The Column of Constantine at Constantinople: A Cultural History (330-1453 C.E.)

Carey Thompson Wells

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THE COLUMN OF CONSTANTINE AT CONSTANTINOPLE:

A CULTURAL HISTORY

(330-1453 C.E.)

BY

CAREY THOMPSON WELLS

A master’s thesis submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Liberal Studies in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts, The City University of New York

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By

Carey Thompson Wells

This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in Liberal Studies in satisfaction of the thesis requirement for the degree in Master of Arts.

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Abstract

The Column of Constantine at Constantinople

A Cultural History

(330-1453 C.E.)

By

Carey Thompson Wells

Advisor: Dr. Eric Ivison

This thesis discusses the cultural history of the Column of Constantine at Constantinople, exploring its changing function and meaning from Late Antiquity to the end of the Byzantine era. Originally erected as a pagan triumphal column in celebration of Constantine’s re-foundation of Byzantium as Constantinople in 330 C.E., this monument was soon reinterpreted within a Christian context and acquired its own relic tradition, most significantly relics from Christ’s Passion. In addition, as the centuries passed, this relic tradition increased to include objects significant not only to Biblical history but also Constantinopolitan history. Because of this, in the middle Byzantine period, the column became a significant imperial and ecclesiastical station along the main street or Mese of Constantinople and was incorporated into the military triumphs of the period. Here, through close proximity with the column, the current emperor could link himself to Christ through Constantine the Great. Ultimately, at the conclusion of the Byzantine era, the column continued to retain significance as a monument of Byzantium’s future and
revival. Therefore, with this in mind, we will study the Column of Constantine as a monument of layered meaning that sustained its significance in each Byzantine epoch as a microcosm of the history of Constantinople that was tied directly to its wellbeing by its citizens.
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Introduction

The Column of Constantine in Istanbul has been the subject of much speculation, interpretation and study in its near 1700 years of existence, making it a worthy monument for further investigation (Fig. 1). Constructed to celebrate the re-foundation of Byzantium as Constantinople or New Rome, it came to function as a microcosm for the Byzantine empire itself. Here, in this role, the Column of Constantine was tied directly to the wellbeing of Constantinople and the Byzantine empire, serving as a talisman or good luck charm for the state. In addition, it also reflected broader political and religious trends in Byzantine culture, often functioning as the venue for imperial ceremonies and even riots.

Today the column is situated along the modern Divan Yolu, on what was originally the Forum of Constantine and a section of the Mese.\(^1\) (Fig. 2) Throughout its existence, it has held a number of names from its Byzantine title, the Porphyry Column of Constantine,\(^2\) to “the Savior’s Nail,”\(^3\) and most recently “Cemberlitaç” or the “Burnt Column.”\(^4\) The appearance of the column has also changed significantly over time; originally crowned by a monumental statue of Constantine as Helios, today it survives in a damaged state with none of the original statue surviving and its sculptured base obscured by an Ottoman casing. The plethora of names for the monument is reflective of the changing meanings that it has held over the centuries since its construction. Additionally, it is critical to note that the identity of this monument was never in

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question, always being thought of as Constantine’s founding monument and as a result that emperor was continually memorialized there throughout the Byzantine age.

In the Byzantine epoch, the column was closely associated with the success and permanence of the state as well as serving as a focus for the cult of Constantine as the sainted founder of the city. In addition, it was often a monument of ambiguous messages, straddling both the pagan and Christian traditions. When referencing the monument, for instance, the primary sources usually take one of these stances, either choosing to focus on pagan aspects of it such as the statue’s shining rays, or Christian interpretations which saw its crown as being made up of nails from the True Cross. Thus, the column has become a mirror for the evolution of Byzantine political and religious thought from the mid fourth century to 1453 C.E..

In addition, throughout the middle and later Byzantine empire, the column was incorporated into apocalyptic myths like that of Andreas Salos. This legend posits that during the floods that would presage the end of the world only the column would remain because of the “precious nails” incorporated into it and that ships will dock themselves to it. Thus, from this text we can argue that the column was thought to play an essential role both in the foundation of Constantinople and in its downfall which was held to be coterminous with the end of times.

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10 Ibid., 222.
Because of this, scholarship would especially benefit from a more extensive study on a cultural history of the Column of Constantine from Late Antiquity to the later Byzantine period.

This work will seek to inquire how the column was interpreted and perceived by the Byzantine sources that refer to it from Late Antiquity to 1453 C.E. This thesis will also ask, how did interpretations of the column change overtime as the empire became fully Christianized, and what aspects of the column were they interested in reporting? To begin to answer these questions, it is first necessary to examine the historiography of column from the post-Byzantine period up to the modern day.

Two broad trends can be identified in the post-Byzantine historiography of the column. Some scholars took a forensic approach, recording its exact measurements or deciding to focus on certain parts of it like the base or bronze statue. This has resulted in a very narrow understanding that fails to place it in its proper cultural context for each respective Byzantine epoch (early, middle, late). Other scholars, like Cyril Mango, have attempted to understand the column’s cultural significance namely, by studying how it was the focus of certain political or religious occasions. This method seeks to understand the column’s cultural and political dimensions along with its actual physical measurements. In our view, to gain the best understanding of the monument, one must apply both methods to understand the column and its history in both its physical setting and its cultural space.

For this introductory section, we will review the post-Byzantine scholarship on the Column of Constantine from the 16th century to the modern day, analyzing the methodologies

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and the aspects that interested them. In addition, we will also note whether they tend to take a forensic approach or a cultural one, and how that choice shaped their value as sources.

