Reframing Relics:

Visible and Material Sanctity in Monstrance Reliquaries

By

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Abstract

This dissertation examines how changing understandings of materiality and the transmission of Islamic rock crystal objects to Western Europe in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries led to the creation of a new type of Christian liturgical instrument. Unlike earlier reliquary types, monstrance reliquaries reveal the relics contained inside by setting them within rock crystal or glass windows. In previous scholarship, monstrances have often been connected to optics and theories of vision that developed in the thirteenth century. My dissertation builds on this work by considering the broader changes in understanding of natural philosophy, properties of matter, and sensory perception that also occurred in this period. Chapter One engages with the history of science to outline the intellectual context of the twelfth to thirteenth centuries, when the first monstrance reliquaries were made. I examine texts by philosophers such as al-Kindi, Roger Bacon, and Albert the Great to demonstrate that these objects were created within a system of natural philosophy that provided an explanation for the special powers of materials from around the globe, including rock crystal imported from the Eastern Mediterranean. In Chapter Two, I examine the case study of the San Marco Reliquary of the Miraculous Blood to argue that the rock crystal vessel establishes the material nature of the divine, revealing the blood relic but also taking on one of its physical qualities as the crystal appears red. Chapter Three considers a case study from the Guelph Treasure of Brunswick, in which a carved Fatimid crystal that refracts light and prevents clear sight of the relic contained within. I argue that the materiality of this vessel signals the foreign origins of the relic and participates in the creation of institutional memory, tying the object to the power and prestige of past Guelph patrons. My dissertation demonstrates that the use of monstrance reliquaries in religious ceremonies drew attention to their materiality by engaging the senses. In turn, the material nature of the rock crystal containers activated these objects for medieval viewers, building shared communal identity and providing tangible access to the divine.

For My Family

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INTRODUCTION

Around the year 1200, a new type of reliquary began to appear in Western Europe. An example from the Musée de Cluny in Paris represents the type (Figs. 0.1–0.2).[1] The reliquary takes the form of a diminutive casket, not unlike that of early reliquary caskets or the ubiquitous Limoges enamel caskets. However, the Cluny casket employs a distinctive material, rock crystal, to create the casket's body, here shaped as nonagon. The interior of the crystal has been hollowed out, allowing it to function as the receptacle of a relic (now absent). The remainder of the reliquary is made of engraved copper, which creates a simple yet sophisticated supporting framework. The ends of the rock crystal are capped on either side by nine-sided pieces of copper that feature cutouts of trefoil pointed arches. Beveled pieces of rock crystal are set into both caps, with a hinge on the right side to facilitate access to the interior. The reliquary stands on four slim zoomorphic feet and is topped by several pieces of ornamentation that are later additions, likely made in the late thirteenth or fourteenth century. These include a pitched roof of engraved copper decorated with representations of fantastic beasts and a diminutive four-sided tower set at the center of the roof, extending upwards in a pyramidal apex crowned with a miniature crucifix.

The Cluny Museum's reliquary is just one example of a type found at the Walters Museum of Art in Baltimore,[2] the Schnütgen Museum in Cologne,[3] the church of St.

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[1] Published in Hans Hahnloser and Susanne Brugger-Koch, *Corpus der Hartsteinschliffe des 12.–15. Jahrhunderts* (Berlin: Deutscher Verlag für Kunstwissenschaft, 1985), 151 and pl. 200; Elisabeth Taburet-Delahaye, *L'orfèvrerie gothique au Musée de Cluny* (Paris: Éditions de la Réunion des Musées Nationaux, 1989), 105–106.

[2] Published in Hahnloser and Brugger-Koch, *Corpus*, 142 and pl. 171.

Peter in Geseke (Germany),[4] St. Ursula in Cologne,[5] and in the treasury of Cologne cathedral.[6] While the exact dates of the creation of these objects are unknown, the scholarly consensus places their genesis around the year 1200. As a group, they are remarkable because they represent a paradigmatic shift in reliquary production, employing the semi-transparent medium of rock crystal to make fully visible relics that had previously been concealed from view. This new form of display fundamentally altered the perception of relics and the qualities of interaction between sacred remains and the spectator.

Project Overview

The dissertation is the first study in the English language dedicated to the development of monstrance reliquaries—transparent or translucent receptacles that are designed to provide visual access to their sacred contents. The term 'monstrance' has been used to convey a wide array of meanings to different groups over time. Today, it most commonly refers to reliquaries designed to hold relics of the consecrated host, especially disc-shaped reliquaries adorned with burst of sun beams that have been in widespread use since the Baroque period.[7] While the word is often used both in common speech and academic discourse to refer only to reliquaries of the consecrated host, my use

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[3] Published in Anton Legner, *Ornamenta Ecclesiae*, Vol. 3 (Köln: Schnütgen-Museum, 1985), 145 and ill. 147; Hahnloser and Brugger–Koch, *Corpus*, 142 and pl. 170.
[4] Published in Legner, *Ornamenta Ecclesiae*, Vol. 3, p. 147; Hahnloser and Brugger-Koch, *Corpus*, 142 and pl. 171.
[5] Published in Legner, *Ornamenta* Ecclesiae, Vol. 2, 344–345; Hahnloser and Brugger-Koch, *Corpus*, 145 and pl. 177.
[6] Published in Legner, *Ornamenta Ecclesiae*, Vol. 2, 83 and ill. 87; Hahnloser and Brugger-Koch, *Corpus*, 143–144 and pl. 176–179.
[7] Charles C. Kovacs III, "Monstrances," in *Eucharistic Vessels of the Middle Ages*, ed. Heidi Roehrig Kaufmann (Cambridge, MA: Busch-Reisinger Museum, 1975), 97–103.

of the term in this dissertation is more general.[8] I classify any reliquary that employs a rock crystal or glass vessel as the primary means of containing and displaying the relic as a monstrance. In using the term this way, I echo its origins, which in fact pre-date the introduction of the Feast of Corpus Christi and the official display of the consecrated host as a relic.[9] Rather, the word monstrance was created from the Latin verb *monstrare*, which means "to show," and it first appears in the written record in church inventories. A related term, ostensorium (from the Latin verb *ostendere*: to put on view, to show), is sometimes used interchangeably with monstrance.[10] In the text below, I refer to any reliquary of this type as a monstrance unless museum records and the scholarship specifically identify it as an ostensorium.

The monstrance type began to appear at a time in which the medieval worldview underwent significant changes, as theologians began to reconcile Aristotelian philosophy with the Christian idea of an omnipotent God. One of the fundamental goals of my project is to consider the materiality of the rock crystal medium, which was specially selected for use in this new reliquary type. The medium was rare in Western Europe, where it was not commonly worked by artisans before the thirteenth century, and while it could be found in Alpine regions, rock crystal was often imported to the West as vessels produced by foreign workshops.[11] The use of a rare, imported material in the making of

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[8] See, for example, Heather C. McCune Bruhn, "Late Gothic Architectural Monstrances in the Rhineland, c. 1380–1480: Objects in Context" (Ph.D. dissertation, Pennsylvania State University, 2006). McCune Bruhn uses the term *monstrance* to refer only to reliquaries of the host.
[9] Miri Rubin, *Corpus Christi* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 164–185. The feast was officially established by Urban IV in the 1264 papal bull *Transiturus de hoc mundo*.
[10] See, for example, Joseph Braun, *Die Reliquiare des christlichen Kultes und ihre Entwicklung* (Freiburg: Herder, 1940), 301–380. Braun seems to prefer "ostensorium" to "monstrance."
[11] On the sources of crystal, see Avinoam Shalem, "On Medieval Rock Crystal Sources and Resources in the Lands of Islam," in *Seeking Transparency*, ed. Cynthia Hahn and Avinoam Shalem (Berlin: Gebr. Mann Verlag, 2020), 101–115; Stéphane Pradines, "Madagascar, the

these objects, suggests a specific interest in the material itself. My dissertation contextualizes the use of monstrance reliquaries during a time in which ideas of the natural world—including optics, properties of matter, and sensory perception—were growing in sophistication. While much of this debate took place in scholastic circles and in theological writings, I am interested in how changes in conceptions of materials, sensory experience, and divinity affected devotional experience, especially as manifested in devotional objects such as the monstrance.

My approach to the study of reliquaries is anchored in the field of art history, where objects are considered primary sources that hold valuable information about the culture and time in which they were made. When the first monstrances began to appear around the year 1200, they were only the latest development of a new type of reliquary, previous iterations of which include caskets or boxes, purses, figural forms in the round, body parts, and tablets. Previous studies of reliquaries have shown that their appearance is not tied to the kinds of relics they contained, but rather to their use in liturgy. In other words, there is a direct correlation between form and function. My understanding of reliquaries follows the methodology developed by Cynthia Hahn in the book *Strange Beauty*. For Hahn reliquaries are a form of re-presentation, communicating specific messages to their audience by means of form and ornament, mediating the presence of

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Source of the Abbasid and Fatimid Rock Crystals," in *Seeking Transparency*, ed. Hahn and Shalem, 35–50. Carved rock crystal from the medieval period has long been attributed to Fatimid workshops in Cairo from the ninth to eleventh centuries, which were famous for the quality of their production. Recently, scholars have argued for a broadening understanding of other centers of production. See Marcus Pilz, "Beyond Fatimid: The Iconography of Medieval Islamic Rock Crystal Vessels and the Question of Dating," in *Seeking Transparency*, ed. Hahn and Shalem, 169–181; Assadullah Souren Melikian-Chirvani, "Fatimid Art and its Unresolved Enigmas," in *The World of the Fatimids*, ed. Assadullah Souren Melikian-Chirvani (Toronto: Aga Khan Museum, 2018), 94–106.

the relics they contain.[12] While this approach can be widely applied to reliquaries of different types and different periods, the meanings of individual objects can be quite diverse, even in cases of visual similarity. Therefore, it is important to contextualize, whenever possible, the setting in which these objects were originally made and used. In this dissertation, I examine inventory records and written accounts such as chronicles to help establish the how monstrance reliquaries were valued by the communities that owned them. I also use liturgical manuscripts to understand their functional use in ecclesiastical ceremonies.

Recent scholarship in the field of art history has also established the multisensory nature of medieval liturgy, and by extension, art objects made for the church. Éric Palazzo and Alexei Lidov have argued that the design of sacred spaces, from selection of the site and building design to decorations (including sculptures, frescoes, textiles, manuscript illuminations, and liturgical metalwork), was intended to facilitate tangible access to the sacred and the divine.[13] The experiential interaction with objects fully engaged the senses in liturgical contexts designed to activate divine presence through the smell of incense, ritual touching and/or kissing, the sound of bells, and the taste of the Eucharist. This theme has been explored in recent exhibitions such as *A Feast for the Senses* in 2016, which focused on the multisensory interactions medieval viewers had with artworks.[14] Bissera Pentcheva's recent studies of the Hagia Sophia further highlight

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[12] Cynthia Hahn, *Strange Beauty* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2012), especially 3–29. She expands the application of this methodology in Hahn, *The Reliquary Effect* (London: Reaktion Books, 2017).
[13] Éric Palazzo, *L'invention chrétienne des cinq sens dans la liturgie et l'art au Moyen Âge* (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 2014); Palazzo, "Art, Liturgy, and the Five Senses in the Early Middle Ages," *Viator* 41, no. 1 (2010): 25–56; Alexei Lidov, "Hierotopy," in *Hierotopy*, ed. Alexei Lidov (Moscow: Indrik, 2006), 32–58.
[14] Martina Bagnoli, ed. *A Feast for the Senses* (Baltimore: The Walters Art Museum, 2016).

the role of sound and light in medieval religious experience, animating ritual objects through bursts of sound or rays of light that reverberate through sacred architecture.[15] Monstrance reliquaries were just one part of the medieval liturgy, but their format and design, often including a long, knobbed stem and a foot, suggest their functional use: they were designed to be carried in procession, held aloft, and placed on an altar. Even if the precise liturgical context and use of these objects is not usually known, they were—like all medieval ritual objects—designed to appeal to the senses.

While the visual form and contextual documentation (i.e. inventory records, liturgical documents, chronicles) of monstrance reliquaries form the core evidence for my study, I also look to contemporaneous writings from leading scholastic theologians and natural philosophers such as Roger Bacon and Albert the Great to situate these objects within a changing scientific and theological worldview. The transparent quality of the rock crystal used as the container for relics in these objects has led many scholars to associate them with increasingly sophisticated optical theory in the medieval West. Advancements in optics have been understood as the impetus for shifts in medieval artistic production towards objects that emphasize light, transparency, and vision (including stained glass, Gothic architecture, and monstrance reliquaries), but the authors of medieval optical theory were also working in other fields, including theology, philosophy, and natural history.[16] My dissertation considers works of optics alongside

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[15] Bissera V. Pencheva, "The 'Crystalline Effect': Optical and Sonic Aura and the Poetics of the Resurrected Body," in *Seeking Transparency*, ed. Cynthia Hahn and Avinoam Shalem (Berlin: Gebr. Mann Verlag, 2020), 211–223; Pentcheva, *Hagia Sophia: Sound, Space, and Spirit in Byzantium* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2018); Pentcheva, "Hagia Sophia and Multisensory Aesthetics," *Gesta* 50, no. 2 (2011): 93–111.

[16] See, for example, Michael Camille, "Before the Gaze: The Internal Senses and Late Medieval Practices of Seeing," in *Visuality Before and Beyond the Renaissance*, ed. Robert S. Nelson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 197–223.

those in natural history, demonstrating shared conceptual frameworks drawn from the Islamic philosopher al-Kindi and thirteenth-century experimental knowledge. Texts such as Bacon's *De multiplicatione specierum* and Albert's *De mineralibus* portray a world in which sensory perception and the natural properties of earthly matter are not only related, but intimately connected. The possibility of visual interaction within the rock crystal container of a monstrance reliquary is mediated by the materiality of the crystal itself, which I argue facilitated the meaning generated through viewing the reliquary.

My research on monstrance reliquaries, which were only one element of larger ecclesiastical treasuries, engages with several other areas of critical theory. Recently, medieval treasuries themselves have been the subject of some debate, as scholars—such as the contributors to *Le trésor au Moyen Âge: discours, practiques, et objets*—have seen them alternatively as amassed collections of material wealth that could be liquified in times of financial crisis, as encyclopedic catalogues of natural wonders that could invoke the sacred, or as active agents in the creation of institutional identity.[17] Cultural exchange also factors into the creation of monstrance reliquaries, since rock crystal was usually imported to Europe from North Africa and Constantinople. The transmission of highly-desired luxury goods from East to West exemplifies what has been called a global style cultivated by a value of exoticism in court circles and by "portability," which extends beyond traditional geographic, cultural, and religious boundaries.[18] Finally, the study of these reliquaries must consider the notion that objects were active mediators of the divine, forging a connection between medieval viewers and the saints that could be

[17] See Philippe Cordez, *Trésor, mémoire, merveilles* (Paris: Éditions de l'École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, 2016); Lukas Burkhart et al., eds. *Le trésor au Moyen Âge: discours, practiques, et objets* (Florence: SISMEL edizioni del Galluzzo, 2010).
[18] Eva Hoffman, "Pathways of Portability: Islamic and Christian Interchange from the Tenth to the Twelfth Century," *Art History* 24, 1 (2001): 17–50.

experienced through the senses. In this context, the material itself is understood to be charged with meaning.[19] My analysis is guided by a recent turn towards materiality in the fields of medieval art history and religious studies. As David Morgan argues, religious belief is grounded in practice that often involves religious ephemera—artifacts that serve as evidence of human activities such as making, exchanging, display, and use. The physicality of these remains forms a gateway to understanding the religious beliefs of people who made and used them.[20]

One of the first major art historical studies of reliquaries is Joseph Braun's 1940 tome, *Die Reliquiare des christlichen Kultes und ihre Entwicklung*. This book offers a broad-ranging and comprehensive catalogue of materials used in reliquaries and their formal types, relying on inventory records as well as extant objects. Braun's study meticulously classifies reliquaries on the basis of visual appearance and proposes dates for the earliest instances of different types. Unlike earlier publications, which tend to focus only on objects from a singular treasury or collection,[21] Braun brought together objects from many different European countries to outline a detailed method of categorization. His categories are based on select criteria, such as visual form, date, and material. He proposes five primary groups of reliquary types with numerous subcategories in each: caskets (*kastenartige Reliquiare*), panel-shaped reliquaries (*tafelförmiger Reliquiare*), rounded or cup-shaped reliquaries (*pyxisförmiger*, *becherartiger*, *kannenförmiger*, and *hornförmiger Reliquiare*), monstrance reliquaries (*ostensoriumförmiger Reliquiare*), and figural reliquaries (*figuraler Reliquiare*). At times,

[19] Caroline Walker Bynum, *Christian Materiality* (New York: Zone Books, 2011).
[20] David Morgan, "Introduction," in *Religion and Material Culture: The Matter of Belief*, ed. David Morgan (London: Routledge, 2010), 1–7.
[21] For example, Antonio Pasini, *Il Tesoro di San Marco in Venezia* (Venice: Ferdinando Ongania, 1886).

Braun's methods of categorization are idiosyncratic. For example, he traces the development of formal types and experimental uses of material in separate sections of the study, despite the fact that reliquaries are nearly universally multi-media constructions. Braun's chronology is firmly rooted in a timeline established by written accounts, primarily inventory records. This dependency is problematic because inventory records survive intermittently, use inconsistent and insular vocabulary, and describe objects that are predominantly lost, making them difficult to verify.[22] The primacy Braun gives to written sources is reflected in later scholarship, such as Hans Hahnloser and Susanne Brugger-Koch's *Corpus der Hartsteinschliffe des 12.–15. Jahrhunderts*, which divides a group of visually cohesive tower-shaped reliquaries that feature crystal display elements into two separate groups: objects that pre- and post-date the appearance of the word monstrance in textual sources.[23]

The formalist approach that Braun brought to his study of the development of reliquaries also led to some flaws in his system of categorization and analysis. While Braun carefully tracks the existence of the major typologies of reliquaries, he does not attempt to explain the reasons for which these different reliquary types were developed (i.e. invoking divine presence through likeness, performing specific liturgical function, portability).[24] The most notable example of the problematic legacy Braun's study had in future scholarship is the reliquary type he calls "speaking reliquaries" (*redende Reliquiare*), a group of sub-categories of figural reliquaries that resemble human body parts. Braun's name for this category is based on a flawed theory; he explains that the

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[22] Joseph Salvatore Ackley, "Re-approaching the Western Medieval Church Treasury Inventory, c. 800–1250," *Journal of Art Historiography* 11 (2014): 1–37.
[23] Hahnloser and Brugger-Koch, *Corpus der Hartsteinschliffe*.
[24] A variety of different forms of reliquaries and their functions are discussed in Martina Bagnoli et al., eds. *Treasures of Heaven* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010).

"speaking reliquaries" proclaim their contents through their special visual form, which reflects the type of relics placed inside:

> Among the reliquaries which have survived, especially from the later Middle Ages, the number of "speaking reliquaries" is very large; so named because they indicate, through their special shape, the type of relics they were created to contain, or the saints from whom they came, much like the images of the so-called "speaking coats-of-arms" that suggest the names of their holders.[25]

However, as recent scholarship has overwhelmingly shown, there is little correlation between the form of a "speaking reliquary" and its contents. On the contrary, in one example cited by Cynthia Hahn, an arm-shaped reliquary was made to house a relic of Christ's burial shroud. The reliquary was used to perform ritual blessings during an Ascension Day procession, indicating, as Hahn argues, that the form of a reliquary was as likely to be determined by its liturgical function as by its contents.[26]

Despite its flaws, Braun's study became the foundation for later scholarship, which still often follows the formal categories he described. In the years following the publication of Braun's book, many scholars adopted his terminology and system of categorization, especially in museum bulletin publications and journal articles when new reliquaries were discovered, acquired, or brought to light. The value of this scholarship is that it provides modern academics with a large corpus of objects and documentary sources that can be roughly dated and located in relation to other, similar objects. Since the 1970s, contemporary scholarship has begun to build on the foundation provided by

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[25] Braun, *Die Reliquiare*, 380. "Sehr groβ ist unter den Reliquiaren, welches ich aus der Vergangenheit, zumal dem späten Mittelalter, erhalten haben, die Zahl der redenden Reliquiare, so gennant, weil sie, wie die Wappenbilder der sog. redenden Wappen den Namen des Wappeninhabers andeuten, durch ihre Sonderform auf die Art der Reliquien, zu deren Aufnahme sie geschaffen wurden, oder auf die Heiligen, von dem dieselben herrührten, hinweisen sollten." Unless otherwise specified, all translations are the work of the author.

[26] Hahn, *Strange Beauty*, 135–137.

Braun and other scholars, leading to studies that examine the reasons behind formal development, aesthetics, and the devotional functions of reliquaries.

One of the most compelling questions that has developed from this line of inquiry is the role of reliquary statues in the re-emergence of figural sculpture in the early Middle Ages. While several major studies have considered this question, including those by Ilene Forsyth, David Freedberg, Hans Belting, and Beate Fricke, the link between reliquaries, cult images, and large-scale sculptures is still debated.[27] Most scholars, however, agree that the sculptural form of these reliquaries led them to be directly associated with the evocation of the physical presence of the saint, making them popular objects of devotion. More recently, Thomas Dale goes further to argue that sensory engagement with the materiality of reliquary portraits animates the presence of the saint, bringing the image to life.[28] Body-part reliquaries are another formal type that has received much scholarly attention in recent years, especially following the publication of a special issue of *Gesta* in 1997 dedicated to the subject.[29] This special issue called for new scholarly approaches to body part reliquaries, and encouraged methods centered on questions of the power of sculpted images, likeness, and viewer response.

The study of reliquaries in the 1980s, 1990s, and early 2000s was also built around several major museum exhibitions and their accompanying catalogues. Some exhibitions have followed a traditional model, presenting the contents of a single ecclesiastical treasury or collection to modern audiences, such as exhibitions of the

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[27] Ilene Forsyth, *The Throne of Wisdom* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972); David Freedberg, *The Power of Images* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989); Hans Belting, *Likeness and Presence* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994); Beate Fricke, *Fallen Idols, Risen Saints* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2015).
[28] Thomas E.A. Dale, *Pygmalion's Power: Romanesque Sculpture, the Senses, and Religious Experience* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2019), 89–124.
[29] Caroline Walker Bynum and Paula Gerson, eds., *Gesta* 36, no. 1 (1997).

treasuries of San Marco in Venice, Basel Cathedral, and Hildesheim, all of which traveled to the Metropolitan Museum of Art.[30] The catalogues for these kinds of exhibitions tend to contextualize the treasures according to style and type, building upon earlier scholarship. Other exhibitions, however, have different goals. In 1985, Anton Legner organized a massive exhibition of medieval ecclesiastical artworks at the Schnütgen Museum in Cologne. Titled *Ornamenta Ecclesiae*, the exhibition was accompanied by a three-volume catalogue that extensively documented the objects included in the show.[31] In addition to standard catalogue entries identifying each object, the three volumes include a number of thematic essays, covering topics ranging from the practical (art-making practices and the use of objects in liturgy) to the theoretical (the role of the arts in medieval thought). In many ways, the wide scope of *Ornamenta Ecclesiae*, its thematic strands, and its focus on contextualizing medieval objects have set the standard for subsequent exhibitions. In the past two decades, museum exhibitions of relics and reliquaries have often been organized thematically, focusing on particular regions or styles rather than presenting a collection of objects from the same place, and reliquaries have frequently been incorporated into much larger exhibitions that include many different kinds of artworks.[32] Other catalogues consider serious academic questions regarding the nature of reliquaries and their place in the medieval world. In the catalogue for the 2001 exhibition *The Way to Heaven*, Henk van Os composed essays on topics

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[30]David Buckton, et al., eds., *The Treasury of San Marco* (Milan: Olivetti, 1984); Timothy Husband, ed., *The Treasury of Basel Cathedral* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2001); Peter Barnet et al., eds., *Medieval Treasures from Hildesheim* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2013).

[31] Legner, *Ornamenta Ecclesiae*, 3 vol.

[32] For example, John P. O'Neill, ed., *The Art of Medieval Spain 500–1200* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1993); O'Neill, ed., *Enamels of Limoges 1100–1350* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1996); Stefano Carboni, ed., *Venice and the Islamic World 828–1797* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2007).

ranging from veneration—historical and contemporary—to the connection between the relics and saints as activated through memory, and sight as a means of authenticating belief.[33] Similarly, the 2010 catalogue *Treasures of Heaven*, edited by Martina Bagnoli, Holger Klein, C. Griffith Mann, and James Robinson supplements the catalogue entries with essays written by leading scholars in the study of reliquaries that address issues such as technique, materiality and material symbolism, the economic market for relics in the Middle Ages, and the role of relics within the liturgical space of the church.[34] Exhibitions have also stimulated the exploration of similarities between practices of collection and display in the medieval cult of relics and modern and contemporary artistic practice. Cynthia Hahn curated a 2011 exhibition with graduate students at Hunter College titled "Objects of Devotion and Desire: Medieval Relic to Contemporary Art" that probed questions of memory, the body, materiality and viewer response evoked by works of medieval and contemporary art alike. Hahn explores this intersection further in the final chapter of her 2017 book *The Reliquary Effect*.[35] In a 2015 essay, Thomas Dale connects the contemporary artworks of Natasha Nicholson, which he calls "modernist reliquaries," both to medieval conceptions of collection and evocation of memory and to modernist artistic practices of assemblage.[36]

Ultimately, the scholarship of the past several decades, encompassing publications of academic books and articles as well as museum catalogues, has identified several questions key to the study of medieval reliquaries, including materiality, function,

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[33] Henk van Os, *The Way to Heaven* (Baarn: De Prom, 2001).
[34] Bagnoli et al., eds. *Treasures of Heaven*.
[35] Hahn, *The Reliquary Effect*, 232–283.
[36] Thomas E.A. Dale, "Natasha Nicholson's Modernist Reliquaries. Memory and Recollection," in *Natasha Nicholson. The Artist in Her Museum* (Madison, WI: Madison Museum of Contemporary Art, 2015), 62–75.

and viewer response. Addressing these questions, Cynthia Hahn proposed a complex methodology for the study of reliquaries.[37] Her approach encompasses several strands, including an intense focus on the visual, semiotic theory, the integration of textual studies, and especially the sensory interaction between viewers and objects. Hahn argues that reliquaries are a paradox that viewers must confront, since very often there is not a direct correlation between the containers and their contents. Ultimately, for Hahn the semiotic interaction between the viewer and the object, mediated by the senses, leads the believer to a contemplative interaction with the divine.

Although the literature on reliquaries has greatly expanded in recent decades, no comprehensive study of the origins of the monstrance type has appeared. When monstrance reliquaries have been considered in past scholarship, they have usually been used as supporting evidence or larger artistic and/or theological trends. Hans Belting saw the monstrance as the culmination of a trend in reliquary design that increasingly valued aesthetics, with the goal of presenting a relic within a beautiful frame.[38] Michael Camille connected monstrance reliquaries to emerging optical theory in the West, with the crystalline containers acting as mediators of relics in a mode that emphasizes transparency and luminosity.[39] For Suzannah Biernoff, the type formed as an offshoot of increasing interest in the visual experience of the Eucharist in liturgy, especially after the Acts of the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215 limited lay participation in the sacrament and confirmed the doctrine of transubstantiation.[40] Caroline Walker Bynum suggested that the monstrance developed in a late medieval culture that celebrated the fragmented body of

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[37] Hahn, *Strange Beauty*, 1–29.
[38] Belting, *Likeness*, 303.
[39] Camille, "Before the Gaze."
[40] Suzannah Biernoff, *Sight and Embodiment in the Middle Ages* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillian, 2002).

the saint. The incorruptible relics they contain(ed) both signal the pending reunion of earthly and heavenly bodies at the end of days and insist upon the efficacy of the body part standing in for the whole power of the saint.[41] In 2006, Heather C. McCune Bruhn completed a dissertation that remains the only one in English on monstrance reliquaries, but her study focuses solely on late Gothic architectural—or tower—monstrances, and specifically those made to display the consecrated host.[42] This dissertation provides a detailed context for the production and use of late reliquaries within the complex liturgy of the Feast of Corpus Christi, but its author does not explore the origins of the monstrance type in detail. In the past decade, several studies on the concept of transparency in reliquaries have been published in Germany. Building upon the work of Hans Belting, Gia Toussaint associates the appearance of transparent crystal in reliquary production with the Crusades, when Western Europeans encountered relics that were made visible in their containers in places such as Constantinople, and returned to the West with relics that were subsequently displayed as trophies. For Toussaint, the visibility of relics is tied to a proof of foreign origin, authenticity, and sanctity.[43] While Toussaint associates the display of these relics with triumphalism, Avinoam Shalem's important study the presence of Islamic materials such as Fatimid rock crystal in Western Christian treasury contexts establishes several patterns of transmission, including royal and diplomatic gift exchange, crusade, and mercantile trade. For Shalem, Islamic objects, admired in Europe for their aesthetics and craftsmanship, were sanctified through a process of conversion so that they could be appropriately incorporated into Christian

[41] Bynum, *Christian Materiality*, 131–136 and 184–185.
[42] McCune Bruhn, "Late Gothic Architectural Monstrances."
[43] Hans Belting, *The Image and its Public in the Middle Ages* (New Rochelle, NY: A.D. Caratzas, 1990), 203–221; Gia Toussaint, *Kreuz und Knochen, Reliquien zur Zeit der Kreuzzüge* (Berlin: Dietrich Reimer Verlag, 2011).

liturgical instruments.[44] In a monograph on the cathedral treasure of Essen, Anne Kurtze examines the pressing question of the transparency of crystal itself.[45] Kurtze investigates some of the same questions that drive this dissertation, both in relation to the materiality of transparent stone, and the changing understanding of vision around the year 1200.

My understanding of monstrance reliquaries relies upon this important body of foundational scholarship. Examining reliquaries as a means of representation, as Hahn suggests, encourages careful consideration of both the messages that these objects were made to communicate, and how these messages were physically coded into their material parts and visual forms. My study also builds on previous interpretations of monstrance reliquaries, which have established the clear link between theories of vision and the presentation of relics in transparent vessels. My engagement with theories of medieval materiality will demonstrate their capacity to appeal to multiple senses and offer an expanded understanding of additional meanings associated with rock crystal.

Chapter Summary

The three chapters that follow focus on three different aspects of monstrance reliquaries. The first chapter establishes the twelfth- and thirteenth-century context in which monstrances developed, while the following two focus on individual case studies. In structuring my text in this manner, I hope to demonstrate first and foremost the ways in which these objects communicated meaning through materiality. In the case studies, I turn to the more specific contexts of each example to explain the kinds of individualized messages that could be coded into medieval metalwork.

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[44] Avinoam Shalem, *Islam Christianized*, Second Edition (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1998).
[45] Anne Kurtze, *Durchsichtig oder Durchlässig, Zur Sichtbarkeit der Reliquien und Reliquiare des Essener Stiftsschatzes im Mittelalter* (Petersberg: Michael Imhof Verlag, 2017).

The first chapter outlines the intellectual context of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, specifically regarding changes in Western medieval understandings of the natural world. Previous scholarship has emphasized the importance of vision to the development of the monstrance type. In this chapter, I expand this conversation by examining the connections between optical theory and writings in natural history, both of which were part of a larger intellectual movement stemming from the arrival of vast numbers of Greek and Arabic texts in Western Europe beginning in the twelfth century. I demonstrate that both medieval optics and natural history employ the framework of a particular concept drawn from the writings of the Islamic philosopher al-Kindi. In *De radiis*, al-Kindi develops a theory of the ray, which creates a physical connection between objects and allows for the transfer of power or information from one to the other. This chapter traces the legacy of al-Kindi's concept of the ray as it appears in the works of Roger Bacon (*De multiplicatione specierum)*, and Albert the Great (*De mineralibus*).

I argue that the concept of the ray, as it appears in the writings of these thirteenth-century Christian theologians and natural philosophers, emphasizes the materiality of natural objects as a means of knowledge and access to the divine. This framework presents a new approach to objects such as early monstrance reliquaries, which often include pieces of crystal with obvious cracks or flaws, drawing attention to their physical and material nature. I seek to place these reliquaries, which represent an innovative reliquary type, in the context of a system of natural philosophy that acknowledges hidden knowledge contained within natural materials and explains the divine source of their properties. Within this setting, I contend that materiality was a primary interest in the design of these objects.

Chapter Two considers a singular early monstrance reliquary as a case study: the thirteenth-century Reliquary of the Miraculous Blood from the treasury of the Basilica of San Marco in Venice. The Reliquary of the Miraculous Blood is well-documented in historical materials such as letters, inventory records, chronicles, and liturgical manuscripts, establishing it as an object of primary importance within a larger collection of items at San Marco valued for their foreign origins. Moreover, the materials used in its construction highlight its important liturgical function during the celebration of Easter. The reliquary consists of an Islamic rock crystal flask, with the relic of blood inside, that the Venetians took in the sack of Constantinople (1204). The crystal is set in a delicate stand made of pure gold and became one of the most famous objects in the San Marco treasury. The reliquary, along with other relics, statues, and columns looted by the Crusaders, has been understood as part of a broader effort to forge a special connection between Venice and the East. I argue that within the larger context of the treasurery collection, as documented in a 1283 inventory record, the reliquary and other materials held by the basilica more broadly establish the power and influence of Venice throughout the Mediterranean region.

