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THE MONARCH'S GESTURE AND VISUALISATION OF RITUALS ASSOCIATED WITH THE CULT OF RELICS

I

A tendency for the visualisation of religious symbolism of the ritual proceeding according to a solemn and ritually formalised scenario is an inseparable part of the mediaeval cult of relics¹. The ritual presentation of relics to the faithful — *ostensio reliquiarum* is the simplest way of visualisation both in terms of ideas, which stemmed from the worshipping of relics, and the relics themselves². *Ostensio* could be celebrated as the ceremony ac-

¹ Due to a large number of scientific works devoted to the mediaeval cult of relics, it is almost impossible to quote even an ubridged version of the bibliography on the subject. The most detailed bibliography with a commentary, regarding the cult of relics, reliquaries, vaults where relics were kept, and transfer (till the beginning of 1990s) can be found in: Dom J. Dubois, J. Lemaître, *Sources et méthodes de l'hagiographie médiévale*, Paris 1993, pp. 247-319; see also: A. Angenendt, *Heilige und Reliquien: die Geschichte ihres Kultes vom frühen Christentum bis zur Gegenwart*, München 1994; E. Bozóky, A.-M. Helvétius (ed.), *Les reliques. Objets, cultes, symboles. Actes du Colloque international de l'Université du Littoral-Côte d'Opale (Boulogne-sur-Mer) 4-6 septembre 1997*, Turnhout 1999; J. Crook, *The Architectural Setting of the Cult of Saints in the Early Christian West, c. 300 - c. 1200*, Oxford 2000; L. Canetti, *Frammenti di eternità. Corpi e reliquie trà Antichità e Medioevo*, Roma 2002; N. Herrmann-Mascard, *Les reliques des saints. Formation coutumière d'un droit*, Société d'Histoire du droit. Collection d'histoire institutionnelle et sociale, vol. VI, Paris 1975; J. Petersohn (ed.), *Politik und Heiligenverehrung im Hochmittelalter*, Vorträge und Forschungen, vol. XLII, Sigmaringen 1994; of works in Polish see: K. Szczepkowska-Naliwajek, *Relikwiarze średniowiecznej Europy od IV do początku XVI wieku: geneza, treść, styl i techniki wykonania (Medieval European Reliquaries from the 4th till the Beginning of the 16th Century: Origins, Contents, Style and Techniques of Production)*, Warszawa 1996; *Kult świętych w Polsce średniowiecznej: materiały z sympozjum naukowego 31 maja 2001 (Cult of Saints in Mediaeval Poland: Papers of the Scientific Symposium of May 31st 2001)*, ed. E. Piwowarczyk, Kraków 2003, also a popularizing work by J. Kracik, *Relikwie (Relics)*, Kraków 2002.

² H. Kühne, *Ostensio reliquiarum. Untersuchungen über Entstehung, Ausbreitung, Gestalt und Funktion der Heiltumsweisungen im römisch-deutschen Regnum*, «Arbeiten zur Kirchengeschichte», vol. LXXV, Berlin-New York 2000.

companying a major cult event, which could be the — usually miraculous — finding of relics (*inventio*)³, the confirmation of the authenticity of relics (*autenticatio*)⁴, the transfer of relics to a new place of cult or a reliquary (*translatio*), or, finally, the elevation of relics to the altar (*elevatio*). Also, well-known are the autonomous rituals *ostensio reliquiarum* whose aim was a mere presentation of relics and their veneration by the faithful. No matter whether the ceremony of *ostensio* or the transfer of relics was held publicly or in a narrow circle of the clergy⁵, it constituted the visualisation of spiritual contents directed at God, saints and people. Both the major celebrant — usually a bishop — and members of the community worshipping the relics, performed a number of symbolic gestures during the ceremony, ascribed to them in *ordo translationis* or *ordo ostensionis*, which brought a clear ideological message. The so called *Ordo of Saint-Amand* (Flanders), one of the oldest preserved liturgical texts of this sort (approx. 691/692)⁶ which may have been written for the needs of a re-elevation to the altar and transfer of St. Amand's relics to a new reliquary, serves as an example of an early ritual formalisation of the ceremonies accompanying the veneration of relics in time of their transfer and *ostensio*.

Even a superficial look at *ordo of Saint-Amand* makes it possible to notice that the ritual of transfer described there

³ Despite the fact that the historiography regarding the cult of relics is extremely rich, there are very few works—syntheses on the transfer; in this particular matter of the bibliography of this problem, we refer the reader to the already mentioned work by Dom J. Dubois, J. Lemaître, *Sources et méthodes de l'hagiographie médiévale...*, listing below only the most relevant, in our opinion, works: M. Heinzelmänn, *Translationsberichte und andere Quellen des Reliquienkultes*, «Typologie des sources du Moyen Âge occidental», vol. XXXIII, Turnhout 1979; N. Herrmann-Mascard, *Les reliques des saints*, pp. 206–216; H. Kühne, *Ostensio reliquiarum*, pp. 513–527.

⁴ From the 11th century onwards, *ostensio* is a permanent element of transfer and *inventio* of relics as an element of authentication, see: N. Herrmann-Mascard, *Les reliques des saints*, pp. 122–124; 206–208.

⁵ That happened, for example, in Paris in 1267 — the abbot and convent of the Sainte-Geneviève Abbey opposed the public transfer *ne praelati et nobiles de minutis ossibus et aliis ad sanctam pertinenes aliquid importunitate, comminatione vel modo quocumque extorquere niterentur, quod sine ira et indignatione vitari non valeret*, Iacobus de Dinant, *Tractatus de translatione sanctae Genovefae*, «Recueil des Historiens des Gaules et de la France» (quoted below as: «RHF»), vol. I–XXIV, Paris 1768–1904, here: vol. XXIII, p. 141); cf. L. Carolus-Barré, *Saint Louis et la translation des corps saints*, in: *Études de droit canonique dédiées à M. Gabriel Le Bras*, Paris 1965 pp. 1110–1111.

⁶ *Ordo de Saint-Amand*, ed. M. Andrieu, *Les Ordines Romani du haut moyen âge*, vol. IV, Louvain 1956, Ordo XIII, pp. 409–413.

constitutes a sort of religious *theatrum* where none of the acted gestures and ritual practices is meaningless but they visualise the sense of performed prayers and songs or harmonise with them. After the relics had been taken out of a sepulchre, martyrrium or an old reliquary, they were handed over to the bishop who was celebrating the liturgy, and the cantors who were singing the antiphon *Ecce populus custodiens iudicium*. After the antiphon, the bishop touched the relics through white silky canvas and at the same time raised them for a while so that the convent could see them, and next, he placed them wrapped in a piece of silk on a paten. Those practices were accompanied by further singing Psalm 86 (87): *Fundamenta eius in montibus sanctis*, which referred to the foundations for God's church to be built — in this case it was undoubtedly the relics which were to serve as the foundations. Next, the bishop, assisted by the two deacons who were holding his arms, raised the paten. At the same time God was being worshipped through the singing of *Gloria* — — *sicut erat in principio*, and after that the cantor expressed the joy of good Christians, singing *versus (tropus): Sicut laetantium omnium nostrum*, based on the final verse of the psalm which started the liturgy, *sicut laetantium omnium habitatio in te* (Psalm 86 (87): 7). Next, carrying the relics which, wrapped in white silk, were still lying on the paten, the bishop conducted a solemn procession around the church, with incensing and candles, which was being joined by the secular faithful, who had gathered earlier in front of the church, waiting to join the ceremony at that particular moment. In the meantime the cantors were singing the antiphon which expressed the joy of the faithful *Cum iocunditate exhibitis* (if the procession lasted longer — a Psalm with the antiphon)⁷. When the relics had circled the church in procession, the bishop stopped all, handed over the relics to the friars and began the litany to All Saints. Also, during the litany the saint present in the relics was being honoured through incensing. The crowd, in their response to the invocations, which were said by the bishop in the litany, appealed to the saints for their intercession in Heaven — and it was, like the participation in the procession, the prayer preparation of the faithful for their further contribution to the transfer. Next, the priests sprinkled holy water on the faithful

⁷ *Ordo of Saint-Amand* does not specify which psalm was to be sung then, therefore it was most likely Psalm *secundum feriam*.

in order that they were symbolically cleansed and sanctified before entering the church. After the door was opened, the procession, still reciting the litany, entered the church. After the litany, the cantor began the antiphon *Sacerdos magne, pontifex summi Dei, ingredere templum Domini et hostias pacificas pro salute populi offeres Deo tuo. Hic est enim dedicationis sanctorum Domini Dei tui*, which was directed at both the bishop and the saint who was present in the relics. Next, the cantor, chanting Psalm 32 (33): *Gaudete [Exultate]*⁸, *iusti in Domino*, turned to the crowd, and later the Holy Trinity was worshipped again and *Gloria* — — *sicut erat in principio* was sung. At that time the relics were again handed over to the bishop, who showed them to the crowd once more and next put them in a reliquary; the cantor was then singing the antiphon *Sub altare Domini sedes accepisti, intercedite pro nobis per quem meruisti*, in which the faithful turned to the saint, who received the place of residence *sub altare Dei*, for his intercession. After the antiphon, Psalm 118 (119) *Beati immaculati* was chanted, which praised the Lord's people who obeyed God's Law; on account of the fact it was a very long Psalm, it was only sung as long as the relics were being put in the reliquary or martyrium.