Petrus Gyllius or Pierre Gilles, an emissary of King Francis I of France in Constantinople between 1544 and 1547, is especially valuable as an early modern source for the column since he was walking around the city roughly ninety years after its conquest by the Ottoman Turks.\(^ {12}\) Gyllius, a humanist scholar and antiquarian from Albi in France, had published previous works on zoology as well as a Greek-Latin dictionary.\(^ {13}\) In the mid 16\(^ {th}\) century, he was sent to Turkey on a diplomatic meeting to secure an alliance between France and the Ottoman empire.\(^ {14}\) While traveling there, he was ordered to acquire manuscripts for the King’s library at Fontainebleau, but progress here was soon halted due to lack of funds.\(^ {15}\) Therefore, while waiting, Gyllius decided to produce a work of his own, recording the urban topography of ancient Constantinople and its environs. In this work, like a modern historian, he also referenced many of the Byzantine sources like Procopius and Cedrenus.\(^ {16}\) In this study, Gyllius often reproduces the attitudes of Byzantine sources for the column, at times quoting Procopius and Cedrenus word for word.\(^ {17}\) However, it is also likely that he was interviewing bystanders. When discussing the column, for instance, he often begins phrases by saying “they say” or “the story goes,” perhaps relying on an oral tradition for the column in the 16\(^ {th}\) century.\(^ {18}\) Here, he is quite advanced for his age, since

\(^ {15}\) Ibid.
\(^ {17}\) Ibid., 136.
\(^ {18}\) Ibid., 134-136.
like a modern historian, he has compiled primary accounts of the column while also providing
the first measured description of it as well.\textsuperscript{19}

When reading the section covering his on-site investigation of the column, one senses
that Gyllius was not able to properly examine the area. For political reasons, he was forced to
nervously “pose as a tourist” while his Turkish employee ascended the column to take
measurements.\textsuperscript{20} Due to his limited access to the column, he miscounted the seven porphyry
drums as eight.\textsuperscript{21} However, this is understandable, as he was a western European in a hostile
country at war with many western nations at the time. Therefore, it would have been critical for
him not to seem like a spy for his own personal safety and well-being.

As a humanist and cultural historian, Gyllius has a tendency to repeat the Byzantine
legends surrounding Constantine’s column.\textsuperscript{22} In his account, for instance, he spends a significant
amount of time theorizing on the nature of the Palladium at the column’s base, a mythic Trojan
monument associated with the destiny of Rome imported to Constantinople by Constantine.\textsuperscript{23}
Here, he hypothesizes on this statue, its material, posture and place of origin in the hopes that he
would inspire someone to travel to Istanbul after him and excavate the original Palladium.\textsuperscript{24}
Thus, Gyllius is of immense importance for our understanding of the topography of post-
Byzantine Constantinople and specifically of the column itself.

Aside from Petrus Gyllius, however, there are also several sketch albums of the
monument from the mid 16\textsuperscript{th} century that are also of great importance to our understanding of it.

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{19} Ibid., 134-136.
\textsuperscript{20} Ibid., 137.
\textsuperscript{21} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{22} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{23} Ibid., 139-140.
\textsuperscript{24} Ibid.
\end{flushleft}
The sketches of Melchior Lorichs as well as those of an anonymous German artist now in the so-called Freshfield album in Cambridge University Library are of particular significance for recreating the way the pedestal would have appeared before the addition of Turkish stonework in 1779.\(^{25}\) (Fig. 3 & 4) Both of these drawings record a series of fleurons within squares traversing the monument’s base horizontally.\(^{26}\) In addition, the sketches also take into account damages to the pedestal, likely inflicted in the early 5\(^{th}\) century and reported in textual sources.\(^{27}\) However, most interesting, is an *aurum coronarium* represented on the column’s pedestal in one of Lorichs’ drawings, depicting the emperor Constantine flanked by winged victories.\(^{28}\) This aspect of the structure is not attested in any other source and either is the artist’s invention or was simply later concealed by imposing structures. It is perhaps meaningful to note that the anonymous Freshfield sketch, completed a decade after Lorichs’, does not record this coronation scene at the base. Therefore, perhaps some imposing structure was erected between the time Lorichs traveled to the city in 1561 and the anonymous author in 1574.

The likelihood that its base was indeed obstructed at some point is further supported by the existence of a late sixteenth century drawing of an event at the column’s base.\(^{29}\) (Fig. 5) In this scene, there are numerous wooden structures and tents erected in the column’s vicinity, including what appears to be a roof directly bordering the pedestal.\(^{30}\) Therefore, with pictorial evidence such as this in mind, it would have been reasonable that travelers like the Gyllius and the anonymous German artist would fail to mention the *aurum coronarium* because it could have

\(^{26}\) Ibid., 307.
\(^{27}\) Ibid., 307-307-310.
\(^{28}\) Ibid., 308.
been obscured then. Thus, these early representations of the column are incredibly valuable for what they can tell us about the way the column appeared before and during Turkish intervention. However, aside from this, the archaeological work carried out at the column’s base in the first half of the 20th century is also important to our understanding of the monument.

Between 1929 and 1930, Carl Vett, a Danish theosophist, under the guidance of Ernest Mamboury, excavated the area immediately surrounding the column with the hopes of recovering relics like the Trojan palladium and Noah’s axe. However, before describing the excavations, it will be helpful first to inquire as to why Vett was interested in these relics. As a theosophist, Vett was interested in mysticism and uncovering the unknown. In this case, he attempted to use his abilities as a mystic and psychic to discover ancient Constantinopolitan relics. However before unfairly judging Vett, we must understand that theosophy and other pseudo sciences were quite prevalent in the 19th and early 20th centuries. Therefore, to Vett and likeminded individuals, this was a perfectly rational approach to excavating and understanding the column.

