilemus hodie Christo regi glorie qui post coronam spineam coronam confert auream.*<sup>92</sup>

Thus, the introductory part of the liturgy in honour of the Crown of Thorns, like the whole text, concentrates, obviously, on the salvific character both of the Passion and of venerating it through the adoration of its relics and Christ the King – for every Christian. However, during the first nocturn, the psalm *Beatus vir* is intertwined with an antiphon which appeals to the worldly kings, encouraging them to improve in the true Teaching of Christ by singing songs in honour of the Crown of Thorns, which, as it was said earlier, is a royal crown: “Reges intelligite reges erudimini novum carmen agite de corona domini.”<sup>93</sup> We can see that the king is specially called to venerate the Crown of Thorns as one sharing the royal nature of Christ. The similarity of Christ the King and the worldly kings can be also found in the third lesson read during the first nocturn, mentioning giving thanks to the Saviour, of whose scepter, imperial diadem, and victorious crown of “our King” we all are subjects: *Agentes igitur gratias gratie salvatoris scepro eius subiecti et imperialis dyadematis et victoriose corone regis nostri ipso adiuvante festinate preconia celebremus.*<sup>94</sup> It seems evident that the sentence beginning the lesson is ambiguous: on the one hand it concerns Christ the King and that is how the words about the victorious crown may be interpreted: of “our King,” but on the other hand, “our King” may also mean the worldly king: the king of France, Louis IX, the more so that also the end of the sentence may be interpreted in more than one way: *ipso adiuvante festinate preconia celebremus* may be understood both as a belief that the liturgical ceremonies will be performed with God’s help but also that they take place owing to the support of the king of France. Christ is called *our King* many times in the office, and the detailed theological justification of calling Christ a king appears when the name *rex noster* is mentioned in the fifth lesson of the second nocturn with the reference to Jesus as the king of the Jews and to king Solomon of whom Christ, as a true king of the Chosen People, was a successor.<sup>95</sup>

92 BRUSSELS KBR, Ms. IV 472, fol. 3v<sup>o</sup>-4r<sup>o</sup>.

93 BRUSSELS KBR, Ms. IV 472, fol. 5r<sup>o</sup>.

94 BRUSSELS KBR, Ms. IV 472, fol. 7v<sup>o</sup>.

95 BRUSSELS KBR, Ms. IV 472, “Lectio V. Legat et intelligat devotus chorus fidelium regem nostrum coronis III<sup>or</sup> fuisse coronatum. Unde scriptum est: In capite eius dyademata multa. Et Zacharias prophetando predixit: Facies coronas et pones in capite Ihesu. Prima fuit corona humanitatis, secunda passionis, tertia iusticie, quarta glorie. Humanitatis corona fuit redimitus quum virgo de virgine et in virgine pro nobis et novo miraculo circumclusus. Sic enim predixerit Ieremias. Novum faciet dominus super terram et mulier circumdabit virum. Hec

During the mass, lessons from Solomon's Book of Wisdom, i.e. the Song of Songs are read: *Egredimini et videte filie Syon regem Salomonem in dyademate quo coronavit eum mater sua in die desponsationis eius et in die leticie cordis illius*. In the Christian exegesis, the Song of Songs is, of course, interpreted as a prefiguration of the wedding of Christ with the Ecclesia, for Christ is the new Solomon. After the reading there is the hymn from Sirach's Book of Wisdom (Syr 45,14): *Corona aurea super caput eius expressa signo sanctitatis glorie honoris et opus fortitudinis. Quoniam prevenisti eum in benedictionibus dulcedinis posuisti in capite eius coronam de lapide pretioso*<sup>96</sup> which from the Carolingian period accompanied placing the crown on the king's head in the coronation *ordines* together with the antiphon *Unxerunt Salomonem Sadoc sacerdos et Nathan propheta regem in Gihon et abierunt laeti dicentes 'vivat rex' in aeternum alleluia*. In other words, this is a direct allusion to the ruling monarch who, like Solomon who preceded Christ, is His earthly image and successor, becoming the *christus Domini*, the anointed by God like David, Solomon and Christ, during the ceremony of anointment with the Holy Oil. This reference to the contemporary times: the ruling monarch, Louis IX and the contemporary Kingdom of France, is emphasized in the prose sung immediately afterward and before the Gospel (John, 19,1-5): "this Crown is given today to our Gaul by the king of mercy."<sup>97</sup>

The readings for the day after the feast of the Crown also contain fragments in which the author of the office uses the ambiguity of the expression *rex noster*: our king. The lesson eight is especially striking: "after the merit of the Crown of Thorns our Lord obtained the crown of fairness, which may be understood in two ways: namely in the work of converting

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circumdatio dicitur coronatio. De hac corona non abusive legitur et exponitur illa exhortatio: Egredimini filie Syon et videte regem Salomonem in dyademate suo. Filie Syon anime virtutibus delicate in speculatione contemplationis enutrite et egredimini non solum a viciis carnis et curis huius seculi sed etiam ab interna contemplatione divinitatis ad contuitum dominice carnis. Videte inquam oculis fidei et intellectus et regem Salomonem ubique enim rex est. Licet enim regnum eius non sit de hoc mundo tamen rex est etiam in hoc mundo. Interrogatus siquidem ergo rex es tu inquit In hoc natus sum et in hoc veni in mundum ut scilicet regnaret super electos. Quod etiam magi reges testati sunt cum dixerunt: Ubi est qui natus est rex iudeorum. In carne enim iam rex erat et in femore eius scriptum erat rex regum et dominus dominantium. Rex iste in humanitate doctor fuit morum in cruce triumphator tormentorum. In iudicio erit discretor meritorum in regno distributor meritorum;" BRUSSELS KBR, Ms. IV 472, fol. 10r<sup>o</sup>-10v<sup>o</sup>.

96 BRUSSELS KBR, Ms. IV 472, fol. 18v<sup>o</sup>-19r<sup>o</sup>.

97 "Hanc coronam hodie nostre confert Gallie rex misericordie;" BRUSSELS KBR, Ms. IV 472, fol. 19v<sup>o</sup>.

the pagans and Jews who join him through their faith and in the power to judge. Namely, the faithful ... are his [Christ's] crown and ornament, the crown his Father had promised him, saying: Ask me and I will give you the pagans, your heritage, and the land to settle."<sup>98</sup> This lesson thus refers to a psalm (Ps 2,8), which announces the arrival of the Kingdom of God, which is interpreted in the Christian exegesis as the prophecy of Christ's coming.

The royal aspect of the cult of the Crown of Thorns is especially noticeable in the lessons read on the octave of the feast. Namely, in lesson two we read the following exhortation to the kings, based on Chapter 6,1–6 of Solomon's Book of Wisdom:

Listen then, kings, and understand; rulers of remotest lands, take warning; hear this, you who govern great populations, taking pride in your hosts of subject nations! For sovereignty is given to you by the Lord and power by the Highest, who will himself probe your acts and scrutinize your intentions. If therefore, as servants of his kingdom, you have not ruled justly nor observed the law, nor followed the will of God, he will fall on you swiftly and terribly. On the highly placed a ruthless judgement falls. Those who uphold justice will be judged justly, for they will be rewarded for their justice.<sup>99</sup>

Thus, on the octave of the feast of the Crown of Thorns king Saint Louis heard in Sainte-Chapelle Solomon's admonitions concerning good and fair governance, which he should himself observe if he wished to obtain the Crown of Salvation and reign with Christ in Heaven.

The successive lessons of the octave dealt with the interpretation of Zechariah's prophecy, referred to earlier on in the office: "Then take silver and gold, and make crowns, and set them upon the head of Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest" (Zechariah 6,11); "And the crowns shall be to Helem, and to Tobijah, and to Jedaiah, and to Hen the son of Zephaniah, for a memorial in the temple of the Lord" (Zechariah 6,14). The interpretation

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98 "Post meritum corone spinee que fuit corona miserie collata est regi nostro corona iusticie que corona precipue in duobus attenditur. Videlicet in conversione gentium et iudeorum ei per fidem adherentium et in auctoritate iudicandi. Fideles siquidem ... corona sunt ei et ornamentum quem coronam ei pater promiserat cum diceret: Postula a me et dabo tibi gentes hereditatem tuam et possessionem tuam terminos terre;" BRUSSELS KBR, Ms. IV 472, fol. 25v<sup>o</sup>-26r<sup>o</sup>.

99 "Audite reges et intelligite, discite iudices finium terre. Prebete aures qui continetis multitudines et placetis vobis in turbis nationum quoniam data est a domino vobis potestas et virtus ab altissimo qui interrogabit opera vestra et cognitiones scrutabitur. Quoniam cum essetis ministri illius regni non recte iudicastis neque custodistis legem iusticie neque secundum voluntatem domini ambulastis. Horrende ergo et cito apparebit nobis quoniam iudicium durissimum in hiis qui presunt fiet. Qui autem custodierint iusticiam recte iudicabuntur quia iusticie sue premium accipient;" BRUSSELS KBR, Ms. IV 472, fol. 27v<sup>o</sup>.



of Zechariah's prophecy which predicted Christ's royal status, runs through the whole office but it is ultimately summed up here.<sup>100</sup> Christ's four crowns, predicted by Zechariah, are interpreted with reference to the Incarnation, Birth, life, Passion, death, Resurrection and return of Christ. The subtle allusion comparing the king of France to Christ the King seems to be best expounded in lesson seven: "Having the power to judge and do justice our king rightly owns the crown of Jedaiah, for his [name] should be translated as dear to God, beloved by God or trusted by God."<sup>101</sup> Next the author of the office refers to Psalm 71(72),2 interpreted as a prediction of the just rule of Solomon: "'Give the king your justice, O God, and your righteousness to the royal son!' Which the Father did, for the just Lord loves justice and saw righteousness in the son and confirmed it to himself. Hence, Jedaiah is rightly called trusted by God."<sup>102</sup>

Quite understandably, it is not known who the author of the office was, but some attempts were made at finding him. It seems to have been proved that he was a Dominican monk<sup>103</sup> (it was also claimed that it was Albert the Great who taught at the University of Paris in 1240–1248), which seems to be concurrent with granting the Dominicans the liturgy of the feast of the Crown of Thorns in Sainte-Chapelle as well as bringing the relic to France.

Of course, the whole office stresses the theological aspect of the Crown of Thorns as one of the main Passion instruments and an attribute of the royal status of Christ as Messiah. This main meaning of the liturgy can not be questioned. However, one has to notice the finesse with which the subtle parallel between Louis IX and Christ the King is outlined in several places of the liturgy composed for the Capetian court. Certainly the main method is the consistent use of the term "our King" – *rex noster*, which refers to Christ but may also bring to mind the current king of France. This impression is enhanced by the mention of the contemporary translation of the Crown of Thorns to *our Gaul*, i.e., the Kingdom of France.

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100 *Lectio III – Lectio IX*, BRUSSELS KBR, Ms. IV 472, fol. 27r<sup>o</sup>-31r<sup>o</sup>.

101 "In honore autem et iusticie et iudicii rex noster iuste possidet coronam Ydaie qui dilectus domini vel amabilis domino vel notus domini dicitur interpretari. Deus enim pater filio sibi dilecto et amabili coronam de electis consertam passionis merito coaptavit ut circa illum quasi primogenitum corona fratrum assisteret. Unde in transfiguratione domini dixit pater: Hic est filius meus dilectus in quo michi bene complacui;" BRUSSELS KBR, Ms. IV 472, fol. 30r<sup>o</sup>.

102 "Deus iudicium tuum regi da et iusticiam tuam filio regis. Quod pater adimplevit quia iustus dominus in se et iusticias dilexit in filio equitatem vidit vultus eius approbando. Unde Ydaias recte notus domini nuncupatur;" BRUSSELS KBR, Ms. IV 472, fol. 30v<sup>o</sup>.

103 MERCURI, *Corona di Cristo, corona di re*, pp. 119–121.

One should also note the moralistic threads which occur several times in the office: a suggestion that the kings should especially venerate the Crown of Thorns, which, as we know from the hagiographic sources, Louis IX diligently observed, participating every year in the annual feast and the pageant with the relics in the royal palace and consistent demands that the king, like Solomon, should rule fairly. What is important and interesting, the office from Sainte-Chapelle does not contain fragments of the sermon of archbishop Gautier Cornut, which contains much more the ideology of sacralizing the monarchy: it was evidently designed for the other faithful than the king and the clergy and read during the feast of the Crown of Thorns as a propaganda message. The king used the liturgy of the Crown of Thorns mainly to enhance his own religious sensitivity. The office directs it toward the adoration of the Crown of Thorns as an attribute of Christ's divinity. The case of Saint Louis was not unique, for the early fourteenth century so-called Breviary of Philip the Fair, a luxury book possibly illuminated by Master Honoré, contains, with certain changes concerning the eve of the feast of the Crown of Thorns and readings during the nocturnes, the office with a similar meaning even though some lessons were replaced.<sup>104</sup> There are also some changes in the antiphons and sequences, but, crucially, the original office composed after Gautier Cornut is there. In the known royal breviaries the latter appears only in the second half of the fourteenth century, in the so-called Breviary of Charles V.<sup>105</sup> This observation is quite important because, as we remember, in the first Life of Saint Louis, written in ca. 1274, Geoffroi of Beaulieu says that on the Lauds of the feast of the Crown of Thorns fragments of the *booklet* relating the translation should be read, and the booklet may be identified only with the account of Gautier Cornut or Gerard of Saint-Quentin. However, the latter should be excluded because no office for the feast of the Crown of the Lord is known with fragments taken directly from Gerard, and the first text inspired by his account is an office written in honour of Saint Louis at least twenty-five years later than Geoffroi's Life of Saint Louis.<sup>106</sup> It can be concluded that that since the

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104 BnF, Ms. Latin 1023, fol. 388v<sup>o</sup>-395r<sup>o</sup>. In the nocturn readings from the Brussels breviary Lesson I became the first three in the so-called Breviary of Philip the Fair, Lesson II, became Lesson III and IV, Lesson III, became Lesson V, VI and VII, and Lesson IV became Lesson VIII and IX. Lessons *in crastino* for the octave are identical. MERCURI, *Stat inter spinas lilium*, s. 509–512, interprets in a very similar way the contents of the office, identifying it as a Dominican one. However, Chiara Mercuri ignores the Brussels manuscript, as well, as the attribution of BnF, Ms. Latin 1023, as a breviary of Philip the Fair.

105 BnF, Ms. Latin 1052, fol. 450v<sup>o</sup>-454r<sup>o</sup>.

106 VITA BEATI LUDOVICI AD LECTIONES.

confessor of Louis IX claims that fragments of Gautier Cornut's account were read for the Lauds of the feast of the Crown of Thorns even though it was not done in Sainte-Chapelle, then the office, or as we shall prove, several different offices made of fragments of Cornut's *De susceptione*, must have been quite popular.

In the Parisian breviary originating, according to Victor Leroquais, from Paris Cathedral and written in ca. 1300, there is an office for the feast of the Crown of Thorns called a *semiduplex*.<sup>107</sup> It begins from the vespers, a sequence for the psalm: *Adest nova sollempnitas*, which presents in the poetic form the reason for creating the new feast and the royal character of the Passion, describing the coming of Christ crowned with thorns, wearing a purple robe. The royalty of Christ is especially expressed by the words: "The triumphal crown brings the sign of victory as well as the magnificence of the royal dignity (*Signum profert victoriae corona triumphalis sicut et excellentie dignitatis regalis*)."

Next there is a reading from the Song of Songs from the Book of Wisdom of Solomon: *Egredimini et videte filie Syon regem Salomonem in dyademate quo coronavit eum mater sua in die desponsationis eius et in die leticie cordis illius* followed by the responsory: *Ista corona* also known from the Brussels manuscript,<sup>108</sup> and then the regal hymn in honour of Christ *Eterne rex altissime*, which talks about the salvific mystery of the Passion and overcoming death, and calls the Crown of Thorns the "diadem." The vespers liturgy ends with the verse: "We adore your Crown, we venerate your glorious triumph" (*Tuam coronam adoramus, tuum glorio sum recolimus triumphum*).<sup>109</sup>

The Lauds begin with the antiphon *Consecrator corone spinee, perpetue largitor lauree* (The One who sanctifies the Crown of Thorns and generously awards the eternal crown of victory) followed by a prayer in which the faithful ask God to consider them worthy of being crowned by Him with the eternal crown of glory in Heaven in return for the veneration, in memory of the Passion, of Christ's Crown of Thorns on Earth. Then there is a sung

107 BnF, Ms. Latin 15182, fol. 291r°-297v°. This is a manuscript with the summer part of the breviary; the winter part is in BnF, Ms. Latin 15181; description of the manuscript: LEROQUAIS, *Les bréviaires manuscrits*, vol. III, no. 627, pp. 259–262, however, he does not mention whether the breviary contained the feast of the Crown of Thorns.

108 "R[esponsorium]: Ista corona fidei decet xpisti militem hec fidelis archa dei mentem facit divitem. Divinitus auro sancti spiritus. V[ersus]: Sit cor tuum archa dei ut thesaurum tante rei thesaurizet celitus." *Divinitus [etc.] Gloria Patri*; BRUSSELS KBR, Ms. IV 472, II nocturn, *lectio VI*, fol. 11v°-12r°.

109 BnF, Ms. Latin 15182, fol. 291r°-292r°.

invitation: *Iubilemus hodie Christo regi glorie qui post coronam spineam coronam confert auream*, a psalm *Venite, exultemus* and the hymn *Sacre Christi celebremus corone sollempnia* referring to the prophecy of Isaiah.<sup>110</sup>

The first nocturn<sup>111</sup> is begun by the antiphon *Spineos aculeos suffert vir beatus* followed by Psalm 1: *Beatus vir* with an antiphon encouraging kings to venerate the Crown of Thorns: *Reges intelligite reges erudimini novum carmen agite de corona domini*, thus like in the Brussels manuscript from Sainte-Chapelle, followed by Psalm 2: *Quare fremuerunt* with the antiphon *Ecce benedictio Dei super populum*. After the repeated prayer formula *Tuam coronam adoramus, tuum gloriosum recolimus triumphum* there begin the lessons from the sermon of the archbishop of Sens. The first eight lessons contain the whole homiletical part of Gautier Cornut's account, which we have analyzed above. This homily preached the glory of the Kingdom of France as a New Israel, elevated by God through the gift of the Crown of Thorns, which was to stay there as a sign that Gaul was chosen by God till the time when Christ would come back and wear the Crown. It also preached the merits of the great king, Louis IX, thanks to whose piety and virtues the Kingdom of France was awarded with this honour. The office omits almost entirely the part of the text which described the translation and thus also the similarity of the king of France bringing the relic to Paris and Christ entering Jerusalem ("Blessed is he who comes to the Lord and thanks to whose rule France has been elevated by the presence of such a great treasure"). In lesson nine there is only the last paragraph of Gautier Cornut's text describing the coming of the people from Paris and the whole France to the field near the Church of Saint Anthony where the relic had been demonstrated (*ostensio*) and now, thanks to the Crown of Thorns, Christ's holy diadem, and the faith of the devout people numerous, but not listed, miracles happened there.<sup>112</sup>

The lessons alternate with the responsories.<sup>113</sup> The responsory in the first lesson is *Occidentem illustrat Oriens, verum solum nobis adiciens, spem vincendi coronam largiens*. After the second lesson there is the responsory *De torrente bibens miseriae exaltavit caput rex gloriae coronatus spinis angustiae*. The responsory after the third lesson is *Felix spina per cujus stimulum sanguis exit qui salvat populum*. The second nocturn begins with the antiphons *Lumen vultus domini super hunc signatum corpus praestat*

110 BnF, Ms. Latin 15182, fol. 292r°-292v°.

111 BnF, Ms. Latin 15182, fol. 292v°.

112 All the lessons in: BnF, Ms. Latin 15182, fol. 292v°-297v°.

113 All the hymns, sequences and responsoria in this breviary are accompanied by notation.

*homini gratia renatum, Confregisti terminos nostre pravitatis scuto coronasti nos bone voluntatis, Psalm 5 (Verba mea), and the antiphon Hodie letaberis militans ecclesia pacis coronaberis et honoris gloria. After the fifth lesson there is the responsory Ut coronam spineam caput summi regis mysticae sic auream habet arca legis, after the sixth, Ista corona fidei decet Christi militem haec fidelis arca dei mentem facit divitem divinitus auro sancti spiritus. The third nocturn begins with the antiphons Vir quem sine macula fides coronabit, Qui spinarum cuspide prius cruentarum precioso lapide Christus coronatur, Psalm 31 (Domine in te speravi) and an antiphon to it Anni suae clementiae coronae rex benedicit qui coronis ecclesiae suam coronam adicit. After lesson seven there is a responsory Altare thymiamatis non eget diadematis quod dicitur aureola hoc est sanctorum premium hoc est amoris cremium aromatis areola and after the eighth, Mensa sacra pagina de corona gemina pulchrae coronatur per has designatur firma spes et caritas et super aurum claritas vere figuratur. All those prose texts provide especially an exegesis of Christ's Passion, death, and Resurrection, finally, after lesson nine there is a responsory mentioning the special role played by the king of France in the feast of the Crown of Thorns: Si virtutum gradus isti te sustollunt, miles Christi te prudenter provehis rex Francorum gaudeas ex premissis studeas coronari laureis with the line Archam mensam et altare debes in te deportare cum coronis aureis followed by Te Deum laudamus.*

The laud is begun by several antiphons: *Spina pungens, Spina qui pupungerat patientem Dominum, Regis patientiam miles imitetur et per penitentiam spinis coronetur, Sacerdotes sacerdoti summo benedicite, Te laudamus Ihesu bone.* They are followed by a reading from the Apocalypse (6,2): *Et vidi: et ecce equus albus, et qui sedebat super illum, habebat arcum, et data est ei corona, et exivit vincens ut vinceret* after which the hymn *Deus tuorum militum, sors et corona, premium* is sung. It is usually performed on Saint Stephen's day, but here has a different text: the content devoted to the first martyr is replaced with verses in honour of the Crown of Thorns: *Tue corone meritum confer medelam omnium. Tua corona spinea tuos coronet aurea tua nobis humilitas penas repellat debitas. Tue corone mystice suscepto patrocinio iubiliis vocis melice concurrat mentis gaudio. Nostra conservat regio tibi thesaurum inclitum imminente iudicio resumet hoc depositum. Qui tanto dyademate nos honorat in stadio cum utriusque pneumate sit laus patri cum filio.*

The verse for the hymn is *Eris corona gloriae in manu Domini et dyadema regni in manu Dei tui.* The next canonical hours were treated cursorily with references to earlier prayers and readings in which the antiphon *Ista corona fidei* and reading *Egredimini filie Syon* are repeated; the

last antiphon with a verse is *Tu Christe nostrum gaudium / Tuam coronam adoramus Domine*.