Thus, a sort of theatricalisation of the above mentioned liturgy became a feature of the ritual of transfer of relics, described in *Ordo of Saint-Amand*. This is, of course, not a sacral theatre *sensu stricto*, but the theatricalisation of the liturgy understood in a way that actions and gestures performed by the participants make a visual unfolding of religious symbolism of the ritual, included in the texts of prayers, chanted and recited, which were easily understood by the members of the clergy but not necessarily by the secular faithful. The whole ceremony bears the signs of a religious *theatrum*: each participant in the ceremony performs the role ascribed to him in *ordo* — on his own, like the bishop who conducts the liturgy — or in a group, like the other members of the clergy and the secular faithful who took part in the ritual of transfer. The circling of the church with relics in the procession, the litany in which the faithful turn to saints for intercession, the sprinkling of holy water on the crowd by the priests and together with the clergy, the joint introduction of the

⁸ In the Vulgate Psalm 32 (33) begins with *Exultate*, yet *Ordo of Saint-Amand* quotes *Gaudete*.

relics into the church, all these visualise the bond which was being created during the liturgy of transfer between a local religious community and the saint who was becoming their patron. Even more vivid is the link between the meaning of the prayers and liturgical chanting and the functions of the celebrant — the bishop, whose gestures visualise the sense of liturgical texts: when he receives the relics from friars, the antiphon *Ecce populus custodiens iudicium* sounds; when, conducting the procession, he re-enters the church, the words *Sacerdos magne, pontifex summi Dei, ingrediere templum Domini et hostias pacificas pro salute populi offeres Deo tuo* are heard. The role ascribed to the relics themselves should be discussed separately. They themselves are the centre of a religious *theatrum*, but they only seemingly constitute the subject of actions taken by the people participating in the ceremony. Both the mediaeval piety and the teaching of the Church assumed the actual presence of the saint in his relics, so before the transfer was completed and the bishop put the relics in the reliquary which was either in front of the altar or inside it, he performed the gesture, which in a mystical and material sense reflected the words of the antiphon that was sung then: *Sub altare Domini sedes accepisti*. The relics were put in the reliquary with the bishop's hands, yet it was the saint himself who, through the agency of his relics, found this way his due place on earth, which visualised his transcendent status. Another issue is to determine to what extent liturgical actions and gestures, performed during the ceremony of transfer, inspired the selection of written prayers, and to what extent those prayers inspired these actions. There is no doubt that fundamental liturgical forms, such as a procession with relics, were based on the tradition of the ancient Church and were adjusted to the needs of the ritual of transfer⁹. We do not aim to determine the origins of the rituals associated with the cult of relics, we shall limit ourselves to the conclusion that in the light of *Ordo of Saint-Amand*, the visual forms of the ritual and liturgical texts in use during the veneration of relics are correlated.

There are two examples from the 9th century France which can serve as a testimony to perceiving relics as the most honourable participants of cult rituals which they actively participated

⁹ É. Palazzo, *Liturgie et société au Moyen Âge*, Paris 2000, pp. 58–77, there the complete bibliography with a commentary, pp. 230–233.

in, and as the evidence of the theatricalisation of the cult of relics. In 868, during the transfer of the relics of St. Maurus, the disciple of St. Benedict, to the abbey of St. Peter and Paul situated in the valley of the Marne (later Saint-Maur-des-Fossées), a solemn introduction of the relics to Paris was performed on the first Sunday of Lent. The Bishop of Paris, Aenas, decided then that from then on, on the first Sunday of Lent, that is on the anniversary of the arrival (*adventus*) of Maurus' relics to Paris, a procession with the relics of the saint should be performed in town on a yearly basis. Aenas most likely drew his inspiration from the tradition observed at the same time in the abbey of Saint-Benoît-sur-Loire (Fleury) where, according to the evidence of contemporary Adrevald of Fleury, the procession with the relics of St. Benedict was held twice a year: on the anniversary of the relics' arrival in France (*anniversarium adventus s. Benedicti*) 11th July and 4th December — on the anniversary of putting the body of the saint in a tomb-reliquary in the abbey's church (*anniversarium tumulationis*). It is not only the solemn liturgical setting of the ceremony — bell ringing, the procession of the crowd or the monks with twigs or palms, candles and incense — that deserves to be called theatricalisation, but also the whole ritual. A solemn, processional, welcoming of the relics of saints, which were arriving in town or monastery, is the repetition and imitation of David's departure to meet the Ark of the Covenant and Jesus' entering Jerusalem. Also, another aspect matters: *adventus reliquiarum*, that is to say a historic and religious event which had already happened, is repeated every year, somehow ritually performed.

Every transfer of relics was a great holiday for the church which held it, and it is hard to call the liturgy of transfer an everyday practice in the religious life of the Middle Ages: yet it was a relatively common phenomenon. *Ordo of Saint-Amand* serves as an early example of the text which formalises this sort of liturgy; the very fact it was written down proves that the transfer of relics already acquired the status of a ceremony that belonged to frequent, formalised religious practices, which survived in a slightly changed form until modern times. Even a superficial analysis of *Ordo of Saint-Amand* let us notice the visualisation of the ideological message of the ceremony of the transfer of relics. The ritual depicted in *Ordo of Saint-Amand* was constructed as an ideal model of the transfer of relics, independent

from historical circumstances of the ceremony. However, we know that relics, or perhaps the saints present in them, appeared in mediaeval people's mentality as active participants of social life, actively supporting the community under their patronage — and they interfered in worldly affairs almost every day. It was not only the secular faithful but also the representatives of the educated clergy who expected that the saints they worshipped would engage themselves in worldly affairs, as they perceived the doctrine of the intercession of saints not only as the mediation regarding eternal redemption, but also as a guarantee of prosperity in worldly life¹⁰. Saints were expected to avert natural disasters from their 'herd', and to intervene in material and political conflicts, taking the side of the community which venerated their relics. Special rituals came into being also on such occasions; in the circumstances particularly dramatic for the community, the liturgical *theatrum* was also dramatised, and the relics were given a prominent position, which showed the symbolic meaning of the ceremony even more explicitly than during an ordinary transfer.

II

One of the most colourful and astounding rituals associated with the cult of saints and their relics in the early Middle Ages is the so called *humiliatio* — the humiliation of relics — carried out by friars or canons, usually in dramatic circumstances for the community. A quarter of the century ago, a penetrating analysis was devoted to this phenomenon by Patrick Geary¹¹. The humiliation was the ritual of relinquishing the veneration of a saint according to the hitherto practices in the abbey; monks or canons removed the relics from the reliquary and put them on the floor of the church, sometimes on a pall. This ritual was usually an answer by the convent to an injustice done to it by the secular — an incursion into their territory, buildings, an attack on the people who belonged to the monastery or the chapter, a violation of liberty and privileges of the community or an illegal,

¹⁰ P.-A. Sigal, *L'Homme et le miracle dans la France médiévale (XIe-XIIIe siècles)*, Paris 1985, *passim*.

¹¹ P. J. Geary, *L'humiliation des saints*, "Annales. Économies, Sociétés, Civilisations" (quoted below as: "Annales ESC"), XXXIV, 1/1979, pp. 27-42; N. Herрманн-Маскард, *Les reliques des saints*, pp. 226-228; É. Palazzo, *Liturgie et société*, pp. 184-186.

sacrilegious irruption on the territory under the jurisdiction of the abbot or provost. The ceremony of the humiliation of the relics was an act, rich in symbolic meaning, to depict the sorry plight in which the convent was left; it also visualised the humiliation which, due to hostile actions taken by the oppressors, affected the saint and his worshipping community, and it was also a way to put pressure on the saint patron who had let down his protégés. We therefore are facing here, just like in the case of the *ordo translationis*, a ritual which combines symbolic meaning with the meaning understood most literally.

Of the 1030s comes the so called *Liber tramitis*, the book of customs (*consuetudines*) of the Cluny abbey of the times of the rule of abbot Odilon (994–1048)¹² which contains the formulae of two rituals of a liturgical complaint directed to God (*clamor*), in use when the monastery was in trouble¹³. The first of these formulae also anticipates the humiliation of relics. The ritual took place during a solemn Sunday High Mass, between *Pater noster* and *Agnus Dei*: after the consecration the ancillary friars spread a pall on the floor in front of the altar, where they put the relics, a Gospel book and crucifix. The monks prostrate themselves on the ground and quietly chant Psalm 73 (74): *Quid Deus reppulisti in finem iratus est furor tuus*, while the guardian friars ring two bells. By the High Altar, where the Body and Blood of Christ rest, the celebrant, being the only standing among the monks, speaks in a resonant voice the complaint, asking God to avert disasters from the monastery and punish the oppressors.

One of the most striking descriptions of humiliation is the account by one of the canons regular of the St. Martin Abbey at Tours¹⁴, undoubtedly a participant of the events he himself described. In 996, the Count of Anjou, Foulques Nerra, violated the rights of both the abbey and St. Martin, by trespassing the

¹² *Liber tramitis aevi Odilonis abbatis*, ed. P. Dinter, *Corpus consuetudinum monasticorum*, vol. X, Siegburg 1980.

¹³ D. Barthélemy, *L'an mil et la paix de Dieu. La France chrétienne et féodale 980–1060*, Paris 1999, pp. 90–93; L. Little, *Formules monastiques de malédiction aux IXe et Xe siècles*, "Revue Mabillon", LVIII, 1975, pp. 377–399; *idem*, *La morphologie des malédictions monastiques*, "Annales ESC", XXXIV, 1/1979, pp. 43–60; *idem*, *Benedictine Maledictions. Liturgical Cursing in Romanesque France*, Ithaca–London, 1993.

¹⁴ It was the note taken in the cartulary of the abbey of Saint-Martin at Tours by the anonymous canon, ed. in: L. Halphen, *Le comté d'Anjou*, Paris 1906, appendix 3, pp. 348–349.

claustrum by force of arms, though — as an anonymous monk assures — there was nobody in the monastery, open to all the faithful, to resist him. Moreover, Fulques ordered the destruction of the walls of the house which belonged to one of the canons — the monastery's steward. This event is a typical example of violence, which in the west-frankish kingdom the monasteries were exposed to in the 10th century, on the part of those aristocrats who were building their own territorial domains in the times of the collapse of the royal authority¹⁵. The canons' reaction was determined: having considered what to do in order to counteract the count's violence, they performed the ritual of humiliation. The crucifix from the presbytery and the relics of saints were laid straight on the floor of the church (unlike in Cluny, where they were laid on a pall spread on the floor), in the area of the sepulchre of St. Martin. The canons covered the sepulchre of St. Martin with thorns, they also sprinkled thorns around the Cross and the bodies of saints. The ritual of humiliation from the St. Martin Abbey in Tours, like in the Cluny Abbey, visualised in a symbolic way the humiliation of the patron of the community, all the other saints whose relics were in the monastery, and Christ himself — the sprinkling of thorns around the relics and crucifix and on the St. Martin's grave makes a vivid reference to the suffering of Christ which is still taking place — Christ and his believers are still suffering from oppression. This ritual, Geary remarks, also bears, in addition to the symbolic, the aspect of complete laterality — the placing of the Cross and relics on the ground, among the thorns, and the sprinkling of thorns on the sepulchre of St. Martin not only reflect humiliation which God and saints suffer from the oppressors of the monastery — but it is also a sign of pressure which the convent members¹⁶ who perform the act of humiliation, want to put on the saint so that the patron should defend himself and the monastery more efficiently than previously. However, whereas the Benedictine monks of Cluny were satisfied with such a liturgical demonstration directed to God and

¹⁵ Recently on this subject see: D. Barthélemy, *L'an mil et la paix de Dieu*, pp. 44–139.