In the course of this excavation, Vett of course never found the long lost Palladium or Noah’s axe. But, nevertheless, his team has contributed some reliable information, revealing the original pavement of the forum through a series of trenches dug at the north, south, east and west sides of the column. (Fig. 6) In a report of their excavations, the forum’s stratigraphic level is identified by the presence of many white marble slabs which likely functioned as the

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31 Cyril Mango, “Constantine’s Porphyry Column and the Chapel of St. Constantine,” 103.
32 Ibid., 103.
33 Ibid.
pavement of the original forum.\textsuperscript{36} Here, through this initial excavation, Vett and his colleagues uncovered clear cut archaeological evidence for the Forum of Constantine’s second epithet, “Forum Placoton,” translating roughly as the Flat or Paved Forum.\textsuperscript{37} Carl Vett and Ernest Mamboury’s work on the column is especially valuable since they are the only ones to ever excavate the area.\textsuperscript{38} Therefore, it is even more unfortunate that due to a mishandling of information, this work was never published and the notes have since been lost.\textsuperscript{39} Due to this misfortune, it has been difficult for modern historians to properly study the column because of the missing archaeological data on it and as a result have become overly reliant on textual sources.\textsuperscript{40}

However, nonetheless, after the early 20\textsuperscript{th} century, scholars such as Raymond Janin\textsuperscript{41} and Wolfgang Müller-Weiner of the 1960s and 1970s conducted groundbreaking works on the overall topography of Constantinople.\textsuperscript{42} Here, they both contributed significantly to modern topographical studies on Constantinopolitan monuments. Janin, a French Byzantinist,\textsuperscript{43} compiled textual accounts of many of the monuments of the city while Müller-Weiner, an experienced archaeologist, gathered useful photographs and archaeological evidence for each one.\textsuperscript{44} Müller-

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{36} Ibid., 340.
\item \textsuperscript{37} Gilles, \textit{Constantinople, A Modern English Translation by Kimberly Byrd}, 138.
\item \textsuperscript{38} D’Alessio, “Fouilles et Decouvertes I,” 340.
\item \textsuperscript{39} Mango, “Constantine’s Porphyry Column and the Chapel of St. Constantine,” 103-104.
\item \textsuperscript{40} Ibid., 103-104.
\item \textsuperscript{41} Raymond Janin, \textit{Constantinople byzantin: développement urbain et répertoire topographique}. (Institut français d'études byzantines, 1964).
\item \textsuperscript{42} Wolfgang Muller-Weiner, \textit{Bildlexicon zur Topographie Istanbul}, (Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, 1977).
\item \textsuperscript{43} Janin, \textit{Constantinople byzantin: développement urbain et répertoire topographique}.
\item \textsuperscript{44} Muller-Weiner, \textit{Bildlexicon zur Topographie Istanbul}.
\end{itemize}
Weiner’s study is especially useful to our thesis on the column in that he categorized each monument, providing helpful bibliography for each in chronological order.\textsuperscript{45}

Cyril Mango, a British historian of the later 20\textsuperscript{th} century, is one of the first modern scholars to undertake studying the column specifically. Here, he also notes the lack of archaeological resources for the site, asserting that much of his research is overly dependent on Byzantine textual sources.\textsuperscript{46} When writing on the column, Mango often takes a dual approach, discussing its measurements as well as attempting to clarify how it was used in Byzantine times. On the forensic side of things, he focuses on correcting mistakes like that the column has seven porphyry drums and not eight.\textsuperscript{47} In addition, he hypothesizes as to the nature of the bronze statue as well as summarizing the Byzantine myths surrounding the monument.\textsuperscript{48} To achieve a better understanding of the column, Mango also employs early modern sketches of the structure before the pedestal was covered by Turkish stonework in 1779.\textsuperscript{49} Methodologically, this is a sound approach since it provides a clear sense of the way it would have appeared in the Byzantine era before modern interventions. However, although the sketches from the Freshfield album and Melchior Lorichs are valuable for how they can show how a monument has changed, it is inadvisable to become overly reliant on them.\textsuperscript{50} Mango specifically focuses on one coronation scene depicted at the base of the column in Lorichs’ drawing, noting that this aspect is not attested in any other source and is potentially the artist’s invention.\textsuperscript{51} This scene, however as

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Ibid., 104.
\item Mango, “Constantine’s Column,” 1.
\item Mango, “Constantine’s Column,” 1-6.
\item Mango, “Constantinopolitana,” 305-313.
\item Mango, “Constantinopolitana,” 308-311.
\item Ibid., 311.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
noted above, could have been concealed by later architectural interventions surrounding the column. Here, once again, because of the lack of concrete evidence, scholars are left to base their research of the column on its interpretation in the eyes of Byzantine and early modern bystanders.

Besides discussing the overall problems with studying Constantine’s Column and attempting to enhance our understanding of it, Mango also focuses on the medieval chapel to Saint Constantine at its base and its ceremonial role (Fig. 7). In this discussion, he relies primarily on the De Ceremoniis, a 10th century document composed under Constantine VII’s auspices on ceremonies and court protocol within the Great Palace campus and surrounding areas. Through referencing this source, he notes several ceremonies that occurred in the column’s vicinity like the ritual for the Virgin Mary, Easter Monday and military triumphs. Mango then analyzes the language of the text in conjunction with archaeological evidence to interpret the nature of these ceremonies. He investigates the exact meaning of the word κιονοστασία, for instance, to elucidate where certain officials stood during certain ceremonies. Etymologically, scholars are unsure on how to define this, although Mango has proposed that it could perhaps refer to a cluster or group of colonnades near the column’s base. In this analysis, he proposes that the κιονοστασία or section of colonnettes could have been to the west of the column, judging from recent excavations for the sewer that revealed a row of column pedestals. By focusing on the Chapel of Saint Constantine, Mango is able to study one specific aspect of

52 Ibid.
53 Mango, “Constantine’s Porphyry Column and the Chapel of St. Constantine,” 103-110.
54 Ibid., 105.
55 Ibid., 105-106.
56 Ibid.
57 Ibid., 106-107.
the broader column monument and to focus on its role in Byzantine ceremonial.\textsuperscript{58} This an adept way of understanding the column’s ceremonial function and its evolving meaning in the later dark ages.

In recent years, scholars have taken a variety of approaches to understanding the column, often either studying textual references to it, one of its sections, attempting to understand its ceremonial function or simply surveying all known information. Over the course of the latter half of the twentieth century, Gilbert Dagron, a Professor Emeritus of Byzantine History and Civilization at the College de France, has written extensively on the topography of Constantinople and the ceremonies occurring within. In an early work, \textit{Naissance d’une Capital}, he seeks to establish what Constantine’s founding column meant.\textsuperscript{59} Here, he argues that at its core, the column symbolized the imperial destiny of New Rome and the preservation of its empire.\textsuperscript{60} In addition, having been erected to celebrate Constantine’s victory over Licinius at Chrysopolis, Dagron argues that the column would continue to represent the emperor’s victory for centuries to come.\textsuperscript{61} To Dagron, Constantine, by establishing the palace, hippodrome and circular forum with his column, was setting the groundwork for a political space that would continue to be used and enhanced until 1453.\textsuperscript{62} The fact that the column is one of these prominent fundamental structures makes it an object worthy of further investigation.