All the proses and hymns from the breviary of the Parisian Notre-Dame can be also found in the office in honour of the Crown of Thorns from the Brussels manuscript from Sainte-Chapelle (but they contain more antiphons and hymns and the music part is more complex) even though the text of the office is different. One may thus infer that the office of Sainte-Chapelle had a strong influence on the other Parisian breviaries, but the Parisian liturgy evolved in a distinct manner.

The Parisian breviary from the late thirteenth century<sup>114</sup> is a luxury manuscript decorated with filigree with golden and blue trefoils and initials, some of them illuminated, as well as miniatures, with the use of gold and coloured paint: red, blue, purple/violet and yellow. On fol. 4v<sup>o</sup> in the calendar the feast of the Crown of Thorns is written down in red, for the feasts in honour of martyrs the colour red was also used as well as for Christmas, the feast of Circumcision, Epiphany, the Purification of the Virgin Mary, Saint John, Saint Peter in Chains, the feast of the Ascension, All Saints Day, and the Nativity of the Virgin Mary. The use of the colour blue did not mean that the feast had a lower rank for also Easter is marked with that colour. The status of the feast in this breviary is quite high, higher than in the other liturgical books *festum duplex maior*.

The poetry and music in the office is very similar to the office from the breviary attributed to Paris Cathedral and the breviary from Sainte-Chapelle. It also contains the proses: *Adest nova solepnnitas, Ista corona, Consecrator coronae spineae, Iubilemus hodie, Sacrae christi celebremus, Spineos aculeos, Reges intelligite, Ecce benedictio Dei super populum, Tuam coronam adoramus, Occidentem illustrat Oriens, Victor Christe, De torrente bibens, Felix spina, Lumen vultus domini, Confregisti terminos, Hodie letaberis militans ecclesia, De coronis exodi, Ut coronam spineam caput summi regis, Vir qui sine macula, Posuisti domine super caput eius coronam, Altare thymiamatis, Mensa sacra pagina, Si virtutum gradus, Archam mensam et altare, Spina pungens, Eris corona glorie, Tu Christe*

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114 BnF, Ms. Latin 13233. Libels on fol. 7–69 and 89–572 come from the second half of the thirteenth century, terminus ad quem is 1297, because it does not contain the office in honour of Saint Louis; the office in honour of the Crown of Thorns is on fol. 426v<sup>o</sup>-443v<sup>o</sup>. Fol. 1–6, 71–88, 573–691 come from the fourteenth and fifteenth century; in the later part there is the prose from the office in honour of Saint Louis and on fol. 673r<sup>o</sup>-679r<sup>o</sup>, an office in honour of Louis IX and immediately after it, in honour of Saint Louis of Toulouse (canonized in 1317); LEROQUAIS, *Les bréviaires manuscrits*, vol. II, no. 614, pp. 235–238; cf. ANALECTA HYMNICA MEDII Aevi, vol. XI, p. 182.

*nostrum gaudium* and the hymns: *Eterne rex altissime, Sacre Christi celebremus, Deus tuorum militum* in the same arrangement as in the breviary discussed above. This concerns also the readings: *Egredimini filie Syon* and *Vidi et ecce equus albus*. The psalms in their majority are also the same, the lessons read during the nocturnes are exactly the same as in the office analyzed above.

The office in that breviary is longer than the one presented above: the liturgy of the canonical hours is described in greater detail. Thus for the prime the antiphon *Tu Christe nostrum gaudium* was to be sung, and when the feast was on a Sunday, during the Lauds there should be a pageant with the antiphon *Ista corona*. During the Terce *Egredimini filie Syon* is read and *Tuam coronam* is sung. At Sext the same fragment of Apocalypse of Saint John is read which we know from the previous breviary, accompanied by the responsory *Gloria et honore coronasti eum Domine et constituisti eum super opera manuum tuarum*. At none the prophecy of Isaiah (28,5): *In die illa erit dominus exercituum corona gloriae et sertum exultationis residuo populi sui* was designed. It is accompanied by the responsory *Posuisti domine super caput coronam de lapide pretioso* and *Eris corona gloriae*. For the Vespers the antiphon *Te laudamus Ihesu bone* was to be sung, the reading was again *Egredimini filiae Syon*, the hymn: *Eterne rex* and line *Tuam coronam adoramus*. Finally for the Compline the antiphon *O rex clementiae salvator omnium sola spes venie post lapsus criminum precamur hodie te sanctum dominum da genti Franciae palmam certaminum coronam gloriae post vite terminum* was chosen.

The office from the breviary BnF, Ms. Latin 13233 is thus almost identical with the one known from the breviary BnF, Ms. Latin 15182. It differs only in the higher status of the feast which is probably why the description of the whole liturgy is longer; it is also marked in the manuscript with a small miniature preceding the office with a representation of two angels upholding a green (triumphal) wreath symbolizing the Crown of Thorns.<sup>115</sup>

The office in the thirteenth century breviary from the royal Abbey of Saint-Victor,<sup>116</sup> like all the so-far analyzed manuscripts, begins with an antiphon justifying the introduction of the new feast: *Adest nova sollempnitas*. Generally the structure of the office is similar to the offices BnF, Ms. Latin

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115 BnF, Ms. Latin 13233, fol. 426v<sup>o</sup>.

116 Like BnF, Ms. Latin 13233, BnF, Ms. Latin 14811 is a manuscript composed of two libells from different centuries: the earlier one from the second half of the thirteenth century is on fol. 80–565, fol. 1–79 and 565–585 and the later one from the fourteenth century with the office in honour of the Crown of Thorns is on fol. 452r<sup>o</sup>-456v<sup>o</sup>; LEROQUAIS, *Les bréviaires manuscrits*, vol. III, no. 624, pp. 256–257.

13233 and Ms. Latin 15182, but there are also some important differences. During the office in the Abbey of Saint-Victor the daily liturgy of psalms (*psalmi secundum feriam*) was obligatory, which made it different from the previous manuscripts where the psalms were adjusted to the other parts of the office, in particular, to the antiphons chosen for it. The proses, responsories and psalms in the discussed office are the same as in the ones analyzed above, so from that point of view this breviary is not particularly interesting. What is striking in it is the fact that the lessons read during the nocturns are different. Most of them come from the account of the archbishop of Sens, Gautier Cornut, yet they are partly different than those from the two Parisian breviaries discussed above; in this office Cornut's text was edited in a more sophisticated way than cutting out the whole part describing the course of the translation. Lesson one and two, like in the breviaries analyzed above, come from the homiletical part of Cornut's work, yet the quotations from the Gospel and Saint Augustine were omitted and only the fragments concerning the honour enjoyed by France thanks to the translation of the Crown of Thorns and those stressing the royal dignity of Christ were included. Lesson three, four, five and six, however, contain fragments of the account presenting the historical circumstances and the course of the translation, omitted in the offices described above, and stressing the part played by Louis IX in bringing the Crown of the Lord to France, including redeeming the relic. Interestingly, the *lectiones historicae* end at the meeting of king Louis with the relic near Sens, opening the travelling vessel in which it was brought to France, verifying its authenticity, and resealing it with the royal seal. This showed the participants in the office, in a symbolic way, that the relic was taken over by the king of France. This is, however, where the account of the translation ends in the office: lessons seven, eight, and nine, are fragments of Chapter 19 of Gospel of Saint John, hence the leading role played by the king of France in the translation liturgy in Sens and Paris, described so painstakingly by Gautier Cornut, was omitted in the office of Saint-Victor like in the other offices.

The *lectiones historicae* were arranged in a still different way in the breviary from Sens,<sup>117</sup> which was compiled at the earliest at the turn of the thirteenth and fourteenth century,<sup>118</sup> which is indicated by the presence of the office in honour of Saint Louis. The first lesson was taken from the beginning of the homiletical account of Gautier Cornut encouraging the whole Church of Gaul and the

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117 BnF, Ms. Latin 1028, fol. 286r<sup>o</sup>-292r<sup>o</sup>. On its subject see MERCURI, *Stat inter spinas lilium*, pp. 502–504 ff.; MERCURI, *Corona di Cristo, corona di re*, pp. 123–135.

118 LEROQUAIS, *Les bréviaires manuscrits*, vol. III, no. 486, pp. 3–5.



whole Frank people to rejoice the feast in honour of the Crown of Thorns. All the following lessons come from the historical part of Gautier Cornut's work. The last, ninth, lesson begins with the introduction of the Crown of Thorns to Sens by Louis IX and ends with the description of the arrival of the king with the relic to Paris and the cry of the clergy greeting Louis: "Blessed is the one who comes in God's glory and thanks to whose rule (service) the Kingdom of France is elevated by the presence of such a great treasure." It may thus be said that the office from Sens which has the same proses and hymns as the offices discussed earlier, is the closest to the account of the archbishop of Sens (perhaps he edited it?) and shows the similarity of Saint Louis to Christ to the greatest extent and most directly. Chiara Mercuri rightly noted the strongly pro-regal attitude of the Sens office,<sup>119</sup> however, she mistakenly sees this particular feature in the content of the proses and hymns in it; in this respect the office does not differ at all, or perhaps does not differ significantly from the other offices presented above.<sup>120</sup> What makes the office from Sens special is the interplay between the pro-regal content in the poetry and the Bible readings in the liturgy with the choice of lessons coming from Cornut's narrative which stress to a greater extent than the other offices the holy character of the power of the king of France and present him as a Christ-like figure.

We shall present below those proses and hymns sung during the offices for the feast of the Crown of Thorns with the strongest ideological significance concerning the king of France.

Here are the first two strophes of the hymn *Eterne rex altissime*:

*Eterne rex altissime,  
Reddens coronas perditas,  
Coronam locas optime,  
Ubi per fidem habitas  
Theologie regia  
Parisiense speculum  
Corone fit custodia  
Custodientis populum.*

The antiphon *Corona Christi capitis* has a similar ideological meaning. In the offices its last strophe is most usually quoted (*Qui tanto dyademate*):

*Corona Christi capitis  
Membra coronat hodie,  
Honoribus exhibitis  
Concordat vox letitiae*

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119 MERCURI, *Stat inter spinas lilium*, pp. 502–507; MERCURI, *Corona di Cristo, corona di re*, pp. 123–135.

120 This is due to Chiara Mercuri's very cursory knowledge of these breviaries.

*Regi Francorum mittitur*  
*Corona regis omnium*  
*Suscipiamus igitur*  
*Salutis hoc exenium*  
*Huius corone mysticae*  
*Suscepto patrocínio*  
*Vox regionis Gallicae*  
*Consonet cordis gaudio*  
 ...  
*Qui tanto dyademate*  
*Nos honorat in stadio*  
*Cum utriusque pneumate*  
*Sit laus patri cum filio*

and the hymn *Deus tuorum militum*:

*Deus tuorum militum*  
*Sors et corona, praenium,*  
*Tue corone meritum*  
*Confert medelam omnium*  
*Tua corona spinea*  
*Tuos coronet aurea,*  
*Tua nobis humilitas*  
*Penas repellat debitas*  
*Tue corone radius*  
*Illuminat Parisius*  
*Totam coronat Galliam*  
*Dans gratiam et gloriam*  
*Nostra conservat regio*  
*Tibi thesaurum inclitum*  
*Imminente iudicio*  
*Resumes hoc depositum*  
*Qui tanto dyademate*  
*Nos honorat in stadio*  
*Cum utriusque pneumate*  
*Sit laus patri cum filio.*

Thus, the content of those hymns and proses perfectly matches the content of the readings used in the offices: they praise the glory of France, to which Christ gave the holiest of relics representing His own royal status, refer to the role the Crown of Thorns will play during the Last Judgement and elevate the king of France, who has received the crown of the King of the Universe. The same topic is the leitmotif of the antiphon *Regis et pontificis dyadema* in which Louis IX is called the greatest, most magnificent of kings, excelling over all the earlier rulers, like the King of kings whom is Christ:

*Ludovice rex Francorum*  
*Sub te iungent antiquorum*

*Regum dyademate*  
*Dum corona coronarum*  
*Spina crucis flos spinarum*  
*Tua profert scemate*  
*O rex regum qui centenis*  
*Sexagenis et tricenis*  
*Et coronis gloria*  
*Hac corona nos corones.*

For many years, Kings of France were distinguished by the anointment coming from heaven and now, thanks to the Crown of Thorns, God has shown that the king of France is, like the pope, the successor or deputy of Christ on Earth. However, whereas Rome is the worldly capital of the highest priesthood which the pope exercises in Christ's stead, the king of France shares in the royal dignity of the Saviour:

*Liberalis manus Dei*  
*Sue domus speciei*  
*Et corone triumphorum*  
*Collocat in Francia*  
*Roma caput christianorum*  
*Insignatum habet manum*  
*Summo sacerdotio*  
*Celi gaudet unctione*  
*Rex Francorum et corone*  
*Dei privilegio*  
*Hec corona primitiva*  
*Coronarum genitiva*  
*Que coronat merita.*

The antiphon *Verbum bonum et iocundum* is a contrafacta of the earlier hymn for Our Lady: *Verbum bonum et suave*. The Crown of Thorns is represented here as an instrument of God's protection over the Kingdom of France; it was to protect the kings and queens of France eternally. Besides, having given relic to the Franks, God gave them the Empire.

*Ave veri Salomonis*  
*Corona redemptionis*  
*Donum cunctis maius donis*  
*Francorum presidium*  
*Ave sacrum sertum Christi*  
*Ave, Christo placuisti*  
*Ave, Francis contulisti*  
*Decus et imperium*  
*Ave sertum dulcis spine*  
*Protegentur sine fine*  
*Per te reges et regine*  
*In felici Francia.*

All these proses and hymns, besides the two last ones, can be found in all the above presented offices. The two last ones are known from a gradual-prosarium from Bari and the missal from Sainte-Chapelle made after 1253 and before 1317<sup>121</sup> and they do not appear in any of the breviaries analyzed so far. The other proses from Sainte-Chapelle focus mainly on the greatness of France as the country chosen by God as the place where the Crown of Thorns was to be deposited, yet in all of them the exceptional part played by Louis IX in the translation is stressed like in the prose *Letetur felix Gallia*.

*O regalis humilitas  
 Quem respexit divinitas  
 Ut ei vellet tradere  
 Tam sollempnes reliquias  
 Quas nulli regum alias  
 Dignata est concedere.  
 Quanta regni felicitas  
 Per cuius regem civitas  
 Parisiensis continet  
 Thesaurum tanti precii  
 Coronam Dei filii  
 Cuius regnum non desinet.  
 ...  
 Deus ad cuius gloriam  
 Impendunt reverentiam  
 Corone rex et populus  
 Salva regem et populum*

or *Gens Gallorum iocundare*, in which the course of the translation is reminded as well as the glorious history of the Franks, with references to their Trojan descent. The old name of Paris: Lutetia, changed in honour of the Trojan eponymous hero<sup>122</sup> and possibly (but it is difficult to ascertain it as the note is very brief), alludes to the translation of the Crown of Thorns by Charlemagne:

*Quam cum turma prelatorum  
 Ludovicus rex Francorum  
 A Philippo tercius  
 Magna cum devocione*

121 BnF, Ms. Latin 830, fol. 367r<sup>o</sup>-v<sup>o</sup>; LEROQUAIS, *Les sacramentaires et les missels manuscrits*, p. 137 ff.

122 On this subject see PYSIAK, *Pogańska przeszłość Franków*, pp. 5–28; PYSIAK, *Filip August, Paryż i trojański rodowód Królestwa Francji*, pp. 485–492; PYSIAK, *De la Lutèce des Troyens au Paris des Capétiens*, pp. 11–22; PYSIAK, *Die heidnische Vergangenheit der Franken*, pp. 73–92; with bibliography.

*Passionis et corone*  
*Attulit Parisius*  
*Quam venerator incolis*  
*Preses Constantinopolis*  
*Obligaret in pignore.*  
*Ipipinis et Carolis*  
*Honorandam Christicolis*  
*Suo redemit tempore*  
*Providit hoc Bizantii heres*  
*Quod regis nuntii*  
*Non inconsulto pectore*  
*Attulerunt in Franciam*  
 ...  
*Felix proles Hectorea*  
*Gens in bello fulminea*  
*Felix Franconis filius.*  
*Gens audax a qua postea*  
*Lutecium urbs antea*  
*Dicta fuit Parisius.*

Finally, the prose *Gaude Syon que diem recolis*, which became widespread in the Dominican offices for the Crown of Thorns all over Europe, mentions the efforts made by the king (Louis) to obtain the relics for the Kingdom of France which became elevated above the other ones thanks to it and also became invincible:

*Hec corona a servis subdolis*  
*Dudum sprete sed a Christicolis*  
*Nunc regibus et a celicolis*  
*Honoratur.*  
*Hec corona tunc contumelie*  
*Sed honoris nunc est glorie*  
*Regnum per quam invictum Gallie*  
*sublimatur*  
 ...  
*O corona que spem currentium*  
*Per stadium regis et studium*  
*Per te celi corone bravium*  
*Conferatur.*

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To conclude the reflections about the offices for the feast of the Crown of Thorns it is worth adding a few remarks about its presence in the royal manuscripts, namely the Psalter of Saint Louis from 1253–1270<sup>123</sup> and

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123 BnF, Ms. Latin 10525.

three breviaries: the so-called Breviary of Philip the Fair<sup>124</sup> and the breviary given by the king of Naples, Charles II of Anjou to the basilica of San Nicola in Bari.<sup>125</sup> These two were probably made in ca. 1290 and illuminated by Master Honoré from Paris or in his workshop. The third one is the so-called Breviary of Charles V, originating from the beginning of the second half of the fourteenth century – that codex is also illuminated.<sup>126</sup>

The Psalter of Saint Louis has several dozens full-page miniatures illustrating the history from the Old Testament until anointing Saul as the king and the first years of his rule. Next there is a calendar and another miniature under it representing two scenes from David's life: watching Bathsheba having a bath and the king kneeling before God; the latter scene is represented at a blue background with gold lily blossoms: another evidence that Saint Louis was identified with David. On the right bordure of that page there are the first words of Psalm 1: *Beatus vir*. The next part of the manuscript is composed of psalms whose text was richly decorated, but without illuminations. Of course, there are no offices in the psalter, but three feasts connected with the translations of the relics are mentioned in the calendar: the feast of consecration of Sainte-Chapelle on April 26th with its octave,<sup>127</sup> of the Crown of Thorns with its octave,<sup>128</sup> and of the remaining relics, also with their octave.<sup>129</sup> Each of the feasts was marked as *annuale* and the octaves as *duplum*.

A more detailed analysis of the royal breviaries and the contents of the offices in them will be presented in another publication; here I shall briefly present the main data. The proses and hymns in the offices from the royal breviaries are similar to the ones analyzed above. The office from the breviary of Charles II<sup>130</sup> is an exact repetition of Saint Louis's office from the Brussels manuscript. In the office from the breviary of Philip the Fair<sup>131</sup> some changes were made: the first four lessons from the former office were distributed in the nine readings during the nocturnes, the remaining five were left out including those about the revelation of Saint John: the readings for the matins and octave remained unchanged. This is a very interesting observation because both breviaries were made approximately at the same time and were both decorated in Master Honoré's workshop, yet the book

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124 BnF, Ms. Latin 1023.

125 BARI SAN NICOLA, Cod. 3 (olim Ms 81).

126 BnF, Ms. Latin 1052.

127 BnF, Ms. Latin 10525, fol. 80v<sup>o</sup>, 81r<sup>o</sup>.

128 BnF, Ms. Latin 10525, fol. 82v<sup>o</sup>.

129 BnF, Ms. Latin 10525, fol. 83r<sup>o</sup>, 84v<sup>o</sup>.

130 BARI SAN NICOLA, Cod. 3, fol. 339v<sup>o</sup>-346v<sup>o</sup>.

131 BnF, Ms. Latin 1023, fol. 388v<sup>o</sup>-395r<sup>o</sup>.

given to Charles II was faithful to its original whereas the office in the breviary of Philip IV was slightly changed. This makes it still more interesting that in the assumed next royal breviary, which is believed to have been ordered and owned by Charles V of Valois<sup>132</sup> (it was certainly part of his library), the office is the same as in the earliest Parisian breviaries from the thirteenth century (BnF, Ms. Latin 13233 and 15182) as far as the lessons are concerned and very similar in terms the proses and hymns. Thus if the book was really Charles V's breviary, then this is the first and only case when the readings for the office were taken from Gautier Cornut's text. Finally, the office from the earliest known completely preserved breviary from Sainte-Chapelle (made after 1459) has the same readings as the breviary of Philip the Fair. Can we conclude from the above that the office was changed permanently during the reign of Philip the Fair? If the office, which can be called the 'office of Philip the Fair' and the office from Sainte-Chapelle from the second half of the fifteenth century are almost identical, in particular in terms of differences from the 'office of Saint Louis', it seems justified to claim that the changes made at the end of the thirteenth century were permanent. However, since we do not know any liturgical book from Sainte-Chapelle for the fourteenth or early fifteenth century, besides the ordinary<sup>133</sup> and the latter (by definition) did not contain offices, it is impossible to prove it conclusively. The breviary of Charles V with a different office, representing one of the Parisian types, does not seem to be connected with Sainte-Chapelle: namely, it does not have the feast of the Passion relics on September 30<sup>134</sup> or the feast of consecration of Sainte-Chapelle which ceased to appear in Parisian breviaries at the end of the thirteenth century. It can not be assumed that these feasts were not celebrated in Sainte-Chapelle during the reign of Charles V so it should be concluded that the breviary uses the Parisian rite and not the palace chapel ritual. As the breviary of Philip the Fair was also in the library of Charles V and was believed to have been once owned by Saint Louis, it seems the most probable that it reflects the course of the liturgy of the Crown of Thorns from Sainte-Chapelle and the so-called Breviary of Charles V was ordered and made for other purposes of the royal liturgy of relics.

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132 BnF, Ms. Latin 1052, fol. 450v<sup>o</sup>-454r<sup>o</sup>.

133 BnF, Ms. Latin 1435. Another ordinary is known from the fifteenth century: it was made in 1471 thus, later than the breviary; BnF Arsenal, Ms. 114.