Unlike the Islamic crystals in other reliquaries I have examined, the San Marco vessel appears red to the eye, an illusion created by the rock crystal's mediation of the blood relic stored inside. I argue that the reliquary thus establishes the material quality of the divine in an extraordinary way, as the reliquary both reveals the relic and takes on one of its physical qualities. The materiality of the reliquary reflects its liturgical function, which I reconstruct from liturgical manuscripts, finding that the reliquary was specially used and displayed during Holy Week. I argue that the materiality of the Reliquary of the

Holy Blood reinforces the themes of incarnation, death, and resurrection emphasized in the celebration of Easter, presenting the reliquary as a simultaneous manifestation of the heavenly and earthly bodies of Christ.

The third chapter is also based on a core case study: a monstrance reliquary with the Tooth of Saint John the Baptist from the Guelph Treasure of Brunswick, now in the collection of the Art Institute of Chicago. The reliquary was made in Lower Saxony, a region known for ecclesiastical treasures that include carved rock crystal, but the metalwork framing the vessel here is unique in the way it presents the crystal within the framework of a Gothic turret monstrance, drawing attention to the materiality of the textured surface of the stone. Like the San Marco Reliquary of the Miraculous Blood, this one incorporates a carved Fatimid rock crystal vessel. While the reliquary dates to around the year 1400, I begin the chapter by tracing the roots of the tooth relic and the rock crystal bottle, which I argue were acquired by Henry the Lion in Constantinople in the late twelfth century and subsequently taken to Germany. The lineage of this relic raises the question of why it was reframed in the form of a monstrance, after having been held in the Brunswick treasury for over two centuries.

I contend that the presentation of the Fatimid vessel, which is carved in such a manner that light refracts through its surface, obscuring clear vision of the relic, marks its foreign origins and material value. By comparing the monstrance to two other roughly contemporaneous reliquaries from the Guelph Treasure that also reframe antique objects from the ecclesiastic collection, I demonstrate how the incorporation of valuable materials, both local and foreign, contributed to the creation of institutional identity. Furthermore, I contextualize the Islamic bottle and its holy tooth within the local

environment of Brunswick, which is surrounded by notable treasury collections at Halberstadt, Hildesheim, and Quedlinburg, all of which include reliquaries made of carved Fatimid crystals. Unlike the Reliquary of the Miraculous Blood in Venice, the crystals in this region were obtained though statesmanship and diplomacy rather than looting and can thus be understood to enhance the power and prestige of the institutions that owned them and the patrons that acquired them.

CHAPTER ONE

Seeing Matter: The Materiality of Early Monstrance Reliquaries

At first glance, the reliquary casket from Moûtiers-en-Tarentaise seems to represent a standard reliquary type (Figs. 1.1–1.2).[46] Created in northern France around the year 1200, the reliquary appears in the form of a casket, one of the oldest known types of reliquaries that was in constant use throughout the Middle Ages.[47] The Moûtiers casket is studded with precious stones, which cover the four sides and top of the container. The set gems are surrounded by a field of intricate filigree that both divides the surface into decorative zones and fills them in with foliate tendrils that terminate in clusters of pearls. Although the casket is rectangular in its proportions, it does include traditional features such as a beveled lid and micro-architectural columns on the four corners that allude to the appearance of a tomb. The lid of the casket is adorned with a large piece of crystal, which is secured by a gem-studded setting. This large crystal on the top the piece is almost certainly a nineteenth-century restoration, though the setting itself is original, suggesting that a stone of the same size and shape was an original inclusion.[48]

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[46] The Moûtiers-en-Tarentaise casket is published primarily in museum guides and exhibition catalogues. See Xavier Dectot et al., *Musée de Cluny: A Guide* (Paris: Éditions de la Réunion des Musées Nationaux-Grand Palais, 2015) 102; Martina Bagnoli et al., eds., *Treasures of Heaven* (London: The British Museum Press, 2010), 174–175; Henk van Os, *The Way to Heaven* (Baarn: Uitgeverij de Prom, 2000), 115–117; Marianna Barrucande et al., eds., *Trésors fatimides du Caire* (Paris: Institut du Monde Arabe, 1998), 230; Avinoam Shalem, *Islam Christianized,* Second Edition (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1998), 224; Elisabeth Taburet-Delahaye, *L'orfèvrerie gothique au Musée de Cluny (XIIIe–début XIVe siècle)* (Paris: Éditions de la Réunion des Musées Nationaux, 1989), 35–37; Xavier Barbier de Montault, "Le trésor de la cathédrale de Moutiers" in *Bulletin Monumentale* (1879): 545–62.

[47] Some of the earliest casket reliquaries were likely constructed in imitation of sarcophagi. See Bagnoli et al., eds. *Treasures of Heaven*, 32 and 38–39.

[48] In the first published study of the Moûtiers casket, Xavier Barbier de Montault remarks upon the incomplete top section of the reliquary, positing that it may have had a domed piece of

Additionally, the casket incorporates four rectangular pieces of rock crystal, one set centrally in each side of the box. The crystal used here includes carved figural decoration of animal motifs including hares and ibexes. Similarities between these motifs and decorations preserved in numerous extant rock crystal ewers suggest that these crystal plaques were carved in Fatimid Egypt in the tenth or eleventh century.[49] The continuity of the theme among the four pieces may indicate they were removed from a larger piece of crystal and cut down for inclusion in the Moûtiers casket.

Because of the inclusion of these panels, I classify the Moûtiers casket as an example of an experimental type of reliquary that began to appear in the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries, ultimately leading to the formal type called the monstrance.[50] While the form of these objects varies slightly, they each share a fundamental defining characteristic: the use of the translucent medium of rock crystal to showcase holy relics in a more visible manner than previously seen in Western medieval reliquaries. This chapter explores the intellectual context of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries within which these objects developed, specifically considering changes in the European Christian understanding of the natural world. Previous scholarship has emphasized the importance of vision to the development of the monstrance type. While vision certainly was an

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crystal. The casket is illustrated in an engraving that omits the topmost stone as well as the metalwork trim along the foot of the casket. The engraving is reproduced in Taburet-Delahaye, *L'orfèvrerie gothique*, 35. Most subsequent publications have not remarked upon these details, with the exceptions of van Os, *The Way to Heaven*, 115–117, and Bagnoli et al., eds. *Treasures of Heaven*, 174–175. Van Os suggests the crystal and trim were added as an act of restoration to increase the value of the object; it was acquired by the Musée de Cluny in 1887.

[49] On Fatimid rock crystal generally, see Jonathan Blair and Sheila Bloom, *Arts of the City Victorious* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), 101–105; Anna Contadini, *Fatimid Art at the Victoria and Albert Museum*, (London: V&A Publications, 1998), 16–38; Shalem, *Islam Christianized*, 56–62 and 147–151. For a recent reappraisal the state of research on Fatimid ewers with animal motifs, see Jens Kröger, "The State of Research on Some Rock Crystal Ewers and Related Vessels From Islamic Lands," in *Seeking Transparency*, ed. Cynthia Hahn and Avinoam Shalem (Berlin: Gebr. Mann Verlag, 2020), 13–33.

[50] For my definition of a monstrance, see the Introduction to this dissertation.

important factor for the design of monstrance reliquaries, in this chapter I show that optical theory was just one facet of a vibrant intellectual movement, which stemmed from the vast number of Greek and Arabic texts that began to be translated in Western Europe starting in the twelfth century. I demonstrate the connection between medieval optics and natural history through the Islamic philosopher al-Kindi's concept of the ray, which creates a physical connection between two objects, allowing the transfer of power or information. I argue that early monstrance reliquaries, which often include pieces of crystal with obvious cracks or flaws, draw attention to the material natures of both the stone and the relics contained within. By contextualizing these objects within a system of natural philosophy that provided an explanation for the special powers of materials around the globe, I contend that interest in materiality was a driving force behind their development.

Al-Kindi's Theory of the Ray

Around the year 1200, significant changes were under way in the intellectual circles of European Christianity, primarily stimulated by the arrival of large numbers of Greek and Arabic philosophical texts. Many of these texts entered the European Christian discourse by way of Spain, where they were translated from Arabic into Latin and then disseminated to intellectual centers such as the University of Paris. Many of these works were previously unknown to medieval Christian writers, and their rediscovery fundamentally altered the landscape of theology as scholars engaged with new ideas presented by Classical and Islamic philosophers. These included the works of al-Kindi (d. circa 866), an Islamic philosopher who lived in the Abbasid capital Baghdad in the early ninth century. Considered to be one of the fathers of Islamic philosophy, al-Kindi

composed hundreds of philosophical treatises on wide-ranging topics and oversaw the translation of many earlier works from Greek into Arabic. Al-Kindi saw God as the first cause, the ultimate source of all things, and drew upon useful conceptualizations in the Neo-Platonic principles of Plotinus's *Enneads* to present a broad theory of causation.[51]

Al-Kindi's concept of the ray is one of his most important legacies in Western medieval thought. This idea is fully developed in a treatise called *De radiis*, which significantly survives only in Latin translations.[52] The authenticity of the treatise has occasionally been questioned because the concept of the ray is not employed by al-Kindi in other works that discuss similar topics. However, as Peter Adamson argues, the concept of the ray does not conflict with al-Kindi's broad philosophical approach and has parallels with other works he composed, prompting Adamson to suggest that the work was likely written towards the end of al-Kindi's career.[53] Al-Kindi proposes the ray as the mechanism by which God's influence is transmitted throughout the universe. According to al-Kindi, the stars and other celestial bodies are the sources of radiation, acting as the proximate agent causes of things in the sublunar world on behalf of the divine.[54]

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[51] For overviews of Al-Kindi's philosophy, including his dependence upon Aristotelian and Neo-Platonic principles, see Peter Adamson and Peter E. Pormann, *The Philosophical Works of Al-Kindi* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), xxiii–xxxii; Majid Fakhry, *A History of Islamic Philosophy*, Third Edition (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), 67–95.

[52] For a critical edition of the Latin text, see Marie-Thérèse d'Alverny and Françoise Hudry, "Al-Kindi *De Radiis*," *Archives d'histoire doctrinale et littéraire du Môyen Age* 41 (1974): 139–259. The treatise has been translated into modern French, see Didier Ottaviani, *Al-Kindi De radiis* (Paris: Éditions Allia, 2003). An English translation of the first five chapters appears in Adamson and Pormann, *The Philosophical Works*, 217–234.

[53] Peter Adamson, *Al-Kindi* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 188–191. On the authenticity of the text, see also d'Alverny and Hudry, "Al-Kindi *De Radiis*," 149–167.

[54] Al-Kindi composed another treatise, *On the Proximate Agent Cause of Generation and Corruption*, that describes the stars in similar terms, although Al-Kindi does not use the framework of the ray in that text. For a translation of this work, see Adamson and Pormann, *The Philosophical Works*, 153–172.

De Radiis begins with a chapter titled "On the Origin of the Idea," which outlines al-Kindi's Aristotelian approach to science; this text is based on the idea that sensory perception and logic are the foundations of knowledge of the natural world. The second chapter, "On the Rays of the Stars," explains the mechanism of the ray in detail. Al-Kindi begins by describing the unique nature of each star and the rays they emit:

> Each star has its own proper nature and condition comprising, among other things, how it sends out rays. Just as each and every star has its own special nature which cannot in its totality be found in any other star and which includes how it releases rays, so the rays themselves are of diverse natures in different stars, just as the stars themselves are of diverse natures.[55]

Next, al-Kindi explains how the stellar rays have different effects on the earthly world that depend upon several factors, including the star's place in the heavens, the unique aspect of the star, and the angle of the rays. The rays affect all things in the sublunar world:

> Each star emanates rays to each location. Therefore, the various rays, as if fused into one, change the things contained in all the locations, as in each location the course of the rays is different, for it [the course] is determined by the overall harmony of the stars. Moreover, as it [the harmony] constantly changes with the continuous movement of the planets and other stars, it [the harmony] constantly moves the world of elements [i.e. the sublunar world] and all the things contained in it in accordance with their location into varying conditions, being actualized as demanded at that time by the harmony, even if some things of this world seem to human sense to be unchanging. That this is not the case is proved quite clearly by physical reasoning—even if this [the reasoning] has its origin in sense perception. It is therefore clear that all different locations and times produce different individual things in the world. This is achieved by the heavenly harmony through the rays sent into the world, as it [the harmony] constantly changes, and in certain cases, this is also acknowledged by sense-perception.[56]

Al-Kindi goes on to describe how the rays impact things in the sublunar world differently, because of differences in earthly material and variances in the aspects of the rays themselves. As a result of the rays, earthy material can be transformed, as for

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[55] *De Radiis* 2.1, trans. Adamson and Pormann, *The Philosophical Works*, 222.
[56] *De Radiis* 2.5, trans. Adamson and Pormann, *The Philosophical Works*, 222–223.

example seeds become wheat or barley. This transformation, al-Kindi writes, is based both upon the matter itself and the influence of rays. This system of stellar radiation accounts for the diversity of nature on Earth:

> The diversity of things visible in the world of elements at any moment in time is chiefly due to two causes: the diversity of matter and the diverse effect produced by the rays of the stars. Since the difference between these things is sometimes greater and sometimes smaller, those things produced [by them] differ more or less strongly at various locations and times. Therefore, some things exist which differ in genus, some in species, but some only in number.[57]

According to al-Kindi, things that differ greatly are a result of vast differences in material rather than the influence of rays, although there may also be a different predominant star anchoring the harmony that governs various parts of the Earth. Al-Kindi explains that there is so much diversity that no two things are exactly alike, even if the differences between them are imperceptible to human sense. The stellar rays act with such precision, al-Kindi says, that if one understood every aspect of an earthly thing, one would understand the cause of the celestial harmony through its effect. Likewise, the condition of an individual reflects the same harmony.

In the next chapter, "On the Rays of the Elements," al-Kindi extends the mechanism of the stellar ray, arguing that all things on Earth emit rays in a similar fashion. He writes:

> Well then, since the elemental world is the image of the world of the stars so that each thing contained in the former possesses the appearance of the latter, it is obvious that each thing in this world, whether substance or accident, produces rays in its own way like the stars; otherwise it [the world] would not be a complete likeness of the world of the stars.[58]

The chapter goes on to explain that these rays function in much the same way as the rays of the stars. Just as the celestial rays have effects that are idiosyncratic, so too are the

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[57] *De Radiis* 2.11, trans. Adamson and Pormann, *The Philosophical Works*, 224.
[58] *De Radiis* 3.1, trans. Adamson and Pormann, *The Philosophical Works*, 226.

effects of rays produced by objects on Earth: their efficacy varies based upon distance and angle, they can act upon objects in mixtures that can enhance or diminish their powers, and rays can affect both objects that are contiguous and distant. Together, these two chapters present the mechanism of the ray as a comprehensive device that explains most, if not all, of the many ways in which the universe functions.

In the remaining chapters of *De radiis*, al-Kindi extends his analysis of the ray to demonstrate that rays are the cause behind a variety of occult practices. In Chapter Four, "On Possibility," the philosopher discusses the question of free will versus causal determinism. Ultimately, al-Kindi contends that the system of radiation is the ultimate source of all causation. Despite the illusion of possibility in an individual's hopes, desires, or fears, all outcomes are predetermined under the influence of stellar rays. In framing his argument in this way, al-Kindi makes clear his position that God is the first cause of all things, through the proximate agent cause of the rays of the stars, which govern all secondary causes in the sublunar world. In the next chapter, "On the Things Which Bring About the Effect of Movement," al-Kindi establishes the fact that humans can use the rays that they generate to achieve some effects in the world. Chapters Six through Ten provide specific examples, including prayer, figures, talismans, sacrifice, and actions.

The latter parts of the treatise earned al-Kindi criticism in the medieval West. In manuscript copies, the text is often given the subtitle *Theorica artium magicarum*, but as Peter Adamson has argued, *De radiis* is not a sourcebook of practical magic, but rather an explanation of universal causation and the relationship between macrocosm and

microcosm.[59] The text circulated widely enough that al-Kindi was included in Giles of Rome's *Errores philosophorum*, which criticized *De radiis* for both its causal determinism and its promotion of occult practices such as sacrifice.[60] Despite these controversial claims, however, the system of rays that al-Kindi theorized was adopted by many medieval Christian writers. Though al-Kindi is not always cited by name, perhaps because of his association with the magical arts, clear parallels to his views exist in texts that discuss a variety of topics, ranging from optical theory to natural philosophy.

The Ray and *Perspectiva*

Al-Kindi's legacy in the medieval West is most often associated with the enterprise of optical theory because his concept of the ray was adopted by scholars such as Roger Bacon to explain how vision works. As David Lindberg has shown, Bacon was intimately familiar with nearly all the Greek and Islamic treatises on optics, yet he chose to include special consideration of the ray in his own writings. By 1267, Bacon completed his treatise *De multiplicatione specierum*, which used the concept of the ray as a means to explain how sensory perception was possible.[61] Bacon defines species as follows:

> A species is the first effect of an agent: for all judge that through species [all] other effects are produced. Thus the wise and the foolish disagree about many things in their knowledge of species, but they agree in this, that the agent sends forth a species into the matter of the recipient, so that, through the species first

[59] Adamson and Pormann, *The Philosophical Works*, 218.
[60] Giles of Rome, *Errores philosophorum*, trans. John O. Reidl (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1944). *Errores philosophorum* was composed around 1270, which indicates that the circulation of *De radiis* in the thirteenth century likely exceeded the five extant thirteenth-century manuscript copies catalogued in d'Alverny and Hudry. "Al-Kindi," 173–175.
[61] The exact date of the composition of *De multiplicatione specierum* is unknown, but David Lindberg has suggested it dates to the early 1260s. The treatise was sent to Pope Clement IV alongside the *Opus Maius* and *Opus Minus* in 1267 or 1268. On dating, see Lindberg, *Roger Bacon's Philosophy of Nature* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983), xxv–xxxiii.

> produced, it can bring forth out of the potentiality of the matter [of the recipient] the complete effect that it intends. And therefore, there can be no doubt that the species is the first effect.[62]

Bacon further expanded upon optical mechanics of the multiplications of species in his *Perspectiva*, which ultimately became the fifth part of his *Opus maius*.[63] This optical system is significant because it provides a reasonable scientific explanation for the way that sensory perception, and especially vision, functions. The optics presented by Bacon are also rooted in the idea that sensation creates a physical link between the object and the perceiver, enabled by the multiplication of species that bridges the space between the two. Furthermore, the species are understood as a fundamentally perfected copy of the object, so that sensation allows the perceiver to experience the full essence of an object even from afar.

This system of optics codifies and explains some of the peculiarities of practices in Western Christian devotion that developed in the same century, apparently stimulated by the possibility of physical interaction through the sense of sight. As Lindberg and Michael Camille have argued, Bacon presents a new kind of vision that employs the ray to synthesize the two leading theories of vision in previous works, intromission and extramission.[64] The result gives agency to both objects and perceivers, reframing the experience of sight, for example, into what Camille calls a tangible link. When thought of in this way, it is not surprising that scholars have quickly connected the changes in

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[62] Roger Bacon, *De multiplicatione specierum*, trans. Lindberg, in *Roger Bacon's Philosophy,* 75.
[63] David Lindberg, *Roger Bacon and the Origins of* Perspectiva *in the Middle Ages* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), lxviii–lxxxvii.
[64] Michael Camille, "Before the Gaze: The Internal Senses and Late Medieval Practices of Seeing," in *Visuality Before and Beyond the Renaissance*, ed. Robert S. Nelson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 197–223. Lindberg's understoanding of Bacon's synthesis is presented most succinctly in Lindberg, *Theories of Vision from al-Kindi to Kepler* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976), 107–116.

liturgical practice in the late twelfth and thirteenth centuries to works on optical theory such as these. The idea of vision as a tangible connection brings a new dimension to the interaction with the divine that the church was believed to facilitate, whether in the case of a consecrated host transformed into the body of Christ and displayed to the faithful, or exposing the holy remains of the saints to pilgrims.

The Ray and the Albert the Great's Natural Philosophy

While the relationship between al-Kindi's concept of the ray and optical theory has already been established in scholarship, I argue that the concept was also employed in the texts of natural philosophy composed by Albertus Magnus, or Albert the Great, around the same time. This section focuses on several of Albert's original compositions, which use a system of causation via stellar rays to explain the variable properties of things in the natural world. Albert's natural philosophy presents a new understanding of materiality, in which the properties of things are a potent source of information, effectual evidence of the universal causes behind their creation.

Albert the Great is one of the most important scholars of the thirteenth century. He was one of the first men to have access to the entire Aristotelian corpus and wrote extensively on a range of topics including metaphysics, theology, and natural philosophy.[65] Albert was famous for the breadth of his learning even in his own day, earning him the titles *Doctor universalis* and *Doctor expertus* from his contemporaries.[66]

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[65] I use the term natural philosophy here, but this division of Albert's work is sometimes called natural history or natural science.

[66] On the range of his expertise, see David Tweeten and Steven Baldner, "Introduction to Albert's Philosophical Work," in Irven Resnick, ed. *A Companion to Albert the Great* (Leiden: Brill, 2013): 165–172; James A. Weisheipl, "The Life and Works of St. Albert the Great," in James A. Weisheipl, ed. *Albertus Magnus and the Sciences* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1980): 11–51.

Unlike Robert Grosseteste and Roger Bacon, Albert was not convinced that mathematics was the foundation of knowledge of the physical world. Instead, as William Wallace argues, Albert believed that an empirical attitude is the basic requirement for natural philosophy, which leads to knowledge through the understanding of causes. For Albert, the best way to acquire this knowledge is through observation, which can in turn be confirmed through experimentation.[67] Though only a few details of Albert's early life and travels are known with certainty, he spent several years at the University of Paris in the 1240s, where he wrote a theological *Summa* and encountered the works of Aristotle. In 1248, Albert left Paris for Cologne, where he lectured as regent master on both theology and philosophy before ultimately embarking on a project to rewrite the entire Aristotelian corpus of *libri naturales*, or works of natural philosophy.[68]

For Albert, natural philosophy was a worthy topic of study because observation provided empirical knowledge about the properties of things.[69] The purpose of natural philosophy is to study the *corpus mobile*, or the body subject to change. As Benedict Ashley explains:

> The first task of such a science is to establish the basic principles by arriving at a real definition of this subject "changeable body" through an analysis of sensible experience, and then generating its most general properties. This general model of a changeable body can then be used in analyzing every kind of natural body, proceeding from the most common features and descending to the ultimate species of things with their specific properties.[70]

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[67] William A. Wallace, "The Scientific Methodology of St. Albert the Great," in Gerbert Meyer, O.P. et al., eds. *Albertus Magnus Doctor Universalis 1280/1980* (Mainz: Matthias-Grünewald, 1980): 385–407, esp. 390–393.
[68] Weisheipl, "The Life and Works," 21–33.
[69] On medieval natural history more broadly, see Karen Meier Reeds and Tomomi Kinukawa, "Medieval Natural History," in *The Cambridge History of Science Vol. II, Medieval Science* ed. David C. Lindberg and Michael H. Shank (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 569–589.
[70] Benedict M. Ashley, O.P., "St. Albert and the Nature of Natural Science," in Weisheipl, ed. *Albertus Magnus*, 81.

The study of these bodies ultimately reveals the hidden causes responsible for change.[71] However, Albert was not content to limit his study of natural philosophy to abstract or general questions. He writes:

> In investigations of nature, however, it is necessary not only to consider the changeable understood universally according to its common features, but it is necessary to get down to details so that the primary agent in each individual case may be ascertained, especially in sensible animate things, because in investigations of nature we must discover the universal principles through singulars, since in such investigations the particulars are better known than the universals. It is through the singulars that we come to believe that it is convenient and necessary for universals and their principles to exist, since it is only those universals which are exemplified in particulars that we accept, while those that are not so exemplified in particulars, we reject.[72]

Because Albert believed that the investigation of individual subjects led to a better understanding of the universal principles of the natural world, his conception of natural philosophy was comprehensive, including a series of at least nineteen texts that he lists in order in the first book of his *Physica*.[73] Albert's style of commentary on these works was paraphrase, unlike some of his contemporaries who wrote commentaries, glosses, or employed question and answer.[74]

Albert was aware that the Aristotelian corpus had not come down to him in a complete or uncorrupted state, and he addresses his own agency in his effort to fill the gaps. He writes:

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[71] For a comprehensive analysis of Albert's *Physica*, the first work in his series on natural philosophy, see David Tweeten, Steven Baldner, and Steven C. Snyder, "Albert's Physics," in Resnick, ed. *A Companion to Albert*, 173–219.
[72] Albertus Magnus, *De principiis motus processive* 1.1, trans. Ashley, "St. Albert and the Nature," 87.
[73] The whole series of works is listed in Dorothy Wyckoff, *Albertus Magnus The Book of Minerals* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967), xxvii. The list comes from Albertus Magnus, *Physica* 1.1.4.
[74] Ashley, "St. Albert and the Nature," 59 n.31.

> And we shall also add, in certain places, parts of unfinished books, and in others, books passed over or omitted, ones which Aristotle did not produce or, if perhaps he did produce them, they have not reached us.[75]

Furthermore, Albert was quite willing to correct what he perceived as errors in the works of Aristotle and makes it clear that in his paraphrases he is recounting the true practice of natural philosophy.[76] He writes:

> Intending to give a universal and unqualified determination regarding the principles of [the] mobile body, and wishing to follow Aristotle in what[ever] we suitably can, we must first treat the inquiries and responses that the ancients made concerning the principles, and then, summarizing, we shall make a determination concerning them according to our own opinion.[77]

Finally, Albert knew that some of the positions he took in his representation of Aristotelian natural philosophy might be controversial to some of his contemporaries, especially when his views might be seen as diverging from those of the ancient master. He writes:

> Perhaps some will say that we have not understood Aristotle and that on this account we have not agreed with what he said or that (from their certain knowledge) we contradict him in point of truth on some matter. To him we say that whoever believes that Aristotle was a god ought to believe he never erred; if, however, one believes him to be but a man, then without doubt he could err just as we can too.[78]

Taken as a group, these statements outline the methodology that Albert employed in his approach to natural philosophy. His study of the subject was founded on the ancient works of Aristotle, but Albert knew that this corpus was incomplete, and he sought to fill in the gaps and generally correct the claims that he found to conflict with his own

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[75] Albertus Magnus, *Physica* 1.1.1, trans. Edward A. Synan, "Introduction: Albertus Magnus and the Sciences," in Weisheipl, ed., *Albertus Magnus*, 11.
[76] Tweeten and Baldner, "Introduction to Albert's Philosophical Work," 168–172.
[77] Albertus Magnus, *Physica* 1.2.1, trans. Tweeten and Baldner, "Introduction to Albert's Philosophical Work," 169.
[78] Albertus Magnus, *Physica* 8.1.14. Translated by Synan and published in Synan, "Introduction: Albertus Magnus," 11.

experiences of observation and experimentation. In composing his texts of natural philosophy, Albert sought to teach the principles of observation that allowed for the inference of causes from their earthly effects, which in turn revealed universal principles that could be applied to the study of higher arts such as metaphysics or theology.[79]

While Albert's enterprise of natural philosophy was founded on Aristotle, his paraphrases also engage with viewpoints expressed by Arabic Peripatetic commentators. Although Albert does not cite al-Kindi's *De radiis* in his works of natural philosophy, there are clear parallels between the mechanism of the ray and the system of causation that appear in a number of his texts. In the remainder of this section, I focus on three works in particular: *De natura locorum*, *De causis proprietatum elementorum*, and *De mineralibus*. These titles are all listed near the beginning of the series on natural philosophy, and as a result each deals with the same central concept of causation. Additionally, these three texts are noteworthy because they do not correlate to surviving Aristotelian works on their subjects, meaning that Albert had to expand upon fragments or compose entirely new treatises.[80]

In these works, Albert describes a system of causation that functions through radiation and influence, a clear parallel to al-Kindi's concept of the ray. Like al-Kindi, Albert views God as the first cause, or prime mover, and the rays of the stars are the instrument of causation. Albert makes it clear that these rays of the stars are different from the elements of the natural world (earth, water, air and fire). In *De causis proprietatum elementorum*, he writes:

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[79] Ashley, "St. Albert and the Nature," 100–102.
[80] *De causis proprietatum elementorum* is based on a fragment now understood to be a pseudo-Aristotelian text likely composed by an Arabic philosopher in the tenth century. *De natura locorum* and *De mineralibus* are Albert's original compositions.

> But from those things that we said in the book *On Heaven and Earth*, it is known that there are elements of two kinds. For there is a certain first efficient cause of bodies that does not enter into their composition through substance and being, but infuses its powers into all things both simple and composite, and this is called the fifth element. It is distinct from all the others, but bears a certain similarity to an element in that it is itself the first cause to composition and is unmixed with the composite by its power.[81]

The fifth element, or *quintessence*, that Albert describes here makes up the bodies of the celestial orbs and is understood to be distinctive from the earthly elements, just as al-Kindi treats stellar rays and elemental rays separately. In *De mineralibus*, Albert reminds the reader that, through their rays, the celestial bodies influence the properties of all things in the sublunar world. He writes:

> If we wish, then, to investigate this power, which is one and the same in all these places, let us recall to mind what has been determined in the preceding books on natural science—namely, that the stars by the amount of their light, and by their positions and motions, move and regulate the world through [influencing] the material and place of everything that can be produced or destroyed. The power thus determined by the stars is poured down into the place where each individual thing is produced, in the way that has been explained in *The Nature of Places*. For this is the power that brings forth and produces the elements and everything composed of elements.[82]

In this passage, Albert describes a system of stellar radiation almost identical to the one al-Kindi lays out in the second chapter of *De radiis*. Albert also refers back to another treatise in his series on the natural philosophy, where he elaborates on several additional points that align with al-Kindi, namely the affect that the changing motion of the heavens and the angle of stellar rays have upon causation.[83] Al-Kindi sees these factors as an

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[81] Albertus Magnus, *Liber de causis proprietatum elementorum* 1.1, trans. Irven M. Resnick, *Albert the Great on the Causes of the Properties of the Elements* (Milwaukee, Marquette University Press, 2010), 20.
[82] Albertus Magnus, *De Mineralibus* 1.1.8, trans. Wyckoff, *Albertus Magnus*, 29–30.
[83] Albert's self-citation here is common throughout his works of natural philosophy, making it difficult to understand the exact chronology of their composition. James A. Weisheipl proposes that *De natura locorum*, *De causis proprietatum elementorum*, and *De mineralibus* were all written at the early stages of Albert's project, see Weisheipl, "Appendix 1: Albert's Works on

explanation for regional diversity, which Albert addresses in similar terms in his treatise *De natura locorum*, one of his original compositions. Here, Albert writes:

> If anyone wishes in particular to understand all of the nature and characteristics of particular places, in water, air, and on earth, he will know that there is no point in them that does not have a special characteristic by the power of the stars looking on the middle location of compounds. And at every point of location of plants, and animals, and rocks, the circle of the horizon varies, and in addition to the variation of the circle of the horizon the whole reflection of the sky varies in regard to the middle of habitation. For this reason the nature, properties, characteristics, activities, and kinds of those things vary which appear to be brought forth in the same perceptible place. Indeed because from twin seeds diverse properties and characteristics are attributed to animals, brutes, and men from this diverse outlook. And this is reasonable because heaven has ascertained formative powers in everything that is; however, for the most part it diffuses those powers through rays sent forth by the lights of stars; it follows, therefore, that any one shape of rays and angle may cause various powers in inferior bodies.[84]

In both of these passages, Albert presents an explanation of the causal power of stellar rays that is entirely consistent with the system described by al-Kindi in *De radiis*. The stars are seen as being made of an entirely different material from the earthly elements, and their rays are understood to influence the sublunar world. Albert also repeats the factors that al-Kindi lists as contributing to diversity of the effects of these rays, including the motion of the heavens, distance, and angle of rays.

Although Albert's works of natural philosophy appear to draw directly from *De radiis*, he does not name al-Kindi as a source for these ideas. While it is not entirely unusual for Albert to repeat ideas or information that he read elsewhere without naming the authority he draws on, he likely had good reason to withhold the name of al-Kindi.[85]

Natural Science (*libri naturales*) in Probable Chronological Order," in Weisheipl, ed. *Albertus Magnus and the Sciences*, 565–577.

[84] Albertus Magnus, *De natura locorum* 1.5, trans. Jean Paul Tilmann, O.P., *An Appraisal of the Geographical Works of Albertus Magnus and his Contributions to Geographical Thought* (Ann Arbor: Department of Geography University of Michigan, 1971), 47.

[85] For example, John M. Riddle and James A. Mulholland have argued that Albert fails to mention Albert of Saxony as one of the sources he draws upon in the lapidary section of *De*

By the 1270s, *De radiis* was increasingly criticized because of its later chapters, which insist upon a strict version of causal determinism that supersedes free will. Giles of Rome criticizes al-Kindi for his claims that full knowledge of an earthly thing leads in turn to a complete understanding of the heavenly sphere, for his suggestion that all things happen of necessity by the cause of the celestial bodies, and for his explanations of the efficacy of occult practices.[86] Likewise, the Parisian Condemnations of 1277 include several examples that explain the errors of causal determinism through stellar radiation in its list of 219 articles.[87] These include the following errors:

> 21. That nothing happens by chance, but all things occur from necessity and that all future things that will be will be of necessity, and those that will not be it will be impossible for them to be; and that upon considering all causes, [it will be seen that] nothing happens contingently. [This is an] error because by definition a concourse of causes occurs by chance, as Boethius says in his book *On Consolation [of Philosophy]*.
> 38. That God could not have made prime matter without the mediation of a celestial body.
> 106. That the immediate effective cause of all forms is an [celestial] orb.
> 161. That the effects of the stars on free will are hidden.
> 162. That our will is subject to the power of the celestial bodies.[88]

Jeremiah Hackett argues that Albert, like Roger Bacon, does not fully embrace the causal determinism espoused by al-Kindi.[89] Still, by omitting a citation of al-Kindi or *De radiis*,

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mineralibus. See Riddle and Mulholland, "Albert on Stones and Minerals," in Weisheipl, ed. *Albertus Magnus and the Sciences*, 230–234.