\textsuperscript{58} Ibid., 109.
\textsuperscript{60} Dagron, \textit{Naissance d’un Capitale}, 30, 36-40.
\textsuperscript{61} Ibid., 26, 36.
\textsuperscript{62} Ibid., 36.
In a later work, *Constantinople Imaginaire*, Dagron continues his discussion of what the column actually meant to the inhabitants of the city.\(^{63}\) Here, he mentions the relics deposited at its base and also briefly surveys the ceremonies that occurred there, noting that the column was saluted by the army and that hymns were performed near it to insure the prosperity of the city.\(^{64}\) In this discussion, he relies primarily on Byzantine textual sources like the *Parastaseis Syntomoi Chronikai* and *Patria* to better understand how the forum and column as spaces functioned in overall processions and ceremonies.\(^{65}\) Thus, in both of these volumes, he relies on Byzantine texts to clarify the column’s symbolic importance and its function in the city. His most recent work, *Emperor and Priest*, continues in this vein, covering the column as a station along an imperial ceremonial route.\(^{66}\) Dagron’s overall approach is sound in that he is attempting to understand the column’s purpose and spends less time on forensic detail. However, his works cover broader Constantinople and so could not possibly focus on all pertinent details to the column.

Paul Magdalino, also takes this approach in his work, writing on the overall structure of the city instead of focusing on one area or monument. Like Dagron, Magdalino is also concerned with the topography of Constantinople, primarily focusing his work on its medieval cityscape, discussing the locations of churches, monasteries and certain markets.\(^{67}\) In the beginning of this study, he notes the “permanence” of certain Constantinopolitan structures, among which the


\(^{64}\) Dagron, *Constantinople Imaginaire*, 90.

\(^{65}\) Ibid., 50, 90.


forum is mentioned. However, overall his work neglects the column in favor of later medieval ecclesiastical structures as it is a study focusing on Constantinople in the medieval epoch.

When the forum is mentioned at all, it is noted in relation to another space like the Artopoleia or bread market. Here, he references the Book of the Eparch, noting that this market was at times located at the entrance to the Forum of Constantine or the Forum of Theodosius. However, although this information is interesting in relation to the economic history of Constantinople, the column of Constantine itself is rarely mentioned or discussed. His primary concern in this volume seems to be the medieval architectural foundations of the city most of which were churches or monasteries. However, in his monograph on the Emperor Manuel Komnenos, Magdalino does mention the repairs to the column carried out during that emperor’s reign. However, aside from studying the column within its urban topography, some scholars like Garth Fowden have attempted to analyze contemporary texts, theorizing that they might somehow allude to the monument.

Garth Fowden, in his study on the column, attempts to provide a snapshot into the 4th century Byzantine perspective on Constantine’s monument by analyzing the 4th century Life of Elagabalus in the Historia Augusta. Here, he argues that the author’s account of the tyrant

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68 Magdalino, Constantinople Medievale, 19.
69 Ibid., 19.
70 Ibid., 22.
71 Edwin Hanson Freshfield, Roman Law in the Later Roman Empire: Byzantine Guilds: Professional and Commercial Ordinances of Leo VI C. 895 from the Book of the Eparch. (University Press, 1938).
72 Magdalino, Constantinople Medievale, 22.
73 Ibid., 1-117.
Emperor Elagabalus was meant to directly reference contemporary events during Constantine’s reign. In the *Historia Augusta*, Elagabalus is depicted as irrationally worshipping and setting up a column to the Syrian sun god, Heliogabalus. A scenario that would have been very familiar to contemporary Constantinopolitans who would have just witnessed Constantine erect a column and statue of himself in the guise of a sun god. Here, Fowden provides compelling evidence for what could be the earliest reference to the porphyry column. Besides simply analyzing the *Historia Augusta*, he also briefly surveys the history of the monument and its changing meaning.

Although Fowden makes some intriguing arguments about the relation between Elagabalus and Constantine, Chris Lightfoot is skeptical of some of his conclusions. Lightfoot, a specialist in late Roman history and numismatics, argues that unlike Elagabalus’ irrational expenditures, Constantine’s porphyry monument was actually highly regarded, symbolizing the re-dedication of Byzantium as Constantinople. Thus, it would have hardly been viewed as an object of selfish waste by the Constantinopolitan majority.

Aside from attempting to connect Constantine’s column to late Roman historiography, recent scholars have also attempted to study it within its Late Antique urban context. Sarah Bassett, in her monograph, *The Urban Image of Late Antique Constantinople*, has provided helpful data for how the column was perceived in the Late Antique city. In this work, she

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77 Ibid.,” 119-131.
78 Ibid., 120-121.
79 Ibid., 131.
80 Ibid., 122-131.
82 Lightfoot, “Constantine’s Porphyry Column Reinstated,” 29.
surveys all data relevant to the monument and primary sources which refer to it in this epoch.\textsuperscript{84} Her work on the primary sources will be especially valuable to the first chapter of this study as it provides extensive excerpts on the monument.\textsuperscript{85} When discussing the column, Bassett often centers her discussion on its position within the city along the Mese.\textsuperscript{86} This approach allows her to consider its role in the broader Constantinian era city, a useful methodology for understanding its ceremonial significance during this time.\textsuperscript{87}