134 Here, I refrain from analysing there the office composed for the Feast of Relics (*festum reliquiarum*), which, as BRUSSELS KBR, Ms. IV. 472, fol. 32v<sup>o</sup>-81r<sup>o</sup> clearly shows, are far less marked with the royal ideology. An excellent analysis of the proses contained in these offices was presented by GOULD, *The Sequences 'De sanctis reliquiis' as Sainte-Chapelle Inventories*, pp. 315-341.

#### 4. Saint Louis and Other Translations of the Relics in France during His Reign

Louis IX personally participated in at least thirteen translations of relics: four of them comprised the translations of the relics from Constantinople to Paris of 1239, 1241, and 1242 and their introduction to Sainte-Chapelle in 1248. The remaining ten will be briefly discussed below.

We shall first deal with those translations or elevations of the relics in which Louis IX did not actively participate in the cult act, i.e., in the liturgical ritual, and it is only known that the king was present at the ceremony.

On June 9th, 1247, Louis IX came to the Cistercian Abbey in Pontigny to take part in the exhumation, elevation to the altar (*elevatio*) and placing in a new tomb of the body of saint Edmund Rich, recently canonised by Innocent IV,<sup>135</sup> archbishop of Canterbury, who died at a voluntary exile in France in 1239, conflicted during his lifetime with the king of England, Henry III, and posing as the new Becket. Thus the ceremony was a ritual inauguration of a new cult. The pope was represented by two cardinals: bishops of Albano and of Tusculum; French bishops were also present: that of Bordeaux, Bourges, Sens, Auxerre, Orléans, and Troyes as well as prelates from the British Isles: the archbishop of Armagh and bishop of Chichester. The sources describing the translation do not indicate that the king played an important part in the ceremony. It seems it was rather the queen mother, Blanche of Castile, who on the eve of the opening of the grave made an invocation to Saint Edmund asking him to bless the Kingdom of France like he did during his lifetime and strengthen it in peace and glory. The king's part in the ceremony, according to Matthew Paris, was that he prevented Saint Edmund's body from being fragmented into relics, having seen how miraculously well it had been preserved, even though the Cistercians from Pontigny offered him the saint's particle.<sup>136</sup> The other sources discussing the elevation of Saint Edmund do not provide any information about Louis IX's participation. They merely state that he, the queens Blanche of Castile and Margaret of Provence, as well as the brothers of the king, Robert, Alphonse, and Charles, were present.<sup>137</sup>

135 CAROLUS-BARRÉ, *Saint Louis et la translation des corps saints*, pp. 1089–1091.

136 MATTHEW PARIS, *Chronica majora*, vol. IV, p. 631.

137 The other sources describing the translation are the letter of bishop Richard of Chichester to the abbot of Begham quoted in: MATTHEW PARIS, *Chronica majora*, vol. VI: *Addimenta*, pp. 128–130; ALBERT SUERBEER, *Historia translationis sancti Edmundi*, coll. 1861–1874. In 1249 the queens Blanche of Castile and Margaret of Provence took part in the translation of the body of Edmund to the reliquary founded by Henry III of England. In 1249, however,



The next translations where Louis IX's presence was recorded took place on September 17th, 1256, in Péronne in Picardy and on September 2nd, 1257, in Saint-Quentin in Vermandois. During the translation in Péronne the relics of an Irish saint from the Merovingian period, Saint Fursey (d. 649), were taken out from the old reliquary, allegedly made by Saint Eloi of Noyon, and placed in a new one. The king witnessed the procedure and authenticated it with a charter, additionally confirmed by the seals of the bishops of Beauvais, Noyon, and Thérouanne, who had performed the translation. As the king had the right of patronage over the collegiate of Saint-Fursy in Péronne, i.e., he nominated the custodian (treasurer), it seems that the king played a similar role in that ceremony as was played by another king in part of the ceremony in Senlis in 1177. As we remember, in the collegiate of Saint-Frambourg, also belonging to the king, Louis VII conducted an inspection of the relics and issued a charter confirming their authenticity. The only difference is that the translation in Senlis was performed on a bigger scale and was accompanied by a public *ostensio* conducted by Louis VII. In Saint-Quentin, a ritual translation of the bodies of the saints who converted Vermandois to Christianity: Quentin, Victor, and Cassianus, was performed in connection with the consecration of the newly built chancel in the Gothic basilica of Saint-Quentin. Also the Collegiate Church in Saint-Quentin was under the king's patronage and at that time the records of the translation were also issued in the name of Louis IX who confirmed them with his seal. There were also the seals of the bishops of Reims, Laon, Châlons, Noyon, Beauvais, Arras, Amiens, Tournai, and Thérouanne, who celebrated the translation. Besides the king the ceremony was witnessed by the heir to the throne, prince Louis.<sup>138</sup>

Towards the end of Louis's reign, in autumn 1265, in the Abbey of Vézelay, the finding (*inventio*) of the body of Saint Mary Magdalen was performed. Namely, under the main altar a metal sarcophagus was found with a woman's body and a forgery of an undated charter issued in the name of king Charles, which was ascribed to Charles the Bald. We know it is an evident forgery<sup>139</sup> but the witnesses of the *inventio* comprised: the abbot of

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the arm of the saint was separated from the body and deposited in a separate reliquary; ALBERT SUERBEER, *Historia translationis sancti Edmundi*, coll. 1869–1871. Blanche of Castile founded then an exquisite garment for the body of Saint Edmund, decorated with her coat of arms (i.e., of Castile); QUANTIN, *Répertoire archéologique du département de l'Yonne*, coll. 48.

138 CAROLUS-BARRÉ, *Saint Louis et la translation des corps saints*, pp. 1091–1092.

139 The forged charter was made using the example of an authentic document issued by Charlemagne for Vézelay in 842. On finding the body of Saint Mary Magdalen and its translation: CAROLUS-BARRÉ, *Saint Louis et la translation*

Vézelay, the bishops of Caesarea Palestinae and Auxerre, the abbot of the Premonstratensians in Auxerre (Saint-Marien Abbey) and the arch-cantor of the Sens Cathedral. Their presence yielded credibility to the finding itself as well as to the forged royal charter. Louis IX, informed about the discovery of the body of Saint Mary Magdalen, set up the date for the solemn translation to the day of Saint Mark in 1267. Soon a *vidimus* authenticating the alleged charter of Charles the Bald was compiled: a record was made, confirmed and sealed by the prelates present at the *inventio*, which says that the monarch was consulted. Informing the king, beside the need to draw public attention to the event, was the duty of the abbot, for after 1259 Louis IX had custody over the Abbey, which traditionally used to be the task of the count of Nevers. Since the latter one (Louis's son, Jean Tristan) was a minor, the king, as the count's legal senior, had the whole county under his tutelage. Besides Louis IX, the king's sons: the heir to the throne, prince Philip, Jean, the count of Nevers and Pierre, Louis's son in law, Theobald, king of Navarre and count of Champagne, the king's brother Alphonse de Poitiers, as well as the duke of Burgundy, and the papal legate, cardinal Simon de Brion, the bishop of Auxerre, the abbot of Saint-Germain-des-Prés and the abbot of Vézelay also took part in the translation. The hierarchs and the king were given particles. Louis obtained the whole arm of the saint and part of the mandible with three teeth, which he deposited in Sainte-Chapelle in Paris. To express his gratitude, he had three magnificent reliquaries made for the Abbey: one was in the shape of an angel, made of silver, gilded. It held a small crystal vase and was decorated with 4 rubies, 4 sapphires, and 8 emeralds. The other one had the form of an arm with an extended hand and was encrusted with 18 rubies, 29 emeralds, 13 sapphires, and 32 pearls. It contained numerous particles of the relics from Sainte-Chapelle, among others, two thorns from the Crown of Thorns and a piece of the Holy Cross, a fragment of the fabric Jesus wore during the Last Supper and with which he wiped the feet of the apostles, as well as a fragment of Christ's purple robe and a fragment of His shroud.<sup>140</sup> As Louis Carolus-Barré remarked, the king's own justification of placing the Passion

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*des corps saints*, pp. 1104–1110 (on the forgery: pp. 1105–1106) and SAXER, *Le culte de Marie Madeleine en Occident*, vol. II, pp. 191–196. Cf. *RECUEIL DES ACTES DE CHARLES II LE CHAUVE*, vol. I, no. 11, p. 27 and vol. III, Introduction, p. 2.

140 The charter of Louis IX for the Abbey in Vézelay: *LAYETTES DU TRÉSOR DES CHARTES* (IV), no. 5297, p. 232; *vidimus* of the abbot and the convent: no. 5298, p. 233. Cf. the letter of gratitude to Louis IX also describing the reliquary and confirming that it contained the arm of the saint: CAROLUS-BARRÉ, *Saint Louis et la translation des corps saints*, pp. 1108–1109.

relics in the reliquary meant for Magdalen's hand is very interesting: namely, Louis said that in his opinion it was right that the relics of the saint who loved Christ so much and whom the Saviour allowed *familiariter* to touch him were placed in the same reliquary as the relics of Christ.<sup>141</sup>

In 1261, Saint Louis was present at two translations. On May 1st in the Benedictine Abbey of Saint-Lucien near Beauvais the bodies of Saint Lucian, Maxianus, and Julian, the martyrs and 'apostles' of Beauvaisis from the mid-third century, were moved to new reliquaries. The king was accompanied once again by Theobald, his son in law and the king of Navarre and count of Champagne, as well as by the heir to the throne, prince Philip, the son of the emperor of Constantinople, Philip de Courtenay, and numerous noblemen. The clergy was represented by the bishops of Beauvais, Senlis and Amiens, the abbot and the convent of Saint-Lucien, finally by ten abbots of Benedictine, Cistercian and Augustine monasteries. The king was given by the monks of Saint-Lucien the arm of Saint Maxianus and a rib of Saint Lucian and of Saint Julian, which he deposited in Sainte-Chapelle in a specially founded architectonic reliquary today stored in the Musée de Cluny in Paris.<sup>142</sup> In return he probably gave the Picard abbey a thorn from the Crown of Thorns.<sup>143</sup>

The same year, on July 22nd, Louis IX and his queen, Margaret of Provence, were present at the translation of the bodies of two of the Eleven Thousand Virgins to the royal Abbey of Cistercian nuns in Maubuisson, founded by the late king's mother, Blanche of Castile. Little is known about the king's actions during the ceremony, but he certainly took part in the procession with the relics led by the archbishop of Rouen and bishop of Évreux from the royal castle in Pontoise to the Abbey. The fact that the royal residence was used to deposit the relics before the translation and also as the first stage of the procession clearly showed to all the participants in

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141 CAROLUS-BARRÉ, *Saint Louis et la translation des corps saints*, p. 1109: "Congruum enim visum est nobis quod hujusmodi reliquie Redemptoris ponerentur cum reliquiis illius sanctissime mulieris que tam ardentem dilexit eundem, et ab eo tam largam suorum percipere meruit veniam delictorum, a qua etiam ipse tam familiariter se tangi permisit;" *LAYETTES DU TRÉSOR DES CHARTES* (IV), no. 5297, p. 232.

142 CAROLUS-BARRÉ, *Saint Louis et la translation des corps saints*, pp. 1096–1098; SOUCHAL, *Un reliquaire de la Sainte-Chapelle au Musée de Cluny*, pp. 179–194; TABURET-DELAHAYE, *L'orfèvre gothique*, pp. 83–86; TABURET-DELAHAYE, *Reliquaire des Saints Maxien, Lucien, Julien*, pp. 164–166. The inventory number of the reliquary is Cl. 10746.

143 CAROLUS-BARRÉ, *Saint Louis et la translation des corps saints*, p. 1098; SOUCHAL, *Un reliquaire de la Sainte-Chapelle au Musée de Cluny*, p. 186.

the ceremony the royal patronage over the translation and also indicated who had commissioned it. Even the mass which was part of the translation liturgy was celebrated not in the abbey church but in the chapel royal in Maubuisson. This was justified because indeed the importation of two virgin-martyrs from Cologne was a result of the mission of the prior of the royal Cistercian foundation in Royaumont, Adam, sent by the king to the archbishop of Cologne, Konrad von Hochstaden. Adam's trip yielded a number of relics from Cologne and its vicinity: at the request of the king of France the archbishop sent him ten bodies of the saints taken from the Collegiate Church of Saint Gereon and the Church of Saint Andrew in Cologne, as well as from the Abbeys of Saint Walpurga in Eichstätt, in Altenberg and in Deutz: nine bodies of the Eleven Thousand Virgins and one martyr of the Theban Legion, and confirmed their authenticity with a letter sent to Louis IX.<sup>144</sup> The martyr from the Theban Legion and one of the virgins were given to the royal Abbey of Châalis, and two virgins to Maubuisson Abbey;<sup>145</sup> two other martyrs from Cologne were sent to Royaumont.<sup>146</sup>

We do not know anything about the part the king played in the translation of the relics of the holy virgins to the Abbey of Châalis. However, the case of Royaumont suggests that the archbishop of Cologne sent to France at least two consignments of relics, for we know of a previous letter of Konrad von Hochstaden to Saint Louis from as early as 1260.<sup>147</sup> At that time, a solemn translation of one of the martyrs, Saint Barga *de Asneriis*, took place. During the translation, the archbishop of Rouen, bishop of Évreux, and Louis IX carried the relics in a procession to the Abbey Church in which they were received by the bishop of Beauvais, abbots of Royaumont and Clairvaux; the last-mentioned held a sermon during the mass celebrated by the archbishop of Rouen.<sup>148</sup>

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144 Letter of archbishop Konrad to Louis IX from September 13, 1261; *THESAURUS NOVUS ANECDOTORUM*, vol. I, coll. 1112–1113.

145 CAROLUS-BARRÉ, *Saint Louis et la translation des corps saints*, pp. 1094, 1098–1100.

146 Ibid.

147 *THESAURUS NOVUS ANECDOTORUM*, vol. I, coll. 1108–1109.

148 *REGISTRUM VISITATIONUM ARCHIEPISCOPI ROTHOMAGENSIS*, p. 376. Théodose Bonnin interprets the quantifier *de Asneriis* as a possible proof that the relics came from the town of Asnières near Paris, but it is impossible. The letter of Konrad von Hochstaden confirms that Louis IX was sent the body of a holy virgin from Bretagne, called Barga. Contrary to what Louis Carolus-Barré (CAROLUS-BARRÉ, *Saint Louis et la translation des corps saints*, p. 1099) says, these relics did not come from the Collegiate Church of Saint Gereon but from the monastery in Deutz, which follows from the letter

We shall focus on two translations in which Saint Louis took active part: of the relics of Saint Aignan in Orléans in 1259 and of the relics of the martyrs from the Teban Legion from the Abbey of Saint-Maurice-d'Agaune to Senlis in 1262.<sup>149</sup> The relics of Saint Aignan were placed in a reliquary founded by Robert the Pious in 1029. The eleventh century translation, connected with the redevelopment and reconsecration of the church was a very important moment during Robert's reign: in the invocation delivered then the king called the saint the father of the homeland and patron of almost all groups of his subjects. This translation has been described in detail elsewhere in this volume. Louis IX was possibly informed by the canons from Saint-Aignan about the history of the translation which had taken place more than two centuries earlier. The king's participation in the translation of Saint Aignan may probably be interpreted as a conscious reference to the heritage of Robert the Pious, whom the Capetian historiography presents as a model of a devout and learned monarch.<sup>150</sup> In the translation of October 26th, 1259, besides Saint Louis, also his two elder sons, Louis and Philip, took part, as well as the archbishop of Bourges, the bishop of Orléans, the abbot of Saint-Benoît-sur-Loire, and the canons from the Orléans cathedral and Collegiate Church of Saint-Aignan. The ritual began in the cathedral where the archbishop of Bourges and the bishop of Orléans took Aignan's relics from the reliquary founded by Robert the Pious and placed in the new one. Then the relics were carried in a pageant from the cathedral to the Basilica of Saint-Aignan; the reliquary was carried by the king. The ceremony was completed with a sermon delivered in the cloister of the Collegiate Church. Then, like Robert the Pious before him, Louis IX performed a gesture of humiliation in front of the saint: together with his two sons sat on the floor and listened to the sermon in this position.<sup>151</sup> As usual, the monarch's participation in the translation gave him the opportunity to obtain a relic: he was given the knee of Saint Aignan, which he

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of the archbishop of Cologne (*THESAURUS NOVUS ANECDOTORUM*, vol. I, coll. 1109).

149 The analysis of the translation of the relics of the martyrs from the Teban Legion is a partial repetition of my papers: PYSIAK, *Gest władcy i wizualizacja treści ideowych kultu relikwii*, pp. 21–29, here: pp. 25–28; PYSIAK, *Gest monarchy i wizualizacja symboliki rytuałów związanych z kultem relikwii*, pp. 165–186; PYSIAK, *Teatralizacja kultu relikwii w średniowieczu*, pp. 31–44, here: pp. 41–43 (only Senlis).

150 Primat, *Les Grandes Chroniques de France*, RHF, vol. X, pp. 305, 311.

151 CAROLUS-BARRÉ, *Saint Louis et la translation des corps saints*, pp. 1093–1094.

deposited in Sainte-Chapelle; in return he gave the collegiate church two pieces of precious silk fabric from Baghdad (*baudegin*).<sup>152</sup>

Still more ideologically meaningful was the translation of the remains of the martyrs from the Theban Legion from 1262.<sup>153</sup> It has been well documented in the diplomatic sources<sup>154</sup> but the ideological meaning given to the ceremony by the king can be best studied basing on his Life written after 1297 by Guillaume de Saint-Pathus, the confessor of Margaret, the widow of Saint Louis. Saint-Pathus never meet Louis but used the canonization questionnaire.<sup>155</sup> One of the main depositaries of the relics of Saint Maurice and the remaining martyrs from the Theban Legion were the Regular Canons of Saint Augustine from Saint-Maurice-d'Agaune<sup>156</sup> in the Kingdom of Arles, which was part of the Holy Empire. That is why Louis IX sent his envoys to Agaune asking for the relics which he wanted to distribute among the churches of France. According to Guillaume, the abbot of Saint-Maurice gave Saint Louis as many as 24 bodies of martyrs and, with a group of canons, accompanied the royal envoys to France to hand the relics over to the monarch personally. Hearing that the holy relics were approaching, Louis called a meeting of the prelates and barons in Senlis. It is worth noting – as Guillaume de Saint-Pathus explains – that the name of the town could be translated as *centum lilia*:<sup>157</sup> one hundred lilies, the flowers on the coat of arms of the kings of France. The embassy

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152 VIDIER, *Le trésor de la Sainte-Chapelle. Inventaires et documents*, p. 3.

153 CAROLUS-BARRÉ, *Saint Louis et la translation des corps saints*, pp. 1100–1104.

154 The following have been preserved: the charter of the abbot of Saint-Maurice-d'Agaune: *GALLIA CHRISTIANA* (X), no. 1523; the charter of the bishop of Senlis, Robert: AUBERT, *Le trésor de l'abbaye de Saint Maurice-d'Agaune*, no. 23, p. 226; a letter of Louis IX from 1262 and a founding charter of the Priorate of the Holy Virgin Mary and Saint Maurice in Senlis: AUBERT, *Le trésor de l'abbaye de Saint Maurice-d'Agaune*, no. 24, 25, pp. 228–231.

155 GUILLAUME DE SAINT-PATHUS, *Vie de Saint Louis* (DELABORDE), pp. 45–46.

156 Two excellent collections of studies about the Abbey of Saint-Maurice-d'Agaune and the cult of Saint Maurice radiating from it have been recently issued: *MAURITIUS UND DIE THEBÄISCHE LEGION*, especially: JÄGGL, *Die Verehrung der Thebäerheiligen in Spätantike und Frühmittelalter*, pp. 173–191; SEELIGER, *Die Ausbreitung der Thebäer-Verehrung*, pp. 211–225; and *AUTOUR DE SAINT MAURICE*, especially: BROCARD, WAGNER, *Introduction*; HELVÉTIUS, *L'abbaye de Saint-Maurice-d'Agaune dans le haut Moyen Âge*; WAGNER, *Le culte des martyrs de la Légion thébaine dans l'Empire ottonien*.

157 Lat. *centum lilia*, Fr. *cent lys*, pronounced in the same way as Senlis.

from Agaune stopped half a mile away from Senlis, in the bishop's castle of Mont-l'Évêque, and awaited the arrival of the king, barons and prelates. On February 5th, 1262, the lay and ecclesiastical clergy from Senlis went in a procession to the bishop's castle where, witnessed by the clergy, barons and the 'people' the relics were placed in the reliquaries covered with silk founded by Louis IX. The procession with relics set off to Senlis. At the king's request, the reliquaries were carried by 46 knights who held in pairs 23 reliquaries: at the rear of this symbolic pageant of the French nobility there walked, carrying the last, twenty-fourth reliquary, the king of France, Louis, and the king of Navarre, Theobald. The pageant went to the cathedral where a pontifical mass was held and then the relics were deposited in the chapel of Saint Denis in the royal palace in Senlis. The holy relics stayed in the palace chapel only temporarily; in 1262, Saint Louis decided to found in Senlis for the Augustinians the Priorate of the Assumption and Saint Maurice where the relics were deposited during the consecration of the church in 1264 performed in the king's presence. This, however, did not mean that the king gave up his ownership of the relics of the martyrs of the Theban Legion. Louis exerted his right to the relics already in 1264: out of the 24 bodies of the saints sent to Agaune, he gave 14 to the Priorate and, keeping his promises made two years previously, he gave the remaining ones to other churches. Some of them were certainly given to Sainte-Chapelle, the Abbey of Saint-Denis, and the Abbey of Châalis.

In the foundation charter issued a year after the church had been consecrated and the relics had been handed over, Saint Louis decided that the priorate was to be subordinated to the abbot of Saint-Maurice; the canons also had some legal duties toward the bishop of Senlis, e.g., they had to make a procession with candles during the ceremony of enthroning a new bishop.<sup>158</sup> Louis also wished that the priorate should observe the liturgy concordant with the liturgical custom (*consuetudo*) of Sainte-Chapelle. Thus the foundation was supposed to maintain a spiritual and liturgical contact with the royal palace chapel in Paris. This bond was certainly strengthened by the fact that, already in 1262, the king gave the priorate one thorn from the Crown of Thorns in a reliquary which was quite precisely described in the foundation letter.<sup>159</sup> In the charter Saint Louis clearly expressed his wishes concerning the priorate in Senlis: it was called the king's own

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158 The obligations as well as the legal and economic privileges of the priorate are discussed by HÉLARY, *Le prieuré Saint-Maurice de Senlis*, pp. 333–348.