[86] Giles of Rome, *Errores Philosophorum*, 10.1–18, trans. Riedl, *Giles of Rome Errores Philisophorum*, 47–55.

[87] While some of these condemnations are critiques of general aspects of Aristotelean philosophy in its application in Christian theology, others appear to follow Giles of Rome's direct critique of al-Kindi. See Roland Hissette, *Enquête sur les 219 articles condamnés à Paris le 7 Mars 1277* (Louvain: Publications Universitaires, 1977), 53-55, 174-174, and 237-240.

[88] Trans. Edward Grant, *A Source Book in Medieval Science*, ed. Grant (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1974), 47–50.

[89] Jeremiah Hackett, "Necessity, Fate, and a Science of Experience in Albertus Magnus, Thomas Aquinas, and Roger Bacon," in *Man and Nature in the Middle Ages*, ed. Susan J. Ridyard and Robert G. Benson (Sewanee: University of the South Press, 1995), 113–123. Liana Saif traces what she views as a more enthusiastic embrace of the implications of al-Kindi for the occult,

Albert may have wished to distance his works of natural philosophy from critiques such as these.

Even so, there is evidence that Albert's works of natural philosophy were read alongside al-Kindi already during the Middle Ages. While most of the twenty copies of *De radiis* catalogued by Marie-Thérèse d'Alverny and François Hudry are found in astrological miscellanies, two manuscripts include the treatise copied alongside texts of Albert's natural philosophy.[90] *De radiis* appears in a fourteenth-century manuscript at the public library in Bruges after a whole series of works by Albert: *Meteora*, *De natura locorum*, *De motibus animalium*, *De principiis motus processive*, and *De iuventute et senectute*.[91] At the Bodleian Library, meanwhile, a late-fourteenth-century manuscript contains *De radiis* immediately following Albert's *De mineralibus*.[92] These manuscript witnesses demonstrate that even though Albert declined to name al-Kindi, his works of natural philosophy were understood by medieval audiences to share the principles of the system of stellar radiation outlined in *De radiis*. As a result, the enterprise of natural philosophy encourages careful observation of the natural world in order to trace the origins of elemental properties back to their celestial roots, and ultimately to God, the prime mover.

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especially in Albert's works on astrology (i.e. the *Speculum astronomiae*), see Saif, *The Arabic Influences on Early Modern Occult Philosophy* (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 70–94.

[90] For the list of manuscripts, see d'Alverny and Hudry, "Al-Kindi," 179–211.

[91] Bruges, Openbare Bibliotheek MS 486. For a brief description of the contents, see D'Alverny and Hudry, "Al-Kindi," 180–181.

[92] Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Digby 183. The manuscript also contains an excerpt of Roger Bacon's *Opus Maius* book 4, which includes a summarized version of *De multiplicatione specierum*. I have not yet been able to determine which parts of the *Opus maius* are copied here. For a brief description of the contents, see D'Alverny and Hudry, "Al-Kindi," 192–193.

Materiality

Albert's works of natural philosophy develop a complex interest in materiality that has serious implications for art historians. His series of writings served as a comprehensive primer that would prepare any reader to engage closely with the natural world and, through the practice of observation, uncover universal truths that led to a closer understanding of the divine. A foundational tenet of this natural philosophy, then, is learning to recognize and differentiate various kinds of matter. Medieval artworks, as Aden Kumler observes, are in most cases composite works that combine several or even many different kinds of materials.[93] Given this fact, Albert's natural philosophy, with its attention to matter, provides a portal to explore the materiality of the works.

The question of what exactly materiality is and what it can offer to the understanding of medieval art is still under discussion.[94] In part, this dissertation responds to Kellie Robertson's call to "emphasiz[e] the complicated ontological status of medieval objects as well as their perceiving subjects."[95] I also follow Caroline Walker Bynum, who argues that materiality privileges medieval conceptions of matter, and posits an approach that seeks to uncover the power manifested in medieval objects that call attention to their own "thingness."[96]

Albert's interest in natural materials is also important because it represents a significant shift from the concerns of his twelfth-century predecessors, such as Bernard of

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[93] Aden Kumler, "Materials, Materia, 'Materiality,'" in *A Companion to Medieval Art: Romanesque and Gothic in Northern Europe*, Second Edition, ed. Conrad Rudolph (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley Blackwell, 2019), 97.
[94] For an historiography of materiality in medieval art history, see Kumler, "Materials, Materia, 'Materiality'".
[95] Kellie Robertson, "Medieval Materialism: A Manifesto," *Exemplaria* 22, no. 2 (2010): 115.
[96] Bynum, Christian Materiality, 28–29.

Clairvaux and Abbot Suger of St.-Denis, who famously argued about the role of materialism in the church. In 1125, in a treatise known as the *Apologia ad Guillelmum Abbatem,* Bernard laid out a detailed criticism of what he saw as the excessive material adornments of church furnishings, particularly golden reliquaries and liturgical instruments. He writes:

> Eyes are fixed on relics covered with gold and purses are opened. The thoroughly beautiful image of some male or female saint is exhibited and the saint is believed to be more holy the more highly colored the image is. People rush to kiss it, they are invited to donate, and they admire the beautiful more than they venerate the sacred. Then jeweled, not crowns, but wheels are placed in the church, encircled with lights, but shining no less brightly with mounted precious stones. And instead of candlesticks we see set up what might be called trees, devised with a great amount of bronze in an extraordinary achievement of craftsmanship, and which gleam no more through their lights on top than through their gems. What do you think is being sought in all this? The compunction of penitents, or the astonishment of those who gaze at it? O vanity of vanities, but no more vain than insane! The Church is radiant in its walls and destitute in its poor. It dresses its stones in gold and it abandons its children naked. It serves the eyes of the rich at the expense of the poor. The curious find that which may delight them, but those in need do not find that which should sustain them.[97]

As Conrad Rudolph has shown, Bernard's critique was based on three primary issues: the use of artworks to attract further donations, lavish spending on artworks instead of the poor, and the danger artworks posed as a distraction from spirituality.[98] Abbot Suger, on the other hand, presents a defense of the use of costly materials in church decorations in his account of the renovations carried out at the Royal Abbey of St.-Denis in Paris under his tenure, a text known as the *Liber de rebus in administratione sua gestis* or, more simply, *De administratione*.[99] Probably composed around 1150, Suger's text responds to

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[97] Bernard of Clairvaux, *Apologia ad Guillelmum abbatem*, 28, trans. Conrad Rudolph, *The Things of Greater Importance* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1990), 11.
[98] Rudolph, *The Things of Greater Importance*, 20–124.
[99] This text, along with two others written by Suger, *Ordinatio* and *De consecratione*, was edited and translated by Erwin Panofsky (the second edition was updated and corrected by Gerda Panofsky-Soergel).

the concerns raised by Bernard even as it describes in detail how the abbot renovated existing treasures and liturgical objects as well as commissioned new ones, using the finest materials that were available to him.[100] As Suger explains, the use of gold and precious gems is appropriate because the earthly material is meant to evoke the immaterial divine through anagogy, an act of mystical interpretation that elevates the spirit. In a passage that details renovations to the high altar at St-Denis, Suger writes:

> Thus when—out of my delight in the beauty of the house of God—the loveliness of the many-colored gems has called me away from external cares, and worthy meditation has induced me to reflect, transferring that which is material to that which is immaterial, on the diversity of the sacred virtues: then it seems to me that I see myself dwelling, as it were, in some strange region of the universe which neither exists entirely in the slime of the earth nor entirely in the purity of heaven; and that, by the grace of God, I can be transported from this inferior to that higher world in an anagogical manner.[101]

Based on this passage, Panofsky argued that Suger's reforms at the Abbey of St.-Denis, often seen in the history of art as the birth of the Gothic style in architecture, were grounded in the negative theology of Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite. The concept of anagogy that Suger describes evokes the Dionysian argument that the mind can approach the immaterial plane through the guidance of the material world.[102] However, as Rudolph argues, Suger's text offers a complex justification of lavish works of art, of which Neoplatonism and negative theology are only one part. Rudolph finds the Gothic portal and stained-glass windows attributed to Suger point to exegesis, and in particular the

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[100] Conrad Rudolph, *Artistic Change at St-Denis* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), 20–24. Rudolph proposes 1150 as a more likely date for the text, revising Panofsky's estimate that it was written between 1144 and 1148.

[101] Abbot Suger, *Liber de rebus in administratione sua gestis* 33, trans. Panofsky, *Abbot Suger on the Abbey Church of St.-Denis and its Art Treasures*, Second Edition, ed. Gerda Panofsky-Soergel (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979), 63–65.

[102] The library at St.-Denis had several copies of the Celestial Hierarchy, including a copy given by the Byzantine Emperor Michael the Stammerer to Louis the Pious and a translation of the text into Latin by John the Scot. See Panofsky-Soergel, ed., *Abbot Suger*, 18–26.

writing of Hugh of Saint Victor, as a significant factor in the conceptualization of artworks for both public and elite audiences at St.-Denis.[103] Additionally, Suger utilizes several traditional arguments for the place of art in religious practice, most notably asserting that the artworks are made for the honor of God and the saints and championing a theory of reciprocity that prescribed returning precious materials to God to honor his generosity.[104] This more traditional justification appears in the same section of *De administratione* describing the high altar:

> To me, I confess, one thing has always seemed preeminently fitting: that every costlier or costliest thing should serve, first and foremost, for the administration of the Holy Eucharist. *If* golden pouring vessels, golden vials, golden little mortars used to serve, by the word of God or command of the Prophet, to collect the *blood of goats or calves or the red heifer: how much more* must golden vessels, precious stones, and whatever is most valued among all created things, be laid out, with continual reverence and full devotion, for the reception of the *blood of Christ*! Surely neither we nor our possessions suffice for this service. If, by a new creation, our substance were re-formed from that of the holy Cherubim and Seraphim, it would still offer an insufficient and unworthy service for so great and ineffable a victim; and yet we have so great a propitiation for our sins. The detractors also object that a saintly mind, a pure heart, a faithful intention ought to suffice for this sacred function; and we, too, explicitly and especially affirm that it is these that principally matter. [But] we profess that we must do homage also through the outward ornaments of sacred vessels, and to nothing in the world in an equal degree as to the service of the Holy Sacrifice, with all inner purity and with all outward splendor.[105]

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[103] Conrad Rudolph, "Inventing the Exegetical Stained-Glass Window: Suger, Hugh, and a New Elite Art," *The Art Bulletin* 93, no. 4 (2011): 399–422; Rudolph, "Inventing the Gothic Portal: Suger, Hugh of Saint Victor, and the Construction of a New Public Art at Saint-Denis," *Art History* 33, no. 4 (2010): 568–595.

[104] See Rudolph, *Artistic Change*, 26–31. Rudolph downplays the role of Pseudo-Dionysian mysticism in Suger's aesthetic program, instead arguing that the reforms at St-Denis are based in Augustinian Christology and exegesis.

[105] Abbot Suger, *Liber de rebus* 33, trans. Panofsky, *Abbot Suger*, 65–67. The italics are Panofsky's and indicate that Suger is quoting another textual source, in this passage Hebrews 9: 13–14.

In this passage, Suger suggests a correlation between an object's materiality and its function, with the rarest and most valuable materials reserved for the most sacred rituals in liturgical performance.

A similar understanding of materiality appears in the writings of Theophilus Presbyter, the author of the best-know medieval treatise on the practices of artisan craftsmanship, *De diversis artibus*.[106] While this text has long been understood as a technical work meant to record and pass along artisan knowledge, Heidi Gearhart convincingly argues that Theophilus's text is structured to emphasize the practice of re-reading and coming to knowledge over time. Gearhart posits that *De diversis artibus* defines artisan craftsmanship as a spiritual practice that requires attention to details such as materials, workmanship, variety, and function.[107] In her analysis, Gearhart finds a direct correlation between function and materiality. She writes: "Throughout the treatise, the purpose of the object determines its material, and as material increases in complexity and expense, the function of the object becomes more sacred and more centered to the performance of the liturgy."[108] This is exemplified in the discussion of making chalices, which begins with a small silver chalice, before moving onto a larger one, then one decorated in niello, and finally a golden chalice.[109]

As outlined above, Albert the Great's system of natural philosophy is based upon a different understanding of materiality. In Albert's observational model, all earthy things are the physical evidence of the actions of stellar rays. Materiality, then, can be

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[106] Theophilus, *On divers arts*, trans John G. Hawthorne and Cyril Stanley Smith (New York: Dover, 1979).
[107] Heidi Gearhart, *Theophilus and the Theory and Practice of Medieval Art* (University Park, PA: The Penn State University Press, 2017), 43–66.
[108] Gearhart, *Theophilus*, 57.
[109] Gearhart uses this example in her analysis. The discussion of chalices in the treatise spans thirty chapters, see Theophilus, *On divers arts*, III.26–56, trans. Hawthorne and Smith, 99–128.

understood as a method of tracing effects to their causes, creating a pathway to the sacred through the mundane, rather than the most precious of materials. While Albert's natural philosophy was designed to be broadly applied, this dissertation focuses on the materiality of stone generally, and on rock crystal in particular. Albert's claim that stones possessed special powers was part of a long textual tradition of lapidaries, encyclopedic volumes that list the various kinds of stones and their virtues. To consider the materiality of stone is, as Jeffrey Jerome Cohen puts it, to take seriously the "lithic potency" of the rocks themselves.[110] Part of the potential or agency of stone in Albert's natural philosophy is its status as a source of information. *De mineralibus* teaches that everything in the world is unique and that the study of particulars can reveal universal truths. The text also describes a system of generation that is strictly deterministic, in which the stones of the earthly world are formed through a combination of natural elements fused together under the influence of stellar rays. While this process should create perfect specimens in ideal circumstances, Albert explains that variable properties occur due to imperfect mixtures of elements, producing what he calls the accidental properties of stones. These accidental properties include color, transparency, size, hardness, fissility (i.e. crumbliness), porosity, and weight.[111] In essence, these traits comprise the materiality of stone. As the unique qualities of individual specimens, the accidental properties are potent sources of information, a record of the conditions under which the stone formed. For Albert, "it is [the task] of natural science to assign causes for these accidental

[110] Jeffrey Jerome Cohen, *Stone, An Ecology of the Inhuman* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2015), 232.
[111] See Albertus Magnus, *De mineralibus*, 1.2.1–1.2.6, trans. Wyckoff, *Albertus Magnus*, 36–50.

properties, based on the material and efficient causes, in the matter described elsewhere."[112]

Materiality provides an interesting perspective from which to reconsider the function of monstrance reliquaries, especially the earliest examples which experiment with form and material. The introduction of this chapter suggested one such example, the reliquary casket from Moûtiers-en-Tarentaise. In recent years, the scholarship surrounding reliquaries such as the Moûtiers casket has focused on the translucent nature of these crystal panels. Given this aspect of its material nature, crystal is seen as a window, facilitating visual access to the relics contained within.[113] For example, in the catalogue for *Treasures of Heaven*, the most recent exhibition that include the reliquary, the Moûtiers casket is described as follows: "The nearly transparent plaques would have allowed the faithful to see the precious relics contained in the casket."[114] A similar statement describes the casket in the catalogue from the 1998 exhibition *Trésors fatimides du Caire*: "It was used as a reliquary; in effect the crystal plaques allow the faithful to see the precious relics that it contained."[115] Though I argue against this practice of essentializing the use of rock crystal for the sole purpose of facilitating visual access to relics, scholars have offered a variety of compelling explanations for why this shift toward making relics visible began to accelerate around the year 1200.[116] Miri Rubin

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[112] Albertus Magnus, *De Mineralibus*, 1.2.4, trans. Wyckoff, *Albertus Magnus*, 47.
[113] In Roger Bacon's optical theory, transparency was a key element that allowed vision to function without disrupting the multiplication of species, see Roger Bacon, *Perspectiva*, I.9.2, trans. Lindberg, *Roger Bacon and the Origins*, 131–133.
[114] Christine Descatoire, "Reliquary Casket," in Bagnoli et. al, eds. *Treasure of Heaven*, 176.
[115] Barrucande et al., eds., *Trésors fatimides du Caire*, 230. Original text: "Il fut utiliseé comme reliquaire, les plaques de cristal permettant en effet aux fidèles de voir les précieuses reliques qu'il contenait."
[116] Some notable reliquaries did incorporate rock crystal elements into their design before 1200, particularly reliquaries of the True Cross such as the Borghorst Cross (c. 1050) and the

and Suzannah Biernoff have outlined shifts in liturgical practice that emphasized vision.[117] These include the elevation of the host, which is thought to have been introduced in the 1190s and quickly spread across Europe, the subsequent affirmation of the doctrine of transubstantiation that was cemented in the fourth Lateran Council in 1215, and the general restriction of communion to the clergy around this time.[118] Hans Belting and Gia Toussaint have argued that this style developed in response to the Byzantine reliquaries encountered during the crusades and brought back to western Europe in great numbers following the sack of Constantinople in 1204.[119] Byzantine objects, such as the skull reliquary of St. Jacob from the Halberstadt Cathedral Treasury, did not share the same tendencies to conceal holy relics that governed the making of Western reliquaries (Fig. 1.3).[120]

While the carved rock crystal plaques included in this casket have usually been understood as providing visual access to the relic contained within, I believe that the carved animal and foliate motifs on the crystal pieces here serve to disrupt this function. Though the relic that the Moûtiers casket once contained is no longer extant, the crystal plaques are translucent rather than transparent, only providing clear sight under specific lighting conditions and angles, as evidenced by the professional photographs of the

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Theophanu Cross from Essen (c. 1050). The examples under consideration in this chapter are notable for their experimental designs that led to the creation of a new reliquary type.

[117] Miri Rubin, *Corpus Christi, The Eucharist in Late Medieval Culture*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991); 49–82; Suzannah Biernoff, *Sight and Embodiment in the Middle Ages* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 133–164.

[118] Rubin, *Corpus*, 63–82.

[119] Hans Belting, *The Image and its Public in the Middle Ages* (New Rochelle, NY: A.D. Caratzas, 1990), 203–221; Gia Toussaint, *Kreuz und Knochen, Reliquien zur Zeit der Kreuzzüge* (Berlin: Dietrich Reimer Verlag, 2011) 139–191.

[120] Another exposed skull relic is the "face of the glorious Baptist" was discovered in Constantinople by a canon named Wallon de Sarton and donated to Amiens Cathedral in 1206, see Annemarie Weyl Carr, "The Face Relics of John the Baptist in Byzantium and the West," *Gesta* 46, no. 2 (2007): 166–168.

objects (Figs. 1.1–1.2). Instead, the stone seems to insist upon its material presence, changing colors, distorting vision, and refracting light through its carved surface. In its manipulation of light and vision, the crystal does not act as a passive viewing pane that "articulates an increasing dematerialization," as Michael Camille suggests; instead the substance or matter of the crystal itself can be understood as an active participant in the reliquary's function as a mediator of its sacred contents.[121] Moreover, the characteristics of the rock crystal in the Moûtiers casket are highlighted by the collected presence of the dozens of precious stones that stud its surface. The juxtaposition of these various stones calls attention to the visual attributes that differentiate them, including those listed in Albert's list of accidental properties such as transparency, color, and size. The experimental form of the Moûtiers casket suggests that it was designed around the materiality of its crystal elements rather than their transparency. While related to other casket and purse types, the Moûtiers casket is the only extant example that employs rock crystal plaques cut from larger vessel and framed into its four sides. Its diminutive size and the modulated surface of the panels highlight the physicality of the crystal, which is further emphasized by the material characteristics of the other stones present, including the large domed crystal on the roof of the casket.[122]

Despite its innovative use of crystal, the format of the Moûtiers casket is old-fashioned for a reliquary made in the year 1200. By then, Limoges champlevé enamel caskets were already being produced and disseminated widely across Europe.[123] The

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[121] Camille, "Before the Gaze," 204.
[122] It is worth repeating that the crystal on the roof is a replacement of a lost original, which may have been another crystal or, possibly, some other variety of precious stone.
[123] See Barbara Drake Boehm, "*Opus Lemovicense*: The Taste for and Diffusion of Limousin Enamels," in *Enamels of Limogues 1100–1350*, ed. John P. O'Neill (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1996), 40–47.

Moûtiers casket shares none of the visual traits of those from Limoges, which vary in subject matter, ranging from complex biblical or Christological programs, to contemporary political events like the martyrdom of Thomas Becket, or more generic groupings of saintly or angelic figures (Fig. 1.4). These caskets depict their subject matter in intricately worked enamel made in the champlevé technique using red, green, and blue glass. Finer examples may feature additional engraved detailing and the inclusion of appliques to raise prominent sections from the surface, such as the faces of holy figures.

Instead, the form and material embellishment of the Moûtiers casket is reminiscent of much earlier purse reliquaries, such as the St. Stephen's Purse from Vienna, which dates to the ninth century (Fig. 1.5). The decorative program of the purse seems to be governed by a *horror vacui*; nearly the entire surface of the reliquary's frontal side is covered by set gemstones. Although the studded surface of the purse reliquary lacks figural decoration, it is still highly charged with meaning. As Brigitte Buettner has argued, the diverse stones that cover an object such as this can be understood as visual stand-ins for the saints themselves, who are often compared in hagiographic narratives to precious gems because of their virtue. A collection of gems also calls to mind the heavenly Jerusalem, described in the Book of Revelation (21:18–21) as being built of pure gold and a variety of jewels.[124] The use of gems also creates a connection between the heavenly bodies of the saints and their earthly remains, as Ellert Dahl has shown, increasing the efficacy of jeweled reliquaries as mediators of prayer.[125] In addition to metaphorical or spiritual meanings, the application of gemstones on

[124] Brigitte Buettner, "From Bones to Stones: Reflections on Jeweled Reliquaries," in *Reliquiare im Mittelalter*, ed. Bruno Reudenbach and Gia Toussaint (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2005) 43–60.
[125] Ellert Dahl, "Heavenly Images: The Statue of St. Foy and the Signification of the Medieval 'Cult-Image' in the West," *Acta ad archaeologiam et atrium historiam pertinentia* 8 (1979): 175–191.

reliquaries, especially *en masse*, calls attention to their inherent material values. As Buettner writes, "the preciousness of precious stones was considered to be one of their first and foremost characteristic [sic]; and, as with saints, that was a consequence of their rarity, their being sparsely scattered amid the sea of coarse matter and common fallibility."[126] An object such as the St. Stephen's Purse, she argues, therefore becomes a sort of catalogue of the natural world, presenting an entire collection of rare stones at once. A similar case can be made for the Moûtiers casket, which as Henk van Os has documented, incorporates at least thirty-eight pearls and sixty-three gemstones, including sapphire, garnet, turquoise, emerald, mother-of-pearl, ruby, carnelians, and antique cameos.[127] Even among this collection of more than a hundred precious stones, the four crystal plaques command attention due to their relatively large size, prominent placement, and intricate craftsmanship, mediating visual access to the interior space of the reliquary but also proclaiming their own physical and material presence.

A focus on materiality may also help re-orient the understanding of another predecessor of the monstrance type: the cabochon reliquary. Hans Hahnloser identifies a group of related objects of this type, which he attributes to an early rock crystal carving workshop active in Germany in the late twelfth or early thirteenth century.[128] Unlike the Moûtiers casket, the crystal used in these objects was worked in Europe and fashioned for the reliquaries in which it set. The distinctive feature of a cabochon reliquary, as seen here in examples from the Kunstgewerbemuseum in Berlin and the Dommuseum in

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[126] Buettner, "From Bones," 46.
[127] Van Os, *The Way*, 116. In "Le trésor de la cathédrale de Moutiers," Barbier de Montault claims that the precious stones number one hundred and forty-seven, which seems to include forty pearls. Barbier de Montault gives a similar list of stone varieties, though his list includes amethyst and topaz and omits mother-of-pearl, carnelians, and the cameos.
[128] See Hans Hahnloser and Susanne Brugger-Koch, *Corpus der Hartsteinschiffe des 12.–15. Jahrhunderts* (Berlin: Deutscher Verlag für Kunstwissenschaft, 1985), 51.

Hildesheim, is the presence of a relatively large rock crystal carved into the form of a dome with a hollowed-out center (Figs. 1.6–1.8). The carved stones are placed, in both examples, atop a rectilinear base. The decoration of these bases differs quite drastically between the two examples: the Berlin cabochon features repoussé busts of saints or prophets set under an arcade, while the Hildesheim cabochon is decorated with a Limousin enamel plaques of saints, evangelists, and angels.

The cabochon-carved crystal that sits atop the Berlin reliquary is in very poor condition. Not only has the stone been extensively damaged, broken into several large pieces and then glued or sealed back together, but it is also a poor specimen of rock crystal. Hahnloser comments on its bad quality, noting its slightly smoky appearance and many impurities, consisting of both streaks and inclusions.[129] Despite these flaws, Hahnloser notes the precision with which the crystal was prepared for its mounting: it was carved into its domed shape and carefully polished to leave a surface free of any tool markings, which appear only in the interior cavity that was hollowed out to encapsulate the relic. The selection of such a crystal for a mounting suggests that the stone's accidental properties, in this case its coloring, flaws and inclusions were not enough of a concern to preclude its use.

The Hildesheim cabochon, by contrast, features a rock crystal specimen of much higher quality, and one that remains in much better condition. This reliquary, unlike the others discussed thus far, does offer a clear view of its sacred contents, thanks to the quality of the crystal, which is colorless and largely free of any blemishes. However, even this nearly transparent stone does not truly offer the relic to the eye of the viewer.

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[129] Hahnloser and Brugger-Koch, *Corpus der Harsteinschiffe*, 139–140. It is unclear from Hahnhloser's analysis when the stone was damaged, and when and how it was repaired.

Rather, the bone is concealed within a shroud of silk, accented by red thread. It is this bundle of fabric that comprises the spectacle visible through the stone (Fig. 1.8). Furthermore, the materiality of the crystal is still apparent in its role of mediation; the domed shape and curving perimeter of the stone distort the appearance of the bundled relic through slight magnification.[130] Thus, even in the performance of facilitating vision, the form of the Hildesheim cabochon emphasizes the material nature of rock crystal, and its properties of color and transparency in particular.

The visual characteristics of each of these reliquaries draw attention to the materiality of the rock crystal they employ. This includes both examples that feature reused Islamic crystals and stones carved in nascent European workshops. As Cynthia Hahn argues, the formal and decorative qualities of a reliquary are a re-presentation of the contents that demand interpretation through sensory engagement.[131] The crystal material here is presented in a way that denies engagement through vision alone. Instead of thinking of crystal as a visual element of reliquaries, I understand it as a visible element. The materiality of rock crystal calls attention to its tangible presence as a mediator, offering both a glimpse of the sacred though its surface as well as an understanding of the divine through its natural physical properties.

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[130] On the use of rock crystal as a vision aid in Islamic cultures, see Farid Benfeghoul, "Through the Lens of Islam: A Note on Arabic Sources on the Use of Rock Crystals and Other Gems as Vision Aids," in *Seeking Transparency*, ed. Hahn and Shalem, 237–249. Gia Toussaint notes the use of smaller crystal stones to magnify relics or parchment, especially on tablet reliquaries in Toussaint, "The Sacred Made Visible: The Use of Rock Crystals in Medieval Church Treasuries," in *Seeking Transparency*, ed. Hahn and Shalem, 229–231. Rolf Willach suggests the magnifying quality of crystal cabochon reliquaries may have inspired the creation of the telescope, see Willach, *The Long Route to the Invention of the Telescope* (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 2008).

[131] Hahn, *Strange Beauty*, 28–29.

Conclusion

This chapter proposes materiality as a method for the examination of monstrance reliquaries, particularly those that employ rock crystal as a setting. While previous scholarship has connected the innovation and proliferation of new reliquary types using this material to changes in the culture of visuality in Western Europe in the thirteenth century, I have shown that burgeoning optical theory was only one part of a shifting worldview as Western European theologians began to synthesize texts from ancient and Islamic authors that were newly available. In particular, I have traced the legacy of the Islamic philosopher al-Kindi's theory of the ray, which inspired the concept of the multiplication of species, a core tenant of the science of *perspectiva*. Moreover, this chapter demonstrates that al-Kindi's ray also factored heavily into the concept of generation in Albert the Great's natural philosophy, a system of thought that reframed Aristotelian principles of observational knowledge as a Christian enterprise.

I argue that the understanding of materiality that is presented in Albert's *De mineralibus* is fundamentally different from the concerns of twelfth-century writers, including Abbot Suger of St.-Denis and Bernard of Clairvaux, who disagreed about the role of materiality in the decorative arts. While Suger and Bernard argue about the appropriateness of using costly materials such as gold and precious gemstones, Albert's writings develop a different system of value for natural materials. Following the al-Kindian idea that the generation of earthy matter occurs under the deterministic influence of stellar rays, Albert sees things such as stones as repositories of information, in as much as they record in their physical properties a reflection of the celestial conditions under which they were created. These conditions manifest especially in the accidental

properties of stones, qualities that include color, transparency, size, hardness, fissility, porosity, and weight. In other words, the very materiality of stone for Albert is charged with potential, or lithic potency, to bring the careful observer closer to an understanding of the divine.

Though my focus in this chapter lies on examples from around the year 1200, I have demonstrated that "overt materiality," to quote Herbert Kessler, is a defining characteristic of these objects, which experiment with both form and material in their inventive designs.[132] I argue that the rock crystals incorporated into these objects call attention to their materiality in different ways, though in each case the physical traits of the stones are a point of emphasis. Their accidental properties, as Albert would call them, lend tactility to the stones, which assert their physical presence. The objects introduced here have uncertain or incomplete provenance, and little is known about how they functioned in liturgical performance. However, the remaining chapters in this dissertation apply this approach to monstrance reliquaries that have better context. In these case studies, I explore how a changing understanding of materiality in the thirteenth century and beyond can help us better understand the functions of new crystal reliquary types within specific devotional contexts.

[132] Herbert Kessler, *Seeing Medieval Art* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2011), 19.

CHAPTER TWO

Heaven and Earth: The Reliquary of the Miraculous Blood in the Treasury of San Marco, Venice

This chapter focuses on the Reliquary of the Miraculous Blood, an unusual monstrance reliquary notable for the luminous red color of the crystal vessel that contains a relic of Christ's blood (Figs. 2.1–2.6). I consider the reliquary's function in two ways: first as one of the foremost objects in the larger treasury collection of the Basilica of San Marco, and second as a liturgical instrument that performed a special function in the celebration of Easter Week in Venice. In performing these dual functions, I argue that the reliquary established the divine favor that Venice claimed as support for its dominance of the Mediterranean region and acted as a material manifestation of the divine body of Christ.

The Reliquary of the Miraculous Blood is a small, delicate object composed of an Islamic, carved rock crystal flask mounted on a gold stemmed base.[133] The rock crystal vessel, which was probably made in Fatimid Egypt in the tenth or eleventh century, is cylindrical in shape with a slender neck. A foliate pattern of stem and leaf arabesques is carved around the body and a Kufic inscription runs around the center of the neck, invoking a generic wish of blessing and glory for its owner.[134] The metalwork in which

[133] For catalogue descriptions of the reliquary see Marie-Madeleine Gauthier, *Highways of the Faith*, trans. J. A. Underwood (Secaucus, NJ: The Wellfleet Press, 1986), No. 65, 116; Hans Hahnloser, ed., *Il Tesoro di San Marco*, vol. 2 (Florence: G.C. Sansoni, 1971), 116–118 and pl. CIII-CIV; Antonio Pasani, *Il Tesoro di San Marco in Venezia*, 2 vol. (Venice: Ferdinando Ongania, 1886), 25–26 and pl. XXVIII.

[134] The Kufic inscription is damaged, but the invocation of a blessing for the owner can also be seen on other Fatimid crystal vessels. On the inscription here, see K. Erdmann "Reliquario del sangue miracoloso," in *Il Tesoro di San Marco*, ed. Hahnloser, 117. For a bottle with a similar

the rock crystal is mounted is Venetian, dating to the early to mid thirteenth century. Made of pure gold, the base features extraodrinary craftsmanship. The reliquary stands on a six-lobed foot that is divided into two tiers, each pierced by an arcade that extends around the base. Engraved vegetal motifs appear on the lower tier, while the upper is adorned with an alternating patern of birds and acanthus leaves (Fig. 2.3). The stem of the reliquary emerges upwards from the foot, bisected by a large, melon-shaped knob textured with a geometric engraving. It terminates in a protrusion that takes the form of a pinecone, leaving a gap between the stem and the bottom of the crystal flask (Fig. 2.4). This vessel is encompassed by a delicate system of golden ribs, which extend upward from the stem. These golden ribs are secured by hinges to two thin bands of gold that wrap around the circumference of the flask at the top and bottom of its body. A Latin inscription running around the upper band identifies the relic contained inside the bottle, proclaiming, "here is the blood of Christ."[135] The gold ribs bend upward to the mouth of the flask, which is capped with a golden lid surmounted by a baroque flame finial, replacing what was originally a pearl. The framing support of the reliquary is remarkable not only because it is the only extant example of Venetain metalwork in pure gold from the period, but also because of its unusual design, employing the delicate rib system to make the rock crystal appear almost to float above the stem and the base.[136]

A variety of sources establish that the Reliquary of the Miraculous Blood was one the prized objects in the San Marco Treasury, part of a core of a group of reliquaries taken in the sack of Constantinople in 1204. These relics survived a fire in 1231, a

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inscription, see James Robinson, "Flask Reliquary," in *Treasures of Heaven*, ed. Martina Bagnoli et al. (London: The British Museum, 2010), 174.