Bassett attempted to understand the column’s larger role within the city.\textsuperscript{88} However, like Carl Vett of the early twentieth century, Byzantine scholars continue to be fascinated by relics and other objects associated with the column. These relics have often been the basis of studies conducted by John Wortley\textsuperscript{89} and Slawomir Bralewski\textsuperscript{90} who have spent a significant amount of time surveying the primary source accounts for the column and its relics. Wortley, for instance, in his publication on “The Legend of Constantine the Relic Provider,” calls into doubt Constantine’s status as a major relic collector, asserting that it was a later tradition that attributed this characteristic to him.\textsuperscript{91} He concludes by arguing that likely the only relic Constantine acquired was a pagan one, the Palladium of Troy.\textsuperscript{92} Thus, Wortley has focused in on the column’s objects as a way of elucidating Constantine as an historical figure.\textsuperscript{93}

\textsuperscript{84} Bassett, \textit{The Urban Image of Late Antique Constantinople}, 192-199.
\textsuperscript{85} Ibid., 192-199.
\textsuperscript{86} Ibid., 29-30.
\textsuperscript{87} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{88} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{91} Wortley, “The Legend of Constantine the Relic Provider,” 495-496.
\textsuperscript{92} Ibid., 496.
\textsuperscript{93} Ibid., 487-496.
Like Wortley, Bralewski focuses on the objects associated with the column. However, instead of studying Constantine himself, he uses these relics to support his hypothesis on the multiplicitous meaning of the column.⁹⁴ From reading his study on the column, it becomes apparent that no one whether Byzantine or modern really agrees completely on the nature of the monument. Bralewski, for instance, surveys the works of previous scholars such as Gilbert Dagron, Raymond Janin and Adam Ziolkowski all of who have entirely different interpretations of the bronze statue.⁹⁵ Janin, for example, took the fairly common stance that it represented Constantine-Helios, while Ziolkowski understood it as a statue of Christ, a unique interpretation that has not won followers in modern scholarship.⁹⁶ Bralewski, through this survey of modern and Byzantine perceptions on the column, has shown that there is still much work to be done in terms of clarifying this monument’s evolving meaning.⁹⁷ The only disadvantage to his work is that it is often disorganized chronologically and is at times confusing, switching between issues like the city’s foundation ceremony and later Byzantine attitudes towards the column.⁹⁸ Perhaps a more ideal method is to organize into chronological chapters, the cultural history of the column as is adopted in this thesis.

Like Wortley and Bralewski, the most recent scholars studying the column also frame much of their arguments around questions regarding its nature, attempting to reconstruct its original appearance and better understand the evolution of its meaning. Robert Ousterhout⁹⁹ and

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⁹⁵ Ibid., 90.
⁹⁶ Raymond Janina and Adam Ziolkowski in Ibid., 90.
⁹⁷ Ibid., 87-100.
⁹⁸ Ibid.
Jonathan Bardill\textsuperscript{100} both take this approach in their work on the monument, summarizing the facts and attempting to adequately provide answers to some of the more dubious aspects. Both scholars pose questions as to the nature of the bronze statue, inquiring as to whether it was clothed or nude and to the specific design of its crown. Ousterhout, for instance, lists three possibilities for the statue, asserting that it was either in heroic nudity typical of Hellenistic statues, was cuirassed in military attire like earlier Roman emperors, or was shown in priestly robes like that of Apollo Kitharoedos.\textsuperscript{101} This is a helpful practice in that by listing out all possibilities, the most likely option may be determined.

Bardill, in his 2012 study of Constantine, makes a compelling argument able as to the appearance of the statue and its crown. He compellingly proposes, for instance, that a radiate crown is more likely than a vertical one due to the fact that angled rays would be countable from the ground whereas vertical ones would not.\textsuperscript{102} This is reinforced by the many primary texts that attest to the seven rayed crowns of the statue, clearly reflecting their ability to see and record the number of rays.\textsuperscript{103} Additionally, Bardill asserts that seven rays would have been too few in a vertical rayed crown often shown with eleven rays.\textsuperscript{104} So, Ousterhout\textsuperscript{105} and Bardill\textsuperscript{106} have most certainly contributed to our understanding of specific details regarding the column, but what of the broader issues? Ousterhout touches on the column’s changing meaning through time in his

\textsuperscript{101} Ousterhout, “The life and afterlife of Constantine’s Column,” 312.
\textsuperscript{102} Bardill, \textit{Constantine, Divine Emperor of the Christian Golden Age}, 36.
\textsuperscript{103} Ibid., 34.
\textsuperscript{104} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{105} Ousterhout, “The life and afterlife of Constantine’s Column,” 305-326.
concise overview of the primary sources, but this should most certainly be investigated in a more thorough study.¹⁰⁷

In his 2014 study, Ousterhout chronologically discusses the primary sources for the monument and then inquires as to how these texts should be used to understand the column.¹⁰⁸ From studying both Late Antique and later Byzantine texts, it becomes vividly clear that the column underwent a significant evolution in how it was received and understood. Ousterhout, here, has taken a much needed first step in investigating the column’s evolution in the Byzantine perspective which should be expanded into a larger project.¹⁰⁹

Aside from Ousterhout and Bardill, most recently Pelin Yoncaci Arslan has studied the column for her PhD dissertation, “Christianizing the Skyline: The Appropriation of the Pagan Honorary Column in Early Constantinople.”¹¹⁰ In this dissertation, like previous scholars, she discusses its measurements, the statue and the excavations of Mamboury and Vett, but also employs previously unused sources like the 19th century Bayezid Water Distribution Maps and travel guides, making her work especially useful.¹¹¹ In addition, Arslan also reviews the logistics of how the sixty ton porphyry drums were each transported along the Mese to the forum.¹¹² For this discussion, she argues that this impressive monumental spectacle would have functioned as ideal propaganda similar to Hadrian’s architectural feat of raising the Nero colossus.¹¹³

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 309-310.
¹¹² Ibid., 104-116.
¹¹³ Ibid., 110.
Additionally, Arslan cites recent repairs to the column in the 1970s and early 2000s, providing us with sufficient knowledge on how the monument has been maintained in recent years.\textsuperscript{114}

Although Arslan’s account of the column is the most up to date, employing recent Turkish sources regarding its maintenance, for her, Constantine’s column is only one of several column monuments covered in the dissertation.\textsuperscript{115} In this dissertation, she seeks to clarify the purpose of honorific columns, their role in the cityscape of Constantinople and how they evolved between the reigns of Constantine and Justinian.\textsuperscript{116} Thus, Constantine’s column only plays a small part in her overall thesis, discussing column monuments in Late Antique Constantinople.\textsuperscript{117}

However, nonetheless, her work is applicable in that it inquires as to the purpose of these monuments and how they were incorporated into the Byzantine Christian tradition.\textsuperscript{118} For this thesis, instead of focusing on all of the column monuments of Constantinople like Arslan, we will instead study only the Column of Constantine’s evolving meaning through time and its role in the religious and imperial ceremonies of Constantinople.