159 The reliquary was made of gilded silver and had a round foot with an engraved inscription +SPINA DE SACROSANCTA CORONA DOMINI; the Thorn is in a glass tube enclosed in an elliptical crystal monstrance enclosed with a gold bordure, decorated with 19 rubies, emeralds, and pearls; cf. *SAINTE LOUIS*.

chapel: *propre chapelle des rois de France*. After the death of the chaplain performing the liturgical services in the old palace oratory of Saint Denis, the service in the oratory was to be handed over to the priorate, which was to be extended by one, fourteenth, canon. Besides, the canons had to perform liturgical service in the intention of the royal family: they were to solemnly celebrate the liturgy for the dead at the anniversary of the deaths of the founder's parents: Louis VIII and Blanche of Castile, and in the future also of Louis IX and Margaret of Provence. Thus, founding the priorate the king in fact made a translation of the *capella palatina* in Senlis, and the church of Our Lady and Saint Maurice in Senlis was to play the same part as Sainte-Chapelle in Paris.

The translation of the relics of Saint Maurice and his companions to Senlis seems not only to fit into the general religious program king Louis, who wanted to transform France into a worldly image of the Kingdom of Heaven and for that purpose strove to ensure the intercession of the saints for himself and his subjects by venerating their earthly remains. Louis Carolus-Barré rightly calls the Senlis translation of 1262 the feast of the knighthood.<sup>160</sup> It seems that by translating the relics from the Theban Legion Louis IX wanted to make Senlis a royal city, a centre of cult sacralizing the nobility to a greater extent than it had been done by the Catholic church till then, Christianizing the knightly ethos and the rite of conferring knighthood itself. Maurice and the martyrs of the Theban Legion were to become patrons of the French knighthood, being, according to the thirteenth century French writers, the second after the Catholic church pillar of the throne and pride of France. The Capetian authors claimed that the glory of the Kingdom of France, beside the piety and renown of its kings consisted in the greatest devotion to the Catholic faith, knowledge (*clergié*), i.e., schools and universities, and the most magnificent and Christian knighthood. It seems, therefore, that Louis IX, the king-knight wished to stress (as it is indicated by the ideological content of the translation of the 'knights' from the Theban Legion and establishing their cult in Senlis) also in the religious sense, the unbreakable bond of the knighthood with the monarchy, overseeing the newly introduced cult. This unbreakable bond<sup>161</sup> was clearly shown during the translation: the relics were carried by French knights in a

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CATALOGUE DE L'EXPOSITION À LA SAINTE CHAPELLE, no. 224, fig. 21.

160 CAROLUS-BARRÉ, *Saint Louis et la translation des corps saints*, p. 1104.

161 "Et c'estoit l'entente du benoiet roy tele, si comme l'en croit, que c'estoit bonne chose et honeste que li dit saint qui avoient esté chevaliers de Jhesu Crist fussent portéz par chevaliers;" GUILLAUME DE SAINT-PATHUS, *Vie de Saint Louis* (DELABORDE), p. 46.



procession with Louis IX at its rear. The staging of the ritual showed that the king belonged to the nobility, but during its course he was shown as the sovereign of the knighthood also in the spiritual understanding, as the organizer of the cult. The introduction of the Parisian liturgy from the Capetian palace chapel in the Church of Our Lady and Saint Maurice and calling the church in its foundation charter the “own chapel of the kings of France” strongly underlined the bond between the king of France and his knighthood, but especially extended the sovereignty of Louis IX over the cult of relics chosen by the monarch as suitable for his knights.

So far Senlis appeared in the context of the Capetian cult of saints and relics due to the Collegiate Church of Saint-Frambourg and the cult of the relics stored in it. However, the sacral topography and the Capetian’s foundation policy in Senlis deserves more attention. Starting from Hugh Capet and Adelaide and the oratory of Saint Frambourg, every generation of the new dynasty made a royal foundation in that town or its vicinity. Robert the Pious redecorated the collegiate of Saint-Rieul and, possibly, founded the collegiate of Saint-Pierre and the church of Saint-Aignan. Also during Robert’s reign the Abbey of Saint-Michel was founded (we do not know about Robert’s part in that foundation, but in a royal town it certainly needed the king’s permission and acknowledgement) and Henry I or his widow, Anne of Kiev, the Abbey of Saint-Rémi for the Benedictine nuns. Anne of Kiev also founded the Abbey of the Regular Canons of Saint-Vincent. Louis VII expanded the Collegiate Church of Saint-Frambourg, and began the Gothic redevelopment of the cathedral and founded a commandery of the Knights Hospitaller in Senlis. Outside the town Louis VI founded in 1136 a Cistercian Abbey in Châalis and Philip Augustus founded the Abbey of the Victorines of Notre-Dame-de-la-Victoire (as a vote for the victory at Bouvines in 1214). Thus, already in the thirteenth century the sacral heritage of Senlis was impressive and the foundation of the Priory of Saint Maurice made by Louis IX was a continuation of the policy of his predecessors. It seems that Xavier Héлары rightly stated that in Capetian times Senlis could have been named a “holy city” (*cit  sainte*).<sup>162</sup> However, as no serious studies of the sacral history and topography of Senlis have been conducted, we do not even know why this town hosted such a concentration of pious foundations of the Capetian kings. It is known that it was one of the important royal residences, among others, due to the fact that it was located among the royal forests in which the Carolingians and Capetians liked to hunt. Moreover, a considerable part of Capetian court officials in the late eleventh and twelfth century originated from Senlis.<sup>163</sup> However, this is not

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162 H LARY, *Le prieur  Saint-Maurice de Senlis*, pp. 333–348.

163 BOURNAZEL, *Louis VI le Gros*, pp. 56–58, 215–217, 219–220, 236, 254–255.

enough to explain why Senlis succeeded to become one of the most important centres of the Capetian foundation policy for more than two centuries, equalling Paris in the intensity of the foundations made by the successive kings, even though the latter outpaces all the other Capetian centres of power in the twelfth century, in the political, economic, demographic and religious respect, becoming the most important in the Kingdom (or perhaps even in the whole transalpine Europe) centre of higher education and the monarch's residence. However, in the thirteenth century Senlis begins to lose its status. Even though it was a votive foundation commemorating the battle of Bouvines, the greatest victory since the Carolingian times the anniversary of which was celebrated throughout the whole thirteenth century, the Abbey of Notre-Dame-de-la-Victoire had never become an important place on the map of the sacral institutions of the French Kingdom. Xavier Hélyary established that the Priorate of Saint Maurice was also not particularly successful: all the successive kings confirmed its privileges when they began their reigns, but it had never again, since the translation of the relics of the 'knights' from the Theban Legion, played an important part in shaping the ideological image of the monarchy. Nor did it play a leading role among the royal oratories. As one of the supposed reasons why the foundation was not successful, Hélyary indicates the large number of earlier sanctuaries in the city.<sup>164</sup>

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164 HÉLARY, *Le prieuré Saint-Maurice de Senlis*, pp. 333–348.

## Conclusion. The Translation and the Cult of the Crown of Thorns during the Reign of Saint Louis against the Backdrop of the Capetian Cult of Relics

Due to a historical coincidence, the Latin Eastern Empire and its ruler, Baldwin II, got into dire straits, which allowed Louis IX to gain the Crown of Thorns, the relics of the Holy Cross and many other ones for his Kingdom. The king grasped the opportunity offered by good fortune, or as he believed, by the special grace of God, and intentionally made use of it, not only to get the relics but also to make their translation and liturgical cult into a clear proof of the special religious and historical status of the French monarchy. However, it is not our intention to present Louis IX as a ruler who treated this cult instrumentally. On the contrary, we believe that the king's involvement in the translation and establishing the cult as well as his active participation in it were the outcome not only of Saint Louis's personal spirituality<sup>1</sup> but also of his consistently applied concept of the royal power and its sacral dimension, which is evidenced by the king's participation in many other translations. The unique character of the cult of the Crown of Thorns, expressed by the gesture and preserved in the narrative and liturgical sources, and, later, in the iconographical ones, is a derivative of the theological message brought about by the relic of the Crown of the Saviour and the whole Christian thought connected with it. This consistent and logical relation between the kind of relic and type of cult and the ideological content which Saint Louis connected with rituals concerning various relics is evidenced by the translation of the martyrs of the Theban Legion from 1262. At that time the major part of the translation liturgy in its demonstrative aspect was devoted to a celebration of the connection between the holy 'knights'-martyrs and their contemporary successors: the king of France and his vassals.

It may be said that the ideological meaning of the Senlis translation was constructed according to the same mental structure as that underlying the cult of relics of Christ the King. The martyrs of the Theban Legion were, as the thirteenth century people believed, knights, so the translation of their holy remains was performed by knights headed by the king-knight. Christ is a king and the tools of His Passion, which are at the same time the tools

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1 On the spirituality and model of Saint Louis's piety: LE GOFF, *Saint Louis*, pp. 328–344, 744–780, 858–886.

of His triumph, are His royal insignia. Thus it is evident that the cult which should be applied to the *instrumenta Passionis* is a royal cult and the leading role of Louis IX in that cult was due to the fact that he was a king, thanks to which, Louis, the modern anointed of God, *christus Domini*, co-participated in the royal essence of the Saviour. By taking up the leading part in the liturgy of the Crown of Thorns and the Holy Cross, Louis<sup>2</sup> performed his obvious duty. Unlike his ancestor, Robert II the Pious, who believed that Saint Aignan, as the “father of the fatherland,” *pater patriae*, was a patron of all groups of his subjects and of himself, Louis organized the cult of the relics and the saints where he could, establishing (with the use of the language of gestures and theatricality of rituals) a more specialized patronage, or a bond of the cliental character. This was probably in accordance with the already quoted view of Louis IX on the role of the cult and intercession of the saints, who were the intermediaries between people and God, like the courtiers and the king. It thus seems logical to apply the notion of the saints’ ‘specialization’, a phenomenon known to the medieval society for a long time and not a novelty during the reign of Louis IX.

### 1. Saint Louis IX – *Rex Imago Christi*

The royal aspect of that cult showing the similarity of the king of France as represented by Louis IX (but also, undoubtedly, by his successors) to Christ the King and the clear-cut analogy between the royal standing of the Capetians or even their coronation insignia and the Crown of Thorns (traces of such perception of the symbols of the Capetian power are known also for the times preceding the translation and are confirmed for the whole thirteenth century) as well as Christ’s royal status, manifested in the narratives presenting the translations and rituals connected with the Crown of Thorns and also in the liturgical texts, has been repeatedly stressed in this volume. We shall not return to these texts here, however, it is worth showing that these issues (alluded to more or less clearly in the accounts of the translation and especially in the proses and hymns accompanying the liturgy for the feast of the Crown of Thorns, as well as in the symbolism of the gestures of the king himself) were suggestively and explicitly justified by the person of the highest standing among the Western Christians. Namely, on June 9th, 1244, pope Innocent IV issued for Sainte-Chapelle, being founded at that time by Louis,<sup>3</sup> a privilege which forbade to suspend,

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2 See BOZÓKY, *Saint Louis, ordonnateur et acteur des rituels autor des reliques de la Passion*, pp. 19–34.

3 The first foundation document of Louis IX for Sainte-Chapelle was issued in January 1245; MORAND, *Histoire de la S<sup>te</sup>-Chapelle, Pièces justificatives*,

excommunicate, or interdict the clerics who were to serve now and in the future in the chapel royal of Sainte-Chapelle without a previous special apostolic mandate permitting that.<sup>4</sup> In the arena of the document, the pope states explicitly:

Among the other things which God's favour has given Your Highness for Your merits, the one which should be considered, most rightly due to its sublimity as special and unique is that God has crowned You with his Crown of Thorns, which, by his indescribable decision, he entrusted to Your Magnificence.<sup>5</sup>

Thus the pope's privilege calls things by their names. The king of France, whose merits were liked by God, was given the greatest favour one can get on Earth: Christ crowned him with his own crown, the Crown of Thorns, which Louis IX was to guard from then on. The same is said in the hymn *Deus tuorum militum*, present in all without exception offices for the feast established by Louis IX: *Tua corona spinea / Tuos coronet aurea – Your Crown of Thorns crowns your (knights) with a gold (Crown)* or the antiphon *Regis et pontificis dyadema* in which Louis IX is called the greatest, the most magnificent of kings, excelling over all the earlier rulers, similar to the King of kings whom is Christ: *Ludovice rex Francorum / Sub te iungent antiquorum / Regum dyademate*. For as it is sung in the prose *Liberalis manus Dei* the king of France enjoys not only the heavenly anointment but also the Crown, handed to him thanks to the privilege granted to him by God, the Crown of Christ the Lord, which gave rise to all the royal crowns: *Celi gaudet unctione / Rex Francorum et corone / Dei privilegio / Hec corona primitiva / Coronarum genitiva*.

pp. 3–7. It is thus worth noting the foresight of the king who first obtained a papal privilege and then carried out a formal foundation of the chapel. Louis's intention to build a new chapel for the relics of the Holy Cross and the Crown of Thorns was, however, known to the pope already from the privilege issued on June 9, 1244; see below.

- 4 PARIS, AN, L.619.5. The text is published in: COHEN, *An Indulgence for the Visitor. The Public at the Sainte-Chapelle of Paris*, Appendix, p. 883 and MORAND, *Histoire de la S<sup>e</sup>-Chapelle, Pièces justificatives*, pp. 2–3. Sauveur-Jérôme Morand dates the document to 1243, however, as Robert Branner (BRANNER, *Saint Louis and the Court Style*, p. 56) aptly noted, 1243 is erroneous: the dating in the charter gives the fourth nones of June (June 8 or 9; Meredith Cohen erroneously mentions June 3) of the first year of Innocent IV's pontificate; yet, Innocent was elected on June 25, 1243.
- 5 “Inter alia quae tuae celsitudini & divina gratia tuis suffragantibus meritis sunt concessa, illud prae sua celsitudine singulare ac praecipuum, nec immerito reputamus, quod te Dominus in sua corona spinea, cujus custodiam ineffabili dispositione tuae commisit excellentiae, coronavit;” MORAND, *Histoire de la S<sup>e</sup>-Chapelle, Pièces justificatives*, p. 2.

Thus, Innocent IV legitimizes the train of thought of the Capetian ideologists and ensures Louis IX that owning the Crown of Thorns grants the king of France an additional sacral legitimation. The royal splendour of the Capetians was since then religiously justified by the royal splendour of Christ whose image on Earth was Louis IX (and his successors), to a greater extent than any other anointed monarch. Therefore also Matthew Paris was right to call Louis IX *rex regum terrestrium*, even though he did not refer to the Crown of Thorns. Louis IX was the king of worldly kings, for, having been crowned with the Crown of Thorns by the Lord, he was the worldly image of Christ, the King of kings.

This issue is indirectly connected with the notion of the *regale sacerdotium sive sacerdotale regimen* of Louis IX. William of Chartres, one of the first hagiographers of Saint Louis, and his chaplain and confessor during the Tunisian Crusade, when describing the personal Louis's piety and his involvement in persuading his subjects to lead good Christian life, which will ensure them salvation (according to the hagiographer the king implemented the relatively archaic, Carolingian model of the *ministerium regis* according to which one of the main duties of a Christian monarch is to lead his subjects to redemption) claims that Louis IX "exercised royal priesthood or priestly reign."<sup>6</sup> This hagiographer's opinion does not appear in the Life in connection of the information about the translation and cult of the Crown of Thorns. However, it seems to accurately comment also on those actions of Louis IX: establishing the feasts in honour of the royal Christ's relics bringing his subjects together, feasts in which Louis himself took active part.<sup>7</sup> Moreover, the Crown of Thorns stored in the royal palace chapel was a visible emblem of the "royal priesthood or priestly reign" of Louis resembling Christ on Earth. We may assume that the view on the character of the reign of Louis IX expressed by a man so close to the king merely several years after the monarch's death (the Life was written in ca. 1276) reflects the king's view, or at least a reflection of the opinion of the closest courtly elite.

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6 "Quoddammodo regale sacerdotium, aut sacerdotale regimen videretur pariter exercere;" GUILLAUME DE CHARTRES, *De Vita sancti Ludovici (Acta Sanctorum)*, cap. III, 15, p. 562; GUILLAUME DE CHARTRES, *Vita sancti Ludovici* (RHF), p. 32; cf. PYSIAK, *Ludwik Świąty: portret hagiograficzny idealnego władcy*, pp. 68–69.

7 GUILLAUME DE CHARTRES, *De Vita sancti Ludovici (Acta Sanctorum)*, cap. I, 5, pp. 559–560; GUILLAUME DE CHARTRES, *Vita sancti Ludovici* (RHF), p. 29.

The notion of the “royal priesthood” found in the Book of Exodus and the First Epistle of Saint Peter refers to the whole Chosen People,<sup>8</sup> yet the hagiographer attributes it to the Capetian monarchy personified by Louis IX. This phenomenon is not new in the Frankish monarchy, for it was also known by the Carolingians, already in the times of Pippin the Short, as it is evidenced by the *Prologue to the Salian Law* in its new recension commissioned by the first Carolingian king, or Alcuin’s letter to Charlemagne from 794–795 (written in connection with the proceedings of the Synod of Frankfurt, dealing with the adoptionist heresy). In his letter, Alcuin treats the Franks as the new Chosen People.<sup>9</sup> The Carolingian kings, especially Pippin and Charlemagne, were compared by their contemporaries to the kings of Israel, and Charlemagne – to David. In the *Admonitio generalis*<sup>10</sup> Charlemagne himself assumed the duties of the Old Testament king Josiah.<sup>11</sup> As we remember in this context, both the narratives about the Crown of Thorns and other Passion relics, as well as the liturgical proses for the Feast of the Crown of Thorn, compare king Louis IX to king David. This topic is the most prevalent in the writings of Gerard of Saint-Quentin, who called Louis IX *David noster*, comparing the translation of the Passion relics to Paris to the introduction of the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem. Gautier Cornut expressed similar ideas in a more veiled way, but quite directly claimed that the translation of the Crown of Thorns was tantamount to the translation of the Promised Land to Gaul. This idea, as well as the notion that the king of France was a worldly reflection of Christ the King, became quite deeply rooted in the Capetian ideology: in the early fourteenth century, the Capetian propaganda expressed by the Dominican preacher Guillaume de Sauqueville during the wars of Philip the Fair with

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8 “And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation;” Exodus 19,6. “But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people;” 1 P 2,9.

9 *PROLOGUS LEGIS SALICAE*, pp. 2–10; *ALCUINI Epistolae*, no. 41, p. 84.

10 *ADMONITIO GENERALIS*, no. 22, pp. 55–56.

11 The problem of comparing the king of the Franks to the kings of Israel is discussed by: GRABOÏS, *Un mythe fondamental de l’Histoire de France au Moyen Âge: Le „roi David”, précurseur du „roi très chrétien”*, pp. 11–31; MICHAŁOWSKI, *Podstawy religijne monarchii we wczesnym średniowieczu*, pp. 10–20; MICHAŁOWSKI, *Problem języka w zachodnioeuropejskiej ideologii władzy królewskiej*, pp. 37–39; KANTOROWICZ, *Laudes Regiae*, p. 54 ff. See also: DESHMAN, *The Exalted Servant. The Ruler Theology of the Prayerbook of Charles the Bald*, pp. 406 ff.; STEGER, *David rex et propheta*. One of the most profound studies of the Kingdom of the Franks is: GARRISSON, *The Franks as the New Israel? Education for an Identity from Pippin to Charlemagne*, pp. 114–161.

Flanders, persuaded that the king of France was a figure of Christ on Earth, the French kingdom was a reflection of the Kingdom of Heaven, and Philip's revenge on his enemies was to resemble the second coming of Christ and God's revenge.<sup>12</sup> Could it be otherwise if from the times of the translation of the Crown of Thorns the Capetian court believed that the king of France was crowned with the Crown of Thorns by God himself?

## 2. Saint Louis as the New Charlemagne

The earlier conclusions already indicated significant similarities of the sacral aspects of the ideology of power of Louis IX and some ideological topics present in Charlemagne's programme of rule. Also the use of the name and figure of the Biblical king Josiah as a model for a Christian king is repeated with respect to Louis IX. However, whereas in the *Admonitio generalis* Charlemagne indicated Josiah as the inspiration of his own actions, we do not know of any such declarations on the part of Saint Louis. He was called a new Josiah by his first hagiographer, Geoffroi of Beaulieu, who, interpreting the meaning of the name Josiah saw in it features parallel to the values and merits of Louis IX.<sup>13</sup> Both in the case of references to Josiah and the parallel between Louis and king David, it is not possible to determine whether this ideological similarity to the religious foundations of Charlemagne's power was intentional. It seems doubtful and proving it convincingly would be extremely difficult if at all possible.

In the case of Louis IX, the direct inspiration with the historical memory of Charlemagne can be undoubtedly found with respect to the translation and cult of the Crown of Thorns.

Louis IX tried in many ways to make ideological references to Charlemagne, whom he considered as his ancestor and predecessor on the French throne. One of the proofs is the rigorously observed annual ritual of depositing four gold bezants on the main altar of the Abbey church in Saint-Denis, based on the twelfth-century forgery, according to which Charlemagne made Saint-Denis a *caput omnium ecclesiarum* in the Kingdom of the Franks.

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12 STRAYER, *The Holy Land, the Chosen People, and the Most Christian King*, pp. 3–16.

13 GEOFFROI DE BEAULIEU, *Vita sancti Ludovici (Acta Sanctorum)*, cap. I, 1–4, pp. 542–543, cap. VIII, 68, p. 558; GEOFFROI de BEAULIEU, *Vita sancti Ludovici* (RHF), cap. 1, 2, 51, pp. 1–4, 25–26; FOLZ, *La sainteté de Louis IX d'après les textes liturgiques de sa fête*, pp. 30–45; LE GOFF, *Royauté biblique et idéal monarchique médiéval: Saint Louis et Josias*, pp. 157–168; LE GOFF, *Saint Louis*, pp. 396–401; PYSIAK, *Ludwik Świąty: portret hagiograficzny idealnego władcy*, pp. 59–60.



However, let us remind that this homage had its equivalent in the four coins which, according to *Iter Hierosolimitanum* Charlemagne obliged to pay all those who did not accompany him on his expedition to the Holy Land and their descendants. It is possible that besides the tradition going back at least to the times of Louis's grandfather, Philip Augustus, and the requirements of the charter, the king used to pay four golden bezants to Saint-Denis because he was aware that he had not yet gone to aid Jerusalem. Another ostentatious way of stressing the Carolingian character of Louis's monarchy was the new arrangement of the royal sarcophagi in the aisle of the Abbey Church of Saint-Denis, deployed in the nave in a new way according to the king's will after the redevelopment of the church in the Gothic style, so as to stress the Carolingian genealogy of the king's father and grandfather, as well as of Louis IX himself.<sup>14</sup> The Carolingian origins of the last Capetians' generations were also mentioned in the historical works written during the reign of Philip Augustus, and these claims were repeated in the texts from the times of Louis IX<sup>15</sup> who personally supervised the content of these writings.<sup>16</sup> In this context it is justified to see an analogy between the translation of the Crown of Thorns performed by Saint Louis and the alleged one from the times of Charlemagne; a careful reader has certainly noted these parallels already, they will nevertheless be briefly presented below.