¹⁶ See footnote N° 9. According to St. Ouen, St. Éloi imposed a ban on worshipping St. Colombe until the saint caused the golden ornaments stolen from the tabernaculum in the basilica of Sainte-Colombe in Paris to be given back (S. Audoënus, *Vita Ellgii*, 30, ed. J.-P. Migne, *Patrologiae cursus completus. Series Latina*, vol. LXXXVII, col. 503).

his saints, carried out within the *claustrum*, the canons of Tours put more emphasis on the theatricalisation of the ritual, inviting an audience. This difference stemmed, to a large extent, from the dissimilarity in intended use of the two churches — the abbey church in Cluny was, of course, a convent church, inaccessible to the secular faithful, whereas the church of St. Martin at Tours — was a sanctuary for pilgrims, the destination of pilgrimages to the sepulchre of the Apostle of Gaul and a stage of a journey to Santiago de Compostela, thus it attracted a number of the believers. The canons closed the doors of the church, allowing only the pilgrims to enter it. Thus, the sepulchre of St. Martin was inaccessible not only to the people from the castle (which is included in the account of the anonymous canon) but also to the town dwellers. This action was threefold efficient — firstly, forbidding the inhabitants of Tours to enter the sanctuary must have caused among them agitation, a wave of fear and the growth of hostile attitudes towards the count, both in town and among the rest of the clergy. Secondly, the excluding of the count from the group of the worshippers of St. Martin almost equalled his expulsion from the congregation of the faithful — it was not a coincidence that the crucifix was also humiliated. Thirdly, letting pilgrims in the sanctuary, the canons allowed them to look on the humiliation of the Apostle of Gaul and the Cross, and to later spread the news about that to other countries. In order to augment an already spectacular effect of the humiliation the canons probably opened the reliquaries, which were lying on the floor of the church, so that the relics inside them could be visible, which is indicated by the words *corpora sanctorum*, consequently used by the author. The 11th century knows the practice of bringing out the relics of the reliquary so as to get the witnesses of this sort of *ostensio* to experience a psychological shock and moral improvement. We can learn from the collection of miracles of St. Edmund (end of 11th century) that Abbo of Fleury made one of the powerful neighbours of the Bury–Saint–Edmond Abbey do penance, by removing in his presence the relics of the martyr king from the reliquary¹⁷. Also, the humiliation of the relics and crucifix of the church of St. Martin soon produced results — within a short period of time, Fulques Nerra arrived at canon

¹⁷ Hermanus, *De miraculis sancti Edmundi*, 2, ed. T. Arnold, in: *Memorials of s. Edmund abbey*, vol. I, London 1890, pp. 30–31.

Sicard's house to ask him for permission to do penance. Leaving Sicard's house, surrounded by a few nobles, he went barefooted to church where, at the saint's grave, he laid a material token of gratification for the damage he had caused to the canons, church and St. Martin; later, in the presence of two bishops, the Count of Anjou took an oath that he would never commit a similar sin, and next he did penance by the grave of the Apostle of Gaul, in front of the crucifix and the bodies of the saints, which apparently were still left outside the reliquaries.

Humiliation was not the only means to counteract the threats or injustice which was done to the monastery and the saint: from the 10th–11th centuries the examples are known when the monks, being exposed to acts of violence, pictured the rights of the saint to the lands of the monastery, performing rituals in which the saint, present in his relics, somehow himself asserted his rights. Around 960, the friars of Luxeuil Abbey, leading a dispute over the borderland territories with nobles Robert and Bernard, who claimed the ownership rights to one property in possession of the monastery, led a solemn procession with the relics of St. Waldebert and Eustasius¹⁸, outside the walls of the monastery. A similar action was taken by the monks of the Conques Abbey: when the lands of the monastery were invaded or when there was only a threat of an invasion, the monks carried in a solemn procession the statue — reliquary of St. Foy to the fields that belonged to the monastery, which constituted visual evidence of the saint's rights to that land¹⁹.

In 1107, the abbot of Saint-Amand, willing to save the monastery from an invasion, organised a tour of St. Amand's relics across the lands of the abbey, which ended in a solemn field mass, during which, in the presence of the crowds of the faithful, he put a curse on the invaders²⁰. The saints present in their relics could also participate in numerous political and social events,

¹⁸ *Miracula ss. Waldeberti et Eustasii* (the author's identity has not been unambiguously determined, however, it may have been Adso of Montier-en-Der), *Monumenta Germaniae Historica*, Series Scriptorum, vol. XV, part II, p. 1174; E. Bozóky, *Voyage de reliques et démonstration du pouvoir aux temps féodaux*, in: *Voyages et voyageurs au Moyen Âge. XXVIe Congrès de la Société des Historiens Médiévistes de l'Enseignement Supérieur Public (Limoges-Aubazine, mai 1995)*, Paris 1996, p. 275.

¹⁹ *Ibidem*, cf. *Liber miraculorum sanctae Fidis*, book II, chapter 4, ed. A. Bouillet, Paris 1897, pp. 100–104.

²⁰ E. Bozóky, *op. cit.*, p. 277.

like during synods when *Pax Dei* or *Treuga Dei* was announced, and other peaceful gatherings. In 1024, the King of western Franks, Robert II the Pious (996–1031), calling a peace synod in Héry for the pacification of the Duchy of Burgundy, summoned all his Burgundian bishops and abbots to arrive together with the relics housed in their churches so that those who would refuse to accept peace and stay peaceful on the King's will should do so, for the sake of the fear of God and the saints who, having arrived at the assembly, were ready to put curse on those hardened sinners who would shrink from pledging peace²¹. The Count of Flanders, Baldwin IV (998–1035) did similarly when, calling the peace assembly in Audenarde (1030) to end the war against his own rebellious son, ordered all the bishops and nobles to be there, and to bring all the relics from all over the county²². During the peace synod called by the bishop of Rodez in the town of Anse in 1025, statues–reliquaries of the Saints Marius, Amantius, and Saturnin were gathered, as well as many other relics²³. No doubt, the presence of saints' relics at peace assemblies aimed at sanctifying the mutual oaths to maintain peace which were sworn by the participants — the oath to relics is a well-known phenomenon of mediaeval spirituality²⁴. However, one cannot fail to notice that in the opinion of contemporaries the saint who in person — though in a material way only through his relics or the statue–reliquary — arrived at the synod or peace assembly, became at the same time the witness and the recipient of the oath. The carrying out of statues–reliquaries, which showed golden, ivory and gemstone fully–shaped images of the saints, to the fields was a measure taken to perform the most literal visualisation of the participation of a saint in an event.

²¹ *Historia episcoporum Autissiodorensium*, chapter 49, pp. 171–172; *Chronicon Autissiodorensis*, "RHF", vol. X, p. 275; *Miracula s. Bercharii*, 27, ed. J. Mabillon, *Acta Sanctorum Ordinis Sancti Benedicti*, vol. II, p. 859; *De sancto Verolo presbytero*, chapter 6, *Acta Sanctorum*, Iunii tomus IV, pp. 312–313; D. Barthélemy, *L'an mil et la paix de Dieu. La France chrétienne et féodale, 980–1060*, Paris, Fayard 1999, p. 432.

²² *Annales Elmarestenses*, in: *Les Annales de Saint-Pierre de Gand et de Saint-Amand*, ed. P. Grierson, Bruxelles 1937, pp. 89–90; E. Bozóky, *La politique des reliques des premiers comtes de Flandre (fin du IXe – fin du XIe siècle)*, in: E. Bozóky, A.–M. Helvétius (ed.), *Les reliques. Objets, cultes, symboles*, pp. 271–292.

²³ E. Bozóky, *Voyage de reliques et démonstration du pouvoir*, p. 274 (she erroneously gives the name of the synod as Agen); cf. *Liber miraculorum sanctae Fidis*, book I, chapter 18, p. 72.

²⁴ N. Herrmann–Mascard, *Les reliques des saints*, pp. 235–269.

III

The dramatisation of rituals associated with the cult of relics did not always have to be, however, a derivative of dramatic conflicts which the community worshipping them was involved in. The inspiration for solemn transfers of relics are biblical descriptions of the departure of David to meet the Ark of the Covenant and Jesus entering Jerusalem, as well as *adventus imperatoris* in imperial Rome and Constantinople. The opinion prevailed among clerical elites that the transfer, as a mystical and symbolic repetition of Christ's entering Jerusalem, makes the community which receives the relics a new Jerusalem²⁵. In late-ancient and mediaeval Constantinople the cult of relics was strongly associated with the imperial power ideology. The Holy Cross, miraculously found by St. Helen in the 4th century and remaining in Jerusalem till the 630s, was in 635 brought to Constantinople during the rule of Emperor Heraclius (610–641). Due to the ongoing wars against Persians, and because of rapid Arab expansion, the sacral geography of the Empire underwent significant changes — initially the threat of and then the loss of the Holy Land caused that the passion relics were, according to the emperor's will, gathered in Constantinople, which, thanks to this, got the basis to be called New Jerusalem²⁶. The transfer of the relics of the Holy Cross to Constantinople facilitated stronger bonds between the cult of the Cross and the imperial power,

²⁵ Cf. E. Bozóky, *L'initiative et la participation du pouvoir laïc dans les translations des reliques au haut Moyen Âge. Esquisse typologique*, "Sources. Travaux historiques. Processions et parcours en ville", vols. LI–LII, 1997, p. 40; H. Manikowska, *Translatio Jerozolimy do Wrocławia*, in: *Kościół — kultura — społeczeństwo (Translatio of Jerusalem to Wrocław, in: Church — Culture — Society)*, Warszawa 2000, pp. 63–75 (including bibliography).

²⁶ After plundering Jerusalem in 614, the Persians took away the relics to Persia — the Holy Cross joined the treasury of King of kings, while other relics were given to the victorious Persian commanders — thanks to those arrangements the patrician Niketas was able to buy out the Spear and Sponge from one of them, which he then sent to Constantinople; in 630, after the victory over Chosroes II, Emperor Heraclius regained the Holy Cross, which he gave back to the church of Jerusalem, however, already in 635 in the fear of the Arab invasion, he transferred the Cross to Constantinople; thus, when in 638 Caliph Omar took Jerusalem, Constantinople, according to a number of intellectuals, became New Jerusalem — the evidence is given by the account of a Merovingian bishop, Arculph who in 680s went on a pilgrimage to holy sites; his little work, entitled *De locis sanctis*, is divided into three parts: I — Jerusalem, II — Palestine, III — Constantinople. Cf. B. Flusin, *Les reliques*, p. 24; A. Frolov, *La Vraie Croix et les expéditions d'Héraclius en Perse*, "Revue des Études byzantines", vol. XI, 1953, pp. 88–105.

which is evidenced by the fact that the Holy Cross was stored in the private emperor's chapel, in the Holy Palace²⁷. The emperor's chapel was the main centre of distribution of fragments of the Cross and other passion relics in the Christian East and West till the 13th century (while till the end of 11th century it was almost the exclusive centre)²⁸, and the Byzantines thought that, thanks to the presence of the Holy Cross in the Holy Palace, the Emperor, Town and the whole Empire were under the direct protection of Christ. The tradition of sacralization of the monarchical power through a direct contact of the monarch with relics, — the material manifestation of the transcendent *sacrum* — following the patterns adopted in Byzantium, shaped the model of the Christian *regnum* in the mediaeval West. The cult of relics became both the subject and the instrument of policies of western kings aiming at the ideological strengthening of their monarchies through providing them with sacral legitimisation. In order to better understand the symbolism of certain gestures which accompanied the rituals of veneration of relics by French rulers, let us focus on a few examples from the Byzantine Empire.