[135] The Latin text inscribed in capital letters reads: "HIC EST SANGUIS XPI."

[136] Hahnloser, ed., *Il Tesoro*, 118.

miracle later understood as evidence of divine will for their translation. Their survival was memorialized in a preaching campaign and the relics appear in a relief sculpture installed in the Basilica. Scholars have often understood the emphasis of this group of Byzantine relics in thirteenth century as a part of a larger effort to establish a special connection between Venice and the East. I argue that a 1283 inventory record of the treasury highlights a wider range of foreign connections associated with specific materials held in the collection. As a group, these objects served to establish the power and influence of Venice that reached across the Mediterranean.

I also examine the Reliquary of the Miraculous Blood as a ritual object that was used in specific liturgical ceremonies. The Basilica of San Marco was known for its unique liturgical tradition, stemming from its role as the palace chapel of the doge, the leader of the Venetian Republic.[137] Liturgical manuscript sources document the special function performed by the Reliquary of the Miraculous Blood during the festivities of Holy Week. The use of this reliquary, which materializes theological conceptions of the Incarnation, Death, and Resurrection of Christ would have had special resonance for medieval audiences in the performance of this liturgy. I argue that the materiality of this crystal, visible in its luminous red color, embodies the heavenly and earthly bodies of Christ simultaneously, forming a tangible manifestation of the promise of salvation.

[137] Otto Demus, *The Church of San Marco in Venice* (Wahington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks, 1960). On the connection between ritual traditions at San Marco and the Venetian government see Staale Sinding-Larsen, *Christ in the Council Hall, Acta ad archaeologiam et atrium historiam pertinentia* 5 (Rome: L'Erma di Bretschneider, 1974).

The Miraculous Blood in the 13th Century

Like many of the most precious objects held in the treasury of San Marco, the Reliquary of the Miraculous Blood was brought to Venice after the sack of Constantinople in 1204. Over the course of its first hundred years in Venice, this bottle of Christ's blood was involved in series of key events that helped to establish it as one of the most important relics at San Marco in the Middle Ages. In 1231, a fire broke out in the treasury of the basilica, burning for a day and reportedly decimating the church's collection of relics.[138] The tale of the inferno is related in a letter written in 1265 by the Doge Ranieri Zeno that he sent to a group of his ambassadors in Rome.[139] The Doge asked his men to assist an envoy of Dominicans and Fransicans to share the story of the fire, which he claimed consumed all of the contents of the treasury except for three relics: a fragment of the True Cross, an ampulla containing the blood of Christ, and a fragment of the skull of John the Baptist. In doing so, Doge Zeno hoped for official papal recognition certifying the survival of these relics as a miracle.[140] While the letter apparently failed to produce the papal certification it sought, it remains one of the earliest

[138] Rodolfo Gallo, *Il Tesoro di S. Marco e la sua Storia* (Venice: Instituto per la Collaborazione Culturale, 1967), 13–15

[139] A transcription of the letter is included as an appendix in Debra Pincus, "Christian Relics and the Body Politic," in *Interpretazioni Veneziane*, ed. David Rosand (Venice: Arsenale Editrice, 1984), 57.

[140] Pincus, "Christian Relics," 39 and 57. "Unde clausis januis steterunt usque in mane, donec per intus lignamen, ferrum, aurum, argentum, et lapides praetiosi, et alia omnia consumpta fuerunt…Quaeritando per ipsos carbones, invenerunt Crucem Sanctissimam de Ligno Domini cum parvo ornamento illaesam penitus ab igne, et procedentes, Ampullam christallinam, ubi erat vero Sanguine Domini, cum cartulina ligata in collo ubi scriptum era SANGUIS CHRISTI, inter carbones incorruptam, et illaesam penitus invenerunt…Invenerunt insuper capsam ligneam, in qua erat de vertice Beati Joannis baptistae, quae capsa combusta erat quasi per totum, excepto in tantum, quantum vertex ille tangebat, cum cendato Graeco, cum quo coopertus erat de super integro existente."

recorded instances of a sustained effort to establish the special significance of these three relics.

Around the same time as Doge Zeno's letter was sent to Rome in 1265, a relief plaque was carved and installed in the wall of a passageway connecting the Doge's Palace to the south transept of San Marco (Fig. 2.7). The relief presents a selection of the relics housed within the treasury of the basilica. Probably carved in the 1260s, the relief depicts the relics as a group of reliquaries, faithfully recording the visual form of the holy objects.[141] In the center of the composition, two angels kneel, holding aloft a cylindrical reliquary set on a stemmed base. Cross reliquaries flank the angels on the left and the right. The one on the left includes double cross bars with saintly figures in attendance on either side, while the Cross reliquary on the right appears in the single crossbar style set on a simple base. Two more reliquaries float above the heads of the kneeling angels. On the left, there is a box or casket adorned with a geometric frieze and an oval shape marked with a cross. The reliquary at the upper right looks almost like a quiver: it consists of a tube-shaped container fixed with a cord or strap and decorated with a simple checker-board pattern. While the scene lacks a landscape setting, a third angel blesses the relics from the top left corner, and a hand of God reaches down from the upper right. The relief plaque is exceptional not only because it depicts reliquaries, an uncommon subject in medieval relief sculpture, but also because those it represents are identifiable as specific examples from the the treasury.

[141] Pincus, "Christian Relics," 39–50; Thomas E.A. Dale, "Sacred Space from Constantinople to Venice," in *The Byzantine World*, ed. Paul Stephenson (New York: Routledge, 2010), 421–422; Holger Klein, "Refashioning Byzantium in Venice, c. 1200–1400," in *San Marco, Byzantium*, ed. Nelson and Maguire (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010), 212–218.

The Reliquary of the Miraculous Blood is clearly the object depicted at the center of the relief plaque. The visual details shown in the carving correspond exactly to the monstrance. The releif depicts the stemmed base with a knob, the cylindrical flask at the center, and even the delicate golden ribs that form the support structure and the cap that crowns the mouth of the bottle. The other reliquaries in the relief are depicted in a similarly detailed manner, and each has been equated with extant objects in the treasury. The Reliquary of the Miraculous Blood was identified as the central object in the panel as early as 1886, when Antonio Pasini published the first comprehensive catalog of the treasury holdings. In 1971, Hans Hahnloser published an updated catalog of the treasure, which remains the most complete study of its holdings. Pasini and Hahnloser identified the Reliquary Cross of Henry of Flanders at left, the Reliquary Cross of Empress Irene Dukas at right, and the Arm Reliquary of St. George in the upper right (Figs. 2.8–2.10).[142] Debra Pincus offered a compelling identification of the fifth reliquary at upper left, which is the most ambigous and corresponds the least with surviving objects, as a casket containing the skull of John the Baptist (Fig. 2.11).[143]

Historical documents from subsequent years continue to highlight the special significance of the reliquaries depicted in the relief plaque. Inventory records from 1283 and 1325 both begin by identifying the Reliquary of the Miraculous Blood in unmistakable detail.[144] The earlier record describes it as, “one crystal ampulla in which there is the blood of our Savior Jesus Christ, with gold decoration and a pearl above, and

[142] Pasini, *Il Tesoro*, 3; Hahnloser, ed., *Il Tesoro di San Marco*, vol. 2, viii, 140, 162.
[143] Pincus, “Christian Relics,” 43–44
[144] Transcriptions of the inventories are given in Gallo, *Il Tesoro*, 273–275 and 276–287. A transcription of the 1283 inventory is also included in Appendix A below.

it is in a certain silver church."[145] The record from 1325 is similar, listing it as, "One crystal ampulla with a golden foot, ornamented all around in gold and with a pearl on top, in which there is the blood of our Saviour; and it is kept in a certain little silver church made with grating."[146] The details given in both inventories align closely with the visual appearance of the Reliquary of the Miraculous Blood as it still survives, with the exception of the pearl finial mentioned in each that was lost and later replaced with a baroque flame. The records both note that the blood relic is contained within a crystal vessel, and identify the metalwork support as being crafted of gold as opposed to gilt silver; the 1325 record unambigously describes the metalwork base as a golden foot. The small silver church described in both inventories as a container that the Reliquary of the Miraculous Blood was stored in may be the church-shaped censer still in the treasury, as Thomas Dale argues.[147]

Both records reference additional reliquaries associated with the 1231 fire, Doge Zeno's subsequent letter, and the relief sculpture. The 1283 inventory record identifies two other relics from the group by name: an icon bearing the image of St. Constantine and St. Helena that contains a fragment of the True Cross,[148] and a silver casket, damaged by fire, containing the skull of John the Baptist.[149] The 1325 inventory, which is much

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[145] The inventory record survives in a manuscript copy made by Fortunato Olmo in 1640 (Venice, Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana Cod. Ital. VII, 374, coll. 7781). The Latin text reads: "In primus ampulla una de christallo in qua est sanguis Salvatoris Nostri Jesu Christi, ornate auro et una perla desuper, et est in quadam ecclesia argenti."
[146] Transcribed in Gallo, *Il* Tesoro, 276: "Ampulum unam de cristallo cum pede auro, ornatam circumcirca aurum et cum una perla in capite, in qua est de sanguine Salvatoris nostril; et est quadam Ecclesiola argenti facta cum clatis."
[147] Thomas E.A. Dale, "Cultural Hybridity in Medieval Venice," in *San Marco, Byzantium*, ed. Nelson and Maguire, 180.
[148] Gallo, *Il Tesoro*, 273: "Item Crux Chrsiti quae fuit in igne in una ycona cum coperclo coperta argento deaurato, in qua est imago S. Constantini et Sanctae Helenae."
[149] Gallo, *Il Tesoro*, 273: "Item capselta una fracta cum pezoletis de argento in qua credimus fuisse caput Sancti Jo. Baptistae cum fuit in igne."

longer, lists these same two reliquaries, but adds to them several others. A second reliquary of the True Cross is listed, described as ornamented with gold and silver and decorated on four sides with figures, a description that closely correlates to the Coronation Cross of Henry of Flanders.[150] The record also includes a description of the Arm Reliquary of St. George, decorated with a figure of St. George at the top and set on a mounting that rests on a silver foot.[151] This description clearly reflects the new mounting made for the relic rather than the older, inner relic sheath depicted in the relief.[152]

The origin story of the reliquaries depicted in the relief sculpture was canonized by the mid-fourteenth century, when Doge Andrea Dandolo (1343–1354) declared their provenance in his *Chronica per extensum descripta*. Doge Zeno's 1265 letter had previously stated that the relics of the Cross, the Blood, and the head of John the Baptist had been brought to Constantinople by St. Helena before their transfer to Venice.[153] Doge Dandolo built on this earlier claim, adding the arm of St. George to the group, and tracing all of them to his direct ancestor, Doge Enrico Dandolo (1192–1205), who had led the Venetian fleet during the Sack of Constantinople in 1204.[154] This account was copied in later chronicles, and the group of relics including the Cross, Blood, head of John the

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[150] Gallo, *Il Tesoro*, 276.: "Item Crucem unam Christi, de ligno Domini, auro et argento ornatam, quae crux habet quatuor imagines ad ipsius latera positas, et est in una capsela."
[151] Gallo, *Il Tesoro*, 276: "Item notamus quod brachium s.i Georgii circumdatur auro et argento laboratum ad smaldum cum uno Sancto Georgio equitante a parte superiori et cum uno pede argento laborato."
[152] Pincus, "Christian Relics," 43.
[153] Pincus, "Christian Relics," 57: "Qualiter dictae Sanctae Reliquiae die Hierusalem, per operam Sanctae Helenae in Constntinopolim fuerunt deportate, et qualiter Dominus noster Jesus Christus ipsis in Civitate Venetiarum cum corpore beate Marci, Evangelistae sui, voluit collocari."
[154] On the distribution of relics following the sack of the city, see David Perry, *Sacred Plunder* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2015), 13–40, esp. 30–31.

Baptist, and arm of St. George formed the official list of relics from Constantinople at the core of the treasury collection.[155]

In summary, medieval sources indicate that the Reliquary of the Miraculous Blood was among the most important objects in the treasury of the Basilica of San Marco. After surviving the 1231 fire, the crystal ampulla was reframed, placed into a new setting fashioned of pure gold; this is the earliest surviving example of such craftsmanship from Venetian workshops according to Hahnloser. In the 1260s, Doge Ranieri Zeno wrote to the pope, seeking affirmation of survival of this reliquary as a miracle, and a relief plaque was carved with a mimetic representation of its visual form at the center of the composition. Inventory records of the treasury recorded in 1283 and 1325 both list the Reliquary of the Blood in the privileged position of the first item, and describe its visual characteristics in recognizable detail. Finally, the reliquary's origin story, along with three others in the relief plaque, was canonized in the chronicle tradition by Doge Andrea Dandalo, who traced it back to his own ancestor Enrico, the doge and leader of the Venetians in the sack of Constantinople.

Eastern Relics and the Myth of Venice

The story of the reliquaries from Constantinople has often been associated with the "Myth of Venice," or the idea that Venice was set apart from other municipalities by divine favor, and that its independence provided a stable foundation for an ideal state dedicated to the common good of its citizens.[156] The Myth of Venice also took a visual form in the architecture and visual culture of the city, which imitates and incorporates

[155] Gallo, *Il Tesoro*, 9–13; Pincus, "Christian Relics," 43–44.
[156] David Rosand, *Myths of Venice: The Figuration of a State* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001).

elements from Eastern cities. Venice is built on trade and commerce, and its people regularly traveled across the Mediterranean to distant lands, bringing back goods and materials.[157] Deborah Howard argues that the architecture of Venice evokes Islamic architecture in a particular effort to connect Venice to Alexandria, the city from which the remains of St. Mark the Evangelist were translated in the ninth century.[158] However, Islamic architecture was not the only source utilized to create the unique Venetian atmosphere in the Middle Ages. For Holger Klein, the reliquaries from Constantinople are part of a larger effort to recall Byzantium at the Basilica of San Marco in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.[159] Klein argues that both interior and exterior spaces of the Basilica were redesigned to accommodate objects acquired in the sack of Constantinople. Some of these elements were highly visible, such as the bronze horses placed on the west façade and the statue of the tetrarchs set into the southwestern exterior corner of the treasury room. Others, such as the renovation of the Pala d'Oro and the construction of new pulpits, reflect a reorganization of the liturgical spaces of the church that foreground objects of obvious Byzantine provenance as a stage for the performance of Venetian rites. For Thomas Dale, the connection between Venice and the East is best understood as cultural hybridity.[160] Dale argues that Venice is not an evocation of any single Islamic or Byzantine city, but rather that its art and architecture imitate a combination of forms that present the city as a worthy pilgrimage destination in its own right. For Dale, this cultural hybridity would have already been apparent to Venetian

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[157] For some extant examples of goods, diaries, and travel anecdotes associated with Venetian trade and travel, see Deborah Howard, "Venice as an 'Eastern' City," in *Venice and the Islamic World*, ed. Stefano Carboni (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2007), 59–71.
[158] Deborah Howard, *Venice and the East* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000).
[159] Klein, "Refashioning Byzantium," 193–225.
[160] Dale, "Cultural Hybridity," 151–191.

citizens, either through their own experience traveling to the Middle East or because of the steady return transmission of small portable objects. The unique combination of forms often found in Venice, such as the Basilica's Porta dei Fiori, which places sculpted figural forms in a Byzantine style within an ogival arch, can be understood as an effort to recreate the visual forms that existed together in Eastern cities.

The existing discussion surrounding the reliquaries from Byzantium, and in particular the relief plaque that depicts them, fits into the narrative of the myth of Venice in several ways. The relief plaque has often been understood as an object that underscores the close relationship between politics and religion in Venice. For Staale Sinding-Larsen, the placement of the relief, which is set into the west wall of a passageway that connects the south transept of San Marco to the Doge's Palace, underlines the doge's role as the head of both church and state.[161] Debra Pincus argues convincingly that the relief, and the reliquaries of St. George's arm and the head of St. John the Baptist it depicts, point to a moment of increased tension between Venice and the city of Genoa in the early 1260s.[162] Genoa, one of the main rivals for control of trading rights with Constantinople, depicted St. George on its war banners and held the ashes of St. John the Baptist, the city's patron saint, in the Cathedral of San Lorenzo. For Pincus, the Venetians seemed to use the head relic of St. John the Baptist to "[outbid] the power conferred on Genoa by its own patron saint."[163] The possession of these relics also signals the divine favor afforded to Venice. David Perry sees the relief sculpture as a visualization of a *translatio*, a literary genre that

[161] Sinding-Larson, *Christ in the Council*, 212–213. This text is concerned primarily with the sixteenth century and identifies the objects in the plaque as Eucharistic elements rather than reliquaries, but Sinding-Larsen is correct in emphasizing the significance of the location of the relief.
[162] Pincus, "Christian Relics," 39–50.
[163] Pincus, "Christian Relics," 46.

flourished in Venice following the sack of Constantinople.[164] For Perry, the sculpture reaffirms the core message of these texts: the removal of these relics was sanctioned by God, demonstrated the might and power of Venice that superseded its regional rivals, and signified a transfer of imperial power and grandeur to Venice from the East. Holger Klein views the larger context of the reliquaries from Constantinople, especially Doge Ranieri Zeno's letter and the origin story recounted in Doge Andrea Dandolo's *Chronica*, as a clear effort to establish the doge as the instrument of divine will, thereby guaranteeing the power and longevity of the Venetian Republic.[165] Finally, the relics are part of a larger effort to cast Venice as a city with a special connection to the East, made visible in the architecture and visual culture of the city, which incorporate objects and forms from Islamic and Byzantine lands. For Thomas Dale, the aesthetics of objects such as the Reliquary of the Miraculous Blood would clearly evoke the visual culture of the Middle East, authenticating their origins and proclaiming their sanctity. The grouping together of many such objects in the unique Venetian setting helped to craft a narrative of Venice as a new "Promised Land."[166]

While the group of relics from Constantinople have often been thought of together to comprise a set that generates a connection to the East, it is worth remembering that these few relics are only a small sliver of the larger treasury collection at San Marco, which includes many other reliquaries and liturgical instruments with clear ties to distant locales.[167] Just as Dale views the city itself as a collection that generates meaning by

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[164] Perry, *Sacred Plunder*, 158–178.
[165] Klein, "Refashioning Byzantium," 215–218.
[166] Dale, "Cultural Hybridity," 189–191.
[167] Catalogues of the treasure have often divided the contents by material origin in addition to date. For example, see David Buckton et al., eds., *The Treasury of San Marco, Venice* (Milan: Olivetti, 1984).

combining diverse elements in unique ways, the treasury collection can be understood to function in a similar manner.[168] The collective agency of a treasury is not unique to San Marco; rather, as Cynthia Hahn argues, it is an integral component of all medieval church treasuries.[169] For Hahn, the defining feature of a treasury collection is its perpetual state of incompleteness. A treasury gathers holy relics and sacred objects in order to represent the court of heaven and the divine, but this representation is necessarily imperfect and incomplete. Thus, according to Hahn, the active power of a treasury is the narrative, or conversation, that develops around its contents as they change over time through the acquisition of new objects or the recycling of older ones.[170] The understanding of a treasury as a collection that benefits from the diversity of its contents is echoed elsewhere in scholarship. Lucas Burkart argues that diversity drives the creation of cultural meaning in a treasury collection. For Burkhart, the grouping of heterogeneous objects creates a new meaning that can communicate with various cultural spheres.[171] Heterogeneity also exists in single objects, though as Beate Fricke and Avinoam Shalem argue, there are many ways in which these assemblages can occur that generate meaning differently.[172]

The meaning of a treasury collection is multifaceted and unfixed; it can change over time alongside the accumulation of materials. However, written accounts can speak

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[168] Dale, Cultural Hybridity," 153–154.
[169] Cynthia Hahn, "The Meaning of Early Medieval Treasuries," in *Reliquiare im Mittelalter*, ed. Bruno Reudenbach and Gia Toussaint (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2005), 1–20.
[170] Hahn, "The Meaning," 2–3.
[171] Lucas Burkart, "Transfer und Transzendierung, Zum Wandel von Bedeutung in mittelaltlicher Schätzen," in *Le trésor au Moyen Âge: discours, pratiques et objets*, ed. Lucas Burkart et al. (Florence: SISMEL edizioni del Galluzzo, 2010), 69–88.
[172] Beate Fricke, "Schatzgestalten, Diebesgut, Liebespfand und Fesselkünstler am Werk," in *Le trésor*, ed. Burkart et al., 265–282.; Avinoam Shalem, "Hybride und Assemblagen in mittelaltlichen Schatzkammern, Neue ästhetische Paradigmata im Himblick auf die 'Andersheit,'" in *Le trés*or, ed. Burkart et al., 297–314.

to the cultural meaning of a treasury collection at a particular moment in time. For Philippe Cordez, inventory records are an important resource because:

> All of these documents [inventories] testify to the active role of the written word in the invention, management, and mediation of relics – from their encasement in altars, to the formation of the first systematic collections in the Carolingian period, and later in the grand displays at the end of the Middle Ages.[173]

While inventory records may be understood to capture, or even participate in creating, the meaning of a collection, they must be treated as unique documents. Joseph Ackley points out that one of the only universal qualities of inventory records is their idiosyncrasy. They could be written or drawn up for varying purposes, they do not use common templates or vocabularies, and they may record the contents of even the same collection differently from later records.[174] The inventory records of the San Marco treasury from 1283 and 1325 discussed above serve as a case-in-point illustrating these differences. While the motivations for their scribes are unknown, the format of the two records is quite different. The 1283 record is brief: it records only 41 entries that are roughly divisible into three groups. The 1325 record, by contrast, is much more systematic, encompassing 160 entries divided among a dozen categories that represent separate rooms or cases in the treasury. The 1325 inventory includes raw materials such as pearls and gemstones, suggesting that it is meant as a record of all the things contained within the treasury chambers.

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[173] Philippe Cordez, *Trésor, mémoire, merveilles* (Paris: Éditions de l'École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, 2016), 70. "Tous ces documents témoignent du rôle actif de l'écriture dans l'invention, la gestion, et la mediation des reliques – de leur enfermement dans les autels à la constitution des premières collections systématiques à l'époque carolingienne, puis aux grandes ostensions de la fin du Moyen Âge."

[174] Joseph Salvatore Ackley, "Re-approaching the Western Medieval Church Treasury Inventory, c. 800–1200," *Journal of Art Historiography*, No. 11 (2014): 1–37.

The smaller scope and specificity of the 1283 inventory suggest it was compiled for another purpose (see Appendix A). Previous scholars have understood the prominent place of the reliquaries from Constantinople in this record to exemplify their important status as objects from the East, but in fact the inventory as a whole places a heavy emphasis on the pan-Mediterranean nature of the items it lists. Several entries use adjectives that demonstrate the age of the objects, describing them as old (*vetera*) or broken (*fracta*). Others seem to identify additional survivors of the 1231 treasury fire, describing items as burned (*combusta*), or as having been in the fire (*fuit in igne*). Further, the inventory often identifies objects that have a demonstrable connection to foreign places. Five of the first six entries are described as *ycona*, which should be understood to indicate icons of presumable Byzantine origin. These icons, along with five reliquaries and a single manuscript written in Greek (*de littera graeca*), form the first group of the document. The next thirteen entries speak to the reach of Venetian power in the Mediterranean in a different way: they apparently record sets of silver bells or trumpets associated with Venetian ambassadors to Tunis and Alexandria.[175] The remaining entries in the inventory list various textiles belonging to the treasury, but even here there are objects associated with specific locales. To be precise, the inventory records battle flags associated with some of the most important victories won by the Venetians. These include three large banners woven of sendal silk that are associated

[175] See Gallo, *Il Tesoro*, 274. For example: "Recepimus 4.r [quattor] tumbras de argento, quae fuerunt domini Laurentii Theupoli, a domino Joanne Superantio qui fuit Ambasator in Tonisto." Pasini glosses *tumbras* as a misspelling of *tubas*, indicating sets of ceremonial trumpets or horns. See Pasini, *Il Tesoro*, Appendix I, Inventory 1. The existence of these objects in sets of four or six may also indicate small bells. The term is spelled inconsistently in the entries, suggesting it may be a transliteration, perhaps from Middle Greek *tymbanon* (kettledrum) which was later glossed in Middle French as *timbre* (a bell struck by a hammer). On medieval bells generally, see John Arnold and Caroline Goodson, "Resounding Community: The History and Meaning of Medieval Church Bells," *Viator* 43, no. 1 (2012): 99–130.

with the triumphs at Zara on the Dalmatian coast of Croatia (1202) and Constantinople (1204),[176] and a further two sendal banners, evidently old and tattered, from victories at Tyre (1124) and Chios (likely also 1124).[177] Viewed as a whole, the 1283 inventory record clearly participates in the same kinds of mythmaking that scholars have identified elsewhere in thirteenth-century Venice. The three groups of objects in the record each speak to different aspects of the myth of Venice. The first, which consists of relics and liturgical objects, indicates the divine favor enjoyed by the Republic; not only did these objects come to Venice from Byzantium, but they also survived a fire that otherwise decimated the treasury. The second group demonstrates the diplomatic influence of Venice that extended beyond the Italian peninsula, and the third signifies the military might of the Venetian fleet, as exemplified in banners that represent the battles that gave Venice its command of trade to the Eastern Mediterranean.[178] The connections laid out in this document are not to one specific place or region, but rather extend in various directions across the Mediterranean. In doing so, the treasury inventory declares the diversity of the objects it contains, and through this heterogeneity establishes the wide-reaching power of the Venetian Republic.

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[176] Gallo, *Il Tesoro*, 275: "Item vexilla de cendato tria magna de victoriis Constantinopolim et Iadrae"

[177] Gallo, *Il Tesoro*, 275: "Item vexilla de cendato II fracta et vetera, una de Victoria Suri et alia de Chio."

[178] Debra Pincus and David Perry see the inclusion of the relics of St. George and the head of John the Baptist as an explicit effort to elevate the status of Venice in relation to its rivals, especially Genoa and Pisa, which were also competing for trade privileges in Constantinople around the middle of the thirteenth century. The inclusion of diplomatic objects and battle standards reinforces the standing of Venice as an imperial power above and beyond its rivals. Pincus, "Christian Relics," 46–48; David Perry, "St. George and Venice, The Rise of Imperial Culture," in *Matter of Faith*, ed. James Robinson and Lloyd de Beer (London: The British Museum, 2014), 15–21.

While a treasure collection generates agency through its collective body as I argue here, other meaning is created independently through the use individual objects. The remainder of this chapter considers the use of the Reliquary of the Miraculous Blood in the liturgical performance of Holy Week at San Marco. By focusing on the practical function of this object, I seek to demonstrate how individual objects could operate independently from their function as part of the larger treasury collection.

The Holy Blood and the Liturgy of Holy Week

While the Reliquary of the Miraculous Blood contributes to the myth of Venice as a part of the larger treasure collection, it also had a practical function as a liturgical instrument. The Basilica of San Marco is famous for its idiosyncratic liturgical tradition.[179] It was not the city's cathedral, but rather a state church and the private chapel of the doge. As Susan Rankin argues, the unique position of San Marco allowed for the development of a unique liturgy designed around the person of the doge. These traditions, many of which appear in the earliest surviving sources, were protected—even in instances when the liturgy shifted to align more closely with the Roman rites—because they were understood as an expression of the political and religious freedom of Venice.[180]

The Reliquary of the Miraculous Blood played a central role in the activities of Holy Week at San Marco. While it should come as no surprise that a relic of the holy blood would take on special significance in the liturgical celebration of Christ's death and resurrection, it is unusual to find primary sources that dictate the ritual use of a particular

[179] For general commentary on the musical and liturgical tradition of San Marco, see Guilio Cattin, "La Tradizione Liturgico-Musicale di San Marco," in *I Libri di San Marco*, ed. Susy Marcon (Venice: il Cardo, 1995), 29–45.
[180] Susan Rankin, "From Liturgical Ceremony to Public Ritual, 'Quem queritis' at St. Mark's, Venice," in *Da Bisanzio a San Marco Musica e Liturgia*, ed. Guilio Cattin (Venice: Edizioni Fondazione Levi, 1997), 140–141.

reliquary. Yet a group of surviving textual sources from San Marco document the activities of Holy Week, at times describing the public display of the blood, and at others proscribing rituals that emphasize the incarnation, death, and resurrection of Christ. The earliest of these sources are liturgical manuscripts from the thirteenth century: a gradual at the Berlin Staatsbliothek and a processional-ritual at the Museo Correr in Venice that both date to around the middle of the century.[181] Martino da Canal's chronicle *Les estoires de Venise*, begun around 1267, includes the author's first-hand account of the processions, feasts, and other festivities of Holy Week.[182] Finally, the *Rituum ecclesiasticorum ceremoniale*, compiled by Bartolomeo Bonifacio in 1564, offers a more comprehensive account of the liturgical practices of San Marco.[183] Although this ceremonial is much later in date, some of the practices it describes are clearly linked to the rituals preserved in earlier sources.[184] For Guilio Cattin, the idiosyncratic liturgical traditions of San Marco present in the *Rituum ceremoniale* likely predate a reform made under the leadership of the *primicerio* Simeone Moro between 1287 and 1291, when older rites were consolidated into a new *Liber ordinarius* (now lost).[185]

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[181] The gradual is Belin, Staatsbibliothek Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Mus. ms. 40608; see Wulf Arlt and Giulio Cattin, eds., *Itinerari e Stratificazioni dei Tropi San Marco, l'Italia Settentrionale e le Regioni Transalpine* (Venice: Edizioni Fondazione Levi, 2008); Marcon, *I Libri*, 110–111. The processional-ritual is Venice, Biblioteca del Museo Correr, cod. Cicogna 1006; see Marcon, ed., *I Libri*, 118–119. A partial transcription is published in Giulio Cattin, *Musica e Liturgia a San Marco*, Vol. II (Venice: Fondazione Levi, 1990), 499–502.
[182] Martino da Canal, *Les estoires de Venise*, trans. Laura Morreale (Padua: Unipress, 2009).
[183] The ceremonial is Venice, Bibliotheca Nazionale Marciana, Cod. Lat. III, 172, coll. 2276; see Marcon, *I Libri*, 156–157. A partial transcription is published in Staale Sinding-Larsen, *The Burden of the Ceremony-Master* (digital reprint, https://folk.ntnu.no/staalesl/books.html, 2011), 391–481.
[184] Rankin, "From Liturgical Ceremony." Rankin's article focuses on the trope *Quem queritis*, a dramatic performance of the Visit to the Sepulcher that took place before mass on Easter Sunday. While the performance is described in greater detail in Bartolomeo Bonifacio's ceremonial, the trope appears in both the Berlin gradual and the Correr processional-ritual.
[185] Cattin, "La Tradizione," 156.

A clear picture of the Holy Week activities emerges from this constellation of sources, with a particular emphasis on the Reliquary of the Miraculous Blood. This emphasis is most apparent in the last several days of Holy Week, from Maundy Thursday onward. As recorded in the *Rituum ceremoniale*, the celebration of Maundy Thursday concluded with a presentation of the Reliquary of the Miraculous Blood from the pulpit.

> At night, following the fifth day [Maundy Thursday], the blood of Christ is displayed from the great pulpit [the *bigonzo*] along with many other relics of great veneration by seven of the canons, three residents, and four parish priests. The senior canon first holds the tabernacle of blood, and when he begins to show it, sings the hymn, *Vexilla Regis prodeunt*. And the other canons follow, singing the remaining verses alternately, continuing one at a time and displaying individual relics simultaneously with the precious blood to the people.[186]

As Thomas Dale notes, the pulpit specified for this spectacle, the *pulpito magno*, is the *bigonzo*, or the pulpit on the southern side of the Basilica that served as a raised throne platform for the doge (Figs. 2.12–2.13).[187] The *bigonzo*, which is made from porphyry slabs possibly taken from the Hagia Sophia during the Fourth Crusade, was probably assembled under the leadership of Doge Ranieri Zeno (1252–1268). Taken alongside Doge Zeno's other efforts to promote the Miraculous Blood discussed above, the ritual display of the blood from the *bigonzo* likely dates to this period as well, as Dale argues.[188] The Reliquary of the Miraculous Blood was also presented to the public on Good Friday, as Martino da Canal attests.

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[186] BNM, cod. Lat III 172, coll. 2276, f. 8r. Transcribed in Sinding-Larsen, *The Burden*, 434. The Latin text reads: "In nocte succedente Diei feriae quintae demonstratur sanguis christi ex pulpito magno et multe simul alie reliquie magne venerationis per septem canonicis, tres residentes et quatuor plebanos. senior canonicus prima uice habet tabernaculum sanguinis et dum incipit ostendere, intonat hymnum, vexilla Regis prodeunt. et alii canonici sequuntur cantantes reliquos uersus alternatim, tenentes et ipsi singuli singulas reliquias et simul cum sanguine pretiose eas populo ostendentes."
[187] Dale, "Sacred Space," 407–411.
[188] Dale, "Sacred Space," 411.