Therefore, from a careful study of all secondary resources on the column from Petrus Gyllius\textsuperscript{119} to Pelin Yoncaci Arslan,\textsuperscript{120} it becomes apparent that as of yet the column has either been studied with a quite broad approach or in an extremely detailed manner, fixating on one exact part of the structure like the relics or statue. In actuality, this is an incomplete approach leaving us either with a broad overview or a study of extreme specificities. In order to properly

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\textsuperscript{114} Ibid., 116.  
\textsuperscript{115} Ibid., 116.  
\textsuperscript{116} Ibid., i-iii.  
\textsuperscript{117} Ibid.  
\textsuperscript{118} Ibid.  
\textsuperscript{119} Pierre Gilles, \textit{Constantinople, A Modern English Translation by Kimberly Byrd}.  
\textsuperscript{120} Yoncaci Arslan, “Christianizing the Skyline: The Appropriation of the Pagan Honorary Column in Early Constantinople.”
appreciate the column’s meaning, function and use throughout the Byzantine era, it is necessary to study it in the context of each respective epoch (Late Antiquity, Early Medieval and Later Medieval). Therefore, this thesis will devote a chapter to each of these three epochs to effectively show how the column accumulated meaning over time, gradually becoming prominent center for the cult of St. Constantine.

As of yet there has been no comprehensive study or monograph focusing on the column. This is quite an unfortunate situation as it is one of the only surviving monuments dating exactly to Constantine’s re-foundation ceremony and is in actuality the foundation stone of Byzantine Constantinople. Additionally, as we can see from the discussion above, the column has often been neglected in scholarship or simply ignored with 19th and early 20th century European scholars privileging churches over the neglected “Burnt Column.”

Thus, due to this lacuna in scholarship, it seems quite reasonable to justify this study, a cultural history of Constantine’s porphyry column from its erection in the fourth century to the Ottoman conquest of the city in 1453 C.E. This is the most effective method for discussing how the monument changed physically (repairs etc.) as well as analyzing the evolution of its role in Byzantine political and religious ideology.

Paul Stephenson, a Byzantinist and Professor of History at the University of Lincoln, has also adopted the methodology of cultural history for his work on the Serpent Column in Istanbul, interpreting how that monument’s meaning and use changed through time. For our study on the Column of Constantine, we have elected to follow Paul Stephenson’s model, chronicling the column’s changing meaning and function from the foundation of the Byzantine state to its fall in

1453 C.E.\textsuperscript{123} Here, there is much value to this approach in that we can understand a monument’s broader significance through history.

Each of the five chapters will focus on a chronological time frame as well as a particular theme related to the Column of Constantine’s use and meaning. The overall purpose of the chapters combined is to chronicle the change in Byzantine understanding and interpretation of the column. Chapter I, “The Column of Constantine in Late Antiquity (4\textsuperscript{th}-6\textsuperscript{th} centuries),” will primarily focus on the column’s initial pagan meaning and its significance in the re-foundation ceremony of Byzantium as Constantinople which tied it directly to the city as a whole. Here, we will reference primary sources like Eusebius’ 4\textsuperscript{th} century \textit{Life of Constantine},\textsuperscript{124} Zosimus’ late 6\textsuperscript{th} century \textit{New History},\textsuperscript{125} the mid 6\textsuperscript{th} century \textit{Chronicle of John Malalas}\textsuperscript{126} and the 7\textsuperscript{th} century \textit{Chronicon Paschale}.\textsuperscript{127} In addition, here, we will discuss the archaic Greek origins of the honorary column and its gradual incorporation into Roman political use that was then transmitted to Byzantium.

After discussing the Column of Constantine’s erection and role in early Byzantine ceremonial, Chapter II, “The Christianization of the Column of Constantine (5\textsuperscript{th}-9\textsuperscript{th} centuries),” will then focus on exactly when chronologically the column’s meaning changed. Here, this

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\item Stephenson, \textit{The Serpent Column A Cultural Biography}.
\item Averil Cameron and Stuart Hall, eds. \textit{Eusebius’ Life of Constantine}, (Clarendon Press, 1999).
\item Ronald T. Ridley, trans. \textit{Zosimus’ New History}, (Australian Association for Byzantine Studies, 1982).
\item Brian Croke, trans. \textit{The Chronicle of John Malalas}, (Australian Association for Byzantine Studies, 1986).
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
chapter will rely on the 5\textsuperscript{th} and 6\textsuperscript{th} century histories of Socrates\textsuperscript{128} and Hesychios\textsuperscript{129} as well as the 7\textsuperscript{th} century \textit{Chronicon Paschale}\textsuperscript{130} and 8\textsuperscript{th} century \textit{Parastaseis Syntomoi Chronikai} to understand the political and religious ambience of the age.\textsuperscript{131} In addition, here, we will investigate exactly when the column was Christianized and exactly what relics were associated with the column at this point and their significance to this particular era. Also, in Chapter II, we will study the transition from realistic late antique historiography to an increasingly folkloricized approach of Byzantine understanding of Constantinopolitan monuments and specifically the Column of Constantine. Finally, after substantially discussing the inception of the column’s Christianization, in Chapter III, we will then transition to discuss in more detail the religious and political events that took place there.