Even during the times of Constantine the Great relics were ascribed the power to provide the emperor with military victories. The Holy Cross was interpreted as the *arma triumphalis* of Christ, thus this relic gained the meaning of the emperor's palladium, which ensured victory for the emperor. This conviction stemmed from the vision of Constantine before the battle at Saxa Rubra (also known as the battle at the Mulvian Bridge) — its most vivid evidence is the fact that already from the 4th century a part of the Cross brought to Constantinople by St. Helen was stored together with Constantine the Great's *labarum*, bringing victory. According to Hermias Sozomen and Theodoret of Cyrus, Constantine ordered the nails from the Holy Cross to be fixed into his helmet and the bridle of his horse. Theodoret of Cyrus explains this nearly blasphemous gesture through the prophecy by Zacharias 14,20²⁹: *in that day that which is upon the bridle of the horse shall*

²⁷ Three big fragments of the Cross were housed in the Hagia Sophia, B. Flusin, *Les reliques*, p. 24.

²⁸ B. Flusin, *Les reliques de la Sainte-Chapelle et leur passé impérial à Constantinople*, pp. 20–33; in: *Le Trésor de la Sainte-Chapelle*; A. Frolov, *La relique de la Vraie Croix. Recherches sur le développement d'un culte*, Archives de l'Orient chrétien, vol. VII, Paris 1961, pp. 76–92.

²⁹ B. Flusin, *op. cit.*, pp. 20–21; cf. Sozomène, *Historia ecclesiastica*, book II, chapters 1, 2–9, Sources chrétiennes, vol. CCCVI, pp. 226–232.

*be holy to the Lord*³⁰. There is no doubt as for the intention of such conduct: such as the sign of Christ on the emperor's *labarum*, the relics driven into the emperor's helmet and the bridle of his steed were supposed to secure victory at battles for the emperor. It was not only the Passion relics, however, which could serve as the *palladium*. During the reign of Emperor Heraclius, before the campaign against the Persians began, the relics of St. Theodore of Sykeon were transferred to Constantinople. The sequence of events is known thanks to the account by Nicephorus, the monk of the monastery of Saint Mary in the palace of Blachernai. Nicephorus claims, among other things, that the transfer was carried out in order that St. Theodore should protect Constantinople in a sense in replacement of the emperor who was just setting off for a war; the protection, which was to be spread over the town and the whole empire by the saint was emphasised by the gesture of kenosis which was performed by Heraclius and his court elite: the emperor, together with the senate, in the act of deep humbleness knelt down in front of the saint, just like the Persians should do the same in front of him and the Roman Empire; whereas the emperor was to owe the victory at war, according to Nicephorus, to the blessing he then received from St. Theodore³¹. Also, the emperors–iconoclasts were attached to the relics of the Holy Cross — in 822, during the second iconoclasm, Emperor Theophilus (the son of Michael II) led, together with Patriarch Anthony, the procession on the city walls, carrying in person the relics of the Holy Cross and the veil of Saint Mary of the palace in Blachernai — so during the times of the fights against the cult of paintings the adoration of relics was maintained as well as the conviction about a direct link between the emperor's power and the Holy Cross, and that the relics played a role of the city's patrons³².

Equally interesting is the story of procuring for Constantinople one of the mandilions, a miraculous image of Christ of Edessa, regarded as *veraikon*, that is a picture not painted with a human's hand (*acheiropoietos*), but one which came from

³⁰ English translation based on the edition by Kevin Knight.

³¹ M. Kaplan, *Les sanctuaires de Théodore de Sykéon*, in: *Les saints et leur sanctuaire à Byzance*, ed. C. Jolivet-Lévy, M. Kaplan, J.-P. Sordini, Paris, 1993, pp. 65–79.

³² B. Flusin, *Les reliques de la Sainte-Chapelle et leur passé impérial à Constantinople*, p. 25.

Heaven, thanks to which it possessed the value of the relic of Christ. We know the history of the transfer of the mandilion of Edessa to Constantinople from the text ascribed to Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus (913/944–959). In 944, Emperor Romanos I Lekapenos (920–944), co-ruling with Constantine VII, besieged Edessa, which at that time was occupied by the Arabs. He failed to take the town but the emir came up with the proposal to Romanos that in return for the withdrawal from the besiege he would give away to the Byzantines what was stored in the Edessa Cathedral: a miraculous image of Jesus Christ together with the letter which, being sent from Heaven, confirmed its authenticity as it was, according to the common belief, written by Christ himself³³. Romanos Lekapenos accepted the proposal, considering it as his victory, and even gave him generous gifts. We learn from the text depicting the transfer that the return of the Byzantine army from Edessa to Constantinople changed into a triumphal march. On 15th August 944 Romanos and Constantine set off to meet the relics in the church of St. Mary at Blachernai, from which place they were further taken on an emperor's ship to the Holy Palace, where they were laid in the church of St. Mary of Pharos. On the next day the *veraikon* was toured in a sea procession around the city via Propontida, Bosphorus and Golden Horn, on the emperor's ship with a purple sail: in this way the holy borders were marked within which the relics would protect the city. After finishing the cruise, the relics were again brought to the city, by land from the palace of Blachernai. In front of the city walls, the

³³ According to the tradition of the church in Edessa which was based on a Syrian manuscript and written by Eusebius of Caesarea (*Historia Ecclesiae*, book I, chapter 12), King Abgarus V (the ruler of Oshroene and toparch of Edessa), suffering from leprosy, sent two days before the Passion a letter to Christ, asking in it for his restoration to health and inviting Him to Edessa, where he offered safe shelter from persecution. Jesus wrote back promising that even though he would not go himself, one of his disciples would be sent to the king. This letter, together with the Saviour's portrait attached to it, being recognized as *achetropoietos*, was stored in the vault of the Edessa cathedral and was considered to be one of the most precious relics in the eastern part of the empire, although it was regarded as apocryphal in the West, following the decree *Decretum Gelasianum*, ascribed to Pope Gelasius I (492–496) which allegedly repeated the content of the canons passed by the synod in Rome during the pontificate of Damasius I (366–383). On this issue: M. Starowieyski, *Apokryficzna korespondencja króla Abgara z Chrystusem (The Apocryphical Correspondence Between King Abgar and Christ)*, «Studia Theologica Varsaviensia», 15, 1977, pp. 177–189; also: *Histoire du roi Abgar et de Jésus*, ed., transl. and commentary by A. Desreumaux, Brepols, Turnhout 1993.

four emperors (Augustus Romanos and Constantine Porphyrogenitus and Caesars — the sons of Lekapenos, Christopher and Stephen), the Senate, Patriarch and the clergy were waiting for the mandilion; that solemn retinue introduced the relics into the city where the procession was joined by the people. The procession, advancing *Mese*, reached Hagia Sophia, and next the Holy Palace. The *veraikon* was put there on the emperor's throne in the *Chryzotriclinium* of Constantine the Great, and then seen off to the church of Pharos³⁴. Thus, such a sophisticated ceremony of transfer showed the entrusting of the city and the whole empire to the protection and the emperor's authority of Christ³⁵ which is best exemplified by the solemn placing of the mandilion on the emperor's throne. However, soon events took place which even clearer show the assimilation of the imperial authority with the emperor's dignity of Christ — in December 944 Constantine Porphyrogenitus, with the support of Caesars Christopher and Stephen, dethroned Roman Lekapenos and exiled him to a monastery; the following year in January also the young Lekapenos brothers lost their power and dignitaries. We learn from the text depicting the transfer of the mandilion, which, as it was mentioned above, was ascribed to Constantine himself, that a certain possessed man from Constantinople, having seen the *veraikon*, prophesied: 'Constantinople, regain your glory, Constantine, regain your throne.' Therefore, it should be understood that the transfer of the mandilion from Edessa and its enthronement in Constantine's *Chryzotriclinium* allowed to remove the usurper and give power back to porphyrogenitus³⁶, thus regaining in a natural way the worldly order — Christ and Emperor born in purple return to the Holy Palace as its sole legal rulers³⁷.

³⁴ É. Patlagean, *L'entrée de la sainte Face d'Edesse à Constantinople en 944*, in: *La religion civique à l'époque médiévale et moderne (chrétienté et islam)*, ed. A. Vauchez, École Française de Rome, Roma 1995, pp. 21–35.

³⁵ The number of historical works devoted to the sacralisation of the emperor's power in Constantinople is huge. Among most recent works see: G. Dagon, *Empereur et prêtre. Étude sur le "césaropapisme" byzantin*, Paris 1996, and particularly pp. 141–226 and bibliography placed in footnotes (the book does not contain a separate bibliography) on pp. 368–392.

³⁶ Constantine was Porphyrogenitus, son of Emperor Leo VI (886–912), and assumed power in 913 as an eight-year-old boy, whereas Romanus Lekapenos, who was supposed to rule on behalf of the underage emperor, usurped in 920 the title and emperor's throne.

³⁷ B. Flusin, *Les reliques de la Sainte-Chapelle et leur passé impérial à Constantinople*, p. 27; Évelyne Patlagean, *L'entrée de la sainte Face d'Edesse à Constantinople en 944*, op. cit.

IV

It is the Carolingian epoch which has remained an extraordinarily intrinsic period for the formation of the basic foundations of the ideas that shaped the royal ideology of mediaeval Europe, also within the framework of the royal cult of relics. Roman Michałowski, in his recently published essay, shows political and religious reasons behind the veneration of relics by the monarchs of the Carolingian and Ottonian time³⁸. Accepting the conclusions of this historian regarding the need for the sacralization of royal power, which the monarchs deeply realised, and the whole structure of the monarchy through the personal participation of the ruler in rituals associated with the cult of relics, we abandon a separate analysis of the sources which refer to the transfer of relics performed by western European kings during 9th and 10th centuries. However, it is worth mentioning that the Carolingian model played an extraordinarily vital role in the shaping of the royal piety in the kingdom of the western Franks, and the example of Charles II the Bald in particular. That ruler, as it seems, thought that his royal dignity predestines in a special way to a direct physical contact with relics. To give expression of his conviction, Charles carried out a solemn — second in the history of his reign — transfer of the body of St. Germain in Auxerre (859), understood as the act which confirmed the sacral legitimisation of his secular power during the time when Louis of Germany, called by the opposition of the nobles, invaded his state, aiming to take the throne³⁹.