> On Friday the doge has the precious relics set out for exposition in the church of Monseignor St Mark, as well as the blood of Our Lord and the Holy Cross; and you should know that all the people, the ladies and the young ladies, come to see them.[189]

Additional sections of the Holy Week liturgy call particular attention to the blood of Christ, and these take on added significance when considered alongside the display of the Reliquary of the Miraculous Blood. The Correr processional-ritual includes the hymn *Rex sanctorum angelorum*, which is sung during the procession to the baptismal font at Easter Vigil.[190] The sixth verse of the hymn includes a visceral evocation of Christ's blood as it beseeches the Lord to bless the contents of the baptismal font: "Create, in the contents of this font, the sacred mystery which flowed when freshly spilled blood consecrated the body of Christ."[191] The word used here, *cruor*, refers to the fresh blood of a battle wound, and is distinguished from the spilled blood of the martyrs, the *sanguis fusus martyrum*, mentioned in the second verse of the same hymn. As Martino da Canal records, the Easter Vigil was a significant event in the liturgical calendar because it was the preferred occasion for baptism. He writes, "and on Saturday before Easter, the Venetians have their children baptized."[192] As the hymn calls on the Lord to extend salvation, made possible by the bloodshed in Christ's sacrifice, it must also have recalled the Reliquary of the Miraculous Blood that was displayed to the Venetian populace on the previous days.

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[189] Martino da Canal, *Les estoires de Venise*, trans. Morreale, 100.
[190] BMC, cod. Cicogna 1006, fol. 20v–23r.
[191] BMC, cod. Cicogna 1006, f. 22v: "Fac interna fontis huius sacratum mysterium qui defluxit cum cruore sacro Christi corpore."
[192] Martin da Canal, *Les Estoires*, trans. Morreale, 100.

The celebration of Easter Sunday began with an elaborate procession led by the doge, which traversed Piazza San Marco before the mass. Martino da Canal describes the procession in a lengthy passage.

> I have lived so long in this beautiful Venice, that I have seen the processions that Monseignor the doge arranges on the high feast days; since he does not allow, for any reason whatsoever, that they should not be celebrated every year. First, Monseignor the doge prepares the procession for Easter, that is on the resurrection of Our Lord Jesus Christ; he comes down from his palace before the mass, and just before him there are eight men, who carry banners made of sendal, all worked in gold, with a depiction of the image of St Mark the Evangelist; and each banner bears the imperial bands. And after the banners come two youths, one who carries a faldstool—that is the seat for Monseignor the Doge—and the other a golden cushion. And after them come six trumpeters, who trumpet on silver trumpets, and there are two men with them, who go clashing with cymbals of silver. And after them comes a cleric who carries a very large and very costly cross, made of gold and silver and precious stones. And another cleric carries the evangelistary, which is very luxurious; and a third cleric carries a silver censer. And all of these clerics are clothed in holy vestments of cloth and gold. And after them come twenty-two chaplains of Monseignor St Mark, robed in capes of gold, who go along singing a processional. And after comes Monseignor the doge under an *ombrellino* given to him by Monseignor the pope, and this *ombrellino* is made of cloth of gold, which one of the youths carries in his hands, always coming behind Monseignor the doge. And next to Monseignor the doge comes the *Primicerius* of Monseignor St Mark, who wears a miter just like a bishop; and on the other side of Monseignor the doge comes the priest who is to sing the mass, clothed in holy vestments, all of gold. And Monseignor the doge wears a crown of gold with precious stones, and is dressed in golden garments. After Monseignor the doge comes a nobleman who carries his sword, which is very costly and of fine quality; and after Monseignor the doge come the nobility of Venice, and many brave men of the people. In this way, just as I have told you, Monseignor the doge moves into Monseignor St Mark's square, which is as long as the flight of a crossbow, until he reaches the church of Monseignor St Gimignano, and from there, he goes back the same way; and Monseignor the doge carries a lighter candle of white wax in his hands, very large and marvelously beautiful. And then Monseignor the doge stops, with all his entourage in the middle of the square and three of the chaplains place themselves in front and sing very close to Monseignor the doge all the verses of the beautiful responsorial. And when they have finished, Monseignor the doge goes forth with his whole entourage, and in such a way, after turning back, enters into the church of Monseignor St Mark; and when he is inside, he stops, with all of his entourage. And there the chaplains sing, and then three of the chaplains go forth to the steps of the railings, and say in a loud voice,

> "Christ conquers, Christ reigns, Christ commands: to our lord Renieri Zeno, by the grace of God elected doge of Venice, Dalmatia and Croatia, and lord of one fourth and one half of one fourth of all the empire of Romania, health, honor, life, and victory!"
>
> And the other clerics answer and say, "Christ conquers, Christ reigns, Christ commands!"
>
> And the three chaplains say from the front, "Holy Mary!"
>
> And all the rest respond and say, "Aid him!"
>
> And when they have said this the *Primicerius* takes the miter from his head, and takes the crosier and begins the mass; and then Monseignor the doge places himself in the pulpit, among a fine entourage, and the priest sings the mass. And after the mass Monseignor the doge returns to his palace where he finds the tables set, and he eats with all of the chaplains of Monseignor St Mark.[193]

Martino da Canal captures the splendor of the procession, detailing the fine vestments worn by participants and their use of lavish objects, but he fails to note an important liturgical performance, the *Quem queritis* or Visit to the Sepulcher, that took place just before the mass.[194] The *Quem queritis* appears in both the Berlin gradual and the Correr processional, and in an expanded form in the *Rituum ceremoniale*.[195] Thomas Dale suggests that the drama was performed in an Eastern Sepulcher, likely originally positioned adjacent to the southeast pier of the choir, where fragments of a Deposition mosaic appear; the *Rituum ceremoniale* records it taking place at the Capella San Isidore.[196] While the Visit to the Sepulcher was a common liturgical drama by the

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[193] Martino da Canal, *Les estoires*, trans. Morreale, 94–95.
[194] Rankin, "From Liturgical Ceremony," 155. Rankin argues that Canal saw the *Quem queritis* as a part of the normal liturgy, as opposed to the procession and singing of *Laudes* which focused on the doge.
[195] The differences between the version are outlined in Rankin, "From Liturgical Ceremony," 174–175.
[196] Thomas E.A. Dale, "Easter, Saint Mark, and the Doge: The Deposition Mosaic in the Choir of San Marco in Venice," *Thesaurismata* 25 (1995): 21–33.

thirteenth century, and many churches developed elaborate performances surrounding it, the version performed at San Marco is relatively simple, sung in only three verses.[197]

> Whom do you seek in the grave, followers of Christ?
> Jesus from Nazareth, the crucified, o heavenly dwellers.
> He is not here; he has risen, as he had foretold.
> Go and tell that he is risen, saying:
> I AM RISEN, AND I AM ALWAYS WITH YOU ALLELUIA.
>
> Let us all rejoice, the Lord has risen.
> YOU HAVE PLACED YOUR HAND UPON ME ALLELUIA.
>
> He has conquered, the lion of the tribe of Judah, the rod of Jesse.
> YOUR WISDOM HAS BEEN SHOWN TO BE THE MOST WONDERFUL,
> ALLELUIA, ALLELUIA.[198]

This version of the *Quem queritis* is a clear and straightforward evocation of the miracle of Christ's resurrection. However, in the Berlin gradual, the *Quem queritis* is followed by a second "other trope" that summarizes the mystery of Easter, situating the resurrection as the culmination of the Incarnation and Passion.

> After having been made man, I fulfilled your paternal orders,
> conquering on the cross, through my death, the Erebus of death.
> I AM RISEN, AND I AM ALWAYS WITH YOU, ALLELUIA.
> In the supernal reign I am coequal with you,
> from now on, forever, and always immortal.
> YOU HAVE PLACED YOUR HAND UPON ME, ALLELUIA.
>
> Through the praises of the angels, who praise you without end,

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[197] For other examples see David Bevington, *Medieval Drama* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1975), 21–49. The San Marco version is closer to the tenth-century examples given in Bevington than the twelfth- or thirteenth-century versions. On the transmission of this version to San Marco, see Susan Rankin, "'Quem Queritis' *En Voyage* in Italy," in *Itinerari e Stratificazioni*, 177–207.

[198] This is the version recorded in SBB Mus. Ms. 40608. See Arlt and Cattin, eds., *Itinerari e Stratificazioni*, 309–311. Translated by Ritva Maria Jacobsson; the Latin text reads: "Quem queritis in sepulchro, christicole? Hiesum Nazarenum crucifixium, o celicole. Non est hic; surrexit; sicut predixerat. Ite, nuntiate, quia surrexit, dicentes: RESURREXI <ET ADHUC TECUM SUM, ALLELUIA>. Gaudeamus omnes, resurrexit Dominus. <P>OSUISTI <SUPER ME MANUM TUAM>. Vicit leo de tribu Iuda, radix Iesse. MIRABILIS <FACTA EST SCIENTIA TUA, ALLELUIA, ALLELUIA>."

YOUR WISDOM HAS BEEN SHOWN TO BE MOST WONDERFUL,
ALLELUIA, ALLELUIA,

To whom the angels sing,
"psalm" O LORD, YOU HAVE SOUGHT ME…[199]

Ritva Maria Jacobsson argues that this *Postquam factus* trope is complicated and sophisticated, combining hexameter, prose, and laudatory elements to celebrate the triumph over death. For Jacobsson, the first element is the oldest and most complex, employing lines of hexameter known from the earliest manuscripts from St. Gall. The verses employ several textual strategies, including the use of pronouns, tenses, alliteration, and caesurae to highlight the relationship between Christ and God the Father and to emphasize Christ's death. The remaining elements, composed in prose, utilize diverging stylistic techniques to evoke the eternal reign of Christ in heaven.[200] As a whole, the *Postquam factus* trope reminds the viewer not to focus on the moment of resurrection in isolation, but as a fulfillment of the promise of salvation made possible by the death of Christ.

The liturgy of Holy Week at San Marco can be understood as consciously self-reflective, encouraging participants to recall the events celebrated on previous days. The public displays of the Reliquary of the Miraculous Blood on Maundy Thursday and Good Friday resonate in the liturgy of Easter Vigil and Easter Sunday. In the *Rex sanctorum angelorum* hymn and the *Postquam factus* trope, Christ's bloodshed and death are

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[199] SBB Mus. Ms. 40608, see Arlt and Cattin, eds., *Itinerari e Stratificazioni*, 309–311. Translated by Ritva Maria Jacobsson; the Latin text reads: "Postquam factus homo tua iussa paterna peregi in cruce morte mea mortis herebum superando: RESURREXI <ET ADHUC TECUM SUM ALLELUIA.> In regno superno tibi coequalis, iam ultra in eternum semper immortalis. POSUISTI <SUPER ME MANUM TUAM, ALLELUIA>. Laudibus angelorum, qui te laudant sine fine, MIRABILIS <FACTA EST SCIENTIA TUA>, Cui canunt angeli, ALLELUIA, ALLELUIA. ps. DOMINE, PROBASTI ME…"

[200] Ritva Maria Jacobsson, "Pascha," in *Itinerari e Stratificazioni*, 311–314.

emphasized as the guarantors of salvation. As Martino da Canal tells it, the display of the Reliquary of the Miraculous Blood was momentous. "You should know," he writes, "that all the people, the ladies and the young ladies, come to see."[201] When considered alongside the subsequent liturgical performances, the presentation of Christ's blood at San Marco evoked multiple aspects of theology. As a relic, it was tangible proof of the Incarnation, a reminder of the Passion and the Crucifixion, and a manifestation of the promise of Salvation.

Materiality

The ritual use of the Reliquary of the Miraculous Blood as documented above shows that the object generated meaning specially tied to theological mysteryies of Christ. But this meaning is not tied to the ritual use of the object alone; the materiality of the Reliquary of the Miraculous Blood, and more specifically of the rock crystal vessel that contains the relic, also played a significant role.

As a material, rock crystal was understood by theologians to have special resonance in relation to the body of Christ. As Stefania Gerevini notes, rock crystal was considered a worthy material consideration by theologians from an early period because it is mentioned several times in the scripture.[202] In particular, crystal is used to describe the dazzling clarity of various features of the heavenly citadel as it appears in the visons recorded by Ezekiel (Ez. 1:22) and by John in the Book of Revelation (Rev. 4:6, 21:11, and 22:1). The passage in Ezekiel describes a space in the throne room of God, "spread out above the heads of the living creatures was what looked something like a vault,

[201] Martino da Canal, *Les estoires*, trans. Morreale, 100.
[202] Stefania Gerevini, "*Christus crystallus*, Rock Crystal, Theology, and Materiality in the Medieval West," in *Matter of Faith*, ed. Robinson and de Beer, 94–96.

sparkling like crystal, and awesome" (Ez. 1:22).[203] John describes another mystical phenomenon from the same space in his own vision of the throne: "also in front of the throne [of God] was what looked like a sea of glass, clear as crystal" (Rev. 4:6). Elsewhere in Revelation, John ascribes a crystalline radiance to the whole city of the Heavenly Jerusalem, which he says, "shone with the glory of God, and its brilliance was like that of a very precious jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal" (Rev. 21:11). Finally, John uses crystal a third time to describe the river of life that flows down from the throne and through the celestial realm: "then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb" (Rev. 22:1).

These verses, which describe each of several different zones of the heavenly city as being like crystal led to varying intepretations by Christian exegates. Gerevini traces several notions that received special treatment. Two main threads come from Gregory the Great's gloss on Ezekiel 1:22, which considers the crystalline vault of the throne room as both a representative of angelic nature and as a metaphor for the body of Christ: subject to corruption and change while human but transformed into an incorruptible state through the Resurrection.[204] Gregory's interpretations of rock crystal are both rooted in a popular understanding of the material nature of the stone that came down from antiquity. According to Pliny the Elder's *Naturalis historia*, rock crystal is water frozen so completely that it will never melt.[205] The conception that rock crystal was a form of water

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[203] Biblical quotes are from the New International Version.
[204] Gerevini, "*Christus crystallus*," 94. On Gregory the Great's comments see Also Gia Toussaint, "The Sacred Made Visible: The Use of Rock Crystal in Medieval Church Treasuries," in *Seeking Transparency*, ed. Cynthia Hahn and Avinoam Shalem (Berlin: Gebr. Mann Verlag, 2020), 231–232.
[205] For a discussion of how Pliny's understanding of rock crystal was communicated in the lapidary tradition, see Brigitte Buettner, "Icy Geometry: Rock Crystal in Lapidary Knowledge," in *Seeking Transparency*, ed. Hahn and Shalem, 117–128.

or ice was commonly held throughout the Middle Ages, disseminated in part through lapidary texts and encyclopedias. Following this line of thinking, the medium of rock crystal was remarkable in the fact that it combines two different natures, both liquid and solid. As a result, crystal provides an excellent parallel for Gregory in explaining the mysteries of transformation and perfection as they apply both to the nature of angels and the body of Christ himself.

As Gerevini explains, later writers built on the connections made in Gregory's gloss to consider passages from the Book of Revelation as they relate to other divine mysteries.[206] For thinkers such as Haimo of Auxerre and Rupert of Deutz, the "sea of glass, clear as crystal" that John visualizes before the throne of God in Revelation 4:6 alludes to the purification of the soul through baptism, which makes it transparent. The juxtaposition in the passage between glass and crystal, which share the quality of transparency but differ in the resiliance of their materiality, aligns with the fragility of the human body that is dissolved and made strong and incorruptible. For Haimo, the sea of glass is an analogy for the saints who, purified by baptism, were hardened by the suffering they endured, but for Rupert, it representsents more generally the promise of resurrection.

The passage in Revelation 22:1 converges with ideas about the person of Christ and baptism introduced in commentaries on Ezekiel 1:22 and Revelation 4:6.[207] Here, it is the river of life, "flowing from the throne of God and of the lamb" that is "clear as crystal." Commentary on this passage sometimes sees the river as an allegory for the

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[206] Gerevini, "*Christus crystallus*," 94. On the glosses of Haimo of Auxerre and Rupert of Deutz, see also Bissera V. Pentcheva, "The 'Crystalline Effect': Optical and Sonic Aura and the Poetics of the Resurrected Body," in *Seeking Transparency*, ed. Hahn and Shalem, 220–223.
[207] Gerevini, "*Christus crystallus*," 94–95.

Holy Spirit, since it flows down from both God and the Lamb. In this reading of the passage, crystal might be understood as a manifestation of the mystery of the Trinity. Elsewhere, the river is understood to represent the Holy Scripture, which carries the Holy Spirit down to human souls that have been purified in baptismal waters.

For Gerevini, the readings of these passages focus on theological mysteries that "entailed enigmatic transmutations of matter or the concomitance of different ontological states."[208] Rock crystal was an excellent visualization of these mysteries because of its own status as a material believed to have undergone a transcendantal transformation from water to ice to stone. In contrast to the other verses, which provide several avenues for interpretation, the passage in Revelation 21:11 is usually understood to refer specifically to the radiance of the resurrected body of Christ. This reading is stated most explicitly by Richard of Victor, who explains "Christ is crystal, because resurrecting from the dead, he shone brilliant with the glory of immortality."[209] In the example of Christ, the complex theological notions of incarnation, baptism, and ultimately resurrection are all bundled together. Crystal, then, as a signifier of the resurrected body, shining in the brilliance of heaven, can be understood as a material guarantee of the salvation offered through Christ's sacrifice.

In the context of these discussions, the significance of the use of a rock crystal vessel in a Christological reliquary like the Reliquary of the Miraculous Blood is clear: the clear stone represents the heavenly body of Christ. But if the crystal vessel signifies the ressurected body of Christ, another layer of meaning must also be generated by the blood relic itself, contained within the vessel. Bodily relics of Christ were a relatively late

[208] Gerevini, "*Christus crystallus*," 94.
[209] Quoted in Pentcheva, "The 'Crystalline Effect,'" 213. See also Gerevini, "*Christus crystallus*," 94.

development, apparently first appearing in the ninth century, and became the subject of some debate among theologians. Blood relics of Christ were rare in the Western Europe before the year 1200, the most famous source being a cache of blood discovered in Mantua in 804 that was said to have been brought there by Longinus.[210] Byzantium, on the other hand, was known to hold several prized relics of the Holy Blood at important sanctuaries, including at the Hagia Sophia and the church of the Vigin of Pharos, a chapel in the Imperial Palace complex in Constantinople.[211] Following the Fourth Crusade, relics of the Holy Blood proliferated across Western Europe, prompting increasing discussion by theologians about the nature of these bodily relics of Christ.[212]

Caroline Walker Bynum finds some critical reflection in early discussions regarding the question of relics of Christ's blood. Early writers, from Braulio of Saragossa in the seventh century to Guibert de Nogent in the twelfth, suggest that devotion should be offered instead to the blood of the eucharist.[213] Guibert in particular is fierce in his critism of body relics of Christ, which he views to be an impossible contradiction running against the promise of a perfect resurrection through material continuity. As Bynum argues, the fundamental opposition to the possibility that some of Christ's blood or body parts were left behind disappears in the thirteenth century, paving the way for a variety of explanations for these relics. This discussion centered around the

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[210] Nicholas Vincent, *The Holy Blood* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 40–65.
[211] Vincent, *The Holy Blood*, 67. On the relics of the church of the Virgin of Pharos, see Holger Klein, "Sacred Relics and Imperial Ceremonies at the Great Palace of Constantinople," in *Visualisierungen von Herrschaft*, *BYSAZ* 5, ed. Franz Alto Bauer (Istanbul: Ege Yayinari, 2006), 79–99. A translation of a list of relics in Constantinople compiled in the twelfth century appears in Hans Belting, *Likeness and Presence* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 527–528.
[212] The spread of blood relics from Constantinople to various repositories in Europe is discussed in Nicolas Huyghebaert, "Iperius et la translation de la relique du Saint-Sang à Bruges," *Annales de la Société d'Émulation de Bruges* 100 (1963): 147–153.
[213] Caroline Walker Bynum, *Wonderful Blood* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007), 96–98. On Guibert of Nogent See also Vincent, *The Holy Blood*, 82–85.

phrase *veritas humanae naturae*, used by Pope Innocent III to describe the essential material core of the body that would achieve incorruptibility.[214]

Robert Grosseteste relies on this distinction to make the case for relics of Christ's blood in a short piece called *De sanguine Christi*, which was probably composed at the request of King Henry III as a part of a translation ceremony celebrating the arrival of a blood relic at Westminster Cathedral in 1247.[215] The first half of the composition establishes the provenance of the relic, which was said to have been sent to England by the patriarch of Jerusalem. This blood relic was linked to the Passion; Grosseteste traces its lineage back to Joseph of Arimathea, who he says collected it in a cup. Given this provenance, Grosseteste needed to explain how it was possible that blood spilled in the Passion was left behind after Christ's ressurection. As Nicholas Vincent and Bynum have shown, Grosseteste's defense of the Westminster blood relic depended on the distinction between *veritas humanae naturae*, that is the essential material core of the body, and secondary, or "superfluous," blood that only provided nutrition to the body. For Vincent, Grosseteste's argument is not only theological, but also scientific, informed by his understanding of the body as a system in which arteries and veins functioned independently from each other and contained fluids formed in different ways.[216]

Thomas Aquinas was aware of Grosseteste's argument, summarizing it in a quodlibet in 1271 before refuting it. In part three of the *Summa theologiae*, Aquinas goes further, arguing that that blood relics can not be remnants of the Passion because he considers all the blood that flowed from Christ's body to be part of the *veritas humanae*

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[214] Bynum, *Wonderful Blood*, 98. See also Vincent, *The Holy Blood*, 86.
[215] Vincent, *The Holy Blood*, 87–99. See also Bynum, *Wonderful Blood*, 98–101.
[216] Vincent, *The Holy Blood*, 95–98.

naturae.[217] Instead, Aquinas suggests that blood relics come from another source, flowing down from a maltreated image of the Lord.[218] For Bynum, Aquinas's opinion of the Holy Blood is shaped by a number of his other beliefs that were incompatible with the persistent existence of blood from the Passion, including his theory of formal identity through unicity of form and his understanding of the salvific power of blood as funtioning through unity with the Godhead.[219] Effluvial blood relics, on the other hand, such as the blood from a maltreated image, are like saintly relics or holy images: worthy mediators of devotion offered to the examplar rather than the object itself.

An alternate justification is put forth by Gerhard of Cologne, who wrote a *Tractatus de sacratissimo sanguine domini* in 1280 in defense of the blood relic at Weingarten.[220] Gerhard's defense is based on the fact that blood relics are miracles, made possible by the same miracle of concomitance that explains the mysteries of resurrection and the eucharist. Since all of Christ is in every particle, then His blood can be simultaneously in heaven, in the eucharist, and in the relic. Gerhard also draws comparison to the story of doubting Thomas, in which the glorified body of Christ could pass through doors but still be tangible to the disciple's probing finger. For Gerhard, so too can the blood of Christ be glorified in heaven yet "palpable" on earth.[221]

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[217] Bynum, *Wonderful Blood*, 101–102.
[218] Aquinas is usually understood to mean the blood shed by the Icon of the Savior in Beirut, a popular story told in defense of Icons in the Second Council of Nicaea in 787, where it was said to be from a sermon of St. Athanasius of Alexandria (c. 320s). See Mark Daniel Holtz, "Cults of the Precious Blood in the Medieval Latin West," (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Notre Dame, 1997), 67–68 and 293–294. In the Venetian tradition, a painted crucifix miraculously bled after it was assaulted with knives in 1290, see Belting, *Likeness*, 197.
[219] Bynum, *Wonderful Blood*, 104–106.
[220] Bynum, *Wonderful Blood*, 106–108.
[221] Bynum, *Wonderful Blood*, 107.

Although thirteenth-century commentators on the veracity of the Holy Blood come to different conclusions, for Bynum the discussions are linked to larger debates about the change that the body undergoes through resurrection.[222] The notion of *veritas humanae naturae* was at the center of this debate as it related to the blood of Christ, providing an avenue to explain how some particles might be left behind. While this term was often invoked in earlier debates about which parts of the body would rise, it gained particular urgency as it applied to the Holy Blood.[223] Increasingly in the thirteenth century, popular cults were established around blood relics, and, despite their disagreements, theologians saw the blood as powerful a mediators of devotion: an affirmation in its presence of the absent body of Christ.

The theological context of the thirteenth century presents the Reliquary of the Miraculous Blood at San Marco as a compelling material object. Rock crystal alone was an ideal analogy for divine mysteries like Incarnation and Resurrection because it was believed to have conflicting natures in its own materiality, but through its use as a container for a bodily relic of Christ, this connection is made even more clear. In its formal presentation, the Reliquary of the Miraculous Blood showcases a rock crystal vessel, which can be understood as a material manifestation of the ressurected body of Christ. Contained within that vessel, however, is the relic of blood, believed to be a remnant of Christ's body, or at least as miraculous effluvia with a special connection to

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[222] Bynum, *Wonderful Blood*, 108. For further discussion of Roger Grosseteste, Thomas Aquinas, and Gerhard of Cologne, see also Holtz, "Cults of the Precious Blood," 211–253.
[223] In twelfth-century discourse, for example, there was debate about whether food consumed during one's life constitutes *veritas humanae naturae*. See Caroline Walker Bynum, *The Resurrection of the Body* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), 118–155.

Him.[224] One of the most unusual aspects of the Reliquary of the Miraculous Blood is the apparent red tint that saturates the body of the crystal vessel. Rock crystal was often used as a container for blood relics, as Gia Toussaint notes, but most of the surviving relics of the blood in Western treasuries consist of a red silk cloth wetted by only a few drops of the Holy Blood.[225] Toussaint argues that the function of red silk is simple: it indicates through its bright color the presence and nature of the blood relic in a way that is easily visible through a crystal flask. This is not the case for the Reliquary of the Miraculous Blood, which holds the relic of the blood without an intermediary such as silk cloth. While dried flecks of the blood relic are visible through the crystal upon a close inspection, from a distance the blood transforms the surface of the stone, apparently changing the very nature of its material.

For Bissera Pentcheva, the performative use of rock crystal in a liturgical setting has a distinctive phenomenological effect. Moving through space, rock crystal can catch light and burst into radiance, an occurance Pentcheva calls the "crystalline effect."[226] This effect is temporal, both in its spontaneity and its impermanence, and observable: a sudden manifestation of the divine spirit that appears through the animation of the crystal. For Pentcheva, drawing on the theological associations between crystal and the Resurrected

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[224] It is unclear what the source of this blood relic was believed to be in the Middle Ages. In later traditions from the seventeenth century onwards, the Reliquary of the Miraculous Blood is said to contain an effluvial relic from the Icon of the Savior in Beirut; for example, see Giovanni Stringa, *La Chiesa di S. Marco, Capella del Serenissima Principe de Venezia* (Venice: Francesco Rampazetto, 1610), 43–52.

[225] Gia Toussaint, "Blut oder Blendwerk? Orientalische Kristallflakons in mittelalterlichen Kirchenschätzen," in *…das Heilige sichtbar machen, Domschätzen in Vergangenheit, Gegenwart, und Zukunft*, ed. Jan-Hendrik Olbertz, Wolfgang Schenkluhn, and Ulrike Wendland (Regensburg: Schnell und Steiner, 2010), 107–120.

[226] Pentcheva, "The 'Crystalline Effect,'" 211–223.

body of Christ, the crystalline effect materializes this concept in a visible and tangible way, offering viewers a fleeting glimpse of the Resurrected body in all its glory.[227]

The crystal in the Reliquary of the Miraculous Blood created a similar but distinctive phenomenon as it was elevated from the pulpit and displayed on the altar. While the crystalline effect is activated by light and movement in space and time, the crystal vessel is here powered by another source, color. Furthermore, the red color of the crystal generates meaning in a way that takes on a different temporal dimension. Wheres the crystalline effect is fleeting, the red color is persistent, maintained by the object for the duration of its performative usage. The manifestation of the divine visible in the reliquary is especially powereful because of this longevity, presenting a clear view of the body of Christ rather than a glimpse. Because of this difference, I view the red color as representative of something other than the glorified, Resurrected body of Christ: it signifies the promise of Resurrection, a transformation of the earthly remains into a heavenly body. The promise of this transformation manifests visibly through the materiality of the relic and vessel. The red color is a material quality of the blood itself that is transferred to the crystal, creating a continuity between the two analagous to the transformation of the earthly to heavenly body through salvation.

The materialization of complex theology in the color of the Reliquary of the Miraculous Blood presents a divine mystery in a way that could be easily understood in its liturgical use. While the theological associations of crystal and debates about the blood may not have resonated for the all viewers, the signification of them would nevertheless have been clear, since, the color underscores the same themes emphasized in the liturgy that it was used to celebrate. The liturgy of Holy Week at San Marco outlined above

[227] Pentcheva, "The 'Crystalline Effect,'" 223.

showcases the reliquary in celebrations memorializing the Last Supper and Passion of Christ, and the salvific power of the blood was evoked in the Baptismal hymns of Easter Vigil and in the dramatic reenactment of the discovery of Christ's empty tomb. These rituals lay out the divine mysteries of Incarnation, death, and Ressurection that are encapsulated in the Reliquary of the Miraculous Blood. The design of this object is structured to emphasize its materiality as an especially effective manifestation of these themes, capitalizing on the interaction between relic and vessel that appears to transform the color of the crystal.

While the red coloration of the crystal seems uniform at a distance, this illusion fades upon close viewing, generating another aspect of meaning for privileged viewers of the object such as the celebrants who carried and held it (Figs. 2.5–2.6). From this vantage point, there is a clear separation between the material of the relic and that of the vessel: the dusty red blood appears in flakes that comprise an uneven coating of the interior. A close viewing of the vessel is mediated by the metalwork support that employs a delicate system of thin bands of gold to hold it aloft. These golden bands are connected to each other by a series of hinges, which guide the support around the profile of the bottle. Beate Fricke finds that hinges are often used to secure rock crystal in reliquaries, in contrast to other precious stones which are more commonly embedded in permanent settings.[228] For Fricke, hinges indicate a connection between dichotomies (i.e. native/foregin craftsmanship; the profane/sacred; earthly/heavenly) forged at the moment of creation. While the hinge implies the recognition of difference, it is also the

[228] Beate Fricke, "Hinges as Hints: Heaven and Earth in the Coconut Goblet at the Cathedral of Münster, Part of a Lost Rock Crystal Ensemble," in *Seeking Transparency*, ed. Hahn and Shalem, 197–200.

ambivalent point that bridges the divide, capturing and affixing a moment of transformation.[229]

The hinges that frame the crystal vessel at the center of the Reliquary of the Miraculous Blood provide a metaphor for thinking about the moment of transformation suggested by its materiality. As I argue above, the red color of the vessel evokes broadly the promise of resurrection. For privileged viewers, the reliquary presents this notion as a moment frozen in time. The particles of the earthly body are visible even as they are affixed to the inner contours of the crystal vessel. Whereas the red color of the crystal seems uniform from afar, a close viewing dispels this illusion, revealing instead a remarkable complexity of color and form. The flecks of blood and swathes of clear crystal visible in some areas blend into other zones that are less distinctive. The aesymmetrical appearance of the blood through the stone amplifies the dichotomy of the earthly and heavenly bodies they represent. The hinges that mediate the presentation of the vessel of blood suggest the connection between them, the instant of resurrection that joins together the earthly body and glorified body in heaven.

Conclusion

This chapter establishes that the Reliquary of the Miraculous Blood generated meaning for the Venetian community in two ways: as part of a larger treasure collection of the Basilica of San Marco, and through its use in the liturgical ceremonies of Holy Week. I have reviewed several thirteenth-century sources that establish the significance of the reliquary in the period. It was believed to be part of a group of relics brough to Venice from Constantinople, it survived a devastating fire, and was subsequently

[229] Fricke, "Hinges as Hints," 208–209.

memorialized in a relief sculpture, listed as among the foremost objects in inventory records, and its provenance was later canonized in chronicle accounts. I consider the reliquary alongside the other items listed in the 1283 inventory record to suggest that it functioned as a part of the broader collection to bolster the Myth of Venice, the divine blessing that justified the Venetian's relic thefts and guaranteed the stability of its political and military dominance in the Mediterranean. I show that the treasure supports this narrative as evidenced by the wealth of materials in its holdings connected to foreign places around the rim of the Mediterranean, from Tunis to Alexandria and Constantinople.

My analysis of the liturgical setting in which the Reliquary of the Miraculous Blood suggests that its materiality enabled it to perform a different function as an individual object. I have shown that the reliquary was used in aspects of liturgical performance that were uniquely Venetian. The public display of the reliquary during Holy Week, and the performance of hymns and liturgical dramas that include specific invocations of the blood spilled in the Passion remained in use in Venice through the end of the sixteenth century.[230] I argue that the materiality of the Reliquary of the Miraculous Blood emphasized themes of incarnation, death, and resurrection, echoing the liturgy and providing a tangible manifestation of the promise of salvation. Caroline Walker Bynum observes the power of blood relics had as they increasingly appeared in Western Europe, driving both theological discussions about the nature of the relic and the development of

[230] John Bettley, "The Office of Holy Week at St. Mark's, Venice, in the Late 16th Century, and the Musical Contributions of Giovanni Croce," *Early Music* 22, no. 1 (1994): 45–50. Bettley summarizes the Holy Week rituals of San Marco published by Giovanni Stringa in 1597, demonstrating the persistence of earlier elements, such as the display of relics of Maundy Thursday, the *Rex sanctorum angelorum* hymn sung in procession to the baptismal font during the Easter Vigil on Saturday, and the *Quem queritis* drama on Easter Sunday.

cult practice, itself.[231] The Reliquary of the Miraculous Blood is an especially potent example that demonstrates how materiality can mediate the presence of the divine through the apparent transformation of its visual form. This agency was clearly recognized in medieval Venice, evidenced by the extraordinary support of pure gold crafted to showcase this crystal phial of blood, the celebration of it as one of the principal treasures, and the development of a liturgical tradition around its display.[232]

[231] Bynum, *Wonderful Blood*, 108.