In Chapter III, “The Column of Constantine as a Monument of Byzantine Triumph (9\textsuperscript{th}-mid-11\textsuperscript{th} centuries),” we will study the column as a venue for ecclesiastical feast days, Constantinopolitan holidays and political events held under the auspices of the Macedonian dynasty (r.867-1056). This chapter will reference primary sources such as the 10\textsuperscript{th} century \textit{Patria},\textsuperscript{132} the 10\textsuperscript{th} century book of court protocol known as the \textit{De Cerimoniis}\textsuperscript{133} and also the 10\textsuperscript{th}

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\textsuperscript{128} Socrates in Sarah Bassett, \textit{The Urban Image of Late Antique Constantinople}, (Cambridge University Press, 2004).
\textsuperscript{129} Hesychios in Sarah Bassett, \textit{The Urban Image of Late Antique Constantinople}, (Cambridge University Press, 2004).
\textsuperscript{130} Michael and Mary Whitby, trans. \textit{Chronicon Paschale 284-628 AD}.
\textsuperscript{132} Albrecht Berger trans., \textit{Accounts of Medieval Constantinople, The Patria}, (Dumbarton Oaks Medieval Library, 2013).
\textsuperscript{133} Constantine, Emperor of the East. Philotheos. Ed. Anne Moffatt, Maxeme Tall, Johann Jacob Reiske, \textit{The Book of Ceremonies with the Greek edition of the Corpus scriptorium historiae Byzantinae}. I & II.
\end{footnotesize}
Here, it is the purpose of this chapter to argue that the religious and political ceremonial carried out at the column’s base were critical to linking the current emperor and dynasty to Constantine the Great as a “New Constantine” and back to Christ himself. The emperor’s movement and interplay with this sacred space thereby further guaranteed his legitimacy as God’s chosen ruler. After discussing the apogee of Byzantine ceremonial use of the Column of Constantine, we will then transition to discuss its decline under the Komnenoi and Angeloi dynasties.

Chapter IV, “The Column of Constantine under the Komnenoi and Angeloi Dynasties (mid-11th century-1204 C.E.),” will discuss the decrease in the use of the column as a ceremonial space under the Komnenoi and Angeloi emperors and their re-orientation of the processional landscape of Constantinople. Here, using the 11th century Alexiad of Anna Komnene135 and 12th century historiographic sources like John Kinnamos’ Deeds of John and Manuel Komnenos136 and Niketas Choniates’ Annals,137 we will argue that the Byzantine imperial office and rituals associated with it underwent a profound change under the Komnenoi dynasty. In addition, it will also be necessary to cover the building activity of the Komnenoi emperors which included the renovation of the Column of Constantine itself as well as the construction of several other impressive structures like the Christ Pantocrator Monastery. At this time, the Column of Constantine also became a prime space for political upheaval and riots especially under the child

Emperor Alexios II (r.1180-1183), reflecting the decline in Byzantine political power which eventually led to the Latin Conquest of 1204 C.E.

The Byzantine recovery of Constantinople from the Latin crusaders in 1261 C.E. and the accession of the Palaiologan dynasty will be the topic of the final chapter, Chapter V “The Column of Constantine as a Monument of Palaiologan Revival and Prophecy (13th-15th centuries).” Here, using primary texts like George Akropolites’ *History,* the 14th ceremonial book of Pseudo Kodinos, the accounts of Russian travelers in the 14th and 15th centuries and certain eschatological works, we will discuss Michael VIII Palaiologos’ renewal of the city and the role the Column of Constantine played in this. In addition, we will analyze the Column of Constantine not only as a monument of the past and present but also of the future, being featured in certain prophetic texts like the Andreas Salos Apocalypse and the *Oracles of Leo the Wise and the Tale of the True Emperor.*

Thus, with this brief survey of the chapters completed we will now begin with the Column of Constantine as it was understood and used in Late Antiquity at the commencement of the Byzantine epoch.

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139 Ruth Macrides, J.A. Munitiz, Dimiter Angelov, *Pseudo-Kodinos and the Constantinopolitan Court: Offices and Ceremonies,* (Birmingham Byzantine and Ottoman Studies), 1-540.
140 George P. Majeska, *Russian Travelers to Constantinople in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries.*
Chapter I - The Column of Constantine in Late Antiquity (4th-6th centuries)

The column of Constantine in Late Antiquity was tied directly to the foundation of Constantinople, being incorporated into imperial ritual and ceremony throughout the era and therefore important to our understanding of the early history of the city. In this chapter, we will investigate the column’s meaning and purpose from the 4th century to the end of the 6th century C.E, studying its role in the foundation ceremony of May 11th, 330 and in imperial processions. In addition, it will be necessary to analyze the effect that its construction and erection had on the Constantinopolitan populace. Then, we will briefly discuss the damages inflicted upon the column and subsequent structural interventions on it, analyzing the significance of these occurrences to the city’s political atmosphere. Here, sources such as Zosimus’ *New History*, Socrates’ *Ecclesiastical History*, Hesychios’ *Universal History*, the *Chronicon Paschale*, *Chronicle of John Malalas* and the *Parastaseis Syntomoi Chronikai* will be useful for our analysis. Although these texts provide varying and intriguing accounts of the site, none are contemporary with its construction, creating a substantial problem for modern scholarship. Here, these accounts say more about the column’s reception at the time of their composition than on how it was viewed in the mid 4th century. Thus, to effectively study the column as it was perceived in Late Antiquity will require some critique of the sources that postdate it.

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143 Ridley, trans. *Zosimus’ New History*.
144 Socrates in Sarah Bassett, *The Urban Image of Late Antique Constantinople*.
145 Hesychios in Sarah Bassett, *The Urban Image of Late Antique Constantinople*.
146 Michael and Mary Whitby, trans. *Chronicon Paschale* 284-628 AD.
The Column of Constantine in Late Antiquity held a mostly pagan meaning, being within the tradition of many other columnar monuments of the ancient world. Therefore, to effectively grasp the purpose of Constantine’s monuments, it is first necessary to look back to similar column structures of the Archaic and Classical periods.