The Carolingian patterns were taken up by later rulers. The cult of saints and relics was for the Capetian family a significant way of legitimization of their power: according to the vision of St. Valery and St. Richarius, known from 11th century accounts, Hugues Capet and his successors received the crown as a reward for giving back to the vernacular monasteries (Leuconay and

³⁸ R. Michałowski, *Depozycja ciała św. Wojciecha w roku 1000. Przyczynek do dziejów zjazdu gnieźnieńskiego*, in: *Świat pogranicza (The Repositioning of the Body of St. Wojtėch in 1000. On the History of the Gniezno Convention*, in: *The World of Borderland*), Warszawa 2003, pp. 45–56; *idem*, *Zjazd gnieźnieński. Religijne przesłanki powstania arcybiskupstwa gnieźnieńskiego (The Gniezno Convention. Religious Premises for the Foundation of the Gniezno Archbishopric)*, Wrocław 2005, pp. 139–147, 171–176; there a selection of the most important works on the subjects can be found.

³⁹ R. Michałowski, *op. cit.*, pp. 48–50.

Saint-Riquier-Centula) the relics of those saints, which had been robbed by the Count of Flanders⁴⁰. Robert the Pious showed his deepest respect to the relics of the Holy Cross housed in the cathedral in Orléans, and between 1028 and 1029 he took part in two solemn transfers: of St. Savinien in Sens and of St. Aignan in Orleans⁴¹. Respective Capetinian kings did a similar thing: in 1095 King Philip I called a synod of bishops of the provinces of Reims, Sens and Tours, in order to arrange the date of the transfer of St. Helen's body (the Hautvilliers abbey)⁴², and in 1105 he participated in the transfer of St. Lifard in Meung⁴³. Louis VI, soon after his enthronement, took part in 1108 in the transfer of St. Benedict in Fleury-Sur-Loire, and in 1135 in the transfer of St. Vigor in Senlis⁴⁴. His son, Louis VII, during the consecration of a new church of the Saint-Denis abbey in 1144, carried the relics of St. Dionisius in person⁴⁵, and in 1156 took part in

⁴⁰ *Historia relationis corporis Sancti Walarici*, "RHF", vol. IX, pp. 147-149; Harulf, *Chronique de l'Abbaye Saint-Riquier*, Collection de textes pour servir à l'enseignement de l'histoire, ed. F. Lot, Paris 1894, pp. 153-154; cf. E. Bozoky, *Le recouvrement des reliques des saints Valéry et Riquier par Hugues Capet*, in: *Saint Riquier à Saint-Riquier. Actes du Colloque du Centre d'Études Médiévales de l'Université de Picardie — Jules Verne, Saint-Riquier (9-10 décembre 2000)*, ed. D. Buschinger, "Médiévales", XIII, 2001, pp. 1-13; E. A. R. Brown, *La notion de la légitimité et la prophétie à la cour de Philippe-Auguste*, in: *La France de Philippe-Auguste. Le temps des mutations. Actes du Colloque organisé par le CNRS, Paris, 29 septembre - 4 octobre 1980*, ed. R.-H. Bautier, Paris 1982, pp. 77, 80; A. W. Lewis, *Royal Succession in Capetian France. Studies on Familial Order and the State*, "Harvard Historical Studies", vol. C, Cambridge, Massachusetts — London 1981, pp. 106-109; K.-F. Werner, *Die Legitimität der Kapetinger und die Entstehung der *reditus regni Francorum ad stirpem Karoli**, in: *Die Welt als Geschichte*, vol. XII, 1952, pp. 208 — 218.

⁴¹ Odorannus de Sens, *Chronicon*, chapter 2, in: Odorannus de Sens, *Opera omnia*, ed. R.-H. Bautier, M. Gilles, Paris 1972, *Sources d'histoire médiévale*, vol. IV, pp. 100-110; *De consecratione basilicae sancti Aniani iussu Roberti regis*, ed. and commentary L. Au vray, in: *Mélanges d'archéologie et d'histoire publiés pour l'École Française à Rome*, vol. VII, Roma 1887, pp. 458-471; Helgaud de Fleury, *Epitome vitae regis Rotbetti Pii*, chapter 22, ed. R.-H. Bautier, G. Labory, *Sources d'histoire médiévale*, vol. I, Paris 1965, pp. 106-114; R. Michałowski, *op. cit.*, pp. 50-52; bibliography there.

⁴² T. Goussset, *Actes de la province ecclésiastique de Reims*, vol. II, Reims 1844, p. 127. According to N. Hermann-Mascard, *Les reliques des saints*, p. 179 footnote 229, the abbey of Hautvilliers housed the whole body of St. Helen except for her head, which was kept in Rome.

⁴³ *Translatio s. Lifardi, Acta Sanctorum Ordinis Sancti Benedicti*; vol. I-IX., Paris 1668-1701, here: vol. I, pp. 157-159.

⁴⁴ A. Luchaire, *Annales de Louis VI*, Paris 1906, N° 54, p. 29; N° 556, p. 253.

⁴⁵ Suger, *Scriptum consecrationis Ecclesiae Sancti Dionysii*, chapter 14, in: Suger, *Oeuvres*, vol. I: *Écrit sur la consécration de Saint-Denis. L'Oeuvre administrative. Histoire de Louis VII*, ed. F. Gasparri, *Les classiques de l'Histoire de France au Moyen Âge*, vol. XXXVII, Paris 1996, pp. 48-49.

ostensio of the tunic of Jesus the Child in Argenteuil, being the first witness of the authentication of these relics. In 1177 Louis VII publicly ordered the announcement of the *ostensio*-to-be of the relics of St. Frambourg, which were just found in Senlis, and in the document issued then he encouraged the subjects to participate in that ceremony⁴⁶. Philip Augustus, during a solemn procession from the Paris cathedral to the abbey of Saint-Denis in 1205, personally carried one of the thorns of the Crown-of-Thorns, which he had received from the first Latin emperor of Constantinople, Baldwin I⁴⁷.

Saint Louis participated in transfers with a particular zeal, being a not only deeply religious king but also — what is important for the understanding of his devotion to relics — particularly attached to the Carolinian tradition, whose legal heir and depositary he felt⁴⁸. The most important event associated with the cult of relics, which happened during his reign, was undoubtedly the sequence of the transfer of the Crown-of-Thorns, the Holy Cross and other Passion relics, carried out within 1239–1241. In 1245 the king founded a new palace chapel by his Paris palace — the

⁴⁶ The record of the *autentificatio* and *ostensio* of the relics of the tunic belonging to the Child Jesus has been preserved, in: P. Moretti (ed.), *De ritu ostensionis sacrarum reliquiarum*, Roma 1721, p. 31, quotation from: N. Hermann-Mascard, *Les reliques des saints*, p. 207. The description of the *ostensio* of St. Frambourg can be found in: P. Labbé, *Novae Bibliothecae manuscriptorum librorum*, Paris 1657, vol. II, pp. 559–560; quotation from: N. Hermann-Mascard, *Les reliques des saints*, p. 208.

⁴⁷ Rigord, *De gestis Philippi Augusti*, ed. H.-F. Delaborde, "RHF", vol. XVII, p. 59; N. Hermann-Mascard, *Les reliques des saints*, pp. 206–207.

⁴⁸ In Polish on this subject see: J. Pysiak, *Królewski kult Korony Ciemniowej we Francji Ludwika Świętego (The Royal Cult of the Crown-of-Thorns in France of Saint Louis)*, "Roczniki Historyczne", LXVII, 2001, pp. 17–19; see also: E. A. R. Brown, *Vincent de Beauvais and the "reditus regni Francorum ad stirpem Caroli imperatoris"*, in: S. Lusignea, A. Nadeau, M. Paulmier-Foucart (ed.), *Vincent de Beauvais. Intentions et réceptions d'une oeuvre encyclopédique au Moyen Âge. Actes du Colloque tenu à Montréal du 27 avril au 1er mai 1988. Publiés sous la direction de ...*, "Cahiers d'Études médiévales", Cahier spécial (4), Québec-Paris 1990 [quoted below as: *Vincent de Beauvais*], pp. 167–196; M.-Chr. Duchenne, *Autour de 1254, une révision capétienne du "Speculum historiale"*, in: *Vincent de Beauvais...*, pp. 141–166; R. Folz, *Le souvenir et la légende de Charlemagne dans l'Empire germanique médiéval*, Paris 1950, pp. 277–279; W. Kienast, *Deutschland und Frankreich in der Kaiserzeit (900–1270)*, Stuttgart 1975, vol. 3, pp. 500–515; A. W. Lewis, *Royal Succession in Capetian France*, pp. 116–118; G. M. Spiegel, *The "Reditus Regni ad stirpem Caroli Magni" — A New Look*, "French Historical Studies", VII, N° 2, 1971, pp. 145–171; K.-F. Werner, *Andreas von Marchiennes und die Geschichtssreibung von Anchin und Marchiennes in der zweiten Hälfte des 12. Jahrhunderts*, "Deutsches Archiv für Erforschung des Mittelalters", 9, 1952, pp. 402–463; idem, *Die Legitimität der Kapetinger*, pp. 203–225.

so called Sainte-Chapelle (consecrated in 1248), which was supposed to play the role of an architectural reliquary⁴⁹. It is worth mentioning that the new *capella palatina* referred its name to the ideological inheritance of the Eastern Empire — and the same way the Emperor's Chapel in the palace of Bukoleon, where the Crown-of-Thorns was housed till 1238, is named by Robert of Clari, the author of the account of capturing Constantinople by the participants of the 4th crusade⁵⁰.

In the eyes of the French spiritual and courtly élite, the Crown-of-Thorns was a Christ's royal insignium, and now it is the *titulus imperii*, according to God's plan of *translatio imperii* brought from the East to France, which is the worldly reflection of the Kingdom of Heaven, while its king is head of Christian rulers, the image of the Christ-King⁵¹, king of kings⁵². The sources regarding transfer and the descriptions of holidays established in honour of Passion relics indicate that Louis IX attached great importance to the visualisation of a symbolic meaning of the veneration of the relics of the Passion. According to the evidence given by the *Lives of the Saint King*, Louis IX,

⁴⁹ The transfer of the Crown-of-Thorns to Paris and its ideological meaning for the Capetian monarchy is discussed in detail in J. Pysiak, *op. cit.*, pp. 7–28.