[232] The Reliquary of the Miraculous Blood is one of three principal blood relics held at San Marco before the seventeenth century. Primary veneration probably shifted to another reliquary, the Reliquary of the Most Precious Blood around 1617, when Giovanni Tiepolo identified it as the relic brought from Constantinople that survived the fire and was mentioned in Doge Zeno's letter and later chronicles, see Tiepolo, *Trattato delle Santissime Reliquie, ultimamente ritrouvate nel Sanctuario della Chiesa di San Marco* (Venice: Antonio Panelli, 1617), 28–50. The Reliquary of the Most Precious Blood was likely also acquired in Byzantium and is associated with a circular middle Byzantine casket that contained the blood relic and a Gothic monstrance reliquary, see Hahnloser, ed. *Il Tesoro*, 37–38 and 180–181. For a summary of the different blood relics at San Marco, see Renato Polacco, "I reliquiari del sangue di Cristo nel tesoro di San Marco," in *Del Lapidibus Sententiae*, ed. Tiziana Franco and Giovanna Valenzano (Padua: Il Poligrafo, 2002), 307–319; Michele Donega, "I reliquiari del Sangue di Cristo del Tesoro di San Marco," *Arte Documento* 11 (1997): 64–71. The similarity between the inventory descriptions (which were apparently unknown to Tiepolo), the depiction in the relief plaque, and the pure gold mounting of the Monstrance of the Holy Blood indicate its status as the primary blood relic in the thirteenth century.

CHAPTER THREE

Re-Presenting the Past: The Monstrance Reliquary with a Tooth of John the Baptist from the Guelph Treasure, Brunswick

In the recent reinstallation of the Deering Family Galleries of Medieval and Renaissance Art, Arms, and Armor at the Art Institute of Chicago, the monstrance reliquary of the Tooth of St. John the Baptist stands out among a display of reliquaries from the Guelph Treasure (Fig. 3.1).[233] This reliquary is an unusual monstrance that forms the central case study for this chapter. While it appears at first, like its neighbors in the museum case, as a relatively simple late Gothic turret monstrance, it is distinguished from other examples by its setting, which employs a carved Islamic rock crystal bottle as the vessel for the sacred relic that it holds. Islamic rock crystals are relatively common containers for relics in Western Christian treasuries, evidenced by the fact that another such object is the subject of the previous chapter of this dissertation. However, this reliquary is a rare, likely unique, extant example of an Islamic crystal set into a late Gothic tower monstrance, a type that developed in the West long after most crystals are believed to have been transported there.

This chapter presents the first extended analysis of the Tooth Reliquary, divided into several sections. First, I consider the visual form of the reliquary and summarize its

[233] The Guelph Treasure was famously dispersed in 1930–1931 during a touring exhibition that traveled across the United States. 38 of the 82 pieces were acquired by American institutions and the remaining objects were purchased by the Preussische Regierung für die Berliner Museen, a subsidy of the National Socialist (Nazi) party. The exhibition was accompanied by a *de luxe* catalogue, see Otto von Falke, et al., Der Welfenschatz (Frankfurt am Main: Frankfurter Verlags-Anstalt A.G., 1930). For more on the exhibition and sale, see Patrick M. de Winter, "The Sacral Treasure of the Guelphs," *The Bulletin of the Cleveland Museum of Art* 72, no. 1 (1985): 128–137.

history and interpretation by previous scholars. By comparing the form of the reliquary's metalwork frame to other late Gothic monstrances from the Guelph Treasure, I demonstrate that the reliquary is designed to call attention to the materiality of the Islamic, carved rock crystal. The Tooth Reliquary, unlike others from Brunswick, presents the crystal itself as a spectacle rather than a means of providing transparent access to the relics. I then examine the provenance of the Fatimid bottle containing the saint's tooth, which I argue was most likely obtained in Constantinople and brought back to Germany by Henry the Lion in the late twelfth century.

The marked visual peculiarity of the crystal and its foreign origins raise the question of cultural exchange, which has long been debated in the scholarship on medieval ecclesiastical objects. Following the work of scholars such as Anthony Cutler and Eva Hoffman, I argue that the question of hybridity must be considered not only as a part of broad pan-Mediterranean trends, but also within a local context. By examining documents such as inventory records and comparing the Tooth Reliquary to other examples of Islamic rock crystal in the region around Lower Saxony, I argue that the crystal would likely have been valued by medieval viewers as a luxury object from the East that could only be obtained by powerful secular or religious figures.

Finally, I consider the question of why this valuable imported rock crystal was reframed in the form of a monstrance around the year 1400. I connect the Tooth Reliquary to additional objects in the Guelph Treasure that likewise present antique objects from the ecclesiastical collection. Considered together, I argue that these reliquaries represent a sustained effort to shape local memory and identity in Brunswick, recalling an earlier period of political prestige and religious influence. In the case of the

Tooth Reliquary, this charged meaning is created by the presentation of the Islamic rock crystal as a physical material that is recognizably foreign rather than by facilitating clear and transparent access to the relic it contains. My interpretation of the Tooth Reliquary opens the door for a more complex and nuanced understanding of the ways in which monstrance reliquaries could create meaning for their medieval viewers.

The Historical Context

Produced in Germany around 1400, the Tooth Reliquary of St. John the Baptist at the Art Institute of Chicago, appears in the format of a typical Gothic turret monstrance (Fig. 3.1).[234] The reliquary forms an architectural frame around a rock crystal bottle, which contains the tooth relic. The bottle is slightly oval and is intricately carved with foliate motifs that wrap around its outer edge. To modern viewers, the patternwork on the bottle's outer surface indicates that it was probably produced by Islamic craftsmen in the Fatimid workshops of Cairo sometime in the tenth or eleventh century. Undoubtedly, the bottle is the central focal point of the reliquary, which stands on a six-sided foot reminiscent of a chalice. An inscription spans three lobes on the foot, reading *Dens*

[234] For descriptions of the Tooth Reliquary see Christina Nielsen, "Reliquary with Tooth of St. John the Baptist," in *Treasures of Heaven: Saints, Relics, and Devotion in Medieval Europe*, ed. Martina Bagnoli et al. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010), 84; Nielsen, "Devotion and Splendor, Medieval Art at the Art Institute of Chicago," *Art Institute of Chicago Museum Studies* 30, no. 2 (2004): 53–54; Andrea Boockmann, *Die verlorenen Teile des 'Welfenschatzes'* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1997), 143; Avinoam Shalem, *Islam Christianized, Islamic Portable Objects in Medieval Church Treasuries in the Latin West* (New York: Peter Lang GmbH, 1996), 183–184; de Winter "The Sacral Treasure," 141; Goldschmidt Galleries, *The Guelph Treasure Shown at the Art Institute of Chicago* (Chicago: Art Institute of Chicago, 1931), 61; Otto von Falke, et al., *Der Welfenschatz* (Frankfurt am Main: Frankfurter Verlags-Anstalt A.G., 1930), 194; W.A. Neumann, *Der Reliquienschatz des Hauses Braunschweig-Lüneberg* (Vienna: Alfred Hölder, 1891), 285–286. The Art Institute of Chicago follows Boockmann's attribution of the reliquary to the goldsmith Weddeghe Veltstede in 1433, see Boockmann, *Die verlorenen*, 33-34. I have listed this attribution in the image captions, but follow the scholarly consensus that dates the reliquary closer to 1400 in the text.

Johannis Baptiste, or "Tooth of John the Baptist." The bottle is centered on the reliquary's vertical axis and is secured at the bottom and top by a metalwork casing that forms an open-air niche around the vessel. A turret rises over the crystal, concealing the bottle's open mouth, and a miniature crucifix caps the spire. The metalwork superstructure imitates Gothic architecture through its emphasis on verticality and minimalism, leaving a large central cavity at its center to display the bottle.

Unlike many reliquaries in American museum collections, its place of origin and provenance are concretely documented. The Tooth Reliquary is part of the Guelph Treasure, a collection of over eighty reliquaries, portable altars, crosses, and liturgical instruments from the church of St. Blaise in Brunswick, in Lower Saxony, Germany.[235] Originally founded around 1030 and dedicated to Sts. Blaise, John the Baptist, Peter, Paul, and the Virgin Mary, the church received the patronage of the powerful Guelph family, the ducal house of Brunswick, from the twelfth century onward. The treasure remained in the cathedral until 1671, when Duke John Frederick of Hanover seized it following a revolt by the citizens of Brunswick. Miraculously, the treasure remained intact for the next 250 years, despite moving to Hanover, to England, back to Hanover, and then to Vienna, Gmunden, and a location in Switzerland. In 1929, eighty-two pieces of the treasure were sold to a group of art dealers in Frankfurt.[236] These objects were exhibited in the United States in 1930–1931, and many pieces were sold to American

[235] For summaries of the history of the treasure, see Neumann, *Der Reliquienschatz*, 25–41; von Falke, et al., *Der Welfenschatz*, 11–22; de Winter, "The Sacral," 128–137.
[236] For the current known locations of the Guelph Treasure, see de Winter, "The Sacral," 139–141. Three pieces were not sold in the 1930s: an eleventh-century arm reliquary of St. Blaise (Herzog Anton-Ulrich Museum, Brunswick), an eleventh-century ivory hunting horn (Herzog Anton-Ulrich Museum, Brunswick), and the twelfth-century Gospels of Henry the Lion (now at the Herzog August Bibliothek, Wolfenbüttel).

museums and private collectors. The remaining objects were sold to the Prussian state in 1935, and now belong to the Stiftung Preußischer Kulturbesitz in Berlin.

Three major publications document the history and objects of the Guelph Treasure collectively. In 1891, W.A. Neumann published a large volume intended to catalogue the collection, but many of his conclusions have been challenged by later authors. The 1930 volume by Otto von Falke, Robert Schmidt, and Georg Swarzenski catalogues the portion of the collection that was exhibited and sold in the 1930s, providing brief descriptions of the eighty-two objects as well as commentary on the history of the collection and the stylistic movements it encompasses, including pre-Romanesque, Oriental and Byzantine, Romanesque, and Gothic art. The German edition was supplemented by a limited run of English translations, and abridged editions accompanied the treasure's museum tour. Finally, in 1985, the Cleveland Museum of Art published a special edition of its bulletin, titled "The Sacral Treasure of the Guelphs" by Patrick de Winter. The first major study in English on the Guelph Treasure, this text provides a similar summary of its history and artistic styles, with special attention paid to the nine objects that the Cleveland Museum acquired in the 1930s. As a group these texts have established a basic chronology of the treasure, which was built up over several centuries and includes material acquired from foreign locales as well as domestic metalwork. Most of the authors focus heavily on the earliest objects from the collection, both since they are rare examples of well-documented treasury pieces, and because there was a desire to connect the pieces to Henry the Lion, widely considered the most important patron of St. Blaise. The firm provenance of the Tooth Reliquary of St. John

the Baptist, alongside its unusual inclusion of a Fatimid rock crystal vessel, makes it a compelling example for scholarly study.

One of the last essays that Michael Camille published before his death in 2002 included the Tooth Reliquary within a study of medieval visuality. He argued that the emphasis on sight and transparency in Gothic art, including the desire for visual access to relics, arose from a changing culture of visuality in the later Middle Ages.[237] For Camille, this cultural shift stems from the move from extramission to intromission in medieval optical theory.[238] Both models propose a theory of vision based on propagation of visual rays that form a connection between the viewer and the object of sight. In the extramission model, which was the dominant theory in medieval Europe until about the thirteenth century, the eye emits rays that, upon making contact with an object in the visible world, return information to the viewer enabling visual perception. In intromission theory, the agency of visual rays is reversed: objects in the world emit rays containing coded visual information that enter the eye. Camille argues that this model fundamentally alters devotional interaction with cult objects, such as reliquaries, because in intromission, the viewer perceives an object tangibly by way of its rays penetrating the eye.[239] In other words, eye contact establishes a direct physical link between a relic and the beholder.

Interestingly, Camille chose to illustrate his points about vision and the related transparent aesthetic in Gothic art in this essay with the Tooth Reliquary of St. John the

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[237] Michael Camille, "Before the Gaze: The Internal Senses and Late Medieval Practices of Seeing," in *Visuality Before and Beyond the Renaissance: Seeing as Others Saw*, ed. Robert S. Nelson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 197–223.
[238] See David C. Lindberg, *Theories of Vision from al-Kindi to Kepler* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976), 87–121. A synthesis of the two leading theories was another approach employed by some thirteenth-century authors, including Robert Grosseteste and Roger Bacon.
[239] Camille, "Before," 207–209.

Baptist. However, the carved foliate motif on the Islamic rock crystal bottle set at the center of the reliquary serves to distort vision and block a transparent viewing of the relic of St. John's Tooth. The disruptive quality of the bottle is especially apparent in comparison to other monstrance reliquaries from the Guelph Treasure that employ rock crystal or glass cylinders as windows for viewing relics. The treasure includes among the many examples of later medieval reliquaries six additional monstrances that traveled to the United States the 1930–1931 exhibition.

The Circular Monstrance with a Domed Roof, also from the Guelph Treasure and now in the Art Institute of Chicago, shares a similar construction with the Tooth Reliquary (Fig. 3.2).[240] Here, the rock crystal container is cylindrical and is packed tightly into a rounded architectural element, complete with a trefoil arcade, dome, buttresses pierced by windows and held aloft with columns and pinnacles. In comparison to the Tooth Reliquary, the rock crystal container is more integrated in this example, fully incorporated at the core of the object. Whereas the Fatimid bottle in the Tooth Reliquary sits in a wide pocket of empty space created by the metalwork support, the Domed Monstrance features a silver-gilt framework that runs vertically alongside the crystal cylinder. In further contrast, the Domed Monstrance features the characteristic transparency that provides a clear view of the relics held within. The cylindrical crystal canister here looks almost like glass: the relic on this side stands out so sharply that the viewer can easily see the lettering on the authentic, a thin strip of parchment that identifies the bone fragment and confirms its sanctity.

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[240] Published in de Winter "The Sacral," 141; von Falke, et al., *Der Welfenschatz*, 194; Neumann, *Der Reliquienschatz*, 283–285.

One of the most elaborate, extant monstrance reliquaries from the Guelph Treasure is the Reliquary of the Finger of John the Baptist, now in the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art in Kansas City (Fig. 3.3).[241] Like the other two, this reliquary also includes a Gothic architectural housing, though here the detailing is far more complex. The relic is displayed at the center, encased in a cylindrical piece of glass (possibly a replacement of a lost rock crystal). The architectural detailing is exaggerated in comparison to the other two examples. The base of the stem and the knob at its center are outfitted with Gothic windowed facades, and the central structure of the monstrance appears as a multi-story elevation of metalwork, which includes windowed side aisles, pinnacled buttresses, and a hexagonal turret with trefoil pointed arches. Directly above the relic, a miniature statue of St. John the Baptist stands on a pedestal, surrounded by jamb sculptures. In addition to the architectural detailing, the reliquary is ornamented throughout with delicate flower-shaped bosses, and a set of six miniature bells that hang down below the center. Finally, the relic of St. John's finger, clearly visible through the glass cylinder, has also been encased in resplendent gold and crowned with a golden Agnus Dei medallion.

Although the detailing of the Finger Reliquary is far more elaborate than the decoration of the other two, the focus is still drawn squarely to the center of the monstrance, where the relic is held. The finger is clearly visible through the glass cylinder, and its golden encasement suggests that the original rock crystal container would have been designed to facilitate vision, as in the Domed Monstrance. The Tooth Reliquary, on the other hand, contrasts with these other Guelph monstrance reliquaries. In

[241] Published in de Winter "The Sacral," 142; von Falke, et al., *Der Welfenschatz*, 198–199; Neumann, *Der Reliquienschatz*, 281–283.

optimal lighting conditions, such as those used for the official museum photography of the object, the tooth of St. John is barely visible though the patterned Fatimid crystal bottle (Figs. 3.4–3.5). Although the tooth is in fact wrapped in red cloth and affixed with a parchment authentic, it appears at best as a brownish mass embedded in center of the vessel (Fig. 3.6). While Camille's understanding of crystal as facilitating visuality and transparency holds true for some monstrance reliquaries, such as the Domed Monstrance also at the Art Institute of Chicago, it does not fully explain the stone used in the Tooth Reliquary (Fig. 3.7). Still, Camille's gravitation towards the Tooth Reliquary is understandable. The carved rock crystal bottle is striking for its carved decoration, and the goldwork is designed, as I have described above, to showcase it. Rather than provide transparent visual access to the relic, the monstrance serves to present the Fatimid crystal vessel for viewing. Considering the reliquary from this perspective brings questions regarding the provenance and transmission of the bottle to the medieval West to the forefront.

The rock crystal container in the Tooth Reliquary is a product of Fatimid Egypt, a prolific production center for rock crystal from the eighth to the eleventh century.[242] The Fatimid treasury in Cairo is legendary, said to have held 18,000 pieces of carved rock crystal in varying sizes, including ewers, flagons, cups, smaller perfume bottles, ampullae, and flasks. The technique for carving rock crystal is complicated, and there were relatively few centers of production in the Middle Ages. Additionally, there are several stages in the process of production, which suggests that places like Fatimid Egypt built up centers over long periods of time. First, assessors, who decided what would be

[242] Anna Contadini, *Fatimid Art at the Victoria and Albert Museum*, (London: V&A Publications, 1998), 16–38.

made from large and small pieces, judged pieces of crystal and then sent them to craftsmen. The pieces were roughly cut to shape, and then hollowed out. The hollowing process most likely employed an abrasive mixture of sand and water that was used to slowly grind away the center of the crystal, allowing the maker to drill the inner cavity. Craftsmen carved the intricate outer detailing on rock crystal pieces using a similar technique, applying an abrasive mixture to the stone and carving details using a tool called a bow lathe. Finally, the surfaces of the rock crystal were polished to achieve a shiny, lustrous finish. The difficult and laborious process, combined with the limited availability of raw material, is consistent with the paucity of production centers throughout the Middle Ages.

In the mid-1060s, the Fatimid armies ransacked the treasury in Cairo and its contents were dispersed to Muslim courts in Spain and Sicily, the Byzantine court in Constantinople, and elsewhere. About 180 pieces of Fatimid rock crystal still survive, and most of these were preserved in Western Christian treasuries, as Avinoam Shalem has documented.[243] The rock crystal bottle of the Tooth Reliquary is a common formal type of bottle, most likely made for secular use as containers of fragrant oils or perfumes.[244] At least twenty-six of these types of bottles survive, usually featuring a small, cylindrical body decorated with scrolling leaves. There is some variety in shape and size, and a small number of the bottles replace vegetal decorative motifs with Kufic inscriptions.

The historical roots of St. John the Baptist's tooth are not concretely documented, but it is likely that Henry the Lion acquired the relic from the Byzantine Emperor Manuel

[243] Shalem, *Islam Christianized*, 56–58.
[244] Contadini, *Fatimid Art*, 16–38; Shalem, *Islam*, 25–29.

I during his pilgrimage to Palestine in 1172–1173. Arnold of Lübeck's *Chronicle of the Slavs*, which was probably written by 1210, documents the trip.[245] In a detailed study of Henry's pilgrimage, Einar Joranson argues that Henry acquired multiple relics from the Byzantine Emperor during his return passage through Constantinople. Just before his departure, Henry refused the emperor's offer of mules loaded with gold, silver and silk vestments, asking instead for a collection of relics. Eventually, Manuel consented, but not before adding to the relics, "much glory of precious stones."[246] This kind of story contains typical rhetorical devices associated with medieval stories of diplomatic gift exchange. By refusing the Byzantine emperor's offer of gold, textiles, and other material riches, Henry underlines his own piety and commitment to the church. Moreover, Henry still allows Manuel to bestow upon him a gift of immeasurable value by accepting relics, thus following the diplomatic tradition of good-faith gift exchange.

Though Joranson does not identify any of the relics that Henry the Lion obtained in Byzantium, he does note the Duke's association with the Guelph Treasure, and suggests that Henry may have acquired some of the relics from the treasure, especially those with containers fabricated before the end of the twelfth century.[247] Patrick de Winter adds that Henry the Lion planned to donate his collection of relics to St. Blaise in Brunswick, which he had begun to renovate upon his return from Palestine in 1173.[248] However, Henry died in 1195 before the construction of the new church was completed, and the collection passed to his son, the Holy Roman Emperor Otto IV. In Otto's will,

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[245] Einar Joranson, "The Palestine Pilgrimage of Henry the Lion," in *Medieval and Historiographical Essays in Honor of J.W. Thompson*, ed. James Lea Cate and Eugene N. Anderson (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1938), 148–149.
[246] Joranson, "The Palestine," 205.
[247] Joranson, "The Palestine," 214–215 and n. 233–239.
[248] Goldschmidt Galleries, *The Guelph*, 20.

dated June 15, 1218, he leaves his collection of relics to St. Blaise (see Appendix B).[249] The will only mentions a few relics by name, including fragments of the cross, the holy lance, the crown of thorns, and a tooth of St. John the Baptist; these are set aside as a part of Otto's imperial regalia.[250] Otherwise, the will states that: "All the relics, which our father had, and we have now, we offer in perpetuity to God and St. John the Baptist and St. Blaise in Brunswick, expect for one arm, which shall be presented to our wife."[251] Since Otto IV's reign only lasted a few years, and because he never made a trip to the Holy Land himself, it is likely most of the relics he donated to St. Blaise were those that he had inherited from his father Henry the Lion. The relic of St. John the Baptist's tooth was probably already encased in the bottle when it left Constantinople, which was one of the greatest repositories of Islamic carved rock crystals after the sack of the Fatimid treasury in the 1060s.

The marked visual difference between the composition of the Tooth Reliquary and those of the Circular Monstrance with a Domed Roof and the Finger Reliquary of St. John the Baptist takes on additional significance in light of the bottle's historical connection to the patronage of Henry the Lion, and its Eastern provenance. As I argued above, the Tooth Reliquary, unlike other Guelph reliquaries, is designed to present and

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[249] de Winter, "The Sacral," 115 and 153 n. 84.

[250] The reliquaries associated with the imperial regalia are now in the Imperial Treasury in Vienna. The regalia includes a monstrance reliquary with a tooth of John the Baptist dated to the mid-fourteenth century, probably made after the relics were installed in Karstein Castle in Prague by Charles IV. Previously, the imperial relics were stored in the Imperial Cross (*Reichskreuz)*. See Holger Klein, "Sacred Things and Holy Bodies: Collecting Relics from Late Antiquity to the Early Renaissance," in *Treasures of Heaven*, ed. Bagnoli et al., 60-61; Harmut Kühne, *Ostensio Reliquiarum: Untersuchen über Entstehung, Ausbreitung, Gestalt und Funktion der Heiltumsweisungen im römischen-deutschen Regnum* (New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2000), 92-99; Hermann Fillitz, *Die Insignien und Kleinodien des Heiligen Römischen Reiches* (Vienna: Verlag Anton Schroll & Co., 1954), 22 and fig. 43.

[251] Niedersächsisches Landesarchiv Wolfenbüttel, 2 Urk 1, No. 1. The Latin text reads: "Omnes reliquias, quas pater noster habuit, et nos habemus, Deo et S. Johanni Baptistae, et S. Blasio in Bruneswic perpetualiter offerimus, praeter unum brachium, quod uxori nostrae repraesentabitur."

showcase the Islamic crystal bottle, not to provide a clear view of the tooth relic it contains. The remainder of this chapter will consider some of the ways the presentation of this bottle as the centerpiece of a reliquary could generate meaning in its aesthetic, materiality, and provenance.

Cultural Exchange

Though the transmission of the Fatimid bottle to the West and its transformation into a holy reliquary might immediately bring to mind the concept of spolia, the use of this word is somewhat problematic. The use of spolia as a term used to denote objects reused as spoils, or stripped from their original context, postdates the medieval period, but it has been used in scholarship dating back to the eighteenth century in an attempt to explain the presence of pagan, or non-Christian, material in the context of the medieval church.[252] Most often, the term refers to reused classical gems, marble, or architectural elements, but it may also apply to Islamic objects or Byzantine objects that reached the West after the sack of Constantinople. Early trends in the scholarship generally see spolia in one of two ways: either as an impediment to the development of new, medieval, styles, or as a testament to the surviving influence of classical antiquity.[253] More recently, spolia have been considered a form of political art, as an example of continuity between the classical and medieval worlds, and finally, as a deliberate means of neutralizing pagan significance.[254]

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[252] For a historiography of the scholarship of medieval spolia, see Dale Kinney, "The Concept of *Spolia*," in *A Companion to Medieval Art: Romanesque and Gothic in Northern Europe*, Second Edition, ed. Conrad Rudolph (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley Blackwell, 2019), 331–356.
[253] Kinney, "The Concept," 240–241.
[254] Kinney, "The Concept," 244–245.

This last category is perhaps responsible for the Christian triumphalist readings of ancient or Islamic objects reused in a medieval Christian context. Ilene Forsyth focuses on the history of reused objects to argue that the inclusion of spolia posits a whole that is greater than the sum of its parts, indicating the superiority of the present over the past.[255] She writes that, "spolia are visible witnesses of a rich past, yet they are also vital contributors to the meaning of the present. They make the work of art an art with history, a tangible history that is presumed to have reached a culminating height."[256] For Forsyth, the decorative program of the eleventh-century Borghorst Cross, which incorporates two Fatimid rock crystal flasks among other things, provides a supratemporal history encompassing a range of cultures from pagan antiquity to the present. Ultimately, she suggests that the history presented here is both progressive and triumphal, culminating in the culture of the object's patron.[257]

Though Phillipe Buc never uses the word spolia, and focuses mostly on objects donated to churches, his theory of object conversion likewise argues that objects are converted in order to represent the triumph of the present. However, Buc adds that conversion also acts as an effort to eternalize this power structure.[258] For Buc, conversion is just as much about memorializing as it is establishing a power hierarchy. He argues that objects given to the church and subsequently consecrated are fundamentally altered, because they can no longer be freely returned to the secular world. Since consecration, at least theoretically, prevents a converted object from leaving the church, for Buc, the

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[255] Ilene Forsyth, "Art with History: The Role of Spolia in the Cumulative Work of Art," in *Byzantine East, Latin West, Art-Historical Studies in Honor of Kurt Weitzmann*, ed. Christopher Moss and Katharine Kiefer (Princeton: Princeton University Department of Art and Archaeology, 1995), 153–162.
[256] Forsyth, "Art," 153.
[257] Forsyth, "Art," 154–155.
[258] Phillipe Buc, "Conversion of Objects," *Viator* 28 (1997): 99–142.

process permanently cements the object's status as the triumphal culmination of earlier cultures. [259]

Avinoam Shalem's book *Islam Christianized*, the only categorical study of the reuse of Islamic objects within a medieval Christian context, emphasizes the need for transformation to make an Islamic object appropriate for Christian use. For Shalem, this can occur in three ways: the object's function may be altered, it may be set within a new mounting, or it can be consecrated.[260] However, these categories are not quite clear-cut, because in many instances the process of Christianization may involve all three methods. In the Tooth Reliquary, for example, the Fatimid rock crystal perfume bottle is repurposed as a relic container, set within a Gothic metalwork superstructure, and consecrated by the sacred relic placed within.

Still, triumphalist rhetoric is not the only explanation put forward for the reuse of earlier objects in medieval art. In a 1947 essay that was groundbreaking at the time, Meyer Shapiro argued that already in the twelfth century, artistic practice engaged with aesthetics in a way that was "imbued with values of spontaneity, individual fantasy, delight in color and movement, and the expression of feeling that anticipate modern art."[261] Shapiro suggested that materials and craftsmanship were among the foremost concerns of medieval patrons, which he believes explains why non-Christian elements such as antique gems or pseudo-Kufic script were so eagerly used in Christian art. For medieval writers, Shapiro finds that aesthetic judgments locate beauty within the

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[259] Buc, "Conversion," 101.
[260] Shalem, *Islam*, 129–133.
[261] Meyer Shapiro, "On the Aesthetic Attitude in Romanesque Art," in *Romanesque Art: Selected Papers*, ed. Meyer Schapiro (New York: George Braziller, 1977), 1.

properties of admired objects themselves, not in their past histories.[262] While the inclusion of pseudo-Kufic is sometimes seen as a geometric design or a generic indication of appropriation, Alicia Walker argues that objects such as a Byzantine enamel bowl in the San Marco Treasury in Venice employ it to indicate a hybridity that creates meaning at the intersection of cultures.[263]

Anthony Cutler views the question of appropriation differently by questioning the intentionality behind the inclusion of reused materials in medieval art.[264] Cutler ponders whether ancient vessels, gemstones, and other luxurious material incorporated into medieval Christian objects were "re-used," or, more simply, "used." For Cutler, recognition on the part of the viewer is the key that unlocks meaning in the reuse of objects, but he also differentiates between possible meanings. He writes:

> The difference is one of varying degrees of signification or, more precisely, of levels of importance: at one moment the source or origin of the object is considered its most eloquent aspect, at another what is done with this object is its most noteworthy feature.[265]

In other words, an object could be incorporated into another for its history, or alternatively, for its material. Since the viewer plays in integral part in interpretation, the meaning associated with a piece of spolia can also change over time. Unfortunately, as Cutler observes, medieval authors who record the creation or commission of objects

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[262] Shapiro, "On the Aesthetic," 16–20.
[263] Alicia Walker, "Meaningful Mingling: Classicizing Imagery and Islamicizing Script in a Byzantine Bowl," *The Art Bulletin* 90, no. 1 (2008): 32–53.
[264] Anthony Cutler, "Reuse or Use? Theoretical and Practical Attitudes Toward Objects in the Early Middle Ages," in *Ideologie e practiche del reimpiego nell'alto medioevo*, *Vol. 2* (Spoleto: Presso la Sede del Centro, 1999), 1055–1083.
[265] Cutler, "Reuse," 1060–1061.

rarely record their intentions in selecting specific materials or differentiate between reused and newly created material.[266]

Critically, each of these interpretations hinges upon the viewer's recognition, or lack thereof, of the reuse of objects. For Forsyth and Buc, recognition is explicit, because the reused objects must be recognized as coming from an earlier, or other, culture to signify a dominant power relationship of the present over the past. For Shalem, recognition is more or less implicit, since the need for conversion suggests that these objects would have been understood as being unsuitable for use in Christian setting, unless altered in some significant way. The processes of conversion he describes are therefore designed to account for an object's inherently non-Christian, Islamic associations. For Shapiro and Cutler, objects reused without the explicit recognition of their association with an earlier or other culture indicate more broadly an interest in the object's material value.

The presence of Islamic rock crystal in Western medieval church treasuries was pervasive, in part because the small size of the crystals meant that they were easily transported from distant lands and transformed into Christian objects. Their ubiquity, in the collections of churches both great and minor, from Spain to England to Italy, suggests Eva Hoffman's concept of portability, which speaks to a shared appreciation of material and craftsmanship that transcends geographic or religious boundaries.[267] Portability offers a framework to consider the ways these rock crystal vessels conveyed meaning rooted in a past that was not specifically Islamic. Instead, the inclusion of objects like the Islamic

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[266] Cutler, "Reuse," 1071.
[267] Eva Hoffman, "Pathways of Portability: Islamic and Christian Interchange from the Tenth to Twelfth Century," *Art History* 24, 1 (2001): 17–50.

bottle in the Tooth Reliquary can transmit a message of geographic origin that is imprecise but identifiably foreign, which bestows it with a significant material value.

The scholarly discourse on the incorporation of Islamic objects into Christian artworks in the medieval West highlights the need to carefully examine the specific context of the Tooth Reliquary of St. John the Baptist before drawing conclusions about how it might have been understood by its medieval audience. It is important to consider again how the Fatimid bottle, and the relic it contains, came to Brunswick. The method by which Henry extracted St. John's tooth from Byzantium, gift exchange, was one of the few ways in which Eastern relics traveled to the West before the sack of Constantinople in 1204. Holger Klein has shown that relics such as these were highly desired and only available to members of high society from the fifth to the twelfth century.[268] The commodity, or value, of Eastern relics is tied to the identities of the saints with whom they are associated. Especially in the early Middle Ages, before there was any official process of canonization by the church, most Saints were local martyrs, or believers killed for their faith. In Western Europe, these local saints were the main source for relics, along with the catacombs in Rome. However, Early Christian saints, whose lives form the substance of the biblical books of the New Testament, for the most part neither lived in, traveled to, nor died in Western Europe.[269] Their bodies thus were not readily available as sources for relics in the West. The buying and selling of relics has been officially prohibited since the fifth century, though medieval sources do tell of illicit relic dealers. Another common way to obtain relics was through *furta sacra*, or holy theft, whereby

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[268] Holger Klein, "Eastern Objects and Western Desires: Relics and Reliquaries Between Byzantium and the West," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 58 (2004), 313–314.
[269] Peter Brown, *The Cult of the Saints, Its Rise and Function in Late Antiquity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981).

monks stole the remains of the holy dead from other repositories and carried them back to their own church or monastery.[270] This act was justified because the relics were venerated with greater respect and piety in their new homes, and because the saint could easily prevent their relics from being moved if they so desired. Of all these methods, gift exchange was the most legitimate way to obtain relics from the East, but it was strictly limited to those of high social status.