It is worth remembering that, from the second half or at least the late eleventh century, the Abbey of Saint-Denis was a depositary and exponent of the history of the translation of the Crown of Thorns from Constantinople to the Kingdom of the Franks performed by Charlemagne. The birth and

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14 BROWN, *Burying and Unburying Kings of France*, pp. 241–266; ERLANDE-BRANDENBOURG, *Le roi est mort*, pp. 73, 79–80; HALLAM, *Royal Burial and the Cult of Kingship in France and England*, pp. 359–381, especially pp. 366–367, 370–372; LE GOFF, *Saint Louis et les corps royaux*, pp. 255–284; LE GOFF, *Saint Louis*, pp. 273–290; LEWIS, *Royal Succession in Capetian France*, pp. 116–118, 132; SOMMERS WRIGHT, *A Royal Tomb Program in the Reign of St. Louis*, pp. 223–243.

15 BROWN, *Vincent de Beauvais and the 'reditus regni Francorum ad stirpem Caroli imperatoris'*, pp. 167–196; FOLZ, *Le souvenir et la légende de Charlemagne dans l'Empire germanique médiéval*, pp. 277–279; KIENAST, *Deutschland und Frankreich in der Kaiserzeit*, pp. 500–515; LEWIS, *Royal Succession in Capetian France*, pp. 116–118; SPIEGEL, *The "Reditus Regni ad stirpem Caroli Magni"*, pp. 145–171; WERNER, *Andreas von Marchiennes und die Geschichtsschreibung von Anchin und Marchiennes*, pp. 402–463; WERNER, *Die Legitimität der Kapetinger und die Entstehung der reditus regni Francorum ad stirpem Karoli*, pp. 203–225.

16 DUCHENNE, *Autour de 1254, une révision capétienne du „Speculum historiale"*, pp. 141–166.

dissemination of this tradition, which in the twelfth and thirteenth century became part of the universally binding canon of knowledge about the past, has been described in detail in the first part of this volume. In the light of that reconstruction it is evident that Louis IX was very aware of this knowledge: it was an inalienable part of the Franks' history. According to *Descriptio qualiter* and the texts inspired by it, Charlemagne obtained the relics of the Crown of Thorns from the emperor of Constantinople as a gift of gratitude for freeing the Empire from the Saracen invasion. According to the most knowledgeable writers dealing with the translations of the Passion relics, Louis IX obtained the Crown of Thorns and the remaining Passion relics in return for the help to the Latin Empire. It was not military but only financial aid, yet the analogy is quite evident, especially as Baldwin II used the Capetian money for war. The second, more important, difference is that Charlemagne personally led the Franks to aid Jerusalem and the Holy Land invaded by the Saracens. In 1239–1242, at the time of the Parisian translations, Louis could not pride himself with such a merit, but that was to change soon. We should bear in mind that the crusade vows made by Louis during his illness in 1244 took place soon after the body of the sick king was touched with the Passion relics from Saint-Denis in order to cure him. These were the relics which Charlemagne was said to have obtained in Constantinople after freeing Jerusalem. Louis IX obtained the Passion relics a few years before, when the Holy Sepulchre was still under the rule of the Crusaders (or more specifically, nominally under the rule of emperor Frederick II). The loss of the Holy Lands and the miraculous healing of the king owing to the Passion relics (and also to those of Saint Denis) in 1244 may have persuaded the king that it was his duty to repeat Charlemagne's deeds since he was a depositary of the holiest relics of Christianity.

Besides the above-mentioned historical context of the translation, the accidental character of which on the one hand and the incomplete congruence on the other one have been noted above, we can notice several similarities in the fields which we may call fully dependent on the will and actions of Louis IX, namely: the ritual, ceremonial, and symbolic sphere. In our opinion they were entirely the result of Louis IX's intentions. First, the Passion relics brought by Saint Louis were placed in the chapel royal, like in the case of the apocryphal Carolingian translation: according to *Descriptio qualiter* Charlemagne deposited the relics of the Crown of Thorns in the palace chapel in Aachen. What makes this similarity seem an intentional imitation of Charlemagne is the fact that until then all the Capetians deposited the most precious relics in the Abbey of Saint-Denis or in the Paris Cathedral. It should be added that according to the same account also Charles the Bald passed on to that abbey the relics of the Crown of Thorns he had brought from Aachen. Thus, the fact that Louis abandoned the tradition lasting for

generations seems to indicate that he intentionally imitated Charlemagne. It remains a separate question, still debated by the researchers, how to interpret the artistic form of Sainte-Chapelle from the theological point of view. Whatever the final conclusion, for our purposes it is of secondary importance: whether it was an intentional continuation of the architectural form of palace chapels: royal, bishop's, noblemen's, typical of the Western part of the former Carolingian empire<sup>17</sup> or perhaps, despite its (apparent) formal differences, an imitation of the Golgotha Chapel at the Basilica of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem,<sup>18</sup> is not of utmost important for us.<sup>19</sup> The crucial thing is that there is no doubt that it was the intention of Louis for it to have and fulfill the same function as the palace chapel in Aachen during the reign of Charlemagne. Namely, it was a private, royal, sacral space within the royal palace, but it also fulfilled public functions connected with the monarch's religiousness. Like Charlemagne, Louis IX deposited the Crown of Thorns in his *capella palatina* and, after the subsequent translations made it into a veritable treasury of the relics: the place where the most magnificent and richest collection of relics in the West and possibly in the entire Christendom was kept (in which Saint Louis was to surpass Charlemagne, whose collection was certainly less opulent than that in Constantinople or in Rome). Although at the time when the three translations of the Passion relics took place, Sainte-Chapelle did not yet exist; the authors of all three accounts write that the translation was ended with depositing the Crown of Thorns or the True Cross in Louis IX's chapel royal. Furthermore, Louis, like Charlemagne in the account of the *Iter Hierosolimitanum*, personally demonstrated the relics to the people (*ostensio*) when bringing them to his capital. He did the same during the feasts in honour of the Passion relics he had established. The annual *ostensio* of the Crown of Thorns in the royal palace and Sainte-Chapelle closely resembles the *Indictum* established by Charlemagne in Aachen and transferred to Saint-Denis together with the relics by Charles the Bald.

In this context, it is worth mentioning the policy of giving out particles (thorns from the Crown of Thorns) begun by Louis IX and continued by

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17 This view was expressed by HACKER-SÜCK, *La Sainte-Chapelle de Paris et les chapelles palatines du Moyen Âge en France*, pp. 217–257.

18 Like: MÜLLER, *Paris, das neue Jerusalem?*, pp. 325–336, who argues with Inge Hacker-Sück.

19 On the historical-artistic interpretation of Sainte-Chapelle see also: BILLOT, *Les Saintes-Chapelles (XIII<sup>e</sup>-XVI<sup>e</sup> siècles)*, pp. 230–248; BILLOT, *Le message spirituel et politique de la Sainte-Chapelle de Paris*, pp. 119–141; SAUERLÄNDER, *Architectur gothique et mise en scène des reliques. L'exemple de la Sainte-Chapelle*, pp. 113–136.

his successors. It undoubtedly served to disseminate the new cult and, just as importantly, to gain renown for the king of France, the owner and distributor of the unsurpassable relics. For several generations Saint Louis and his successors substituted the Byzantine emperors in this position, whose chapel had been until then the main source of the Passion relics in Europe. In the second half of the thirteenth century, the thorns from the Crown of Thorns had been disseminated from Paris in almost the whole France and Western Europe:<sup>20</sup> they were sent to Italy, the Holy Empire, Spain, Bohemia,<sup>21</sup> and Norway.<sup>22</sup> A collation of Louis's gifts does not yield a clear picture of the policy of thorns distribution. The recipients included both monasteries and cathedrals as well as private people, who must have enjoyed the king's respect.<sup>23</sup> Despite that, it is possible to notice a certain regularity in the distribution of the thorns. Of course, a series of the gifts from 1239 was an offshoot of the translation and a propaganda and religious effort: it was clearly connected with the intention to disseminate the knowledge about the king's merits connected with bringing the Crown of Thorns to France and developing its cult. In this way, also the people who had been particularly involved in the translation were rewarded: the archbishop of Sens, Gautier Cornut, who obtained a thorn for his cathedral, as well as the bishop of Le Puy, who, like Cornut, took part in the translation rituals.<sup>24</sup> In the following years, the gifts were not given so often, but we can not be entirely sure about that as not all the dates of donations are

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20 A list (incomplete) of the donations of particles of the Crown of Thorns made by Saint Louis in: JORDAN, *Louis IX and the Challenge of the Crusade*, p. 192, *EXUVIAE SACRAE CONSTANTINOPOLITANAE*, vol. II, no. 68, 82, 85, 86, 87, 88, 91, 92, 94, 110, 113, 116, 118, pp. 125, 137–138, 139, 140, 143–144, 145, 154, 156, 161, 158–159; see also: AUBERT, *Le trésor de l'abbaye de Saint Maurice-d'Agaune*, vol. I, pp. 57, 170–171, 177; LEMAÎTRE, *Reliquaire de la Sainte-Croix*, pp. 6–9; VIDIER, *Le trésor de la Sainte-Chapelle*, pp. 262–267

21 On the translation of a particle of the Crown of Thorns to Bohemia, unknown to the French medieval and modern authors: PAUK, *Królewski kult relikwii Świętej Korony Cierniowej*, pp. 59–78.

22 On the translation of a particle of the Crown of Thorns to Norway see PYSIAK, *Polityczne aspekty kultu świętego Olafa i relikwii Korony Cierniowej*, pp. 526–553.

23 This is the case of Roger of Provins, Louis IX's doctor and canon of Saint-Quentin, who was given a thorn during his stay with the king in the Holy Land (1251). The second person to obtain such a gift was the chaplain of pope Alexander IV, a Franciscan, Mansueto di Castiglioni Fiorentino (1258). Interestingly, the pope's chaplain was given a thorn, but the pope was did not.

24 This donation was made on August 12, 1239, a day after the solemn introduction of the Crown of Thorns to Sens, thus before it reached Paris.

known. Certainly, Louis wanted to give the thorns to all the main orders in France, as well as those enjoying his favour. The endowed French monasteries included two Dominican (Paris, date unknown; Rouen, in 1269), Franciscan (Paris, date unknown; Sées, 1259), Benedictine (Beauvais, 1261; Vézelay 1267), and Augustine (Mont-Saint-Éloi, 1261; Blois, 1270) monasteries. The king gave one thorn to the Parisian monastery of the Trinitarians in 1260. The French Cistercians, who were the first to adopt the feast of the Crown of Thorns as their own, did not obtain a particle of the Crown after 1239. This was so probably because already in 1235, a few years before the translation, Louis gave the Cistercian Abbey in Royaumont, which he had founded, another thorn and a fragment of the Holy Cross<sup>25</sup> of uncertain origin. The only known Cistercian monastery endowed by Louis IX with a particle of the Crown of Thorns after the translation is the Abbey of Vaucelles in the County of Hainaut, thus in the Holy Empire.

The reasons for the endowment of Sens and Paris Cathedrals with the particles of the Crown are obvious: in these two cities the main celebrations of the translation of the Crown were conducted and these were the main cathedral churches in the Sens province where the *festum Sanctae Coronae* was soon established. Sens was given a thorn from the Crown in 1239 during the translation. The date of donation for the Parisian Notre-Dame is not known, but it seems justified to believe that it must also have taken place during the translation. Louis IX often gave thorns from the Crown of the Lord in return for the relics he was given and deposited the in Sainte-Chapelle. We have already seen such examples, let us only recall Vézelay, Agaune, or Cologne, from where Louis IX obtained the relics of Saint Mary Magdalen, the martyrs from the Theban Legion, and the Eleven Thousand Virgins. It is another question that the gifts of relics were also used by Louis for diplomatic purposes, which was a traditional policy of the Christian rulers begun already in the eighth century in Byzantium. The donations of the thorns for the bishop of Valence (1256) and the Abbey of Saint-Mauriced'Agaune in Arelate in 1262 and 1264, the Dominicans of Liège (1267), or the Cistercians of Vaucelles at the border of Flanders, France, and the Holy Empire (1257), and finally for Cologne Cathedral (1261), even if in some cases were reciprocations of the gifts of other relics, seem to reveal an intentional policy of distributing the particles to churches located in the borderland, mostly in French-speaking or Roman language territories, nominally

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25 Cf. DIMIER, *Saint Louis et Cîteaux*; DIMIER, *La place de Royaumont dans l'architecture du XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle*, pp. 115–119; GOÛIN, *L'abbaye de Royaumont*.

belonging to the Empire, but in fact being outside the control of the emperor or a German king.<sup>26</sup>

Louis's distribution of the Passion relics itself must have evoked associations with Charlemagne. Let us recall the already discussed phenomenon of the creation of monastic legends in the eleventh and twelfth century, which explained that the relics possessed by the monastery were gifts from or at least belonged to Charlemagne's Aachen collection of relics. The best example may be Saint-Denis, whose case proves that Louis knew this tradition. The author of *Iter Hierosolimitanum Karoli Magni* also says that the emperor gave part of the relics obtained in Constantinople to churches all over his empire. Now the Passion relics were given to churches in the French Kingdom and beyond its borders by Louis IX.

However, there is another key to the interpretation of the distribution of the Crown of Thorns by king Louis. Namely, a collation of these donations reveals their intensification in 1267–1270, thus, in the period when the king decided to set off to his second Crusade. The thorns from the Crown were then sent to the Dominicans from Liège and Rouen, the Benedictines of Vézelay, the bishop of Clermont and the Augustinians of Bourmoyen in Blois. William Chester Jordan believes that this series of gifts was intended to inspire the crusade ardor in Louis's subjects; similarly the gift Louis IX made to Toledo Cathedral in 1248 directly before he set off to his first Crusade was to stress the role of Castile in the war with the infidels on the Iberian Peninsula.<sup>27</sup> Can the gift of another particle to the Franciscans from

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26 The issue of the foreign policy of Louis IX toward the Empire is a well known research question, especially as regards the king's involvement in resolving the controversy between emperor Frederick II and pope Innocent IV and in settling the succession disputes in Flanders (which concerned both the County of Flanders, which was nominally part of the Kingdom of France and of the County of Hainaut and Marquisate of Namur, which belonged to the Empire); cf. LE GOFF, *Saint Louis*, pp. 252–255; JORDAN, *Louis IX and the Challenge of the Crusade*, pp. 43–45, 124; KIENAST, *Deutschland und Frankreich in der Kaiserzeit*, pp. 624–631. Also, the relations with Castile were important for Louis IX due to the close relations and intermarriages between the two dynasties.

27 The connection of the cult of the Crown of Thorns with the Crusade idea should be tackled separately: a solemn donation for Toledo Cathedral took place on the day of the *Festum Sanctae Coronae* in 1248, two weeks before Louis IX set off from Aigues-Mortes to Egypt; Toledo was the capital of the Kingdom of Castile, being a symbol of the holy war against the Saracens (Reconquista) in thirteenth-century Europe (cf. *EXUVIAE SACRAE CONSTANTINOPOLITANAE*, vol. II, no. 82, pp. 137–138; JORDAN, *Louis IX and the Challenge of the Crusade*, pp. 30–31, 109, 191–192). It is possible that the donation for the Franciscans from Barcelona of 1262 was connected with the involvement in the Reconquista of the kingdom of Aragon (cf. *EXUVIAE SACRAE CONSTANTINOPOLITANAE*, vol. II, no. 94, p. 145), but this suggestion is not convincing since king James II the

Barcelona in 1262 be explained in a similar way? The gift of the thorn to the bishop of Vicenza (1259) may be probably connected with the anti-heretic crusade conducted in the local diocese, and certainly was used in that way by the bishop after its end.<sup>28</sup> Possibly also the gift of the thorn from the Crown made by Philip III to the king of Norway, Magnus VI, in 1274 may be connected with the crusade ideology. We know that already in 1247 Louis IX urged his father, Haakon IV to take part in a crusade as the commander of the Crusade fleet.<sup>29</sup> The gift was transmitted by Philip III to the Norwegian embassy returning from the II Council of Lyon (with the archbishop of Nidaros at the head of the legation) during their visit to the royal Palais de la Cité in Paris. We know that the pope Gregory X announced the new Crusade at the Lyon Council, designating its start to 1278.<sup>30</sup> It is possible that Philip the Bold referred in this way to his father's diplomacy and wanted to use the gift to persuade Magnus VI to join the crusade, perhaps suggesting once again that the king of Norway should command the Crusaders' feet.

We also know from a long-time friend and biographer of Saint Louis, Jean de Joinville, who, quite unexpectedly, does not mention the translation of the Crown of Thorns at all, that on the eve of the re-taking of the cross on Good Friday 1270 Louis IX personally performed the *ostensio* of the Holy Cross in Sainte-Chapelle witnessed by the assembly of barons and prelates.<sup>31</sup> In the account of Jean de Joinville, one can note a clear, yet indirect relation between Louis's taking the cross and displaying the Passion relics to the assembly of the barons and prelates: on the eve of Good Friday, the seneschal had a dream and asked a certain priest to explain it. The latter suggested that the dream indicated that the king was to take the cross soon. During the *ostensio* in Sainte-Chapelle Jean de Joinville heard a conversation of two knights from the royal court who also predicted that

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Conqueror considered the Reconquista in Aragon as finished after the kingdom of Valencia was conquered in 1248. On Saint Louis's Crusade ideology as depicted in Sainte-Chapelle stained glass see: GAPOSCHKIN, "Louis IX, crusade and the promise of Joshua in the Holy Land", pp. 245-274, esp. pp. 254-255.

28 The bishop of Vicenza obtained a thorn in 1259 (*EXUVIAE SACRAE CONSTANTINOPOLITANAE*, vol. II, no. 88, p. 145). The diocese of Vicenza was a short time before a subject to an anti-heretic, or rather anti-Ghibelline 'crusade'; cf. PIENIĄDZ-SKRZYPCZAK, *Początki kultu Korony Cierniowej w Vicenzy*, pp. 29-57.

29 MATTHEW PARIS, *Chronica majora*, vol. IV, pp. 651-652.

30 RICHARD, *Histoire des Croisades*, p. 502. The problem of aiding the Holy Land and recapturing Jerusalem was one of the main issues discussed at the Council; see *CONSTITUTIONES LUGDUNENSIS CONSILII*, pp. 400-411.

31 "Je alai en la chapelle le roy et trouvai le roy qui estoit montez en l'eschaffaut aux reliques et fesoit apporter la Vraie Croix aval;" JEAN DE JOINVILLE, *Vie de Saint Louis*, cap. 733, pp. 362, 364.

Louis would soon take the cross, which he did, together with his three sons, on the next day, the Holy Saturday.<sup>32</sup> This story does not suggest a simple dependence between the *ostensio* of the True Cross performed by Louis IX and the announcement of the crusade: one may guess that the king demonstrated the Cross to his subjects on every Good Friday, even if there is no direct proof of that. The account of Jean de Joinville only concerns 1270 and is the only testimony that Louis took such actions, unless we assume that the description of the translation of the relics of 1241 by Matthew Paris, analyzed above, during which the king demonstrated the True Cross, was placed by the chronicler on Good Friday (this date is not confirmed by any other source) due to the contamination of the translation and the ostension. In the account of Jean de Joinville, the king does not take the cross on Good Friday but on Holy Saturday, yet the demonstration of the relic is the highlight of the narrative. The subject of the new crusade, expected by the author and his interlocutors appears in the narrative the day before and on the day of the *ostensio*. On the next day the crusade was announced. Even assuming that for almost thirty years Louis IX performed an ostension of the True Cross on every Good Friday (excluding the years of his first crusade) and the public demonstration of the relic in 1270 did not take place in connection of the king's taking the cross, one is bound to conclude that the temporal relation between these two events was intentional. If the *ostensio* was not organized because of the announcement of the crusade, then the date of taking the cross by Louis IX was intentionally selected in such a way that it almost coincided with the Holy Week and the public demonstration of the Passion relics. In conclusion, one should say that on the premises we have it seems clear that Louis IX consciously used the Passion relics brought from Constantinople to foster the idea of the crusade, sending out the thorns from the Crown of the Lord and demonstrating them to the public.

Did Saint Louis wish to evoke Charlemagne's memory in this way? Even though his actions are not an imitation or a repetition of Charlemagne's deeds known from the *Iter Hierosolimitanum*, and they can not be, since the order of the translation and the expedition to free the Holy Tomb was different in Charlemagne's legendary history from what happened to Louis IX, we answer this question affirmatively. The decisive criterion for this is the already described in this volume when discussing the recognition of Charlemagne (described in this volume when discussing the origins and reception of the *Iter Hierosolimitanum*) as the first, archetypical crusader. This idea was already introduced at the turn of the eleventh and twelfth century as Charlemagne's footsteps were allegedly to be followed by the Western

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32 JEAN DE JOINVILLE, *Vie de Saint Louis*, cap. 732–734, pp. 362, 364.



knighthood who set out to regain Jerusalem in 1096. Thus, also Louis IX imitated Charlemagne by the very fact of announcing the crusades and participating in them. Both William Chester Jordan who considers the crusade as the main idea of Louis IX's reign, and Jacques Le Goff, who nuances this opinion, interpreting the king's wish to regain Jerusalem as only one element of a larger programme of the perfect Christian rule: building the Kingdom of God on Earth,<sup>33</sup> did not notice this aspect of Louis's crusade ideology. It is true that this interpretation can only be made when we notice the similarity between the two translations: the legendary Carolingian one and the actual one, performed by Louis IX, and their consequences.

### 3. Sainte-Chapelle in the Times of Saint Louis

I should also briefly return to the founding of Sainte-Chapelle. I am not going to deal with the endowment and organisation of Sainte-Chapelle, the place of the new chapel royal in the structure of the Capetian royal palace, its clergy, or the reconstruction of the royal liturgy in honour of the relics imported by Saint Louis by the subsequent generations. The functioning of the cult of the Crown of Thorns in Sainte-Chapelle and its connections with the ceremonies and ideology of the royal power in the times of the successors of Louis IX are a very interesting and hitherto insufficiently studied problem. I shall deal with this issue in a separate study presenting the Capetian model of the cult of the relics of the Crown of Thorns as a possible inspiration for the other European monarchies. Here we shall only analyze Sainte-Chapelle as a place where the relics brought from Constantinople (and afterward many other ones) were deposited and the ideological message this may have carried.