⁵⁰ Robert de Clari, *Conquête de Constantinople*, chapter 82, quotation from: Comte P.-E. D. Riant [ed.], *Exuviae sacrae Constantinopolitanae*, vol. II: *Fasciculus documentorum ecclesiasticorum, ad Byzantina lipsana in Occidentum saeculi XIII translata, spectantium, et historia quarti belli sacri imperique Gallo-Greci illustrantium*, Genève 1878, pp. 230–231.

⁵¹ On *translatio imperii ad Francos* see: Primat of Saint-Denis, *Les Grandes Chroniques de France*, "RHF", vol. III, p. 154; Guillaume de Nançis, *Continuatio Chronicorum Sigisberti Gemblacensis*, "RHF", vol. XX, p. 546; cf. W. Kienast, *Deutschland und Frankreich*, *op. cit.*, p. 495, P. E. Schramm, *Der König von Frankreich*, p. 142–176. On the meaning of the transfer of the relics of the Crown-of-Thorns to France for the development of the Capetian ideology of power see: J. Pysiak, *Sakralizacja władzy królewskiej w ideologii monarchicznej Kapetyngów w XII–XIV wieku: Monarchia eschatologiczna (The Sacralization of the Royal Power in the Monarchical Ideology of the Capetians in the 12th–14th Centuries: Eschatological Monarchy)*, in: J. Pysiak, A. Pieniądz-Skrzypczak, M. R. Pauk (ed.), *Monarchia w średniowieczu. Władza nad ludźmi, władza nad terytorium. Studia ofiarowane Profesorowi Henrykowi Samsonowiczowi (The Monarchy in the Middle Ages. Power over the People, Power over the Territory. Studies Presented to Henryk Samsonowicz)*, Warszawa — Kraków 2002, pp. 251–286, and in particular pp. 277–281.

⁵² The name of the king of worldly kings, *rex regum terrestrium*, is given to the king of France, as the one anointed with the heavenly chrism, by the English chronicler Matthew Paris, see: Matthew Paris, *Chronica majora*, ed. H. R. Luard, in: *Rerum Britannicarum Medii Aevi Scriptores, Chronicles and Memorials of Great Britain and Ireland during the Middle Ages (Rolls Series)*, vols. I–VII, London 1872–1883, here vol. V, pp. 480–481.

during a yearly holiday established in honour of the Crown-of-Thorns and the Holy Cross, performed *ostensio* which was especially important for the ideology of the royal power — a procession with the relics took place in the Palace on Cité Island, during which the sovereign, himself carried the reliquary-*ostensorium* in the shape of the royal crown⁵³. Saint Louis thought that the way he followed the examples of Charlemagne, Charles the Bald who, as the authors associated with the Capetian court and the Saint-Denis abbey wrote, were the first to show their people the relics of the Crown-of-Thorns in Aachen, Compiègne and in Saint-Denis⁵⁴. There is no doubt that the ritual in which Saint Louis presided over the liturgy, leading, surrounded by bishops, monks and barons, the procession around his own palace, explicitly visualised the idea of assimilation of the Capetian royal power and the royalty of Christ. Moreover, Louis IX originated the tradition of king's performing *ostensio* of the Passion relics on Good Friday, which was then taken up by his successors, also the English Lancaster family who ruled in Paris and northern France after the treaty of Troyes (1420)⁵⁵. The first references on Louis IX's showing the relics of the Holy Cross come from 1241 and 1270. The first among them is the account in *Chronica majora* by Mathew Paris, who described the *ostensio* of the fragment of the Holy Cross carried out by the monarch during the transfer of the Passion relics, dated by Matthew from Good Friday 1241; the

⁵³ J. Durand, *Les reliquaires de La Grande Châsse*, pp. 113–122, in: *Le Trésor de la Sainte-Chapelle*, op. cit.

⁵⁴ *Descriptio qualiter Karolus Magnus Clavum et Coronam a Constantnopolis Aquigrani detulerit qualiterque Karolus Calvus hac ad S. Dionysium retulerit* [quoted below as: *Descriptio*] ed. G. Rauschen, *Die Legende Karls des Grossen im XI und XII Jahrhundert*, pp. 45–66, 121–125; idem, *Neue Untersuchung über die Descriptio*, "Historische Jahrbücher", vol. XV, 1894, pp. 257–278; *Prima of Saint-Denis, Les Grandes Chroniques de France, Sur les gestes de Charlemagne*, book III, chapters 7–12, "RHF", vol. III, pp. 274–281; cf. J. Pysiak, *Królewski kult Korony Ciermowej (The Royal Cult of the Crown-of-Thorns)*, pp. 17–19.

⁵⁵ As it was written down by the Paris canon Pierre Dongois in 1424: *en l'année 1423, le 21 jour d'avril, jour du vendredi saint, le duc de Bedford, soy disant regent de France au nom d'Henri six d'Angleterre, qui logeoit au Palais, monstra dans la Sainte Chapelle la Vraye Croix, comme les Roys de France avoient accoutumé de faire*, Archives Nationales, LL 630, p. 361; quotation from: J. Durand, *Les reliquaires de La Grande Châsse*, p. 127; we know a similar testimony from the diary of Clement de Fauquembergue, the secretary of the Paris parliament, *Journal de Clément de Fauquembergue, greffier du Parlement de Paris (1417–1435)*, ed. A. Tueteu, vol. I–III, Paris 1903–1915, here vol. II, Paris 1909, p. 128; E. Bozóky, *Saint Louis, ordonnateur et acteur des rituels autour des reliques de la Passion*, in: *La Sainte-Chapelle. Royaume de France et Jérusalem céleste. Colloque international, Paris, les 6, 7 et 8 décembre 2001*, ed. Y. Christie, P. Kurmann, in press.

text⁵⁶ is accompanied by a drawing made by the author in the manuscript, which showed the king presenting the Holy Cross⁵⁷. The second reference is the account by Jean de Joinville who described the *ostensio* performed by Louis in front of the whole court on the Feast of the Annunciation — that ceremony was with no doubt associated with the king announcing a new crusade at the same time⁵⁸. The king's fondness of presiding over the ceremonies in honour of relics is surely somehow linked to the idea, according to which Louis IX's power was named as *regale sacerdotium sive sacerdotale regimen*. This definition, even though it does not appear until the king's death (around 1275), seems to well fit the practice of Louis's rule, and it comes from the King's personal secretary and chaplain, Guillaume de Chartres⁵⁹, thus the man with a personal and long-lasting access to the king. Therefore, he probably expresses the view of Louis IX himself on the tasks ahead of the Christian monarch. Even though the procession with the Crown-of-Thorns around the royal palace is most probably a most colourful ritual which accompanied the cult of the Passion relics underlining the royal dignity of Christ, especially striking seems to be the significance of the *ostensio* of the Holy Cross on Good Friday. On the day which is devoted to the cult of the Cross, the only one when the Holy Mass is not celebrated and instead the mystery of the Saviour's offering is contemplated, the king of France, performing the ostension of the relics of the Cross could, just on Good Friday, become the most important among those who celebrated over the

⁵⁶ *Die siquidem Veneris quae proxima diem Paschae praecedit, qua scilicet Dominus noster Jesus Christus pro mundi redemptione vivificae crucis est affixus patibulo, apportabatur eadem crux Parisius, scilicet ab ecclesia Sancti Antonii, juxta quam composita fuit cujusdam statonis machina, in quam rex ipse ascendens cum utraque regina ... cum fratribus ejusdem regis, praesentibus archiepiscopis, episcopis, abbatibus, et aliis viris religiosis, necnon et nobilibus Francorum magnatibus, cum innumerabili populo circumstante ... [rex] crucem ipsam in altum elevavit ... incipientibus qui presentes erant voce altissima "Ecce crucem Domini", Matthew Paris, Chronica majora, vol. 4, p. 90.*

⁵⁷ *Mattheus Paris, Chronica majora, Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 16, fol. 141r.*

⁵⁸ *Jean de Joinville, Vie de Saint Louis, chapter 733, ed. J. Monfrin, Paris 1995, pp. 362–365: Je alai en la chapelle le roy et trouvai le roy qui estoit montez en l'eschaffaut aux reliques et fesoit apporter la Vraie Croix aval.*

⁵⁹ *Guillaume de Chartres, De vita et actibus inclityae recordationis Ludovici regis, chapter III, 15; Acta Sanctorum, Augusti tomus V, p. 562; cf. J. Pysiak, Ludwik Świąty: portret hagiograficzny idealnego władcy (Saint Louis: a Hagiographic Portrait of the Ideal Ruler), "Kwartalnik Historyczny", vol. CIII, nr 4/1996, pp. 68–69.*

liturgy in his kingdom, and, perhaps, in the whole Christian world.

V

We shall focus our attention on the devotion of Saint Louis to the relics of saints — one should look for the imitation of the Carolingian model of royal piety also in this aspect. As we outlined above, this pattern was followed by Capetian kings, thus the rule of Louis IX was not a breakthrough in terms of quality. However, the number of the transfers of saints' bodies seems to be unprecedented — at least ten in which the ruler participated in person⁶⁰. The opinion of Louis IX himself on the role of saints in the world, written down in the canonisation poll and in the *Vie de St. Louis* (based on that survey) by Guillaume de Saint-Pathus, is of an interesting nature. This opinion was expressed by the monarch to Jean de Joinville, who repeated these words to those polling. According to the king, saints played on God's side the role similar to that of royal advisors at the court: whenever anybody approaches the sovereign about anything, at first he tries to reach the people who are trusted by the king and therefore have an easy access to him. It is they, who take over petitions to be handed over on somebody's behalf to the monarch. Saints are of similar nature: they are the trusted household of God and one can offer requests through their agency, because they are the ones who can appeal to God directly, while God can but listen to them⁶¹. This opinion confirms the conviction that the Kingdom of France is a worldly image of the Kingdom of Heaven; and it shows, in a very picturesque way, how the king himself understood the doctrine of intercession of saints.

⁶⁰ It is worth noticing that almost half a century of the rules of Louis VIII and Louis IX (1223–1270) are featured with the frequency of transfers on an unprecedented scale in the earlier history of France, see: L. Carolus-Barré, *Saint Louis et la translation des corps saints*, in: *Études de droit canonique dédiées à M. Gabriel Le Bras*, Paris 1965, pp. 1087–1112; The list (not complete) of 17 transfers carried out between 1225 and 1263 is presented by N. Hermann-Mascard, *Les reliques des saints*, p. 183.