Of the Guelph Treasure reliquaries that survive, the Tooth Reliquary is the only one associated with the relic of St. John the Baptist's tooth, clearly labeled as such on the foot of the monstrance. Despite the fact that the monstrance that currently houses the tooth was made around 1400, it was clearly made to contain that specific relic. By this time, the tooth had been held within the treasury of St. Blaise for nearly two centuries. In the intervening years, however, Eastern relics began to appear in Western contexts with increasing frequency. For Holger Klein, the availability of once-rare Eastern relics raised some concern about authenticity, which was proclaimed by what he calls the decidedly Eastern aesthetic of the containers in which they were stored.[271]

While the Tooth Reliquary has an Eastern aesthetic to the modern eye, and the Fatimid origins of the rock crystal bottle are clearly noted on the museum labels and in catalogues, it is less certain that the monstrance signified the Eastern origin of the relics to its medieval audience in the same manner. Inventory records provide some of the only written documentation of medieval writers' observations of treasury objects such as reliquaries, but as Joseph Ackley has pointed out, inventories are not a homogenous group of texts, and their authors usually wrote their descriptions using non-standardized

[270] Patrick Geary, *Furta Sacra* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), 35–43.
[271] Klein, "Eastern," 313–314.

and vague vocabulary, with varying degrees of detail.[272] Descriptions of the Tooth Reliquary appear in late medieval inventory records from 1482 and 1542, but both records are brief, characteristic of all entries in these documents. The 1482 inventory reads: "One large monstrance with a crystal or beryl in the middle, in which one tooth of St. John the Baptist is held.[273] The 1542 record is similar: "A silver gilt monstrance, in which a small crystal is fixed, written on the foot 'Tooth of John the Baptist."[274] Clearly, neither record identifies the rock crystal vessel in the reliquary as Islamic, or even Eastern. Neither record indicates that the crystal is carved with a floral design, or even that the form of the bottle is different from stone used in the other rock crystal monstrance reliquaries in the treasury. However, both records do indicate that the material used for the setting is a precious stone and identify the relic as the Tooth of John the Baptist. Not all inventory records even present this much information, and identification of relics in inventories is usually reserved for only the most important ones in a collection, which suggests that the Tooth Reliquary was valued, at least in part, for the material used and the relic it contains.

Brunswick neighbors three other cities in northern Germany with famous ecclesiastical treasures: Halberstadt, Hildesheim, and Quedlinburg, all of which are within about seventy-five kilometers. Significantly, each of these treasures also include Islamic rock crystal in their holdings. At Hildesheim, there is only one surviving reliquary that incorporates Islamic rock crystal, in this case a carved chess piece that is

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[272] Joseph Salvatore Ackley, "Re-approaching the Western medieval church treasury inventory, c. 800–1250," *Journal of Art Historiography* 11 (2014): 1–37.
[273] Boockmann, *Die verlorenen*, 143. The Latin text reads: "Item in una magna monstrancia cum una cristallo vel berillo in medio, in quo habetur una dens sancti Johannis baptiste."
[274] Boockmann, *Die verlorenen*, 155. The German text reads: "Ein silberne vergulte Munstrancien, darinne ein klein Cristal gefaßet, steit uf dem Fuß Dens Joannis Baptiste."

mounted atop a purse-shaped casket decorated on the front with a repoussé Virgin and Child and studded with precious stones (Fig. 3.8). Though the piece of rock crystal is diminutive, its carved surface sets it apart from the crystals used for other reliquaries at Hildesheim, including the casket with a domed crystal discussed above in Chapter One (Fig. 1.7–1.8). Additionally, the chess piece is set upon on of the oldest surviving reliquaries from Hildesheim, consisting of a tenth-century wedge shaped core.

Islamic crystals are far more abundant at both Halberstadt and Quedlinburg. The Halberstadt Cathedral treasure holds a Fatimid flask reliquary, a large chess piece, and a Hedwig glass beaker (Figs. 3.9–3.11).[275] The Halberstadt flask has an unusual shape, consisting of a bulbous round body and a long slender neck, both of which are decorated with scrolling patterns of half palmettes and leaves. The flask is not mounted on an elaborate base, but does include some detailed metalwork around the base, the bottom of the neck, and the mouth. The Quedlinburg treasury has a collection of Islamic rock crystals that includes three bottles or flasks mounted as reliquaries (Figs. 3.12–3.14). In addition to these three, which were all stolen in World War II by U.S. Army Lieutenant Joe Tom Meador, a fourth Islamic crystal reliquary lost in the war has not been recovered (Fig. 3.15).[276] Finally, there are another four carved crystal fragments in the treasure, one

[275] Hedwig Glass is a term used for a mysterious but cohesive group of cut glass beakers that were manufactured in an unknown location. Scholars have suggested various theories of their origins, which were most likely Islamic, Byzantine, or southern Italian. See Jens Kröger, "The Hedwig Beakers: Medieval European Glass Vessels made in Sicily around 1200," in *The Phenomenon of "Foreign" in Oriental Art*, ed. Annette Hagedorn (Wiesbaden: Reichert Verlag, 2006), 27–46; Stefano Carboni and David Whitehouse, *Glass of the Sultans* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2001), 160–161; Shalem, *Islam Christianized*, 113–115.

[276] A decade after his death, Meador was exposed as the Quedlinburg thief by New York Times reporter William H. Honan. See Honan, *Treasure Hunt* (New York: Delta 1998).

of which is associated with a reliquary of St. Stephen's blood mentioned in a 1544 inventory (Fig. 3.16).[277]

The Fatimid bottle used for the Tooth Reliquary in Brunswick must be considered a part of this larger context, in which Islamic crystals, while rare, were incorporated into reliquaries in each of the powerful ecclesiastical centers of the region. Furthermore, these other treasury collections can help to establish an understanding of how rock crystal would have been viewed locally in the medieval period. In this chapter, I have shown that the bottle in Brunswick was likely acquired by Henry the Lion, and the crystals at Quedlinburg and Halberstadt are also associated with notable donor figures. The Abbey Church of St. Servatius in Quedlinburg was established by Otto I, the first Ottonian emperor, in 936.[278] The church continued to receive support from the Ottonian rulers over the course of the next century, including endowments of wealth, land, and an exemption from diocesan oversight. The rock crystals in the Quedlinburg treasury are also associated with this period of imperial patronage.[279] One of the fish bottle reliquaries contains a metal band inscribed with the text *Capills Marie Ott. T. Impr* (*capillus Marie Otto tertius imperator)*, or "Hair of Mary, [donated by] Emperor Otto the Third" (Fig. 3.13).[280] Though the inscribed metal setting of the bottle dates to about the fourteenth century, several hundred years after the death of Otto III (d. 1002), it forms the basis upon which all of the crystals at Quedlinburg have been associated with the Ottonian

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[277] Dietrich Kötzsche, "Vier Fragmente von Bergkristallgefäβen," in *Der Quedlinburger Schatz wieder vereint*, ed. Dietrich Kötzsche (Berlin: KulturStiftung der Länder, 1992), 76.
[278] Ernst Schubert, "Quedlinburg, Stadt und Stätte deustscher Geschichte," in *Der Quedlinburger Schatz*, 3–20. See also Emily Sano and David Kusin, eds., *The Quedlinburg Treasury* (Dallas: Dallas Museum of Art, 1991).
[279] Hans-Joachim Krause, "Zur Geschichte von Schatz und Schatzkammer der Stiftskirche St. Servatius in Quedlinburg," in *Der Quedlinburger Schatz*, 21–26.
[280] Kötzsche, "Ostensorium mit fischförmigem Bergkristallgefäβ," in *Der Quedlinburger Schatz*, 74–75.

emperors. The crystals themselves probably came via Byzantium, and may have been brought by Princess Theophanu, Otto III's mother, as a part of her wedding dowry in 972.

The Islamic crystal bottle at Halberstadt was also brought back from the East, probably by the Bishop Konrad von Krosigk, who participated in the sack of Constantinople during the Fourth Crusade in 1204 (Fig. 3.9). The Bishop returned to Halberstadt on August 16, 1205, a date subsequently celebrated as the *Adventus reliquarum* (arrival of the relics), and donated his substantial collection of relics, gold and silver vessels, and textiles to the cathedral treasure in 1208.[281] The Halberstadt crystal bottle is distinctive from those at Brunswick and Quedlinburg because it was obtained through force, rather than diplomatic negotiation or exchange. In its presentation, the Halberstadt reliquary is also different. In contrast to the others, which employ Western European metalwork to frame and support the rock crystal, the Halberstadt bottle was only minimally altered upon its arrival in Germany. The small band of silver gilt scrolling acanthus leaves around the foot of the bottle was added in about the fourteenth century, but the gold metalwork around the lower neck and lid of the bottle are likely Byzantine.[282]

Seen within this regional context, I argue that the Fatimid bottle used in the Tooth reliquary would have been understood as having come from the East, since Byzantium was the shared source of all these objects. Likewise, the crystal's connection to a powerful figure has clear parallels to those at Quedlinburg and Halberstadt. While the Tooth Reliquary is not inscribed with the name of the patron, and no local feast celebrates

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[281] Jörg Richter, "Kostbarer als Gold und Edelstein – Die Reliquien und ihre Hüllen,'' in *Der heilige Schatz in Dom zu Halberstadt*, ed. Harald Meller et al. (Regensburg: Schnell und Steiner, 2008), 37–41.
[282] Andrea Lermer, "Berkristallflasche," in *Der heilige Schatz*, ed. Harald Meller et al., 62.

the arrival of the relics, it was probably associated with the twelfth-century Guelph Duke Henry the Lion, even centuries after his death. Henry was the patron who built the church of St. Blaise, and his castle Dankwarderode still stands adjacent to it in the castle square of Brunswick, which features a twelfth-century bronze lion statue set on a high pedestal (Figs. 3.17–3.18).[283] Furthermore, Henry and his wife Matilda are buried in the church's crypt, and a tomb effigy of the couple was installed in the middle of the nave just before the altar in the 1230s (Figs. 3.19–3.20). Like those of many other church donors of the period, Henry's effigy holds an architectural model of the building, serving to activate the memory of his patronage. In this setting, the reframing of the Islamic crystal bottle as a presentation piece in the form of a Gothic turret monstrance likely recalled the historical figure of Henry himself, who not only built the church of St. Blaise and its surroundings, but also acquired and eventually donated a collection of relics from the East through his son Otto IV.

Materiality, Local Memory, and Identity

As I have argued above, the Tooth Reliquary of St. John the Baptist is not a typical monstrance reliquary. In using a carved Fatimid bottle as the setting for the tooth relic, the reliquary resists the typical function of a monstrance to provide clear visual access to sacred matter. Instead, in its presentation, the reliquary draws attention to the rock crystal bottle as a material object. Though rock crystal is commonly used in many other objects in the Guelph Treasure, including more typical monstrance reliquaries and

[283] Castle Dankwarderode was reconstructed from ruins in the late nineteenth century by German architect Ludwig Winter. See Monika Lemke-Kokkelink, "Vom Heinrichsbrunnen zum Römischen Fest-Stadtbaurat Ludwig Winter (1843–1930) als Architeckt und Regisseur des Heinrichskultes in Braunschweig," in *Heinrich der Löwe und seine Zeit*, *Band 3: Nachleben*, ed. Jochen Luckhardt et al. (München: Himmer Verlag, 1995), 74–83.

portable altars, the bottle used here is set apart by its markedly different visual appearance. By comparing this bottle to similar rock crystal pieces in the region, I have shown that medieval viewers would have been able to distinguish this piece as having an Eastern provenance and association with a figure of secular or religious power. However, an important question still remains regarding the Tooth Reliquary, specifically regarding its manufacture around 1400. If the rock crystal bottle containing the tooth relic was in the treasury of St. Blaise since around 1200, as I have argued, why was it refashioned into the monstrance frame nearly two hundred years later?

In her study of twelfth-century Conques in southern France, Amy Remensnyder argues that relics and reliquaries played a role in creating what she calls the imaginative memory of religious communities.[284] For Remensnyder, imaginative memory:

> Implies a dialogue between then and now, a dialectic relationship of continuity between two temporal spaces. The past constructed by imaginative memory, the golden age of heroes, does not merely reflect but also informs the present. It has a power and often an authority that we might call 'constitutive'; it creates identity and meaning, whether of the institution, the social group, or even the individual, in the present. Sharing an imagined past can establish and reaffirm the cohesion of a group. It provides a common set of symbols that can help create the boundaries delineating and containing the community or society. Furthermore, as a part of this symbolic set of boundaries, the past creates an identity that is relational, differential, even oppositional. Implicitly or explicitly, this identity situates the group in relation to others and defines it as different.[285]

At Conques, reliquaries such as the A-Shaped Reliquary of Charlemagne and the Casket Reliquary of Pippin function alongside other documents, such as the *Liber miraculorum sancte Fidis* to establish Charlemagne as the church's founder. Though this connection is not supported by any historical documentation from the period in which the church at

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[284] Amy Remensnyder, "Legendary Treasure at Conques: Reliquaries and Imaginative Memory," *Speculum*, 71, no. 4 (1996): 884–906; Amy Remensnyder, *Remembering Kings Past* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995).
[285] Remensnyder, *Remembering*, 2–3.

Conques was established, Remensnyder shows that there was a concentrated effort in a variety of media around the twelfth century to create and bolster this foundational myth.

I argue that the construction of a new reliquary for the rock crystal bottle and tooth relic of St. John the Baptist likewise engages in the creation of imaginative memory at Brunswick. The late fourteenth century marked the start of a period of rapid growth for the treasury of St. Blaise. Of the eighty-five pieces of the Guelph Treasure that survived into the twentieth century, over half date from this period.[286] Despite this, most of the research devoted to the treasure to date focuses on the earliest objects from the collection, particularly twelfth-century reliquaries that scholars are keen to connect to the patronage of Henry the Lion.[287] However, careful consideration of the later objects reveals a pattern of incorporating antique objects from the St. Blaise treasury into new settings beginning towards the end of the fourteenth century.

One of the other objects that I argue should be viewed alongside the Tooth Reliquary is relatively famous: the Ostensorium with the "Paten of St. Bernward," now at the Cleveland Museum of Art (Figs. 3.21–3.22).[288] The Ostensorium was one of the first reliquaries sold in the 1930 exhibition of the Guelph Treasure, and, as Patrick de Winter has shown, its purchase made national headline news because it contains one of the first

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[286] The 1482 inventory record lists 137 reliquaries. Twenty of these were stolen in 1574, including nine monstrance reliquaries that probably also date from the fourteenth century or later. For a detailed analysis of the reliquaries listed in the 1482 inventory that did not survive to the twentieth century, see Boockmann, *Die verlorenen*, 86–125.

[287] Patrick de Winter, for example, devotes sixty pages to the twelfth-century material and only thirteen pages to thirteenth- to fifteenth-century objects in his volume "The Sacral Treasure of the Guelphs."

[288] Published in Bagnoli, et al. eds. *Treasures of Heaven*, 87; Holger Klein, ed. *Sacred Gifts and Worldly Treasures* (Cleveland: The Cleveland Museum of Art, 2007), 124–125; de Winter "The Sacral," 85–86 and 140; von Falke et al., *Der Welfenschatz*, 156–157; Neumann, *Der Reliquienschatz*, 294–297.

relics of the True Cross that came to America.[289] The central feature of the Ostensorium is not, as the name would suggest, made of crystal or glass, but rather is a round paten with Romanesque detailing. The paten is set within a gabled architectural frame, with a fragment of the true cross inserted behind a rock crystal cabochon placed centrally above the plate. Eight additional relics, held in silk pouches, are affixed to the back of the reliquary, as well as a parchment authentic that claims the paten as the work of St. Bernward of Hildesheim (d. 1022). The style and dating of the paten itself refute this claim, and Patrick de Winter suggests that it was likely commissioned by Henry the Lion near the end of the twelfth century.[290]

Finally, a third reliquary from the late fourteenth century similarly reframes an earlier object. The Monstrance with a Relic of St. Blaise, now found at the Kunstgewerbe Museum in Berlin, takes the form of a diminutive turret monstrance with a clear, cylindrical rock crystal setting at its center (Figs. 3.23–3.24). A small Byzantine reliquary capsule hangs on a hook inside the crystal setting, featuring a niello inscription in Greek that reads "relic of the holy martyr Blaise."[291] The crystal setting also contains two medieval authentics on parchment, one of which describes the relic as a bone of St. Blaise. The other, however, describes a thumb of Saint Mark, a claim that is also found in the 1482 inventory records and that scholars attribute to a mistranslation or inability to read the Greek characters.[292] Though the discussion of this reliquary in scholarly studies to date is limited in scope, scholars have proposed that the reliquary capsule was acquired

[289] De Winter, "The Sacral," 133–134 and 154 n. 100.
[290] De Winter, "The Sacral," 85–86.
[291] For the Greek inscription see Dietrich Kötzsche, *Der Welfenschatz im Berliner Kunstgewerbemuseum* (Berlin: Gebr. Mann Verlag, 1973), 79; von Falke et al., *Der Welfenschatz*, 192.
[292] The larger authentic refers to the *pollex de s. marco.* See Kötzsche, *Der Welfenschatz*, 54–55.

by Henry the Lion during his trip to the Holy Land.[293] In its format, the monstrance reliquary offers an interesting parallel to the Tooth Reliquary of St. John the Baptist. Though the monstrance of St. Blaise is of a smaller scale, its basic composition mirrors that of the larger object, similarly featuring a central rock crystal vessel set within a window of negative space created by the extension of a buttressed frame to the left and right (Figs. 3.4–3.5 and 3.24).[294] As I have argued above in the case of the Tooth Reliquary, the structuring of the metalwork frame in this way deviates from other extant monstrance reliquaries in the Guelph Treasure, which tend to incorporate the crystal without leaving such a window of negative space (Fig. 3.7). Here, the composition presents the Byzantine relic capsule in a way that calls special attention to its status as an object of foreign production, indicated by the Greek inscription.

In all three of these examples, new reliquaries were created in the late fourteenth century to reframe and re-present existing objects from the treasury of St. Blaise. As I have shown, each of the antique items appears at the central focal point of its newly designed reliquary, and each of these objects has a shared connection, real or perceived, to the historical figure of Henry the Lion. As a group, these objects might be seen as part of a concentrated effort to create imaginative memory at Brunswick in the late fourteenth century. As Remensnyder has argued, imaginative memory hinges on the great heroes of the past, bringing these figures back to the present in order to create a shared communal

[293] This assertion is not based on any concrete evidence apart from the Byzantine style and Greek inscription on the capsule. However, it is not unreasonable to suggest that it was in fact acquired by Henry, or at least associated with him in later periods. See Kötzsche, *Der* Welfenschatz, 22; von Falke et al., *Der Welfenschatz*, 192; Neumann, *Der Reliquienschatz*, 288–289.

[294] The Monstrance with a Relic of St. Blaise failed to sell in the United States during the exhibition tour of 1930–1931 even though von Falke connected it to Henry the Lion in the exhibition catalogue. Subsequently, the reliquary was not illustrated or discussed at length in de Winter's volume. It is possible that the reliquary was overlooked in part due to its relatively small size, about 31 cm high (compared to the Tooth Reliquary's height of over 45 cm).

identity. In Brunswick, Henry the Lion is the most iconic local figure of the past, presenting him as the obvious focal point for imaginative memory. By recalling this period of political power and religious growth in Brunswick, the fourteenth-century patrons of these objects connected the present to past strength and authority.[295]

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have shown that the Tooth Reliquary of St. John the Baptist from the Guelph Treasure is designed in a way that emphasizes the materiality of the Islamic rock crystal bottle set at its center. This bottle, which I argue was likely brought to Brunswick by Henry the Lion in the late twelfth century, is set apart from other rock crystals in the Guelph Treasure by its visual form, which is characterized by the deep cut foliate motifs that encircle it. While this object is visibly different from any of the other pieces of rock crystal in Brunswick, it was unlikely to have been understood as an Islamic bottle by medieval audiences. Rather, a comparison to other pieces of Fatimid crystal in the surrounding region demonstrates the crystal would more likely have been associated with Byzantium, and its presence in the West would have connected it to a patron of significant prestige. Finally, I have shown that the reframing of the crystal bottle into the form of a late Gothic turret monstrance was part of a larger concentrated effort in the fourteenth century to reconnect to the heroic figure of Henry the Lion. As a part of a

[295] More work needs to be done to establish the chronology of this group of reliquaries. The scholarly consensus places them around the end of the fourteenth century, but some have argued for earlier or later dates. Andrea Boockmann, for example, argues the Tooth Reliquary was manufactured by the goldsmith Weddeghe Velstede in 1433, see Boockmann, *Die verlorenen*, 33–34. The end of the fourteenth century was a period of transition for the Guelph family; the Old Brunswick House ended with the death of Magnus II in 1373. These reliquaries appear to postdate the best-known benefactor of the fourteenth century, Otto the Mild (d. 1344), who donated objects, renovated the south aisle of St. Blaise, and restored some older treasures including the Portable Altar of Countess Gertrude, see de Winter, "The Sacral," 117-127.

group of reliquaries that present antique objects from the church of St. Blaise in a new format, the Tooth Reliquary functions to establish an imaginative memory that carries the prestige of Brunswick's most powerful secular and religious donor into the late fourteenth century.

CONCLUSION

This project set out to explore the origins of the monstrance reliquary type, the last major typological group of reliquaries that was developed in the Middle Ages. Although no dedicated study in English exists on their development, previous scholarship has offered a tentative explanation linking the monstrance type, which employs rock crystal to hold the relic, to advancements in optical theory. It has been argued previously that monstrance reliquaries were utilized because they provided visual access to sacred relics in a novel way that made them tangible to the viewer's gaze.[296] However, as I conducted research for this project in museums and ecclesiastical treasures, I noticed just how hard it often is to see relics through the 'transparent' surface of the crystal. My experience of seeing these objects in plain view contrasted with their representational appearance in exhibition catalogues, which are products of professional studio photography that employs lighting to maximize the translucence of the stone. Moreover, even in objects that employ high quality stones free of cracks and carvings, examples that do seem to act purely as a viewing window, the relics themselves are most often sheathed in silk, cloth, and/or parchment.[297] In these examples, rock crystal can be understood as a material that that mediates access to the divine. This adds complexity to the traditional understanding of monstrance reliquaries. While they certainly employ rock crystal for its visual qualities, its materiality is also apparent, opening further avenues for exploration.

[296] See, for example, Michael Camille, "Before the Gaze: The Internal Senses and Late Medieval Practices of Seeing," in *Visuality Before and Beyond the Renaissance*, ed. Robert S. Nelson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 197–223.

[297] On relic wrappings, see Martina Bagnoli, "Dressing the Relics, Some Thoughts on the Custom of Relic Wrapping in Medieval Christianity," in *Matter of Faith*, ed. James Robinson et al. (London: The British Museum, 2014), 100–109.

This project seeks to establish a method of study for monstrance reliquaries that examines their materiality as a means to understand how they functioned to mediate this divine access in specific contexts. The first chapter broadly outlines the changing intellectual context of the thirteenth century, when the first monstrance reliquaries were made, to demonstrate that a changing understanding of materiality was an important aspect of writings in natural philosophy. Chapters Two and Three apply my method to specific case studies, revealing that the materiality of rock crystal could generate meanings that differed based on the context of the church and community that witnessed their use.

This dissertation argues that scholarly attention to monstrance reliquaries should extend beyond situating their development alongside advancements in optical theory. Chapter One provides an analysis of al-Kindi's concept of the ray and traces its impact on the writings of natural philosophy. For al-Kindi, the ray was a system of influence that guided the formation of natural material and explained the diversity of the world. Al-Kindi's concept of the ray has previously been associated with optical theory, most often as it established the concept of vision as the "multiplication of species" in the works of Roger Bacon. Bacon's theory of vision has serious implications for the way art objects functioned in the Middle Ages because, as Michael Camille and Katherine Tachau argue, sight was understood as a physical connection that existed between an object and its beholder, allowing for tangible interaction even at a distance.[298]

[298] Camille, "Before the Gaze," 197–223; Katherine H. Tachau, "Seeing as Action and Passion in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries," in *The Mind's Eye*, ed. Jeffrey F. Hamburger and Anne-Marie Bouché (Princeton: Department of Art and Archaeology, Princeton University, 2006), 336–359.

I argue that al-Kindi's concept of the ray guided the development of another branch of natural philosophy that similarly changed conceptions of how natural materials could generate meaning. I present an analysis of the writings of Albert the Great to demonstrate how al-Kindi's concept of the ray was incorporated into his understanding of the natural world, in which the properties of objects are determined under the influence of celestial rays that come down from the heavens. I demonstrate that Albert's views on the causal relationship between celestial rays and earthly matter are most fully explained in his works *De mineralibus* and *De natura locorum*, compositions that he penned to fill in gaps he perceived in the corpus of Aristotelian writings. Albert's system of philosophy places a particular value on materiality because the observation of the properties of natural things provides a means of understanding the occult mechanisms of the divine.

In the second chapter, I examine the Reliquary of the Miraculous Blood in the treasury collection of the Basilica of San Marco in Venice. The reliquary was one of the most important objects in the Venetian treasury. Its mounting, made of pure gold, forms an elaborate but delicate support for an Islamic bottle containing a blood relic. The bottle of blood was brought to Venice following the sack of Constantinople in 1204, and it is documented by a number of historical sources that place it at the top of short list of Byzantine relics that were of particular value. Scholars have often viewed the high status of the Reliquary of the Miraculous Blood and the others from Constantinople as part of an effort to establish the mythical connections between Venice and the East, or to conceptions of Byzantine Imperial power.[299] I consider this as one of two primary

[299] Thomas E.A. Dale, "Cultural Hybridity in Medieval Venice," in *San Marco, Byzantium, and the Myths of Venice*, ed. Robert S. Nelson and Henry Maguire (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 2010), 151–191; Holger Klein, "Refashioning Byzantium in Venice, c. 1200–1400," in *San Marco, Byzantium*, ed. Nelson and Maguire, 193–225; Henry Maguire, "The

functions of the reliquary. As a part of the collection, it does participate in a larger effort to demonstrate the political and military power of the Republic of Venice. My analysis of the 1283 inventory of the San Marco treasury suggests that this effort was pan-Mediterranean, highlighting material objects with connections to Tunis, Alexandria, Zara, Tyre, and Chios in addition to Constantinople. As the inventory suggests, the mythmaking of Venice was rooted in a collection of different materials that demonstrated the far reach of its connections.

This chapter shows that the Reliquary of Miraculous Blood functioned differently as an individual object. My analysis of liturgical manuscripts shows that the reliquary was used in unique Venetian traditions performed annually during Holy Week. These festivities, which were one of four major feasts celebrated in Venice, included public displays of the Monstrance of the Holy Blood on Maundy Thursday and Good Friday. Additional elements of the Venetian liturgy of the Easter Vigil and on Easter Sunday place particular emphasis on the salvific power of the blood spilled in the Passion, the act of sacrifice that guarantees salvation through resurrection for Christian believers. The emphasis of these themes, which form the heart of the mystery of Easter, would surely have recalled the public displays of the Reliquary of Miraculous Blood that was proof of this sacrifice.

I argue that the materiality of the rock crystal in this reliquary, especially the red color of the blood relic that echoes in the visual appearance of the stone, is integral to its liturgical function. The themes of incarnation, death, and resurrection that are the central to the celebration of Holy Week are repeated in the appearance of the Reliquary of the

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Aniketos Icon and the Display of Icons in the Decoration of San Marco," in *San Marco, Byzantium*, ed. Nelson and Maguire, 91–111.

Miraculous Blood. Furthermore, the interplay between the rock crystal, understood by theologians to signify the resurrected body of Christ in heaven and the blood relic itself, a fragment of His earthly body, allows the reliquary to present a material manifestation of the promise of salvation.

The third chapter presents the monstrance reliquary with the Tooth of St. John the Baptist from the Guelph Treasure as a case study, exploring another way in which the materiality of the rock crystal generates meaning. I document the likely provenance of the Islamic rock crystal bottle and the tooth relic it holds, arguing that it was probably acquired by Henry the Lion in a diplomatic exchange with the Byzantine Emperor Manuel II in 1172 or 1173. The relic, along with others collected by Henry the Lion, was given to the church of St. Blaise in Brunswick in the will of Otto IV, Henry's son. The provenance of the bottle suggests an appreciation for the materiality that is connected to prestige and exchange between courtly cultures.[300] The rock crystal's material value is also enhanced by the existence of several other collections of imported rock crystal vessels in the nearby ecclesiastical treasures at Quedlinburg and Halberstadt; these objects too have provenance tied to imperial patronage (Quedlinburg) or powerful clergy (Halberstadt).

The monstrance reliquary that now displays the crystal bottle holding the tooth relic was fabricated around the end of the fourteenth century. I argue that it was fashioned to showcase the bottle itself, an antique object that, by then, had been in the treasury collection at St. Blaise in Brunswick for nearly two centuries. Understood in this context, the reliquary must be considered alongside two others that date to the same period and

[300] Eva Hoffman, "Pathways of Portability: Islamic and Christian Exchange from the Tenth to Twelfth Century," *Art History* 24, no. 1 (2001): 17–50.

likewise employ the monstrance form to display antiques: the Ostensorium with the "Paten of St. Bernward," and the Monstrance with a Relic of St. Blaise. Significantly, all three of these reliquaries display objects associated with or acquired by Henry the Lion, suggesting the objects were made to revitalize the local memory tied to the most powerful patron of St. Blaise in Brunswick. In the monstrance reliquary with the Tooth of St. John the Baptist, this connection is forged through the materiality of the crystal that is presented as an object in its own right rather than as a window through which to view the relic.

My focus on materiality is a response to recent calls for an expanded understanding of rock crystal as a medium in medieval objects. While much of the early scholarship on rock crystal and monstrance reliquaries in particular focuses on the transparency of the stone and its potential to reveal the sacred, as I have outlined, my project shows that rock crystal does not universally allow for a clear view of relics. Anne Kurtze expresses a similar sentiment in her conclusion to a monographic study of rock crystal in the Essen Cathedral treasure. Kurtze remarks that:

> The equation of transparency with visibility is a misunderstanding coming from the experience of museum presentation, in which sacred cult objects may be viewed closely and at all angles. For the creators of these artworks, however, translucence connotates not only the obvious possibilities of seeing and knowing, but rather the consolidation of various allegorical statements and, above all, permeability for the agency of the holy relics. The evaluation of reliquaries in their context, reconstructed through sources and their preserved architectural environment, has proven itself a productive opportunity to observe these objects, at least dimly, in their past and very active domain.[301]

My study, like that of Kurtze, addresses the illusion of transparency apparent in the museum presentation of reliquaries by considering the original context and circumstances

[301] Anne Kurtze, *Durchsichtig oder Durchlässig, Zur Sichtbarkeit der Reliquien und Reliquiare des Essener Stiftsschatzes im Mittelalter* (Petersberg: Michael Imhof Verlag, 2017), 124. Translation by author.

of display in which they would have been encountered by medieval viewers. While this effort is fruitful, it is limited in is utility for the study of monstrance reliquaries more broadly, since many of these objects are poorly documented, dispersed from their original locations, and often missing the relics they once held. Application of the method I employ will achieve the best results in future research of additional case studies that are supported by contextual documentation such as inventory records, liturgical manuscripts, and historical documents that provide clues about how monstrance reliquaries generated meaning for their communities. For objects lacking the support of extensive contextualization, another method of inquiry may produce better insight.

My discussion of the materiality as a means of mediating access to the divine finds another parallel in what Cynthia Hahn has recently called the "vision effect," a concept built upon the semiotic theory of Roland Barthes. Hahn writes:

> Rather than the unmediated vision of a relic that is so often assumed in medieval and modern descriptions, relics encased in crystal are often very difficult to see. The experience, rather than clear sight, should properly be called a "vision effect." …That is, although reliquaries and precious containers take a wide range of inexplicable shapes and include opacities that are not conducive to unmediated viewing, in their materials and shapes and especially their use of crystal, they nonetheless create an experience that enhances the viewer's sense of encountering the divine.[302]

For Hahn, it is the experience of seeing the crystal itself in the context of a liturgical setting that mediates access to the relic. This dissertation focuses primarily on reliquaries that employ carved Islamic rock crystal vessels, objects for which the "vision effect" is especially impactful because their carved, textured surfaces refract light in a way that makes clear viewing of relics difficult or impossible. The "vision effect" is a framework

[302] Cynthia Hahn and Avinoam Shalem, "Introduction," in *Seeking Transparency* (Berlin: Gebr. Mann Verlag, 2020), 10. See also Cynthia Hahn, "Reliquaries and the Boundaries of Vision: Relics, Crystals, Mirrors and the 'Vision Effect,'" in *Medieval Art at the Intersection of Visuality and Material Culture*, ed. Raphaèle Preisinger (Turnhout: Brepols, forthcoming).

that emphasizes other qualities of stones, such as their materiality and the access provided to them in controlled settings such as liturgical ceremonies. As the case studies presented in this dissertation demonstrate, the effects produced through the presentation of crystals and the related meaning generated by aspects of their materiality can be drastically different, which can in turn bring about new and unexpected ways of understanding these objects.

Further study of rock crystal objects employing a method based in materiality, attention to context, and the "vision effect" also has broader implications for several strands of critical inquiry in Medieval Studies. Rock crystal is undoubtedly linked to cultural exchange and worked crystal was highly valued in communities across the Mediterranean and beyond. Examining the ways in which it was mined, carved, used, valued, and transmitted around the medieval world reveals the existence of an intricate network of interaction between cultures.[303] Recognizing the materiality of rock crystal as an attribute that declares its own "thingness" provides a way of thinking about how medieval viewers conceptualized the natural world.[304] Albert the Great's view that the natural properties of matter were determined by celestial rays extends beyond rock crystal alone. Future study of materiality could consider how reliquaries, which are composites made of metal, stone, and other natural matter, may present complimentary, or even conflicting, messages through their juxtapositions of material. Likewise, a consideration of the materiality of reliquaries could be extended to other types that are fashioned out of rare, imported natural materials such as coconuts or ostrich eggs.