The main aspect of this problem is the already mentioned obvious claim of intentional imitation of Charlemagne. Like the emperor, as *Iter Hierosolimitanum Karoli Magni* says, Louis IX deposited the Crown of Thorns and other Passion relics obtained from the emperor of Constantinople in his own palace chapel, which from then on was a place of an annual ritual of public demonstration of the relics by the king. Not only is the claim of intentional imitation supported by the evident similarity of the decisions and rituals established by Louis IX to the literary account he was acquainted with, but also the fact that, as we know, opting for this solution the king departed from the existing model followed by the Capetians until then.

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33 JORDAN, *Louis IX and the Challenge of the Crusade*, passim; cf. a different opinion: LE GOFF, *Saint Louis*, pp. 181–182, expanded on pp. 214–227, 243–266, 290–297, 778–780, 887–899.

The architectural form of the chapel, traditional on the outside,<sup>34</sup> had a special structure inside: it had two storeys. On the lower one was the chapel in honour of Our Lady, destined for the lower-ranking members of the court. The chapel on the upper level, dedicated to the Crown of Thorns and the Holy Cross, connected by a procession staircase and a gallery with the royal apartments, was the place where the very solemn liturgies were held on feast days in which the elite of the court, the Church, and of the Kingdom of France took part. On the Northern side of the chapel there was the royal audience hall and beyond it the royal archives (*Trésor des chartes*).<sup>35</sup> On either side of the aisle there were also small loges for the king and the queen. In the chancel there was a two-storey pedestal: it was an elaborate architectural structure with reliquaries and relics. The fifteenth century iconographic sources reveal that on the pedestal under the pyx there was a large reliquary which could be opened and turned around to show the relics to the most eminent of the guests visiting Sainte-Chapelle and the participants in the liturgy.<sup>36</sup> The whole structure was called the *Grande Châsse*.<sup>37</sup> We do not know a similar account for the reign of Louis

34 HACKER-SÜCK, *La Sainte-Chapelle de Paris et les chapelles palatines du Moyen Âge en France*, passim. Similarly BRANNER, *Saint Louis and the Court Style*, p. 59. MÜLLER, *Paris, das neue Jerusalem?*, passim, expresses a different opinion, saying that Sainte-Chapelle is a symbolic reproduction (despite the architectural differences) of the Golgotha chapel in Jerusalem, thanks to which it refers, in his opinion, to the model also used in the chapel in Aachen. COHEN, *An Indulgence for the Visitor. The Public at the Sainte-Chapelle of Paris*, pp. 847–859, is for the concept according to which traditional French architectural models of episcopal chapels was used, but also notes certain details analogous to the Aachen chapel (pp. 857–859). See also: COHEN, *Sainte-Chapelle and the Construction of Sacral Monarchy: Royal Architecture in Thirteenth-Century Paris*, Cambridge University Press, 2015.

35 On the location of Sainte-Chapelle in the royal palace: COHEN, *An Indulgence for the Visitor. The Public at the Sainte-Chapelle of Paris*, pp. 860–865; COHEN, *Sainte-Chapelle and the Construction of Sacral Monarchy: Royal Architecture in Thirteenth-Century Paris*, Cambridge University Press, 2015.

36 On this subject an excellent paper: COHEN, *An Indulgence for the Visitor. The Public at the Sainte-Chapelle of Paris*, pp. 865–882; with a substantial literature about Sainte-Chapelle.

37 This structure may be seen, e.g., in a miniature from the Parisian missal of the fifteenth century, MAZARINE, Ms. 406, fol. 7r<sup>o</sup> (ca 1410); in the breviary of the duke of Guyenne from ca. 1414, CHÂTEAUXROUX, BM, Ms. 0002, fol. 274 r<sup>o</sup> and 350r<sup>o</sup>, on a copy of a miniature from the benedictionary of duke of Bedford (1422–1435), MUSÉE DE CLUNY, CL 22847, as well as an engraving by François-Roger de Gaignières from the seventeenth century, BnF, Estampes, Va 9, fol. 54bis. About the *Grande Châsse*: BRANNER, *The Grande Chasse of the Sainte-Chapelle*, pp. 5–18 and DURAND, *La Grande Châsse aux reliques*,

IX: the earliest information of that type concerns the year 1378 when king Charles V personally showed the relics to emperor Charles IV. However, we know for a fact that the reliquary pedestal existed already during the times of Louis IX: Jean de Joinville writes that on Good Friday of 1270, the king mounted it and ordered (who?) to bring the True Cross down. According to Robert Branner the *Grande Châsse* made of gold and bronze was ultimately completed in 1246–1248, when the reliquary was made, and after 1254, when the arcades, tribunes, and side stairs leading to it were constructed. He believes that the whole equipment of the chapel: its architectural decoration, polychrome medallions representing saints and martyrs, and the statues of the apostles decorating the walls, as well as the liturgical books (evangelaries) ordered by Saint Louis for the chapel, are stylistically uniform.<sup>38</sup>



10. Sainte-Chapelle, choir and the Southern façade, ca. 1248

The artistic and ideological programme of Sainte-Chapelle has been a subject of interest for a long time, which has yielded many studies on the topic. Especially important are the works of Robert Branner on the decoration, the place of Sainte-Chapelle in the artistic style of the epoch of Louis IX,

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pp. 107–112 (both quite richly illustrated), also: COHEN, *An Indulgence for the Visitor. The Public at the Sainte-Chapelle of Paris.*

38 See the next footnote.

and the part played by the chapel in the structure of the chapels royal,<sup>39</sup> and of Alyce Jordan on the stained glass.<sup>40</sup> Recently two large collective works about Sainte-Chapelle have been published, which analyse the monument in many aspects.<sup>41</sup> There is no doubt that Sainte-Chapelle, besides its most obvious, sacral, function, had also an ideological role. Its main aim was to display the holy treasures stored in it.<sup>42</sup> Its general iconographical program was clearly to show the religious foundations of the authority of the kings of France by stressing its genetic bonds with the Old Testament monarchy of Israel and the royal dignity of Christ. The visitors to the chapel were to see Louis IX as the successor of the kings of Israel, which is analogous to the decorative motifs well known from the Gothic sculpted façades of the royal cathedrals in France. In Sainte-Chapelle this topic is illustrated by the stained glasses, where such subjects have been noted as the praise of the dynasty and genealogy, as well as hereditary virtues resulting therefrom. This has been interpreted (perhaps too broadly) as a proclamation of the holiness of the Capetian dynasty and confirmation of the Biblical origins of the royal power: coronation and acclamation, as well as fight with the enemies of God and of (the new) Israel.<sup>43</sup> The representations on the stained glass were considered (seemingly rightfully so) to bear the mark of Louis IX's individual piety and his personal opinions on the religious and ethical aspect of the monarchy. Among others aspects, the analogy between the iconographic meaning of the windows in Sainte-Chapelle and the ideological intention of the moralizing Bibles commissioned by the king were noted. The dialogue of the religious and moral aspects of the monarchy established by God, shown by a parallel between the deeds of the pious men from the Old Testament and the contemporary king of France, can be also noticed in the windows presenting the illustrations of the Old Testament

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39 BRANNER, *The Painted Medallions in the Sainte-Chapelle*, pp. 5–42; BRANNER, *Saint Louis and the Court Style*; BRANNER, *The Sainte-Chapelle and the capella regis*, pp. 19–22; see also WEISS, *Architectural Symbolism and the Decoration of the Ste.-Chapelle*, pp. 308–320.

40 JORDAN, *Visualizing Kingship in the Windows of the Sainte-Chapelle*; see also: GRODECKI, AUBERT, LAFOND, VERRIER, *Les vitraux de Notre-Dame et de la Sainte-Chapelle de Paris*, from p. 295 (catalogue entry and state of preservation). See also: BRENK, “The Sainte-Chapelle as a Capetian Political Program”, pp. 195–213; CLARK, “The Recollection of the Past Is the Promise of the Future”, pp. 92–113.

41 SAINTE-CHAPELLE DE PARIS; TRÉSOR DE LA SAINTE-CHAPELLE.

42 SAUERLÄNDER, *Architecture gothique et mise en scène des reliques. L'exemple de la Sainte-Chapelle*, pp. 113–136.

43 JORDAN, *Visualizing Kingship in the Windows of the Sainte-Chapelle*, pp. 15–29, 50–55.

history and the window presenting the story of the translation of the Crown of Thorns.<sup>44</sup>

#### 4. *Translatio Imperii* or Translation of Jerusalem?

When discussing the meaning of Sainte-Chapelle, one should pay attention to its name: The Holy Chapel, *Sacra Capella*. The name was used by Louis IX himself (and his successors) both in charters and to call the annual feast of consecration mentioned in the liturgical books. The kings employed it not only to stress the standing of that sanctuary or even the analogy with the Carolingian foundation legend of the Abbey in Charroux, which, owing to the Christ's relics deposited in the local church, gained the name of Saint Charroux (*Sanctus Carrofus*). The new chapel royal in the Palais de la Cité was given exactly the same name as the one the Franks used for the chapel in the imperial palace of Boukoleon in Constantinople in which the Passion relics were stored: Robert de Clari called it *sainte-chapele*.<sup>45</sup> The name was probably used also in the Latin Constantinople and this is where Louis IX learned it (possibly from Baldwin II). In other words, this is another trace of the translation of the relics of the Crown of Thorns understood by Louis IX as the *translatio* or at least the *imitatio Imperii*. It seems quite understandable: as a result of the three translations of 1239–1242 Constantinople became completely deprived of its most precious relics, especially the Passion ones, in favour of Paris. The comparison of Louis IX to emperor Heraclius made by Matthew Paris, despite being based on different premises, namely, the kenotic attitude of the king bringing the relics to his town (this is suggested by a similar parallel made by Matthew also with respect to Henry III and the translation of the Holy Blood to Westminster) is paradoxically highly justified from the historical perspective. Like Heraclius, who moved most of the relics (but not the Crown of Thorns) from Jerusalem to Constantinople, his own capital, now Louis IX deprived Constantinople of the Christ relics. Consequently, Constantinople's function of the second sacral capital of Christianity, along with Rome, was transferred to Paris. We learn from the account of the archbishop of Sens, Gautier Cornut, that at that time the Crown of Thorns and the Holy Cross were believed to be the true attributes of the Empire. Cornut, who called the Crown the *Imperii*

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44 CHRISTE, *Un autoportrait moral et politique de Louis IX: les vitraux de sa chapelle*, pp. 251–266; a very instructive presentation of the iconographic material on pp. 267–290. JORDAN, *Visualizing Kingship in the Windows of the Sainte-Chapelle*, pp. 57–69.

45 ROBERT DE CLARI, *Li estoires*, pp. 65–66; ROBERT DE CLARI, *La conquête de Constantinople*, cap. LXXXII–LXXXIII, pp. 170–174.

*titulus et gloria specialis*, and many others shared this belief. Let us mention here John of Viktring, according to whom Adolf of Nassau, the king of Germany and a pretender to the imperial crown, demanded Philip the Fair to return to him the relics and other imperial prerogatives, illegally usurped, in his opinion, by the Capetians. The notion of the *titulus Imperii* was used referring to the Crown of Thorns also by Giovanni Colonna in the mid-fourteenth century. An anonymous French chronicler active at the beginning of the reign of Philip the Fair, when writing about the translation of the Crown of Thorns expressed a view that the king of France was the head of all Christian rulers. He did not use the term 'emperor' or 'empire' but the function of the head of the Christendom is assigned to the emperor. Finally, in a sermon for the Feast of Saint Louis, written in the first years after his canonization, i.e. at the turn of the thirteenth and fourteenth century, the saint is called the new Constantine in the account of the translations of the Passion relics. Gerard of Saint-Quentin, who in his treatise on the translations of the relics to Paris called Louis IX *our David* also introduces the imperial connotations: he stresses that the king brought the Triumphal Cross of the Roman emperors (formerly a palladium of the emperors and the Empire) to France, and now its presence in Paris allows the Capetians and France to enjoy the same graces of God.

The issue of the translation of Jerusalem, as well as of the Holy Land and the Chosen People, to Paris and Gaul, is more obvious and evident than the imperial one, being well-visible in both the narrative and liturgical sources, so it is not necessary to sum it up in detail here. However, it should be stressed that it also repeats the Byzantine imperial ideology which originated in the times when Jerusalem was translated to Constantinople during Heraclius's reign. Yet, it developed separately in the theology and political ideology of the Frankish monarchy and its origins should rather be rightly traced the Carolingian age. It would, however, be unfounded to seek intentional references to the Carolingians in the thirteenth century renaissance of this idea in the Capetian monarchy. It rather seems that this was a permanent element of the royal ideology known also from the other Western European kingdoms and drawing from the shared Carolingian heritage. The comparison of the translation of the relics to the introduction of the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem by David or in particular the Passion relics to Christ's entry to Jerusalem is a topos of medieval hagiography and its use in the narrative about the translation of the Passion relics to Paris is an obvious rather than a special feature. It seems that it was rather the translations, determined by the prestige and origins of the relics brought to Paris by Louis IX, that gave the old scheme a new meaning, allowing to fill it with above-standard ideological content sanctifying the Capetian monarchy. This was reflected in the rituals and liturgical offices surrounding the

cult of the Crown of Thorns and in the architectural and artistic setting of the cult.

## 5. The Capetian Monarchy and the Cult of Relics until the Thirteenth Century

The evolution of the royal cult of relics during the Capetian times can be divided into several stages. From the late tenth century until the end of the reign of Robert the Pious, i.e. before the taking of the royal power by the Capetians and immediately afterwards we observe an attempt at imitating the Carolingian veneration of relics and saints. In fact, it was an imitation of a model elaborated by the territorial princes in the tenth century or of the Ottonian model. Both these models derived their inspiration to lesser or greater extent from the Carolingian heritage. Although the Saxon dynasty consistently tried to refer to the Carolingian paradigm, the unique ideas appearing in the Ottonian cult of relics should not be overlooked. The first Capetians did not have a direct Carolingian model to imitate because the activity of the last Carolingians in this respect must have been rather scant: we have no information that the Carolingians ruling in the second half of the tenth century performed any spectacular acts connected with the cult of relics except for the translation of Saint Theodoric in Reims in 976, where the elevation of the body from the grave was personally performed by king Lothair, persuaded to do this by archbishop Adalberon: no one else could raise the remains of the saint for, as Adalberon explained to the king, the body was deposited there by Dagobert and only another king could lift it from the grave.<sup>46</sup> A contemporary historian from Reims, Richer, does not mention this information although he pays a considerable amount of attention to the redevelopment of the cathedral by archbishop Adalberon (the translation of Saint Theodoric was one of its results) and his care of the relics of the saints collected in the cathedral.<sup>47</sup> Thus, the translation of Saint Theodoric did not make a similar impression on the contemporaries as the translation of Saint Germanus in Auxerre or the other ones performed by Charles the Bald. One may rather suppose that the translation was inspired by Adalberon, one of the last representatives of the declining Carolingian world and its forms of political culture. However, as Geoffrey Koziol aptly suggests, the ceremony was recorded and remembered by Hugh Capet, who probably wanted to repeat the act of king Lothair and outdo him. He had such opportunity a few years later, when he managed to regain the bodies

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46 *DE ELEVATIONE CORPORIS S. THEODERICI*, pp. 82–84.

47 RICHER, *Histoire de France*, cap. 22–23, vol. II, pp. 28, 30.

of the patrons of the Abbeys of Saint-Riquier and Saint-Valéry. If Koziol is right, the translation of the relics of Saint Walaric and Richarius may be interpreted as the founding act of the Capetian dynasty not only at the level of the hagiographic narrative *a posteriori* but also as an actual fact, the conscious appropriation of the royal prerogatives. This seems especially true given that after the translations Hugh reformed both monasteries, thus doing more than the king, consciously following the examples of contemporary German and English monarchs. The chroniclers and hagiographers from the eleventh and the turn of the eleventh and twelfth century justify the replacement of the Carolingians by the new dynasty by the lack of care of the former for the Church. The best example is, of course, the vision and prophecy of Saint Walaric and Richarius, but in the *Auctarium Maglorianum* also the Robertian king of the Franks fulfills the royal duties, taking care of the relics of the saints; the Carolingian king is in fact absent. Of course there was a reason for writing these two texts and it was to legitimate the new dynasty and this is the role of the stories about returning the bodies of Saint Walaric and Richarius to their rightful place and about taking care of the relics of Saint Magloire. However, the fact that in Richer's chronicle we find no mention of royal activity towards the relics comparable to that shown by Charles the Bald – especially with respect to Reims, an emblematic city of the Frankish monarchy according to the Carolingian tradition, and probably the most important point of support for the actual royal power of the latter Carolingian, is significant and disturbing. Let us refer again to the later sources and recall the twelfth century chronicles of the Abingdon Abbey or those written by William of Malmesbury, in which we read about the magnificent gifts, including relics, sent to the king of Wessex by Hugh the Great. Even though Louis IV d'Outremer was a son of an English princess, the last Carolingians were not registered in this way in the historical memory of the Kingdom of England.

Among the first generations of the Capetians, until the twelfth century, the figure of Robert the Pious shines brightest among those who dealt in different ways with the cult of the saints and the relics of the kings of France. His activity with respect to the relics of the saints and involvement in their cult can only be compared to the analogous actions of Charles the Bald, even though the former did not imitate all the rituals shared by the latter. For example, we do not know whether Robert II personally elevated the bodies of the saints from their graves but we know that he carried them on his own shoulders during at least two translations: in Sens and in Orléans. The attempt at creating a sacral centre of the kingdom in Orléans is noteworthy: the king announced that Saint Aignan was the patron saint of the Kingdom and the relics of the Holy Cross were brought from Constantinople to Orléans Cathedral. Another aspect of king Robert's policy toward the



cult of relics is the borrowing of the ritual of making a ‘convention of the saints’, by bringing them in their reliquaries to a peace council, which was a completely new practice for the French monarchy, but, as far as we know, discontinued after Robert’s death. It is possible that, as Geoffrey Koziol says, this intensification of the monarch’s participation in the rituals and their organisation, including those connected with the cult of relics, was an element of a broader phenomenon, which was the increased interest in using the rituals to symbolically bolster the importance of the public and royal power.<sup>48</sup> The main weakness of this bold (and tempting) claim is that after the death of Robert the Pious the involvement of the Capetian monarchy in the cult of relics decreased considerably. The importance of the king of France also dwindled. It was to grow again later, in the twelfth century when Louis VI together with abbot Suger revived and raised to unprecedented heights the cult of Saint Denis, not very popular in the eleventh century. An attempt at verifying the connection between these two phenomena would be very difficult. A possible key may be the notions of the *amicitia* and *familiaritas* with which Hugh Capet (according to the account of Helgaud of Fleury) and Louis VI explained the royal engagement in the cult of the saints. Hugh is said to have advised, on his deathbed, his son to maintain the *amicitia* made with the saints mentioned by name. Louis VI believed that he shared *familiaritas* with Denis. In the society of these times both these notions meant an institutionalized and ritualized social bond which was one of the main structures maintaining order in the community.<sup>49</sup> Thus, it is possible that this bond was considered binding also by the members of the monastic or canonical communities. Perhaps some of the territorial princes can also be included in the group of the *amici* or *familia* of the same saints which strengthened, in the religious aspect, the position of the monarch-venerator of the relics and saints in the community linked by the same type of bond. We treat this suggestion as a mere hypothesis, whose verification or falsification requires an in-depth study; it is also possible that no result would be obtained.

There is no doubt that the reign of Louis VI was the key moment in the development of the Capetian cult of relics. The eleventh century and the first half of the twelfth century saw a renaissance of the Carolingian past and an increased fascination with Charlemagne. This resulted in a fundamental

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48 KOZIOL, *Begging Pardon and Favor*, pp. 109–179, on the meaning of the rituals connected with the relics on pp. 113–115, 125–128, also: 164–171.

49 On *amicitia* as an institutionalized social bond in France at the turn of the millennia see KOZIOL, *Begging Pardon and Favor*, pp. 255–261, 282–287.

reconstruction of the historical memory,<sup>50</sup> manifested in the creation and dissemination of epic and hagiographical narratives introducing completely new topics into Charlemagne's history.<sup>51</sup> Soon, due to the dialogue of hagiography and epic poetry (*chansons de geste*) and the introduction of these topics into chronicle writing, they became part of the common code of historical identity and knowledge of Charlemagne, construing his legendary history focused on his expedition to Spain. In this case, one may talk of an actual reconstruction of the knowledge of the past, as a fictitious narrative was created on the basis of the actual events, as well as of entirely fictitious stories, such as Charlemagne's alleged expedition to the Holy Land, the visit in Constantinople, or his translations of the Passion relics from Jerusalem or Constantinople to the Kingdom of the Franks and its ancient abbeys. Such narratives were usually created in the great old royal abbeys somewhat neglected in the eleventh century and keen to stress their Carolingian origins and high rank.

As an example of this 'renaissance of the Carolingian memory' arranged around the cult of the Passion relics one may mention *Descriptio qualiter* compiled in Saint-Denis toward the end of the first half of the eleventh century, which gained popularity also within the Capetian monarchy, during the reign of Louis VI, or perhaps a little earlier. The first purposeful references of the Capetian monarchy to the Carolingian tradition of the cult of relics appeared during the reign of Philip I: at that time the Holy Shroud was translated in Compiègne, a relic the legend of which was analogous to that of the Crown of Thorns. According to the *Descriptio* it was brought together with the Crown from Constantinople to Aachen, like the Crown, and taken by Charles the Bald from the Aachen chapel royal to be deposited in the chapel royal at the royal palace in Compiègne. This may indicate that the Capetians knew and accepted *Iter Hierosolimitanum Karoli Magni* already in around 1079, when the Compiègne translation took place. It is possible that the dynasty knew the narrative at a very early stage, i.e., when the Abbey of Saint Emmeram in Regensburg questioned the authenticity of Saint Denis's body deposited in Saint-Denis. Probably at that time, if the booklet by Haymon of Saint-Denis, the *Liber de detectione Macharii Areopagitae Dionysii sociorumque eius*, was indeed compiled on the basis of the authentic documents from 1052–1053, as its author claims, we find

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50 GEARY, *Phantoms of Remembrance. Memory and Oblivion at the End of the First Millennium*, especially pp. 150–169, the author, however, observes this phenomenon mainly before 1000.