⁶¹ *Il est ainsi, par similitude des sainz de paradis com il est des conseillers des rois... Car qui a a fere devant un roi terrien, il demande qui est bien de lui et qui le puet prier seurement et le quel li rois doit oïr, et lors, quant il set li quex ce est, il va a lui et le prie que il prit pour lui envers le rot. Ausi est il des sainz de paradis qui sont privez de Nostre Seigneur et ses familiers et le pueent seurement prier, car il les oït*, Guillaume de Saint-Pathus, *Vie de Saint Louis*, wyd. H.-F. Delaborde, Paris 1889, p. 73.

We shall deal with the two transfers in which Saint Louis actively participated: of the relics of St. Aignan in Orleans of 1259 and the relics of the martyrs of the Theban Legion from the monastery at Agaune to Senlis in 1262.

The relics of St. Aignan rested from 1029 in a reliquary founded by Robert the Pious. The 11th-century transfer, associated with the reconstruction and reconsecration of the church, was a significant moment in the Robert's rule — Orleans was one of the most important (if not the most important) centres of power of the new dynasty. In the valley of the Loire were concentrated the most important sanctuaries of France under the first Capetians: Tours with the sepulchre of St. Martin, Fleury-sur-Loire with the relics of St. Benedict, Chartres with the veil of Saint Mary, and Orleans — with the relics of the Holy Cross in the cathedral. St. Aignan (Anianus) was a 4th century bishop, the legendary defender of the town from the hordes of Attila, and the basilica, dedicated to him, bore the status of a collegiate church, thus the church of the second highest rank in town after the cathedral. St. Aignan's sepulchre was famous for its miracles⁶² and in 11th century it was a locally important pilgrimage centre⁶³. The consecration ceremony of the new basilica was attended by the most important hierarchs of the Capetian Church: the Archbishops of Sens and Tours, Bishops of Orleans, Chartres, Meaux, Beauvais and Senlis, as well as great abbots: Odilo of Cluny and Gauzlin of Fleury, the latter being simultaneously Archbishop of Bourges. The authors of the period wrote about king Robert's strong attachment to St. Aignan, whom he considered not only as his special protector⁶⁴ but also a very efficient patron of the whole Christian community: those who farmed their land, kings, princes, the clergy, monks, orphans and widows⁶⁵. The evidence to show that St. Aignan was highly regarded in Orleans is the fact

⁶² *De consecratione basilicae sancti Aniani iussu Roberti regis*, chapter 1, ed. L. Auvray, *Une source de la "Vita Roberti regis" du moine Helgaud*, in: *Mélanges d'archéologie et d'histoire*, École Française de Rome, Paris-Roma 1887, pp. 458–466 (commentary), pp. 466–471 (text); here pp. 466–467.

⁶³ Thomas Head, *Hagiography and the Cult of Saints, the Diocese of Orléans, 800–1200*, Cambridge 1990, pp. 162–163, 167–169.

⁶⁴ *Qualem ergo circa hunc sanctum amorem ple devotionis [Rotbertus] habuerit, nullus edicere cupit, quia illum suum semper post Deum adiutorem, protectorem et defensorem habere voluit...*, *De consecratione basilicae sancti Aniani*, chapter 3, op. cit., p. 467.

that the High Altar of the collegiate church was jointly dedicated to St. Peter and St. Aignan. During the ceremony of transfer, Robert showed tangible evidence of putting himself in the protection of the saint through the gesture of public kenosis in front of his relics — after the consecration of the new basilica the king, having taken off his purple royal vestment, knelt down in front of the Altar of St. Peter and St. Aignan and prayed so that God, taking into account the merits of both saints, could govern, rule and protect the kingdom which Robert had received at the mercy of God for the greater glory of both His Name and St. Aignan's, whom the monarch called the father of the homeland⁶⁶.

There is no doubt that Saint Louis was informed by the canons of Saint-Aignan about the history of transfer from over two centuries before. Louis's participation in another transfer of St. Aignan can probably be interpreted as his will to refer to the tradition of Robert the Pious, who was eagerly showed by Capetian historiography as the exemplar of a religious and learned monarch⁶⁷. However, one has to remember first of all that the transfer of St. Aignan is part of a wider ideological aspect of the rule of Louis IX, that is the disseminating among the political elites in France of the cult of saints and their relics in general — this is proved by the account by Joinville, already mentioned, and the fact of the royal participation in at least ten transfers of holy relics. On 26th October 1259, apart from the king himself, the transfer was attended by his two eldest sons, Louis and Philip; the ceremony was led by the Archbishop of Bourges and Bishop of Orleans, also the abbot of Sait-Benoît-sur-Loire, the canons of the Holy Cross cathedral at Orleans and, of course, the canons from the basilica of Saint-Aignan were present. The ceremony began in the cathedral, where St. Aignan's relics, brought in there

⁶⁵ *Quis est Anianus?* [these are the king's words] *Anianus, Anianus est vera pro certo mestorum consolatio, laborantium fortitudo, regum protectio, principum defensio, pontificum exultatio, clericorum, monachorum, orphano[rum], viduarum egregius et pater pitissimus, op. cit., ibidem.*

⁶⁶ ... *Domine ... Tempora nostra prospice, regnum [tuum] quod tua pietate, misericordia, bonitate nobis datum est, rege, dispone, custodi, ad laudem et gloriam [nominis tui, sancti Aniani virtute mirabili, patris patriae, ab inimicis mirabiliter liberate], op. cit., chapter 6, p. 470;* the excerpts which the manuscript lacked were completed by Louis Auvray according to the manuscript of Helgaude Fleury, see: *Vie de Robert le Pieux. Epitome vitae regis Roberti Pii*, chapter 22, ed. R.-H. Bautier, G. Labory, Paris 1965, pp. 106-111.

⁶⁷ *Les Grandes Chroniques de France*, "RHF", vol. X, pp. 305, 311.

before, were put into a new reliquary; next, a procession set off with the relics from the cathedral to the collegiate church: Louis carried the relics on his own arms. The ritual was completed with the sermon delivered in the *claustrum* of the collegiate church of Saint-Aignan. Then, just like Robert II had once, Louis IX performed a meaningful gesture of humiliation in front of the saint — he sat on the ground, together with both his sons, and listened to the sermon that way⁶⁸. The king also offered the collegiate church two bolts of silk, and in return he received St. Aignan's knee, which he put in Sainte-Chapelle⁶⁹. These acts also show the convergence of Louis's and Robert II's conduct, though Louis's ancestor had offered St. Aignan much richer gifts⁷⁰.

The 1262 transfer of the relics of martyrs of the Theban Legion seems to be even more ideologically marked⁷¹. This transfer is well illuminated by documentary sources⁷² but the ideological sense given to the ceremony by the king can be best learned about from his biography by Guillaume de Saint-Pathus (after 1297), the confessor of Louis' wife, Margaret, who did not know Louis in person but availed himself of the canonization poll⁷³. The abbey of regular canons of St. Augustine at Saint-Maurice-d'Agaune in the Kingdom of Arles, which belonged to the Empire, was the main depositary of St. Maurice's relics and of the other martyrs of the Theban Legion; that is why Louis IX dispatched envoys to Agaune, asking for the relics, which he wanted to distribute among the churches of France. According to Guillaume, the Abbot of Saint-Maurice gave as many as twenty four bodies of the martyrs to Saint Louis as a present, and accompanied the royal envoys, together with a group of canons,

⁶⁸ L. Carolus-Barré, *Saint Louis et la translation des corps saints*, op. cit., pp. 1093–1094.

⁶⁹ Op. cit., *ibidem*; A. Vidier, *Le trésor de la Sainte-Chapelle. Inventaires et documents*, Paris 1911, p. 3.

⁷⁰ *De consecratione basilicæ sancti Aniani*, chapter 6, op. cit., p. 470.

⁷¹ L. Carolus-Barré, *Saint Louis et la translation des corps saints*, op. cit., pp. 1100–1104.

⁷² The following have been preserved: a document issued by Abbot of Saint-Maurice-d'Agaune, *Gallia christiana*, vol. X, N° 1523, a document issued by Bishop of Senlis, Robert, ed. E. Aubert, *Trésor de saint Maurice d'Agaune*, Paris 1872, N° 23, p. 226, a letter by Louis IX of 1262 and the foundation document of 1265 issued for the priory of St. Mary and St. Maurice at Senlis, N° 24, 25, pp. 228–231.

⁷³ Guillaume de Saint-Pathus, *Vie de Saint Louis*, ed. H.-F. Delaborde, Paris 1889, pp. 45–46.

to France, in order to hand over the relics to the monarch in person. Hearing the news that the holy relics were coming, Louis called the congregation of prelates and barons to Senlis — it is worth mentioning that, as it is explicated by Guillaume de Saint-Pathus, the name of the town can be explained as *centum lilia*⁷⁴ — one hundred lilies — thus the emblematic flowers of kings of France. The envoys on their way from Saint-Maurice stopped half a mile from Senlis, in the bishop's castle of Mont-Évêque, waiting there for the arrival of the king, barons and prelates. On 5th February 1262 the secular and monastic clergy set off in procession from Senlis to the bishop's castle where, in the presence of the clergy, barons, and 'people' the relics were put into the reliquaries covered with the silk which was sponsored by Louis IX. The procession set off with the relics to Senlis. According to the king's will, the reliquaries were carried by forty six knights, holding in pairs twenty three reliquaries; that symbolic march of the French knights was being closed by the King of France, Louis IX and the King of Navarra, Thibaut II (Thibault V as the Count of Champagne), who were carrying the last, the twenty fourth reliquary. The procession headed to the cathedral where the Pontifical Mass was celebrated, and next the relics were put in the Chapel of St. Dionisius of the Royal Palace at Senlis. The holy remains were laid in the palace chapel only temporarily: already in 1262 Saint Louis had decided to found in Senlis the priory of the augustians of St. Mary and St. Maurice, where the relics were laid during the consecration of the church in 1264. The transfer of the relics from the royal palace to the augustians' priory did not mean, however, that the king resigned from the ownership rights to the relics of the Theban Legion. In the foundation act, which was issued a year after the consecration of the church and the transfer of the relics there, Louis IX expressed his wish that the priory friars should observe the Paris liturgy, on a par with the *consuetudo* of Sainte-Chapelle. The priory being subordinated to the Abbot of Saint-Maurice as regards hierarchy matters, was thus supposed to remain in spiritual and liturgical unity with the palace chapel in Paris. No doubt, this link was strengthened by the fact that already in 1262 Saint Louis gave as a present one thorn from the Crown-of-Thorns together with

⁷⁴ Lat. *centum lilia*, French *cent lys* — is pronounced the same way as Senlis.

the reliquary to the priory, which was quite precisely described in the foundation act⁷⁵. The will of Louis IX was most clearly expressed in the foundation act of 1265, where the priory of St. Mary and St. Maurice in Senlis was explicitly named the royal church — *propre chapelle des rois de France*. Thus, together with the handing over of the relics to the priory, the king in fact carried out the transfer *capella palatina*, while the church of St. Mary and St. Maurice in Senlis was supposed to play the same role as Sainte-Chapelle in Paris. Louis took advantage of the ownership right to the relics in 1264 — from among twenty four bodies of the saints he handed over to the priory only fourteen; the others, according to his announcement from two years earlier, he gave to other churches as gifts: it is known that they were for sure placed in Sainte-Chapelle, in the Saint-Denis abbey and in the abbey of Châalis.