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[303] Several of these aspects are explored in the essays collected in Hahn and Shalem, eds., *Seeking Transparency*.
[304] Caroline Walker Bynum, *Christian Materiality* (New York: Zone Books, 2011), 28–29.

APPENDICES

Appendix A

A transcription of the 1283 Inventory Record of the Treasury of San Marco (Venice, Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana Cod. Ital. VII, 374, coll. 7781, fol. 45r–46r), adapted from Antonio Pasini, *Il Tesoro di San Marco in Venezia* (Venice: Ferdinando Ongania, 1886), Appendix I, Inventory 1, and Rudolfo Gallo*, Il Tesoro di S. Marco e la sua Storia* (Venice: Instituto per la Collaborazione Culturale, 1967), 273–275.[305]

Ex quodam quaterno in folio pergam.º magno, cui de foris titulus huius modi praeponitur:

Quaternus Joannis Cornario de Commendariis. Intus vero:

In nomine Dei aeterni. Amen. MCCLXXXIII. Mense Junii.

Recordatione facio ego Johannes Cornario quia hic inferius scribam omnia quae habentur in archa Sanctuariorum majori in prima camera Ecclesiae B. Marci.

1. In primus ampulla una de christallo in qua est sanguis Salvatoris Nostri Jesu Chrsiti, ornate auro et una perla desuper, et est in quadam ecclesia argenti.

Deinde:

2. Item Crux Chrsiti quae fuit in igne in una ycona cum coperclo coperta argento deaurato, in qua est imago S. Constantini et Sanctae Helenae.

3. Item ycona una cum copertorio combusta coperta cum argento deaurato.

4. Item alia ycona cum coperclo combusta coperta de argento deaurato, in qua fuit una crux.

5. Item ycona una cum coperclo et cum quatuor cantellis et coperclis combustis coperta de argento deaurato, in qua fuit una crux quae est combusta.

6. Ycona una cum coperclo, in qua fuit una crux combusta. Multae Reliquiae quae dicuntur combustae, sed inter alia sic legitur:

7. Item engolfum unum, qoud est quaedam casicula sine coperclo cum sex cantelis, in quibis sunt Reliquiae Sanctorum et in una earum est de corona de spinis Christi.

[305] I have streamlined minor discrepancies between the Pasini and Gallo transcriptions based on my own consultation of the manuscript. I have maintained the numbering used by Gallo for clarity.

8. Item capselta una fracta cum pezoletis de argento in qua credimus fuisse caput Sancti Jo. Baptistae cum fuit in igne.

9. Item casela una de rame cum copertorio rotundo superius in qua est caput S. Barbarae.

10. Item caselleta una sine copertorio cum crucetis duabus et uno lapide qui dicitur fuisse S. Stephani.

11. Item habemus librum unum cum aliquantulum argenti superius ab uno latere, qui liber est de littera graeca.

Deinde plura alia, ac postea:

12. Recepimus 4.r tumbras de argento, quae fuerunt domini Laurentii Theupoli, a domino Joanne Superantio qui fuit Ambasator in Tonisto.

13. Item habemus tombrae 4.r de argento quae fuerunt domini Raynerii Geno Ducis Veneticiae.

14. Item habemus tumbrae 4.r de arg.to quae fuerunt domini Laurentii Teupolo Ducis Veneciae (Create. Anno 1268. Ob. 1275)

15. Dedimus 4.r tombras suprascriptas de argento domino Nicolao Faletro de voluntate domini Ducis et eius consilii secundum recordationem, qui vadit Ambasator in Tonisto.

16. Dedimus tombras VI argenti Consiliariis, quas portaverunt super Bucentaurum causa recipiendi dominum Ducem.

17. Recepimus suprascriptas tombras VI argenti a Consiliariis.

18. Item habemus tombrae IIII.or de argento quae fuerunt domini Jacobi Contareno Ducis Veneciae. (Create. 1275. Ob. 1280).

19. Recepimus tombras 4.r argenti quae fuerunt domini Joannis Danduli Ducis Veneciae. (Create. Anno 1280. Obiit 1288).

20. Dedimus suprascriptas tombras 4.r argenti Nicolao Quirino S. Pauli, qui de mandato domini Ducis et Consilii ivit Ambraxator in Alexandria.

21. Recepimus 4.r tumbras a domino Nicolao Phaletro qui fuit Ambaxator a Tonisto, quae fuerunt domini Laurentii Theupoli.

22. Dedimus 4.r tumbras quae fuerunt domini Laurentii Teupoli quondam Ducis domino Joanni Superantio qui vadit Ambaxator Tonisto de voluntate domini Ducis et sui Consilii.

23. Dedimus VI tumbras de argento domino Jo. Cornario qui fuit Ambaxator pro comunitate Veneciae Justinopolim pro domino Ptero Gradonico Duce Veneciae. Et

habemus in capsella suprascriptio domini Joannis Cornarii quae sunt in p.a camera nostrae commendariae cum auro et argento et denariis qui sunt intus de voluntate Consiliarorum.

24. Recepimus suprascriptas tombras VI a dominio Jo. Cornario et dedimus ei capsellam suam cum suprascriptis rebus intus

Recordatione quod alii sunt panni et cortinae et vexilla qui et quae sunt et ponuntur in ecclesia B.^{mi} Marci in magnis festivitatibus:

25. In primis cortinae duae longae sanguineae cum imperatoribus intus ad equum.

26. Item cortina una longa cum hominibus sanguineis intus.

27. Item cortina una cum campo rubeo et imperatoribus intus ad equum.

28. Item cortina una cum campo viridi et imperatoribus intus ad equum.

29. Item cortina una sanguinea veteri ad opera purpurea.

30. Item cortinae duae cum proeliis imperatorum intus.

31. Item panni II de examito cum Angelis magnus intus.

32. Item pannum unum sanguineum cum Baptismo Christi.

33. Item pannum unum rubeum cusitum cum agori cum Christo in medio.

34. Pannum unum zallum cum palmerio longo intus.

35. Pannum unum cum leonibus et palmario intus, circumdatum examito rubeo.

36. Item vexilla de cendato tria magna de victoriis Constantinopolim et Iadrae.

37. Item vexilla octo imperialia et duo pennelli imperiales.

38. Item vexilla quinque imperialia vetera et fracta.

a. Item panni VII saratasini.

39. Item vexilla duo sanguinea, quae consuevit portare Dux in Bucentauro.

40. Item vexilla de cendato II fracta et vetera, una de Victoria Suri et alia de Chio.

41. Item vexillum unum rubeum S. Marci, quod portat dominus Dux in pupe Bucentauri.

Omnia suprascripta sunt super ecclesiam; et designavimus ea Petro.

Appendix B

A transcription of the Testament of Holy Roman Emperor Otto IV (Nierdersächsisches Landesarchiv Wolfenbüttel 2 Urk 1 No. 1), adapted from *Braunschweig-Lüneburgische Chronica*, ed. Philippo Julio Rehtmeyer (Brunswick: Detleff Detleffsen, 1722), 457–459.[306]

In nomine sanctae et individuae Trinitatis. Dei gratia Otto quartis Rom. Imp. Et semper Augustus, dilectis fidelibus suis, Henrico fratri suo Palatino Comiti Reni, ministerialibus suis, et universis Burgensibus suis in Bruneswic, et omnibus hoc scriptum intuentibus, salute in eo, qui est salus omnium. Quae temporaliter acta sunt, ne instabilem temporis sequantur naturam, testamento litterarum memoriae sunt commendanda. Nos igitur ob remedium animae nostrae testamentum nostrum facientes, omni affectione qua possumus, te frater Henrice, Palatine Comes Reni, rogamus, ut si Deus, in cujus ditione cuneta sunt posita, praeceptum suum de nobis fecerit, ut universae carnis viam ingrediamur, quatenus pro amore Dei, et in ea fide, qua nobis hominio et fraternitate astrictus es, sanctam crucem, lanceam et coronam, dentem S. Joannis Baptistae, et Imperialia insignia, praeter pallium nostrum, quod dandum est ad St. AEgidium, viginti septimanas post decessum nostrum conserves, et nulli hominum sub caelo repraesentes, nisi ei, quem principes unanimiter elegerint et juste, aut ei, qui nunc est electus, si principes in eum consenserint, et pro his repraesentandis pro honore Dei et nostra salute nullam acceptes pecuniam, nisi nostrum et tuum patrimonium per ipsa Imperialia possis requirere. Quod si non potest fieri super gratia ipsius, qui habiturus est regnum, quae praefata sunt omnia resignes. Rogamus etiam vos, fidissimi ministeriales, sub fidelitatis debito, et vos dilecti et fideles cives nostril in Bruneswic, ut his omnibus promovendis fideliter et efficaciter, sicut vobis confidimus, assistatis. Ad haec volumus, ut uxor nostra cum Dapifero Gunzelino et fidelibus nostris castrum Harlungeberg possideat, donec quicunque Rex vel Imperator est, aut frater noster, seu uxor nostra, dominabus in Waltingerodh de expedites bonis annuatim 30 marcas perpetualiter et immutabiliter assignet, et eos, qui montis heredes sunt a sua portione cedere faciat per restaurum ipsis beneplacitum, tunc uxor nostra reddat castrum Imperio, aut fratri nostro: sed si processum non habeat de castro, ut praetactum est, volumus ut castrum destruatur. Omnes reliquias, quas pater noster habuit, et nos habemus, Deo et S. Johanni Baptistae, et S. Blasio in Bruneswic perpetualiter offerimus, praeter unum brachium, quod uxori nostrae repraesentabitur. Quicquid autem in auro et in gemmis, et in clenodiis habemus, damus uxori nostrae. Castrum in Quedlingeburg destrui volumus, antequam Abbatissae restituatur. Destructa vero munitione locus cum ecclesia restituatur Abbatissae: et nostrum frumentum, quod ibi est, et reliqua quibus argentum comparari potest, Abbatissae et ejus conventui detur pro remedio animae nostrae, praeter balistas, quae dabuntur transmarinare volentibus, ut super hostes Dei torqueantur: et annona quae

[306] I have removed the italics that are included in Rhetmeyer to indicate named persons and places. My translations of the underlined passages, which concern Otto's relics and/or gifts to the church of St. Blaise in Brunswick, are included below.

Ascherleve ablata fuit, reddi debet hominibus et inter ipsos distribui. Jurabunt itaque Gunzelinus Dapifer et Ecbertus filius suus, ut castrum Wallebeke teneant annum, infra quem terminum mittet ad Apostolicum frater noster, si in voluntate ipsius, et eorum, qui heredes montis sunt, castrum habere potest, cum salute animae nostrae, repraesentabitur fratri nostro castrum: si non potest fieri cum salute animae nostrae, castrum destruatur. Advocatium in Wallebeke, quam denariis nostris comparavimus, ipsius loci conventui offerimus. Castrum Hartisburg repraesentabitur Imperio, et eidem cedet turris quam in eo construximus. Comites de Waldenburg habeant seodum suum; Luthardus de Meinerseu seodum suum, Arnoldus de Borchtorp turrim suam cum seodo suo, et alii sicut ab Imperiotenere debent, habeant seodum suum. Castrum Lewenburg reddatur Ottoni de Luneburg nepoti nostro, quia patrimonium suum est et ejus cessit portioni. Castrum Varsfelde reddatur Gardolpho de Hathmersleve, sed si frater noster vult habere, dabit pro ipso centum marcas. Omnia bona nostra in Zeverlingeburg et ipsum locum cum ecclesiis, cum agris, cum paseuis, cum pratis, cum silvis et cum piscaturis et cum omni integritate, qua haec et alia omnia ipsi loco contulimus, Deo et S. Marie, S. Ioanni Baptistae et S. Blasio in Bruneswic offerimus, eo videlicet ordine, ut conventus de S. Blasio statuat ibi sacerdotem subdiaconum, ut sint ibi divina in honore Dei et beatae virginis Mariae indesinenter, pro animae nostrae salute: reliqua vero omnia ad praebendam suam utiliter convertant. Rogamus et te, frater carissime, omni qua possumus intentione et diligentia, ut hanc nostrum ordinationem firmam et inconvulsam teneas, pro amore Dei, et nostra et tua salute, quoniam speramus et credimus, istud honestius esse Deo, et animae nostrae et tuae salubrius, quam ut praescriptus locus in eo statu quo suit, contra nostrum salute male periret. Ut autem haec nostra voluntas effectui mancipetur, ad laudem Dei et salute animae nostrae, hoc scriptum nostro Sigillo corroborari fecimus, omnem adytum malignandi praecludentes. Hujus rei testes sunt Sifridus Episcopus Hildesheimensis, Conradus Decanus, Conradus Cantor, Conradus Scholasticus, Henricus de Tossen, Bartoldus Canonicus St. Mauricii, Magister Marsilius Canonicus St. Crucis. Laici vero, Comes Henricus de Woldenberg, Luthardus de Meinersen, Gunzelinus Dapifer, Allardus de Borchtorp, Wernerus de Lengete, Bartoldus de Wetelemstede, Henricus de Wrete, Rotterus de Veltem, Ioannes de Borneum, et alii complures. Datum Hartisburg 15. Junii anno 1218.

Excerpt 1: A passage instructing Henry, the Palatine Count of the Rhine, to safeguard the imperial regalia, including a tooth of John the Baptist and other relics.

Nos igitur ob remedium animae nostrae testamentum nostrum facientes, omni affectione qua possumus, te frater Henrice, Palatine Comes Reni, rogamus, ut si Deus, in cujus ditione cuneta sunt posita, praeceptum suum de nobis fecerit, ut universae carnis viam ingrediamur, quatenus pro amore Dei, et in ea fide, qua nobis hominio et fraternitate astrictus es, sanctam crucem, lanceam et coronam, dentem S. Joannis Baptistae, et Imperialia insignia, praeter pallium nostrum, quod dandum est ad St. AEgidium, viginti septimanas post decessum nostrum conserves, et nulli hominum sub caelo repraesentes, nisi ei, quem principes unanimiter elegerint et juste, aut ei, qui nunc est electus, si principes in eum consenserint, et pro his repraesentandis pro honore Dei et nostra salute nullam acceptes pecuniam, nisi nostrum et tuum patrimonium per ipsa Imperialia possis requirere.

We, therefore, for the salvation of our soul, make our testament. With all the love that we have, we ask you, my brother Henry, Palatine Count of the Rhine, that if God, in whose dominion all things have been established, makes his command concerning us, so that we may enter into the way of all flesh, since, for the love of God, and in his faith, you are bound to us in humanity and brotherhood, to keep safe the holy cross, the lance and crown, the tooth of St. John the Baptist, and the imperial insignia, except for our cloak that is to be given to St. Aegidius 20 weeks following our passing, and present [them] to no man under the heavens, except [to] him whom the princes unanimously and justly elect, or else [to] him who is now elected, if the princes give their consent to him, and for these matters being performed for the honor of God and our salvation do not accept any money, except our and your inheritance that you might require for the imperial insignia themselves.

Excerpt 2: A passage instructing Otto's collection of relics, inherited from Henry the Lion, to be donated to St. Blaise in Brunswick.

Omnes reliquias, quas pater noster habuit, et nos habemus, Deo et S. Johanni Baptistae, et S. Blasio in Bruneswic perpetualiter offerimus, praeter unum brachium, quod uxori nostrae repraesentabitur.

All the relics, which our father had, and we have now, we offer in perpetuity to God and St. John the Baptist and St. Blaise in Brunswick, expect for one arm, which shall be presented to our wife.

Excerpt 3: A passage granting St. Blaise special rights to additional land in Zeverlingeburg.

Omnia bona nostra in Zeverlingeburg et ipsum locum cum ecclesiis, cum agris, cum pascuis, cum pratis, cum silvis et cum piscaturis et cum omni integritate, qua haec et alia omnia ipsi loco contulimus, Deo et St. Marie, St. Ioanni Baptistae et St. Blasio in Bruneswic offerimus, eo videlicet ordine, ut conventus de S. Blasio statuat ibi sacerdotem subdiaconum, ut sint ibi divina in honore Dei et beatae virginis Mariae indesinenter, pro animae nostrae salute: reliqua vero omnia ad praebendam suam utiliter convertant.

All our property in Zeverlingeburg and its region with churches, with fields, with pastures, with meadows, with forests, and with fisheries and with all integrity, where this and another entire location itself come together, we offer to God and St. Mary, St. John the Baptist and St. Blaise in Brunswick. It is clear, by this order, that the convent of St. Blaise may set up there a subdiaconal priesthood, so that divine [offices] might ceaselessly be celebrated in honor of God and the blessed Virgin Mary, for the salvation of our soul: all the rest of [the property] may be usefully converted into his [the subdeacon's] prebend.

Appendix C

Fair Use Statement

The images in this dissertation are included for the sole purpose of advancing scholarly knowledge through the practice of analytic writing. These images are not illustrations; the artworks represented are the primary source objects that form the basis of my analysis. All image sources are fully and accurately cited. There is no financial gain to be made from the inclusion of any images. The author will obtain copyright permissions if any portion of this dissertation is published.

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FIGURES

Introduction

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Fig. 0.2 Cylindrical Reliquary Casket, side view, 13th century, gilded copper with rock crystal, 18.5 x 16 x 6.7 cm. Musée de Cluny, Paris, Cl. 19965. Image source: author.

Chapter One

Fig. 1.1 Reliquary Casket from Moûtiers-en-Tarentaise, Savoie, c. 1200, gilded silver, gemstones, pearls on a wood core with rock crystal, 11.3 x 14.8 x 9.7 cm. Musée de Cluny, Paris, Cl. 11661. Image source: van Os, *The Way to Heaven*, 115.

Fig. 1.2 Reliquary Casket from Moûtiers-en-Tarentaise, Savoie, side view, c. 1200, gilded silver, gemstones, pearls on a wood core with rock crystal, 11.3 x 14.8 x 9.7 cm. Musée de Cluny, Paris, Cl. 11661. Photograph by Genevra Kornbluth. Image source: www.KornbluthPhoto.com/archive-1.html.

Fig. 1.3 Skull Relic of St. James the Younger, 11th-12th century, Byzantine gilded silver setting, 20 x 16 x 13 cm. Domschatz, Halberstadt, Inv. Nr. 19. Image source: Bagnoli, et al., eds. *Treasures of Heaven*, 141.

Fig. 1.4 Châsse with the Crucifixion and Christ in Majesty, c. 1180–1190, gilded copper and champlevé enamel on a wood core, 26.2 x 30.2 x 11.6 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1917, 17.190.514. Reproduced under CC0. Image source: www.metmuseum.org.

Fig. 1.5 St. Stephen's Purse Reliquary, 9th century, gold on a wood core with silver gilt, precious stones, pearls, and glass, H. 32 cm. Kunsthistorischesmuseum, Vienna, Treasury, WS XIII 26. Image source: Leithe-Jasper and Distelberger, *The Kunsthistoriches*, 56.

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Fig. 1.7 Cabochon Reliquary Casket, c. 1175–1200, gilded copper and enamel on a wood core with rock crystal, 22.8 x 16.2 x 11.3 cm. Dommuseum, Hildesheim, Inv. Nr. DS 20. Image source: author.

Fig. 1.8 Cabochon Reliquary Casket, detail of a wrapped relic in its rock crystal setting, c. 1175–1200, gilded copper and enamel on a wood core with rock crystal, 22.8 x 16.2 x 11.3 cm. Dommuseum, Hildesheim, Inv. Nr. DS 20. Image source: author.

Chapter Two

Fig. 2.1 The Reliquary of the Miraculous Blood, mid-13th century, gold setting with 10th-century carved rock crystal, 23.9 x 9 cm. Basilica of San Marco, Venice, Santuario 63. Reproduced courtesy of the Procuratoria della Basilica di San Marco. Image source: Archivio Fotografico della Procuratoria di San Marco.

Fig. 2.2 The Reliquary of the Miraculous Blood, reverse view, mid-13th century, gold setting with 10th-century carved rock crystal, 23.9 x 9 cm. Basilica of San Marco, Venice, Santuario 63. Reproduced courtesy of the Procuratoria della Basilica di San Marco. Image source: Archivio Fotografico della Procuratoria di San Marco.

Fig. 2.3 The Reliquary of the Miraculous Blood, detail of engravings on foot, mid-13th century, gold setting with 10th-century carved rock crystal, 23.9 x 9 cm. Basilica of San Marco, Venice, Santuario 63. Reproduced courtesy of the Procuratoria della Basilica di San Marco. Image source: Archivio Fotografico della Procuratoria di San Marco.

Fig. 2.4 The Reliquary of the Miraculous Blood, detail of stem and lower support, mid-13th century, gold setting with 10th-century carved rock crystal, 23.9 x 9 cm. Basilica of San Marco, Venice, Santuario 63. Reproduced courtesy of the Procuratoria della Basilica di San Marco. Image source: Archivio Fotografico della Procuratoria di San Marco.

Fig. 2.5 The Reliquary of the Miraculous Blood, detail of vessel and blood relic, mid-13th century, gold setting with 10th-century carved rock crystal, 23.9 x 9 cm. Basilica of San Marco, Venice, Santuario 63. Reproduced courtesy of the Procuratoria della Basilica di San Marco. Image source: Archivio Fotografico della Procuratoria di San Marco.

Fig. 2.6 The Reliquary of the Miraculous Blood, detail of vessel and blood relic, reverse view, mid-13th century, gold setting with 10th-century carved rock crystal, 23.9 x 9 cm. Basilica of San Marco, Venice, Santuario 63. Reproduced courtesy of the Procuratoria della Basilica di San Marco. Image source: Archivio Fotografico della Procuratoria di San Marco.

Fig. 2.7 Relief Plaque of the "Relics from Constantinople," c. 1260s, marble, 89 x 56 cm. In the Basilica of San Marco, Venice, southern corridor to the Doge's Palace. Image source: Maguire and Nelson, eds. *San Marco*, pl. X.

Fig. 2.8 Reliquary Cross of Henry of Flanders, before 1216, wood in a Byzantine gold mounting, set in a 17th-century Venetian ostensorium, 56.5 x 31.2 cm. Basilica of San Marco, Venice, Santuario 55. Image source: Buckton, et al., eds. *The Treasury*, 245.

Fig. 2.9 Reliquary Cross of the Empress Irene Dukas, 12th century, wood in a Byzantine gilded silver mounting, set in a 16th-century Venetian ostensorium, 21 x 14 x 4 cm. Basilica of San Marco, Venice, Santuario 57. Image source: Hahnloser, *Il Tesoro*, pl. XXVIII.

Fig. 2.10 Reliquary of the Arm of St. George, before 1325, gilded silver and enamel with 16th-century additions, 51.9 x 11.7 cm. Basilica of San Marco, Venice, Santuario 53. Image source: Buckton, et al., eds. *The Treasury*, 283.

Fig. 2.11 Reliquary Casket of the Skull of St. John the Baptist, 14th century, gilded silver, 4 x 14 x 6 cm. Basilica of San Marco, Venice, Santuario 105. Image source: Hahnloser, *Il Tesoro*, pl. XXXI

Fig. 2.12 The Basilica of San Marco, Venice, interior view towards the altar. Image source: Vio, ed., *St. Mark's*, 142.

Fig. 2.13 The Basilica of San Marco, Venice, interior view of the great pulpit (*bigonzo*), 13th century, porphyry and marble. Image source: Vio, ed., *St. Mark's*, 61.

Chapter Three

Fig. 3.1. Weddeghe Velstede, Monstrance Reliquary with a Tooth of Saint John the Baptist, 1433, gilded silver with a 10th- or 11th-century carved rock crystal, H. 45.1 cm. The Art Institute of Chicago, Gift of Mrs. Chauncey McCormick, 1962.91. Reproduced under CC0. Image source: www.artic.edu.

Fig. 3.2. Circular Reliquary with Domed Roof and Relics of Saints Godehard and Bernward, c. 1375–1400, gilded silver with rock crystal, H. 40.6 cm. The Art Institute of Chicago, Gift of Kate S. Buckingham, 1938.1957. Reproduced under CC0. Image source: www.artic.edu.

Fig. 3.3. Monstrance Reliquary with the Finger of Saint John the Baptist, c. 1400, gilded silver, 57.79 x 20.32 x 20.32 cm. The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, Purchase: William Rockhill Nelson Trust, 31-71. Image source: Smith, et al., *Medieval Art*, 20.

Fig. 3.4. Weddeghe Velstede, Monstrance Reliquary with a Tooth of Saint John the Baptist, detail of Fatimid bottle with tooth relic inside, 1433, gilded silver with a 10th- or 11th-century carved rock crystal, H. 45.1 cm. The Art Institute of Chicago, Gift of Mrs. Chauncey McCormick, 1962.91. Reproduced under CC0. Image source: www.artic.edu.

Fig. 3.5. Weddeghe Velstede, Monstrance Reliquary with a Tooth of Saint John the Baptist, detail of Fatimid bottle with tooth relic removed, 1433, gilded silver with a 10th- or 11th-century carved rock crystal, H. 45.1 cm. The Art Institute of Chicago, Gift of Mrs. Chauncey McCormick, 1962.91. Image source: author.

Fig. 3.6. Weddeghe Velstede, Monstrance Reliquary with a Tooth of Saint John the Baptist, detail of Saint John the Baptist's tooth with cloth and parchment wrapping removed from the Fatimid bottle, 1433, gilded silver with a 10th- or 11th-century carved rock crystal, H. 45.1 cm. The Art Institute of Chicago, Gift of Mrs. Chauncey McCormick, 1962.91. Image source: author.

Fig. 3.7. Circular Reliquary with Domed Roof and Relics of Saints Godehard and Bernward, detail of rock crystal setting with relics, c. 1375–1400, gilded silver with rock crystal, H. 40.6 cm. The Art Institute of Chicago, Gift of Kate S. Buckingham, 1938.1957. Image source: author.

Fig. 3.8. Reliquary (so-called Wedge Reliquary), 10th-century with later additions, partially gilded silver and copper on a wood core with precious stones and a 10th-century carved rock crystal, 19.5 (without rock crystal) x 13.3 x 4.5 cm. Dommuseum, Hildesheim, Inv. No. DS 4. Image source: author.

Fig. 3.9. Rock Crystal Bottle Reliquary, 11th century with 12th- to 14th-century additions, rock crystal, gold, gilded silver, and gemstones, 17 x 9.5 cm. Domschatz, Halberstadt, Inv. Nr. 49. Image source: Meller et al., eds., *Der heilige Schatz*, 63.

Fig. 3.10. Hedwig Beaker Reliquary, before 1200 with metalwork c. 1400–1450, glass and gilded silver, 28 x 7.5 cm. Domschatz, Halberstadt, Inv. Nr. 69. Image source: Meller et al., eds., *Der heilige Schatz*, 75.

Fig. 3.11. Rock Crystal Chess Piece, 10th century, rock crystal. Domschatz, Halberstadt. Image source: Meller et al., eds., *Der heilige Schatz*, 47.

Fig. 3.12. Large Rock Crystal Flask Reliquary with Birds, 10th century with 13th- to 14th-century mount, rock crystal and silver, 18 x 10.5 cm. Domschatz, Quedlinburg. Image source Sano and Kusin, eds., *The Quedlinburg Treasury*, 15.

Fig. 3.13. Monstrance with Rock Crystal Fish Bottle, 10th century with mount c. 1230–1250, rock crystal and gilded silver, 11 x 4.5 cm. Domschatz, Quedlinburg. Image source: Sano and Kusin, eds., *The Quedlinburg Treasury*, 16.

Fig. 3.14. Monstrance with Rock Crystal Fish Bottle, 10th century with 13th-century mount, rock crystal and partially gilded silver, 12 x 5.5 cm. Domschatz, Quedlinburg. Image source: Sano and Kusin, eds., *The Quedlinburg Treasury*, 17.

Fig. 3.15. Rock Crystal Reliquary in Triangular Form, 10th century with 13th- to 15th-century additions. This piece was stolen from Quedlinburg during World War II and remains missing. Image source: Kötzsche, ed., *Der Quedlinburger Schatz*, 123.

Fig. 3.16. Fragments of Islamic Rock Crystal, 10th or 11th century, rock crystal. Domschatz, Quedlinburg. Image source: Kötzsche, ed., *Der Quedlinburger Schatz*, 76.

Fig. 3.17. The Church of St. Blaise, Brunswick, exterior view from the North with a replica of the 12th-century lion statue in the foreground. Image source: author.

Fig. 3.18. The castle square of Brunswick, view of Henry the Lion's Dankwarderode Castle (reconstructed) at the back left and the northern aisle of St. Blaise to the right. Image source: author.

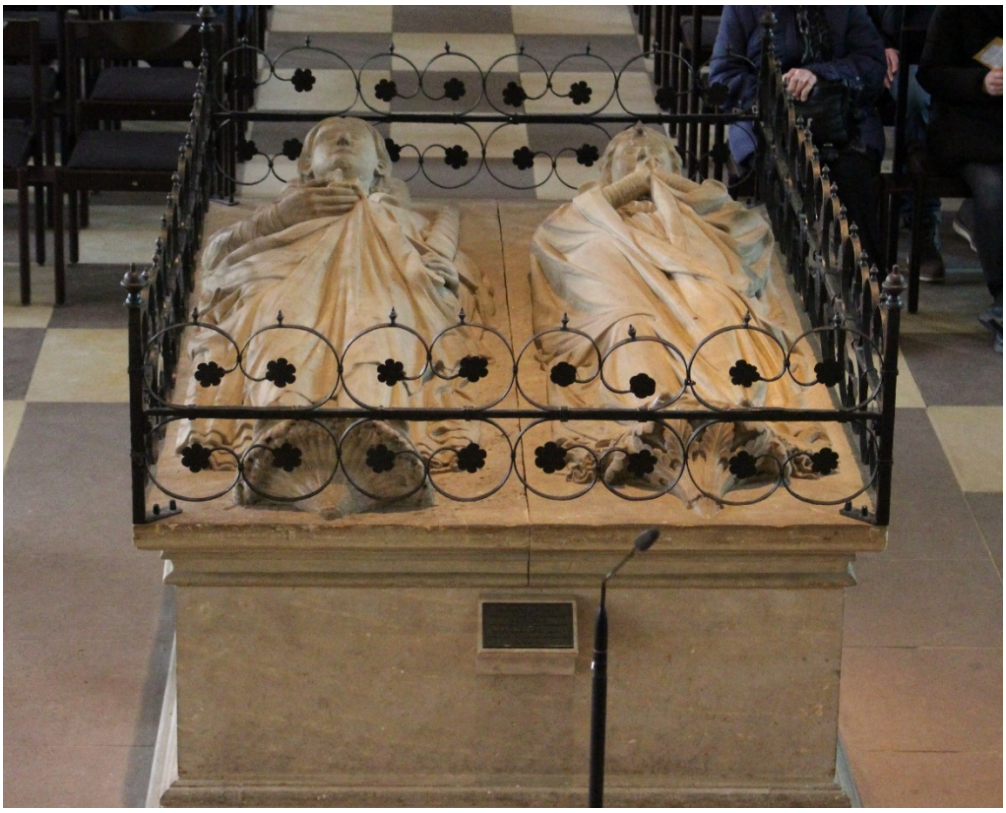

Fig. 3.19. The Church of St. Blaise, Brunswick, view of the tomb effigy of Henry the Lion and his wife Matilda in the nave, c. 1230–1240. Image source: author.

Fig. 3.20. The Church of St. Blaise, Brunswick, detail of the tomb effigy showing the architectural model of St. Blaise, c. 1230–1240. Image source: author.

Fig. 3.21. Ostensorium with the “Paten of St. Bernward,” paten c. 1180–1190 with 14th-century mount, silver, gilded silver, niello, and rock crystal, 34.5 x 15.9 x 14 cm. The Cleveland Museum of Art, Purchase from the J. H. Wade Fund with additional gift from Mrs. R. Henry Norweb, 1930.505. Reproduced under CC0. Image source: www.clevelandart.org.

Fig. 3.22. Ostensorium with the “Paten of St. Bernward,” reverse view, paten c. 1180–1190 with 14th-century mount, silver, gilded silver, niello, and rock crystal, 34.5 x 15.9 x 14 cm. The Cleveland Museum of Art, Purchase from the J. H. Wade Fund with additional gift from Mrs. R. Henry Norweb, 1930.505. Reproduced under CC0. Image source: www.clevelandart.org.

Fig. 3.23. Monstrance with a Relic of St. Blaise, c.1375–1400, gilded silver with a twelfth-century Byzantine capsule, 31.3 x 14.2 x 14 cm. Staatliche Museen Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Kunstgewerbemuseum, Berlin, Inv. Nr. W 44. © Foto: Kunstgewerbemuseum der Staatlichen Museen zu Berlin - Preußischer Kulturbesitz. Fotograf/in: Karen Bartsch. Reproduced under CC BY-NC-SA 3.0 DE. Image source: www.smb-digital.de.

Fig. 3.24. Monstrance with a Relic of St. Blaise, detail of Byzantine relic capsule, c.1375–1400, gilded silver with a twelfth-century Byzantine capsule, 31.3 x 14.2 x 14 cm. Staatliche Museen Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Kunstgewerbemuseum, Berlin, Inv. Nr. W 44. Image source: author.

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