51 REMENSNYDER, *Remembering Kings' Past. Monastic Foundation Legends in Medieval Southern France*; GABRIELE, *An Empire of Memory. The Legend of Charlemagne, the Franks, and Jerusalem before the First Crusade*.

the earliest confirmation that the relic of the Crown of Thorns was stored in the Abbey of Saint-Denis. Until the reign of Louis VI, however, there was no account showing the Capetians' interest in the Crown of Thorns; only after the 1120s do the mentions of one of the most valuable holy objects in the Kingdom begin to appear in the royal charters; in Louis VI's last will the king requested that the great jacinth he had inherited from his grandmother should be fitted in the reliquary containing the thorn of the Crown. Suger, on the other hand, says that at least from the late eleventh century, the annual *ostensio* of the Passion relics in Saint-Denis enjoyed a huge popularity among the faithful and drew large crowds of pilgrims. The crowds were all the more greater due to the fact that the *ostensio* was accompanied by the Abbey fair, called Lendit, but, what is very important, the name of the fair came from the name of the *ostensio* according to the account from *Descriptio qualiter* called *Indictum* – indication (of the relics) used in the times of Charlemagne.

In 1109 or, more probably, in 1120, Paris Cathedral was given the relic of the Holy Cross.<sup>52</sup> No record has been preserved to prove that the king had anything to do with that translation: the relic was sent to the Parisian canons at their request by Anselm, the cantor of the basilica of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem, a former pupil of the cathedral school in Paris. Indeed, he did it at the request of a man very close to the monarchy, chancellor Étienne de Garlande, who was also an archdeacon of Paris Cathedral, the dean of the Chapter of Saint-Aignan in Orléans and of the Orléans cathedral, and who was soon to become the seneschal, the highest official in the Kingdom, which clearly indicates that the translation was inspired by the court milieu. Still, we do not know anything of Louis VI's participation in that event. We know, however, of the great ambitions of the Garlande family to play a leading role in the political and ecclesiastical life of the Kingdom.<sup>53</sup> That is why the translation of the relic may have served as one of the instruments of increasing the family's standing. Certainly, until 1145–1146 at the latest (that is, already during the reign of Louis VII), the cathedral relic of the Holy Cross was used for the blessing at the opening of the royal Parisian fair, thus imitating the Lendit. The abbot of Saint-Denis used to begin the latter fair by blessing the faithful with the relics of the Crown of Thorns and the Holy Nail. Éric Bournazel believes that this tradition may have gone

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52 On the translation and its date see BRESCH-BAUTIER, *L'envoi de la relique de la Vraie Croix à Notre-Dame de Paris*, pp. 387–397.

53 On Étienne de Garlande and the importance of the Garlande family in Louis VI's milieu see DUFOUR, *Étienne de Garlande*, pp. 39–53; BOURNAZEL, *Louis VI le Gros*, pp. 55–56, 121–123, 153–156, 184–188, 196–199, 213–217, 247–255, 271–273, 321–323, 364–366.

back to the times of Louis VI.<sup>54</sup> However, regardless of whether the ritual was first performed during the reign of Louis VI or Louis VII, it is certain that it must have happened because the king wanted to sanctify his own fair in a similar way as that of Saint-Denis. Of course, the aim of it was to draw as many pilgrims as possible, and thus potential buyers and clients of the fair, like in Saint-Denis. At the same time, however, a message was sent that the king of France had at his disposal the Passion relics not only in Saint-Denis but also in Paris, even though none of them were the king's property. It should be noted that the relic of the Cross from Paris Cathedral was the necessary supplement for the Capetian Passion relics because at that time Saint-Denis did not have the relic of the Cross, invaluable for giving it a suitably large sacral dimension fulfilling the Capetian ambitions. Thus, whether or not Louis VI used the mediation of the Garlande family to obtain this relic (nothing indicates this), and whether the blessing of the Parisian fair with the Holy Cross was first performed in the 1120s or only in 1145–1146 (where it is first confirmed in the sources), there is no doubt that the monarchy used the opportunity created by the translation of the particle of the True Cross both for economic and ideological purposes, even if the latter aspect did not enjoy a dynamic development, probably overshadowed by the cult of the Crown of Thorns and Saint Denis. The latter, owing to the joint involvement of Louis VI and abbot Suger, blossomed from the 1120s, becoming the main cult of the Capetian monarchy. Starting with a very solemn *ostensio* of the body of Saint Denis in 1124, by means of a reinterpretation and amplification of the tradition going back to the ancient Merovingian age and known also in the Carolingian era, the saint was given the rank of the main patron of the kings and the Kingdom of France, extending his protection over them especially in times of war and disease or where the life of the king was threatened. New rituals were then created, basing on the ancient tradition, during which the Capetians had a physical contact with the relics of the saint. The elevation of the relics of Saint Denis in 1124, performed by Louis VI himself (who personally placed the body back in the grave after the ostension) was the first instance, after the times of Robert the Pious, in which the king of France touched relics.

Although in the case of Saint Denis's military patronage over the king of France we can observe a decrease of the kings' active participation in ritual activities: already Louis VII when setting out on a crusade only kissed the relics of the saint slightly moved out from the *sepulchrum* and the successive kings merely visited the patron's grave before a military expedition (and we are not sure if this happened before every war): the Capetians' physical

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54 BOURNAZEL, *Louis VI le Gros*, pp. 158–159.

contact with the body of their patron did not cease. King Louis VII, at the request of the bishops present at the event, actually presided over the translation of Saint Denis's body during the re-consecration of the church in Saint-Denis in 1144, personally raising the body of the saint from the grave and carrying it on his own shoulders during the consecration procession around the whole abbey. As the war ritual devolved (even though in 1191 the body of Saint Denis was displayed on the altar for public veneration for the sake of Philip Augustus staying in the Holy Land, the kings did not, at least until the end of the thirteenth century, personally raise the saint's body to the altar) new ones were developing. Although Louis VI, feeling mortally ill, went to Saint-Denis hoping that his patron's intercession would heal him (the king did, indeed, survive), abbot Suger, the author of the account of the event, does not say that a solemn public elevation of the relic was performed. However, in 1191 and 1244 the kings were healed after such a ritual. In the healing ritual the role of the Passion relics from Saint-Denis increased: they were used to touch the ill king (or prince in 1191). Although the disease-stricken king did not have a physical contact with the body of Saint Denis, the historians from the Abbey consistently claimed that the healing was owed to it above all. The most telling proof was assumed to be the healing of Philip Augustus from the same illness simultaneously with prince Louis in 1191, when the king was not touched with the relics of the Crown of Thorns and the Holy Nail, because he was staying in the Holy Land at that time. Yet he was healed and exactly in the same hour as his son. The belief in the miraculous function of the Passion relics from Saint-Denis continued to grow. From the late twelfth and in the thirteenth century they were used also to stop the flooding of Paris. It is also possible, as it is possibly suggested by the fact that Pierre de Beauvais included (in his French-language version of *Descriptio qualiter* written around 1200) scrofula among the diseases miraculously healed during the first *Indictum* in Aachen an idea appeared that the thaumaturgical power (healing the scrofula) of the kings of France are the derivative of the translation of the Crown of Thorns and the Holy Nail. What is more, at least from ca. 1200, there is information about the royal reliquary in Saint-Denis in which the relics of the Crown of Thorns were kept. The reliquary had the shape of the Capetian coronation insignia, almost identical with the royal crown and called the Holy Crown. This is yet another one more proof of the increasing rank of the Crown of Thorns from Saint-Denis. Undoubtedly, the existence of the Holy Crown among the reliquaries and royal insignia stored in Saint-Denis confirms that at least in the late twelfth century (unless the jacinth given by Louis VI to the reliquary of the Crown of Thorns was fitted into the reliquary crown) an idea originated among the Capetians that the cult of the Passion relics of Christ, considered *ab antiquo* by the Christian theology as the insignia of

the royal dignity of Christ, allows to indicate the similarity of the Capetians kingship to the kingship of Christ.

The intensification of the Capetian cult of relics in the twelfth century, especially of Saint Denis, understood as the 'identity' cult of the French monarchy, as well as the increasing role of the cult of the Crown of Thorns, occurred at the same time as the growth of the awareness among the political and intellectual elites of France (and not only the narrowly understood court elite) of the myth of the translation of the Crown of Thorns presented in *Descriptio qualiter*. In the same century, the Capetian kings for the first time after many generations participated in the formally extended rituals of the cult of relics, touching them, performing their translations and demonstrating the relics to the faithful. This concerns not only Saint-Denis and the relics of that saint: Louis VII performed such acts also in Senlis. The participation of the kings as the co-celebrants of the liturgical activities during the rituals of the cult of relics performed by the bishops and members of monastic communities whom the ritual concerned, was interpreted as one of the natural, sacral attributes of the royal power. Two reservations should, however, be made here: this does not concern every translation. The king appears as the 'lord of the relics' in places and situations where he may be considered as such one due to some reasons. In Saint-Denis the king was predestined to perform the translation of Saint Denis's body because the saint was his personal patron linked with the king by the eternal bonds of covenant. One may say that it was this special patronage of the saint, this *familiaritas* between the Capetian kings and Saint Denis that entitled Louis VI and Louis VII to play the leading role in the rituals in honour of the martyr. During the re-consecration of the Abbey Church in Saint-Denis this view was expressed openly by the bishops. There were also other circumstances, like in 1177 in Senlis, when Louis VII was in fact the leader of the cult of the saints whose relics were his own property as well as the church where they were kept. One may thus say that for the Capetian cult of relics the reign of Louis VI was a turning point. Namely, at that time the forms of personal participation of the kings in the rituals of the cult of relics, like those performed by the Carolingians, were brought about again. On the one hand, one may speak about the (intentional?) reference to the tradition of Robert the Pious, but on the other one, the cult of relics practiced by Louis VI marked a new epoch in the evolution of the ritual Capetian policy toward the relics. The way in which the royal piety toward the relics, shaped during the reign of that ruler, became a model valid for more than one century, invariable in its basic principles, like the oriflamma or the cult of the Passion relics in Saint-Denis. The new shape and content of the cult of relics were to be developed by the Capetian monarchy only in the light of such

special events as the translation of the Crown of Thorns or of the collection of the imperial relics from Constantinople by Saint Louis.

Saint Louis intentionally connected the translation of the Crown of Thorns from Constantinople in 1239 with the pseudo-Carolingian tradition. This allowed him to create his own image as a true heir and imitator of Charlemagne and to liberate the royal cult of relics from the so far preponderant influence of the Abbey of Saint-Denis.

In all the cases of translations of relics, separated by time and often also by space, described or only briefly mentioned, the main part is played by the expressive visualization of the ideological content accompanying the translation, expressed by broadly understood gestures performed by the ecclesiastical or lay celebrants of the ceremony. I tried to highlight this body language above, but it is also necessary to present a concise synthesis. The role of gesture in the communication culture of the medieval society is a well known phenomenon extensively described in scholarship.<sup>55</sup> It is obvious that the gesture, designed by nature to illustrate a certain ideological content, was particularly important when made by a ruler or a high rank priest, especially during a religious rite which gathered tens, hundreds, or even thousands of participants from various social strata: from the members of the clergy – bishops, prelates, canons, monks and diocesan priests, to the wide gamut of the representatives of the secular state – aristocrats, barons, knights, and various urban and rural social groups. The gesture illustrating the meaning of the ceremony of translation of a relic was easier to understand for the secular recipients, often not aware of the liturgy and its exegesis. The gestures of the main celebrant and the other members of the clergy as well as the liturgical behaviors assigned to the secular faithful allowed to show the simple people participating in the translation the mystical meaning of the rite and its respective stages. The study of the *ordo* from Saint-Amand and the accounts of all the translations discussed above also shows that the language of gestures, formalized, or on the contrary, departing from the ritual like in the case of the monarch's exceptional kenosis or of the overtaking the monarch of an important part in the ritual, were directed both to the faithful and to God or the saints. The content of the message visualized with the gestures and behaviors of the celebrant or by the course of the rite of translation designed by the monarch used to differ: it could be restricted to the religious meaning of the rite, as it was designed in the *ordo* from Saint-Amand or carry a plethora of political meanings of local or state-wide scale. The political meanings of the cult of

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55 See SCHMITT, *La Raison des gestes*, with a discussion of the literature and of this subject.

relics are rich in the Byzantine, Carolingian, Ottonian, as well as<sup>56</sup> Capetian rites connected with it.

Even though they may have seemed typical, the three translations of 1239, 1241, and 1242 created a new quality in the sacral policy of Louis IX and the political theology of his reign.

Louis IX took part in an unprecedented number of translations of relics (at least thirteen).<sup>57</sup> Of course, the king did not participate in all the translations of relics carried out during his reign<sup>58</sup>). In this context the view of Louis IX himself on the role played by the saints in the world, written down in the canonisation questionnaire of the king and in the *Life of Saint Louis* compiled by Guillaume de Saint-Pathus is very interesting. The king expressed this thought in his lifetime to Jean de Joinville who repeated his words to the interviewers. Namely, Louis IX claimed that the saints played with respect to God the same part as the kings advisors in court: when someone wished the ruler to look at his case, they first tried to reach the monarch's trusted advisors. The pleas were submitted to them, so that they could repeat them to the monarch. The case of the saints was similar: they were the trusted companions (*privez, familiers*) of God and their intermediation was necessary if one wanted to ask God for something, because they

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56 One should also note the question posed by Roman Michalowski in his paper: MICHAŁOWSKI, *Depozycja ciała św. Wojciecha w roku 1000*, passim and p. 56, about the possible political re-interpretation of Otto III's gesture during the Gniezno Summit in 1000. The researcher, having conducted a comparative analysis, wondered whether it was possible to interpret the personal deposition of the relics of Saint Adalbert by Otto as a gesture stressing the emperor's power at the area of the Piast state. This interpretation does not contradict the other Otto III's gestures clearly rooted in the sovereign imperial power such as giving Boleslaw the Great the right to grant the investiture to Polish bishops.

57 It is worth noting that the reigns of Louis VIII and Louis IX which lasted almost half a century (1223–1270) were unique in the exceptional number of translations performed in France; see CAROLUS-BARRÉ, *Saint Louis et la translation des corps saints*, pp. 1087–1112. An (incomplete) list of the 17 translations performed in 1225–1263 (at which Louis IX may not have been present) is given by HERRMANN-MASCARD, *Les reliques des saints. Formation coutumière d'un droit*, p. 183.

58 Such a case, quite surprisingly, as it concerns Paris, so the royal capital city, was the translation of Saint Geneviève in Sainte-Geneviève Abbey in 1242. The author of the account of the event, probably JACQUES DE DINANT (*Tractatus de translatione beatae Genovefae*, pp. 139–142), says that at the abbot's will, the translation was conducted in secret, at night, after the Lauds (JACOBUS DE DINANT, *Tractatus de translatione beatae Genovefae*, p. 141).



could address God directly and God was bound to listen to them.<sup>59</sup> This view is a striking evidence of the belief that the Kingdom of France was a worldly image of the Kingdom of Heaven and illustrates the way in which the king understood the doctrine of the saints' intercession. By venerating the saints and their relics Louis IX acted as a subject in his own kingdom. In this kingdom, however, he was the image of God on Earth for his subjects. We can also see here an example of a linguistic code, which survived in the Capetian dynasty for almost three centuries, determining the understanding of the social role of the saints, submitted to functional variantization. We mean the word *familiaris /familier*. Let us recall that Helgaud of Fleury when describing the last moments of Hugh Capet wrote that the king asked his son and successor to venerate the following saints: the Virgin Mary, Benedict, Martin, Aignan, Cornelius, Cyprian, Denis, and Geneviève. According to Hugh (or Helgaud of Fleury) the dynasty and these saints were bound by the *amicitia*: friendship, which we should understand in the meaning of these times: a personal, but institutionalized and hierarchical, social bond. Certainly, the notion of *amicitia* in the accounts of Jean de Joinville and Guillaume de Saint-Pathus is equivalent to the *privez de Nostre Seigneur*: the personal friends of God, the companions he listens to. The kings of France were in turn connected by the *familiaritas* with the saints, as it is evidenced by the charter of Louis VI issued for Saint-Denis in 1124 in which the king wrote that he created such bond with Saint Denis during his childhood spent in the Abbey of Saint-Denis. Certainly, the parties in this bond are unequal: the king is under the saint's protection, his client, both in terms of the *amicitia* mentioned by Hugh or the *patronatus* evidenced in the Merovingian and Carolingian times and filled with a new meaning from the twelfth century, i.e. the times of Louis VI and Suger. Likewise, toward the end of the thirteenth century, a friend of Louis IX and the author of his Life described the way in which the king understood the cult of the saints. Unfortunately, there is no similar explicit account by a person from the nearest milieu of Louis IX which would state how the king interpreted the monarch's cult of the relics of the Lord. We may only make an analogy to the cult practice of Louis IX toward the Passion relics and guess that the king understood the cult as creating the personal bond with

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59 "Il est ensi, par similitude des sainz de paradis com il est des conseillers des rois... Car qui a a fere devant un roi terrien, il demande qui est bien de lui et qui le puet prier seurement et le quel li rois doit oïr, et lors, quant il set li quex ce est, il va a lui et le prie que il prit pour lui envers le roi. Ausi est il des sainz de paradis qui sont privez de Nostre Seigneur et ses familiers et le pueent seurement prier, car il les oït;" GUILLAUME DE SAINT-PATHUS, *Vie de Saint Louis* (DELABORDE), p. 73.

the Saviour by whom he was anointed and whose living image on Earth he was himself, without the intermediation of the saints.

It seems that we may venture a claim that Louis IX returned to the model of the demonstrative veneration of the relics observed in the case of Louis VII: highly involved and active participation in the ritual in which the ruler played the main role, gradually taking over the leading part. During almost half a century after Louis VII's death this model was replaced by another type of royal religious activity. Philip Augustus certainly still attached a great importance to the cult of relics and saints, but, unlike his father he never became an organiser of the cult nor conducted the liturgy. Rather quickly after gaining independence as a king, Louis IX not only brought back the royal incentive in the field of the cult of relics (when he brought to France the Crown of Thorns in 1239 he was merely 25 years old) but also succeeded in persuading the Church of France to acknowledge the actual sovereignty of the monarchy over the cult of relics, stemming from the nature and essence of the position of the king, both in the centre of the royal power and at the level of the local ecclesiastical milieu.

Finally, one should stress the uniqueness of the Capetians and their model of the royal cult of relics against the background of the medieval European monarchies. This exceptionality does not consist in the specific forms of the rituals connected with the relics performed by the kings or with their participation. In the period following the fall of the Carolingian world both the emperors and the kings of England took part in translations and solemn elevations of the relics, for which we have given a sufficient number of examples. Among the emperors, Henry III, Frederick I, or Frederick II were especially active, which may seem surprising in the light of the general opinion about the latter. Similar ritual cult acts were performed by the Plantagenets, especially Henry II and Henry III. These monarchs, especially the emperors, also performed solemn demonstrations of the relics (*ostensiones*) similar to those of Saint Louis. However, neither the Western Empire nor the English monarchy managed to develop and impose on their Churches the sacral authority of the king as the 'lord of the relics.'

This was probably due to the accidental character of the imperial and Plantagenets' cult of relics. The Hohenstaufen Empire lacked consistency in the 'relic policy' of the monarchy. Despite the attempt at creating in Aachen a centre of the imperial cult of relics of the holy ruler, who was none other than Charlemagne, there was not enough consistency and a fixed point of reference was missing. The rituals undertaken by Frederick Barbarossa and Frederick II seem to have been reactions to the challenges of the current politics; the acts of the cult of relics were used as some kind of religious manifestation, important rather for the *Realpolitik* understood as playing on various instruments of the symbolism of power, aimed at achieving

an expected political effect, than an intentional creation and perpetuation of the conviction among the contemporaries of the sacral attributes of the monarchy. In the circumstances where such a manifestation like the translation of Charlemagne's relics performed by Frederick II in 1215 would not meet the current political need of the monarchy, such as the struggle with the Gregorian papacy in the case of canonization of Charlemagne by Barbarossa or giving a higher standing to a young monarch gaining the throne during a civil war, such actions were simply not taken. Moreover, the emperors often failed to participate in such events even when their symbolic value may have been politically useful for them. More specifically, how should we interpret the absence of Frederick I at the translation of the relics of the Magi, in which only the archbishop of Cologne was involved? In 1200, Otto IV saw the importance of this cult for his position in the Empire and crowned their skulls. However, a year later, when the relics of the Saint Cunigunde were translated, he attended the ritual together with his empress, but did not play any liturgical part. The young emperor Henry VI behaved similarly during the translation of Saint Otto of Bamberg in 1189. The emperors and German kings treated their attendance at such ceremonies as a duty, it was their obvious task, but they did not use it as an opportunity to pose as 'lords of the relics'. It seems that Frederick I Barbarossa or Frederick II participated in Charlemagne's sanctity rituals rather because they recognized the fact that Charlemagne was an emperor than that because they were emperors themselves.<sup>60</sup> The case of the Plantagenets was seemingly similar: this has been clearly showed by Nicholas Vincent in his analysis of the translation of the Blood of the Lord to Westminster.<sup>61</sup> Neither of these dynasties followed the example of the model, as Jürgen Petersohn established, translation of Saint Denis of 1144, despite the evident analogy of the forms of the cult and ostentation of the monarch's leading role during Charlemagne's translation in Aachen and Edward the Confessor's in Westminster.<sup>62</sup> The Capetians also performed cult acts with the use of relics which were determined by the politics, one example of which is the elevation to the altars of the body of Saint Denis in 1124 when France was facing the invasion of the Empire. However, as it is proven by the course of the consecration of the new Abbey Church in Saint-Denis twenty years later, or by the annual ritual of the Crown of Thorns repeated by Louis IX, when they did not serve any particular political need,

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60 PETERSOHN, *Kaisertum und Kultakt in der Stauferzeit*, pp. 101–146.

61 VINCENT, *The Holy Blood. King Henry III and the Westminster Blood Relic*.

62 PETERSOHN, *Saint-Denis – Westminster – Aachen. Die Karls-Translatio von 1165 und ihre Vorbilder*, pp. 420–454.

the relics and the rituals connected with them performed by the king were considered by the Capetians not as an instrument but as a value in itself. The aim was not to achieve a temporary advantage by taking part in a cult act justified by the already existing belief about the natural and obvious sacral prerogatives of the king, but just as importantly, by the active and consistent creation of the image of the royal power and repeated affirmation of its validity.