The church of the canons of St. Maurice at Senlis does not exist anymore, but Eugène Müller proved in the 19th century that it had been an exact copy of the Paris Sainte-Chapelle — thus, it had the same architectural shape of a one-nave two-level hall⁷⁶.

The transfer of the relics of St. Maurice and his companions does not only fit, as it seems, into the framework of a general religious programme of Louis' rule, who, wishing to transform France into a worldly reflection of the Kingdom of Heaven, wanted to provide for himself and his subjects the much needed intercession of saints, worshipping their relics. Louis Carolus-Barré rightly called the transfer of February 1262 the feast day of chivalry⁷⁷. It seems that Louis wished to make a royal town of Senlis, through the transfer of the relics of the Theban Legion's knights, a cult centre which would sacralize the knighthood more than it had been done previously by the Catholic Church through christianizing the chivalric *ethos* and the very ceremony of dub-

⁷⁵ The reliquary was made of silver, gold plated, on the round stand on which the following phrase was inscribed: †SPINA DE SACROSANCTA CORONA DOMINI; The Thorn is placed in a glass tub contained in an elliptic crystal monstrance, closed with a golden border ornamented with 19 rubies, emeralds and pearls, cf. *Saint Louis. Catalogue de l'Exposition à la Sainte Chapelle*, Paris 1960, N° 224, fig. 21.

⁷⁶ *Exacte reproduction de la Sainte-Chapelle de Paris*, E. Müller, *Monographie des rues, places et monuments de Senlis*, part IV, Senlis 1884, p. 571.

⁷⁷ L. Carolus-Barré, *Saint Louis et la translation des corps saints*, p. 1104.

bing. St. Maurice and the martyrs of the Theban Legion were, from then on, to become patrons of the French knighthood, which was, according to the convictions of the 13th century writers, the second, in addition to the Church, support for the throne and the glory of the royalty. Capetian chroniclers maintained that the glory of France was comprised of, apart from the piety and fame of its kings, the most ardent ever Christian faith, learning, that is schools and universities, and the most splendid and most Christian knighthood. Therefore, it seems that Louis IX, the king-knight wished (which is indicated by the ideological message of the transfer of 'the knights' of the Theban Legion and the follow-up cult in Senlis), also in a spiritual and religious sense to underline an indissoluble bond between the knighthood and the royalty, which was in charge of the inaugurated cult. This inseparable bond between the monarchy and the knighthood was explicitly showed during the ritual of transfer. The celebration emphasised the affiliation of the king with the knighthood, yet Louis IX appeared at that time also as a *suzerein* and the superior authority of the knighthood; also in a spiritual sense as the organiser of the cult. When in 1239 Saint Louis carried out the transfer of the Crown-of-Thorns — a relic of the royal dignity of Christ — it was the king who publicly presided over the transfer and he reappeared in this role, from then on, every year in the royal palace on the holidays established in honour of the Passion relics. During the transfer of the relics of the knighthood patrons it was the knighthood members, where also the king belonged, who were ascribed the most spectacular role during the ceremony. The introduction of the Paris liturgy in the church of St. Mary and St. Maurice based on the liturgy of Sainte-Chapelle, and the proclaiming in the royal charter of the priory *propre chapelle des rois de France* put the stress on the bond between the king of France and his knights, but above all spreads the royal authority over the cult of relics at Louis IX's will, which was established as proper for the knighthood.

VI

In all the cases of the transfer of relics, distant in time and sometimes in space, which have been described here or only referred to, an intrinsic role is played by an explicit visualisation of the ideological content which accompanied a transfer, ex-

pressed through a broadly understood gesture performed by the clerical or secular leaders of the ceremony. During our narration, we tried highlighting this gesture language, however it is time now to put together different trains of thought in the description of this phenomenon.

The role of gesture in the culture of communication in the Middle Ages is a phenomenon known and described in scholarly studies⁷⁸. It is obvious that a gesture, by nature intended to picture a certain ideological content, was especially important when it was performed by a monarch or a high-ranked clergyman, especially during a religious ceremony which gathered tens, hundreds, and even thousands of participants who belonged to different social strata — ranging from the members of the clergy: bishops, prelates, canons, monks, and the diocesan clergy, to a broadly understood array of the representatives of the secular class: aristocrats, barons, knights, as well as representatives of numerous groups of townspeople and countrymen. It was the gesture, which pictured the sense of the ongoing ceremony of transfer of relics, that was the most easily understandable by a group of secular recipients who were often unfamiliar with the liturgics and its exegetic meaning. The gestures performed by the celebrant and by other clergymen, as well as liturgical behaviour ascribed to the secular faithful, let the crowd who participated in the transfer picture the mystical sense of the whole ritual and its subsequent stages. The reading of *Ordo of Saint-Amand* and the accounts of all the transfers discussed above also show that gesture language, formalised, or, quite the contrary, moving away from the ritual — like in the case of the extraordinary kenosis of the monarch or in the case of the ruler's taking over a particularly illustrious role in the ongoing ritual — was addressed both to the faithful and to God or saints. The content of the account visualised by gestures and the celebrant's behaviour or by the course of the ritual of transfer anticipated by the monarch used to vary — it could be limited to the mere religious meaning of the ritual — as it was anticipated by *Ordo of Saint-Amand* — or abound with political meanings, on a local or nationwide scale. Political meanings of the cult of relics are plentiful in the associated Byzantine, Carolingian, Ottonian⁷⁹ as well as Capetinian

⁷⁸ See: J.-Cl. Schmitt, *La Raison des gestes dans l'Occident médiéval*, Paris 1990, there the bibliography on that subject is discussed.

rituals. Those meanings used to vary much. When the Emperor Heraclius and the members of the Byzantine Senate performed kenosis in front of the relics of Theodore of Sykeon, a public humiliation of the ruler was to provide him with the blessing of the saint and his triumph in his war against the Persians. Like during the procession of a miraculous image of Christ of Edessa around and inside the walls of Constantinople, putting Him on the emperor's throne was an action taken to show the city's surrendering under the protection of God. The changing of the emperors, which took place soon after that, was undertaken by Constantine Porphyrogenitus as the consequence of the same religious ritual — together with enthroned Christ, the throne in Constantinople was again taken by the legitimate emperor, Porphyrogenitus. Not very far from this way of understanding of the role the cult of relics played, the transfer of the relics of St. Germain of Auxerre in 859 can be placed: the personal involvement of the king in the ritual was to manifest the sovereign right of Charles the Bald, legitimised by God, to rule the west Frankish Kingdom. We also saw examples when the monks who were performing the acts of humiliation or carrying statues–reliquaries outside the monastery's walls, showed the local community the danger in which they themselves and the saint were, and by doing so made the rulers respect the rights of the saint and the convent. Territorial princes and kings, such as Robert the Pious, did not hesitate to make the saints, who were present in reliquaries and visibly present at political rallies, the participants and guarantors of the peace agreements reached there. Robert the Pious, performing kenosis publicly in front of the relics of St. Aignan personally pictured his own and his kingdom's subjugation to the saint whom he regarded as a special protector of the state of the Franks. We lack sufficient evidence that Louis IX's participation, almost two and a half centuries later, in a similar transfer of St.

⁷⁹ One has to notice the question put by Roman Michałowski (*op. cit.*, *passim* and p. 56), regarding a possible political re-interpretation of the gesture of Otto III during the Gniezno Convention in 1000. This scholar, on the basis of comparative studies, wonders whether it is possible to interpret the carrying out of the re-position of St. Vojtěch's relics personally by Otto as the gesture to emphasise a sovereign power of the emperor on the territory of the Piast state. Such an interpretation would not be out of line with those other gestures of Otto III, which are doubtless and unambiguously rooted in the sovereign emperor power, such as, for example, granting Boleslaus the Brave the right to bestow the investiture upon Polish bishops.

Aignan could be interpreted as the intended repetition of the ceremony of 1029, however it is difficult not to notice the similarities between the two transfers. Louis IX paid particular attention to the visualisation of the ideological content of the cult of relics, which undoubtedly played an extremely intrinsic role in a general political plan of his rule. Louis's and his successor's performing a public *ostensio* of the Passion relics put emphasis on the sacral character of the rule of the king of France, who was the image of Christ on Earth. Finally, the transfer of relics of St. Maurice and the martyrs from the Theban Legion allowed Louis IX to lead a sacral ceremony, which at full length showed an inseparable bond between the monarchy and knighthood, and sanctified this bond through the inauguration of a new cult. This cult was to be common for the French knighthood and the king, being both its member and standing above it. Thus there is no doubt that the forms of visualisation of the content of the cult of relics applied by Saint Louis enter a long universal tradition of the political cult of relics.

The reflections written above far from exhaust the whole spectrum of the subject signalled in the title of this study which, though we tried to put the subject in a widest possible comparative aspect, especially diachronically, concentrates mostly on French examples. No doubt other monarchies of mediaeval Europe deserve further studies on this aspect of the origins of the monarchical ideology of power, as everywhere the cult of saints and relics constituted one of main factors of the creation in the eyes of mediaeval people of the vision of monarchical power, the state of the day or rule and society⁸⁰. Relics turn out to be an indispensable and inalienable component of that picture and their cult opened the door for the rulers to publicly demonstrate, through rituals and gestures, especially in front of political elites, the content which was regarded by the ruler as the most important for the stability of his power.

(Translated by Robert Bubczyk)

⁸⁰ See: J. Petersohn (ed.), *Politik und Heiligenverherung*, and also M. Star-nawska, *Relikwie jako fundament wspólnoty w tradycji polskich przekazów średniowiecznych* (św. św. Wojciech, Florian, Stanisław, Drzewo Krzyża Świętego na Łyścu) (*Relics as an Ideological Foundation of the Community in the Tradition of Polish Mediaeval Sources*. St. Vojtěch, Florian, Stanislaus, the Holy Cross Piece on Łysiec Mountain), in: *Sacrum. Obraz i funkcja w społeczeństwie średniowiecznym* (*Sacrum. Its Image and Its Function in the Mediaeval Society*), ed. J. Pysiak, A. Pieniądz-Skrzypczak, Warszawa 2005, pp. 261-279.