## SUMMARY

In 1239, king Louis IX of France performed the translation of the Crown of Thorns, then in 1241–1242 of the relics of the Holy Cross and many other precious Passion relics to Paris. All these relics came from the imperial treasury in Constantinople. The translation celebrations became a splendid religious festivity showing sacral foundations of Saint Louis' authority and of the Capetian royalty. The Passion relics were in fact *ab antiquo* interpreted by Christians as the insignia of royal dignity of Christ. Therefore, their possession by an earthly king could be considered as an act of special grace bestowed by God upon the sovereign and his realm. The king being, like Christ, the anointed of God, showed his subjects a veritable divine origin of the royalty and his own likeness to Christ through acts of adoration of the relics of Christ's royal dignity. The leading role of the king in liturgical rituals performed in public has been justified by the meaning of liturgical and narrative texts relative to the translation and its anniversary feasts, explaining it and commenting on it. This meaning was also emphatically confirmed and fixed in the works of contemporary chroniclers and artists.

The Crown of Thorns, however, has not always been one of the most important Passion relics. During the first millennium, we seldom encounter any mention of it, except in the Gospel or very few Christian authors. The first known author to mention the Crown of Thorns is Paulinus of Nola, while recounting his own pilgrimage to the Holy Land, ca. 400. The next mention comes from the anonymous pilgrim's account of ca. 570, according to which the Crown was placed in Saint Zion Basilica in Jerusalem. In 680 the Frankish bishop Arculphus allegedly visited it, still in Jerusalem. If this was the case, it would mean that the Crown of Thorns had not been transferred by the emperor Heraclius to Constantinople in 635, together with the Holy Cross and other Passion relics. From the seventh until the eleventh century, all trace of Crown of Thorns is lost, although its particles have still been circulating across the Byzantine Empire or European kingdoms: single thorns used to be embedded in staurothekes or mentioned in the collections of relics or donated as precious gifts. Nothing, however, confirms that the Crown of Thorns used to be kept at the time in the imperial palace in Constantinople among other Passion relics stored here. What seems to be particularly significant is that *De ceremoniis aulae Byzantinae* attributed to emperor Constantine VII Porphyrogenetos (913–959) listing Christ's relics owned by the emperor ignore the presence of the Crown of Thorns in the Sacred Palace.

Then, at the end of the first half of the eleventh century, in Capetian France, in the Abbey of Saint-Denis, an apocryphal hagiographical and historical writing appeared recounting how Charlemagne allegedly set out against the Saracens who had invaded the Holy Land and how he freed Jerusalem. Then, paying a visit in Constantinople, he was given the relics of the Passion by the emperor, as a token of gratitude for saving the Eastern Christianity. The Crown of Thorns would be amongst these sacred gifts. On his return to the Frankish kingdom, Charlemagne deposited the relics in Aachen and established an annual festivity in its honour during which the relics were exhibited to the people (*Indictum*). Decades later, his grandson, Charles the Bald, having acquired the imperial crown, took the Crown of Thorns away from Aachen, where the feast had already been forgotten and move both the relics and the *Indictum* to the Abbey of Saint-Denis. Abbot Suger of Saint-Denis declares in his memoirs that at the end of the eleventh century public demonstration (*ostensio*) of these relics used to attract large crowds of pilgrims to the Abbey, and we know that since the turn of the eleventh and twelfth centuries the great fair of Saint-Denis belonging to the Abbey used to be opened with blessings administered with these very relics and bearing the name of *L'Endit*, a French version of *Indictum*.

The legend of Charlemagne's expedition to the Holy Land against the Saracens and the translation of the Crown of Thorns and the nail of the Holy Cross to Saint-Denis, which is called *Iter Hierosolimitanum Caroli Magni* or, from its first words, *Descriptio qualiter Clavum Karolus Magnus et Corona and Constantinopoli Aquisgrani detulerit qualiterque Karolus calvus haec ad Sanctum Dionysium retulerit* appeared almost simultaneously with another account relative to the imaginary history of Charlemagne – concerning the emperor's mythical expedition against the Saracens in Spain (*Pseudo-Turpin Chronicle*) – and quickly gained prestige and authority, becoming, until the late Middle Ages, the canon of knowledge on the historical past, widespread in French and universal chronicles, epic poetry, adaptations of poetic historical fiction in prose, and encyclopaedic works emerging in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Capetian kings, from the reign of Louis VI (1108–1137) used to worship the Passion relics of Saint-Denis, specially the Crown of Thorns, considering it the main – aside from the holy tomb of Saint Denis), title to glory and spiritual role of the Saint-Denis Abbey, from the twelfth century onwards reputed to be the sacred capital of the French kingdom. Thus, it may appear obvious that such universally accepted knowledge was not ignored by Saint Louis who performed a new translation of the Crown of Thorns.

Yet, translations from the years 1239–1242 were in fact a result of unforeseen and unforeseeable circumstances. The king of France could not predict the dire military and financial troubles which the Latin Eastern Empire had

to face in the thirties of the thirteenth century. They have forced the Latin Eastern emperor Baldwin II to pawn the Passion relics and urgently seek assistance in the West. But as soon as the opportunity to acquire ones the most precious relics of Christianity unexpectedly appeared, Louis IX not only took advantage of it, but also did everything he could to show himself a follower and a very true successor to Charlemagne as depicted in the apocryphal Carolingian image, carrying the signs of the Passion of Christ from the East to the West. Soon afterward Louis set out to aid Jerusalem remaining in the Saracen power also in his own days. The main theme of the book is the mutual relationship between two apparently different problems of the history of the mediaeval kingdom of France: the eleventh-century apocryphal legend of the Carolingian translation of the Crown of Thorns (*Descriptio qualiter, Iter Hierosolimitanum*) and its reception in the writings of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, and the reconstruction of the actual Capetian cult of relics. In our view, these two phenomena of Capetian spiritual and political culture were linked together and, between the eleventh and thirteenth centuries, laid the religious and ideological foundations of the Capetian monarchy.

The first part of the book deals with the analysis of the apocryphal Carolingian history of the Crown of Thorns, such as emerged in the mid-eleventh century in the Abbey of Saint-Denis; the reconstruction of its importance in the literary French culture and of the audience that this mytho-historical topic gained in Capetian France and abroad. Equally important is the attempt to find literary sources of this astonishing apocrypha which belongs to a wider cultural phenomenon of eleventh and twelfth-century Europe, which can be named „renaissance of Carolingian memory”. This „new Carolingian renaissance” results from the process of re-construction of the Carolingian past initiated by intellectual aristocratic and, especially, monastic elites of the eleventh and twelfth century. This new image of Charlemagne and Carolingian history created in this period survived as late as the late Middle Ages and was perhaps even more interesting to learned readers than his actual history.

We can find first traces of the reconstruction of the Carolingian past in the late tenth and early eleventh centuries when a new mythical history of Charlemagne first took shape in the Benedictine scriptoria. In time of the feudal struggles, disorder and crisis of the public authority as well as the perceived threat constituted by Islam, Charlemagne – as reflected in the re-constructed past – was seen as an emblem of the desired order, longed for by its authors. Similarly as somewhat earlier *Treuga Dei* and *Pax Dei*, which had become a substitute for the absent or broken bodies of public authority, the myth of Charlemagne had probably performed the same function in the sphere of ideas. Reconstructing the history or foundation of

their Abbeys by means of an alleged Carolingian translation of the relics of Christ, the monks wished to restore the right order of the world in which their monasteries would regain their honourable place and due status in the kingdom. Also, writing and singing about Charlemagne's victories over the Saracens, they affirmed the need for an expedition against the Saracens in their own days.

The monastic hagiographical legends created in abbeys of Reichenau, Charroux, Saint-Denis or Compiègne were aimed at designing an ideal image of the royalty, the ideal king royalty, the ideal king venerating relics, especially the Passion relics, but, most of all, cared about venerable ancient monasteries and held them in high esteem. The success of these monastic legends was naturally influenced by the monasteries' respective importance to the royalty, their proximity or remoteness from the centres of power and by actual capabilities of monarchy. In the case of Saint-Denis these efforts fell on fertile ground: the Capetians, since the turn of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, after a period of ineffectivity in the last decades of the eleventh century began to consolidate their kingdom and – perhaps under the influence of the “second Carolingian Renaissance” – began to make references to the legacy of Carolingians. A particularly pivotal factor in the success of *Descriptio qualiter* was the preaching and the success of the First Crusade, whose actors and historians perceived Charlemagne as the archetypal crusader. This is why *Iter Hierosolimitanum* could become the most influential, besides the *Pseudo-Turpin Chronicle*, monastic legend relative to the revisited history of Charlemagne. To appraise the impact of *Iter Hierosolimitanum* on the elites of the Capetian monarchy, I have not limited myself to the examination of its place among other monastic pseudo Carolingian narratives – like these of Reichenau, Monte Soratte or Charroux – and its links with the *Pseudo-Turpin Chronicle*, but I have also discussed its reception in the diplomatic sources, chronicles, as well as the historical and hagiographical compilations of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries and the iconographical sources as stained glass from Saint-Denis Abbey and Chartres Cathedral. After a scrupulous analyse of all these literary and iconographic monuments, there can not be any doubt that the translations of 1239–1242 must have been seen by Saint Louis and by the authors recounting them as a deliberate imitation of Charlemagne's gesture from the *Iter Hierosolimitanum*.

However, the translations of 1239–1242 are neither an isolated nor the first example of Capetian involvement in the cult of Saints and relics. Like other Christian kings, Capetians did worship Saints and relics, consciously following the model set by devotional acts of Christian Roman or Carolingian emperors. The act of translation – a liturgical ritual transfer of the relics to a new place of veneration – resulted from the legendary finding



of the Holy Cross by the mother of Constantine the Great, Saint Helena, and the deposition of its parts in imperial basilicas in Jerusalem, Constantinople and Rome. Another model to follow was the solemn introduction of the Holy Cross to Jerusalem by the emperor Heraclius, interpreted as a repetition of the entry of the Ark of the Covenant by David or of Christ's entry into Jerusalem. Imperial gestures related to relics were willingly imitated already by the Merovingians. For Carolingian kings and emperors the veneration of saints and relics was one of the ways to a true reestablishment of the Roman Empire in the West and a way of romanisation of the Frankish church and kingdom. Consequently, an active participation of Carolingian king or emperor in translations of saints and relics gradually becomes a royal prerogative, even a duty. The most significant example is Charles the Bald, eagerly participating in translations of numerous relics as an active actor accomplishing ritual gestures which, according to liturgical books, seem to be reserved to bishops. Since the Merovingian era, Frankish kings seek to imitate Byzantine emperors as collectors of relics. The most outstanding example is Charlemagne's sacred collection in his palace chapel in Aachen, imitated by Charles the Bald in his Compiègne palace, designed (even if never accomplished) as a new Aachen and even the Constantinople of the West.

In the second part of the book it is shown how the Capetians, a new dynasty which came to power through usurpation, linked themselves to the already existing forms of worship of saints and relics, thus legitimizing their royalty. A very important aspect of the early Capetian cult of relics (eleventh century) seems to be its relative variability, even lability – both in terms of forms of worship, its objects – namely saints and relics venerated by successive kings – and the intensity of involvement of sovereigns in liturgical rituals. By examining in particular narrative and hagiographical sources, as well as chronicles and royal charters, I analyzed the formal evolution of the Capetian cult of saints and relics in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. After a period of some fluctuations, even volatility, in the eleventh century – the Capetian cult of relics returns to the Carolingian model of saints' and relics' worship. This model, however, is no less revisited and re-constructed than legendary Carolingian past. Under the reign of Louis VI, in the time of abbot Suger of Saint-Denis a reconstruction of the forms and meaning of the ancient (dating from the Merovingian era and flourishing under the Carolingians, but of dwindling importance in the tenth and eleventh century) cult of Saint-Denis begins. Louis VI and Suger succeed in creating a new but allegedly historical content and custom of Saint-Denis worship which, despite some changes in the ritual, survived until the end of the Capetians and even longer. At the same time Capetian kings returned to a peculiar Carolingian practice of relics' worship (abandoned after the death

of Robert the Pious (1031), that is for almost hundred years) which was the king's personal physical contact with relics. Also in the twelfth century, we can see the growing cult of the Passion relics of the Saint-Denis Abbey, initially overshadowed by the cult of Saint-Denis – the personal patron of the king and kingdom – according to *Descriptio qualiter* brought from Constantinople by Charlemagne. It is to be noticed that the growth of the cult of the alleged Carolingian Passion relics of Saint-Denis in the twelfth century appears simultaneously with the spread of *Iter Hierosolimitanum* in France and the neighbouring kingdoms, especially in the Holy Empire, where it became book II of the *Life of Saint Charlemagne (De sanctitate Karoli Magni)*, written probably on Frederick Barbarossa's request.

No later than by 1200 and during the thirteenth century the reliquary crown appears in the treasury of the Saint-Denis Abbey, a reliquary for a thorn from the Crown of Thorns shaping the royal diadem and named the "Holy Crown". Undoubtedly, the assimilation of the earthly Capetian kingship to the royal dignity of Christ was the aim of the reliquary's founder, especially when one considers that the French royal insignia were kept there from at least 1120. It is also worth noting that shortly after 1200 Pierre de Beauvais, adapting *Descriptio qualiter* in Old French, is the first known author to attribute the miraculous curing of scrofula (performed by Capetians from no later than the turn of the eleventh and twelfth centuries) during the legendary *Indictum* in Aachen to the Passion relics brought by Charlemagne from the East. I consider Peter's account as an attempt at finding a religious background capable of legitimising the famous Capetian miracle (so far quite mistrusted or formally ignored by the ecclesiastical hierarchy). Both phenomena mentioned above seemingly confirm the existence of thin, but refined and without a doubt intentionally weaved links between religious aspects of the Saint-Denis Passion relics' worship and the political theology of the Capetian monarchy. It is on this background that I seek to reconstruct, in the third part of the book, using narrative and liturgical sources, the translation of the Crown of Thorns performed by Louis IX in 1239. I also try to recreate the spiritual, political and ideological meaning attributed to it by the king himself and his contemporaries. The purpose of this analysis is to explain both the original features of the new cult, as well as those that resulted from the continuation of the old model. My particular aim is to show that Saint Louis' translation of the Crown of Thorns was an intentionally crafted synthesis of two topics relevant to the ideological foundations of the Capetian monarchy: a legendary Carolingian translation with the religious ritual and royal practices involving relics established by the Capetians in the twelfth century.

The royalist aspect of the cult of Crown of Thorns promoted by Saint Louis, showing a clear analogy between the Capetian royalty and the

royalty of Christ seems to be of particular interest. Such topics are, more or less directly or allusively, present also in the accounts of the translation of 1239 and particularly in liturgical proses and hymns accompanying the liturgy in honour of the Crown of Thorns established by the king. The antiphon *Regis et pontificis dyadema*, present in most of the breviary offices in honour of the Crown of Thorns and sung during the feast of the Crown names Louis IX the greatest of kings, superior to all the monarchs of the ancient times because of the assimilation of the Crown of Thorns to his own royal crown: *Ludovice rex Francorum / Sub the iungent antiquorum / Regum dyademate*. The king of France, as it is sung in the *Liberális manus Dei* prose is exalted in not only by the heavenly anointing, but also by the possession of the Divine Crown, the mother of all earthly crowns given to Louis by the grace of God: *Celi gaudet unctione / Rex Francorum et corone / Dei privilegio / Hec corona primitiva / Coronarum genitiva*. This topic indirectly concerns the concept of the royal priesthood or *regale sacerdotium sive sacerdotale regimen* of Louis IX attributed to him by one of his first hagiographers, his former chaplain and confessor, Guillaume of Chartres. According to Guillaume, Louis was mostly involved in leading his subjects to Redemption (the hagiographer attributes therefore to the king a relatively archaic Carolingian model of king's ministry, in which the care for the salvation of subjects is one of the most important tasks of the Christian monarchy), which bestowed upon Louis IX held a royal priesthood or a priestly reign. Although this hagiographer's view is not expressed in connection with the translation and the cult of the Crown of Thorns, it still seems to relevantly comment on the actions of Louis IX having established feasts in honour of the royal relics of Christ reuniting his subjects. Louis actively participated in these celebrations and played a leading role in them. Moreover, the Crown of Thorns, kept in the Parisian chapel royal was a visible emblem of the royal priesthood and priestly reign of Louis, the image of Christ on Earth. I believe that Guillaume's view on the nature of the reign of Louis IX revealed by a man so close to the king only a few years after the monarch's death (Guillaume's *Life* being accomplished ca. 1276) reflects the king's own idea of royalty, or at least reflects the opinion of the court elite. It is significant that Louis himself used to perform persuasive and unambiguous symbolic gesture during the festivities of the Crown of Thorns, carrying the Crown around his Parisian palace in presence of bishops, barons and courtiers or exposing it to be worshipped by his subjects. Almost contemporary book paintings also reflect such way of thinking – in the illuminated *Life of Saint Louis* by his widow's confessor, Guillaume of Saint-Pathus, we can see the Crown of Thorns depicted as an enormous golden crown adored by Louis bearing an analogical one on his head. Such views were apparently approved by the highest authority of the

Western Church. On June 9, 1244, Pope Innocent IV issued a privilege for Sainte-Chapelle recently endowed by Louis IX raising it to the dignity of the shrine of the Passion relics. The Pope clearly states that the king of France, whose merits have so pleased God, was granted with God's greatest earthly gift: Christ crowned Louis IX with his own Crown – Crown of Thorns – and entrusted him with the dignity of its guardian.

# ABBREVIATIONS

Acta Sanctorum Acta Sanctorum, Vols. I–LXVIII, Antverpiae  
1643–1794, Bruxellis 1863–1940

BAV Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana

BEC *Bibliothèque de l'École des Chartes*

BL British Library

BN Biblioteka Narodowa

BnF Bibliothèque nationale de France

Historiae Francorum scriptores *Historiae Francorum scriptores coaetanei*, Vols. I–V, Parisii 1636–1649

KH *Kwartalnik Historyczny*

MGH *Monumenta Germaniae Historica*

MGH Scriptores in folio *Monumenta Germaniae Historica. Scriptores in folio*, Vols. I–XXXVIII, Hannoverae 1826–

MGH SS in usum scholarum *Monumenta Germaniae Historica. Scriptores rerum Germanicarum in usum scholarum separatim editi*, Vols. I–LXXV, Hannoverae 1871–

PL *Patrologiae cursus completus. Series Latina*, accurante Jean-Paul Migne, Vols. I–CCXXI, Parisii 1844–1855

PH *Przegląd Historyczny*

RHF *Recueil des Historiens des Gaules et de la France. Rerum Francicarum et Gallicarum Scriptores*, Vols. I–XIII, Paris 1738–1786, Vols. XIV–XXII, Paris 1806–1860, Vols. XXIII–XXIV, Paris 1894–1904 (re-edition Vols. I–XIX: Paris 1870–1880)

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Bari, Archivio della Basilica di San Nicola, Ms. XIII.96.  
Bruxelles, Bibliothèque Royale de Belgique, Ms. IV 472  
Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS. 16  
Cambridge, University Library MS. II.6.24  
Chantilly, Musée Condé, Ms. 804  
Charleville, Bibliothèque municipale, Ms. 275  
Chartres, Bibliothèque municipale, Ms. 226  
Châteauroux, Bibliothèque municipale, Ms. 0002  
London, British Library (MS. British Museum Old Royal Collection)  
16.E.VIII  
London, British Library, MS. Egerton 745  
Montpellier, Université de Montpellier III – Paul Valéry, Bibliothèque de la  
Faculté de Médecine, Ms. H.280  
New York, Pierpoint Morgan Library, Ms. 67  
Oxford, Bodleian Library, Coll. Gaignières, MS. 2  
Oxford, Queen's College, MS. 348  
Paris, Archives Nationales, L.619.5  
Paris, Bibliothèque Mazarine, Ms. 406  
Paris, Bibliothèque Mazarine, Ms. 422  
Paris, Bibliothèque Mazarine, Ms. 1711  
Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Arsenal, Ms. 114  
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1. An angel presenting Charlemagne to the Byzantine emperor in his dream, cathedral in Chartres, stained glass window in the choir, ca. 1210-1225; photographed by Philip Maye; source: Images of Medieval Art and Architecture, France: Chartres (Cathedral of Notre-Dame), used with Author's knowledge and consent.



2. Emperor Constantine offering relics to Charlemagne, cathedral in Chartres, stained glass window in the choir, ca. 1210-1225; photographed by Philip Maye, source: Images of Medieval Art and Architecture, France: Chartres (Cathedral of Notre-Dame), used with Author's knowledge and consent.



3. Charlemagne placing relics on an altar in Aachen, cathedral in Chartres, stained glass window in the choir, ca. 1210-1225; photographed by Philip Maye, source: Images of Medieval Art and Architecture, France: Chartres (Cathedral of Notre-Dame), used with Author's knowledge and consent.



4. Reliquary crown from the Dominican Convent in Leodium, the so-called Crown of Louis the Saint, Louvre, inv. no. OA 9445; source: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/mycottagen/3316905873/sizes/l/in/photostream/>.



5. Louis IX praying in front of the Crown of Thorns and the relics of the Passion, miniature from the Life of Saint Louis by Guillaume de Saint-Pathus, ca. 1320, BnF Ms. Français 5716, fol. 67v<sup>o</sup>.



6. Christ Crucified, wearing a royal crown, crucifix, gilded copper, enamel, Limoges, 13th c. Baltimore, Walters Art Museum, inv. no. 44.228, accessed on 8.06.2012.





7. Sainte-Chapelle, interior of the upper chapel, view of the choir, ca. 1248, and the reconstructed Grande Châsse, author's photograph.



8. Sainte-Chapelle, interior of the upper chapel, stained glass depicting the Passion, ca. 1248, author's photograph.





9. Tours, Saint-Gatien cathedral, stained glass in the ambulatory, ca. 1248; 9a. Archbishop of Sens displaying the Crown of Thorns to Louis IX. New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, Cloisters, inv. no. 137-173-3; 9b. Louis IX carrying the Crown of Thorns; New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, Cloisters, inv. no. 137-173-4, Tours, Saint-Gatien cathedral, stained glass in the ambulatory. Photographed by Grzegorz Pac.



Source gallica.bnf.fr / Bibliothèque nationale de France. Département des Manuscrits. Français 2829

10. The king participating in the ceremonial translation of relics. Miniature from *Livre des faiz Monseigneur Saint Loys jadis Roy de France*, commissioned by cardinal Charles de Bourbon, between 1476 and 1488; BnF, Ms Français 2829, fol. 82r<sup>o</sup>

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