From the earliest period of Archaic Greece, columns functioned as symbolic votives to the gods during offerings and festivals. Here, these smaller columns were often topped with bulls, tripods, sphynxes and the like to enhance the sacrificial occasion. The Naxian Column of Delphi, for instance, located along the Sacred Way is a good early example of such a votive column (Fig. 8). However, aside from being used solely as symbolic offerings, the freestanding column was soon employed to honor renowned individuals and rulers and their military victories. The earliest such examples of these are the honorific columns designed by Kallikrates for Ptolemy II and his wife of the 4th century BCE located within Olympia. Additionally, two centuries later, the victories of Eumenes II of Pergamon and his ally Prusias II of Bythynia were similarly celebrated with columns, one of which was topped with an equestrian statue. Thus, the widespread use of columns to honor victorious individuals in the Hellenistic world was soon transmitted to Rome.

Like in the Hellenistic kingdoms, Romans also used columns as a way to memorialize heroes of the state and to celebrate certain events. The 4th century BCE monument for C.Maenius, for instance, was erected to celebrate that naval commander’s victory at Antium.

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150 Ibid., 44.
151 Ibid., 44-45.
152 Ibid., 45.
153 Ibid., 47.
154 Ibid., 49.
In addition, like Maenius’ monument, later Roman emperors also employed columns to celebrate their own personal victories and legacy. This is most certainly the case with Trajan’s monument, which celebrated that emperor’s Dacian campaign as well as even functioning as a funerary monument, holding his ashes within its base.\textsuperscript{155} Similarly, a column was erected in Lambaesis, Africa where Hadrian delivered a speech to his troops.\textsuperscript{156} So, these instances of column monuments in the Hellenistic and Roman worlds bring us to the question of how were these columns used in their political and religious setting.

From both textual and epigraphic evidence, it is apparent that Roman columns were often the venues for orations, public announcement and anniversary celebrations. The column of Maenius, for instance, functioned as a timepiece, marking where the final hour of the day was announced as well as serving as an announcement board, especially for public debts.\textsuperscript{157} In addition, Hadrian’s African column, celebrating the emperor’s speeches to the military, was likely continually revered by soldiers and travelers for several centuries.\textsuperscript{158} Here, in this instance, the actual text of the emperor’s speech was preserved in the monument and so it is probable that the speech was continually read and memorialized in celebration of the emperor’s visit long after.\textsuperscript{159}

From this brief survey, we can easily acquire a sense of the meaning and use of columns in the pre Christian world. In the early Byzantine period, Constantine, as an emperor, was only continuing the column tradition when he erected his own triumphal monument, celebrating his victory over Licinius as well as the re-foundation of Byzantium as Constantinople. Because

\textsuperscript{155} Ibid., 61-62.
\textsuperscript{156} Ibid., 75-76.
\textsuperscript{157} Ibid., 49.
\textsuperscript{158} Ibid., 75-76.
\textsuperscript{159} Ibid., 76.
column monuments were deeply engrained in the pagan tradition, having been used for over a millennium before, it is no wonder that Eusebius, a devout Christian cleric, failed to mention Constantine’s porphyry column.

Eusebius of Caesarea, a 4th century bishop and ecclesiastical historian was very much keen to repress any information representative of Constantine’s pagan sentiments. He composed a number of works praising the emperor such as a panegyric titled *In Praise of Constantine* as well as the *Vita Constantini*. The latter and more prominent text, the *Vita Constantini*, is hybrid in nature, containing aspects of panegyric, hagiography and history. In this work, Eusebius continuously emphasizes the emperor’s status as a Christian monarch and God’s chosen, comparing him to mythic Biblical figures like Moses. Eusebius, at one point, even cleverly parallels Constantine’s youth amongst pagan emperors with Moses’ life at Pharaoh’s court. Thus, with this in mind, it is obvious that Eusebius had a staunchly Christian agenda and would certainly have omitted mentioning a monument with such pagan meaning like the column. If he discusses pagan statuary at all in his account, he is quick to note that they only existed so that Christians could mock them, an unlikely explanation since Constantine and his retinue went through a great deal of expenditure to transport these appropriated objects to the new capitol. Thus, we must turn to the 5th century to find any sort of account that mentions the column or its surrounding area.

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162 Cameron & Hall trans. *Eusebius Life of Constantine*.
164 Cameron and Hall, *Eusebius Life of Constantine*, 73.
165 Ibid., 73.
166 Ibid.
167 Ibid.
The earliest source that refers to the site, Zosimus, a count and official of the imperial treasury in the late 5th century, fails to mention the column at all.\(^{168}\) Here, he simply notes that “Constantine built a circular forum…with double roofed porticoes and set up two huge arches of Proconnesian marble opposite each other through which one could enter the Portico of Severus or go out to the old city.”\(^{169}\) This description provides much detailed information on the column’s surroundings, but yet totally neglects to acknowledge the column.\(^{170}\) Here, we must wonder why Zosimus would omit a monument so significant to the topography of early medieval Constantinople. Perhaps, he saw the column as a memorial to Constantine’s megalomaniacal nature and therefore decided to pass it over in an expression of animosity for that emperor. This can perhaps be supported by an earlier passage in which Zosimus denounces Constantine’s execution of his son as “without any consideration for natural law.”\(^{171}\) With this in mind, it would seem reasonable why Zosimus would avoid describing a structure intended to glorify that emperor.\(^{172}\) Thus, since, Zosimus discusses only briefly the original foundation ceremonies and the column’s construction, we must turn instead to later sources such as the Chronicon Paschale\(^{173}\) and Georgius Harmatolos’ Chronikon.\(^{174}\)

When the Byzantine accounts discuss the column in the context of the early Byzantine era, they often focus on its involvement in the city’s foundation ceremony as well as in political events. The 7th century Chronicon Paschale, for instance, notes the “great porphyry column”

\(^{169}\) Ibid., 37.
\(^{170}\) Ibid.
\(^{171}\) Ibid., 36.
\(^{172}\) Ibid.
\(^{174}\) George Monachus, Chronikon (de Boor, 1987). In Bassett, The Urban Image of Late Antique Constantinople, 198.
before moving on to discuss the establishment of May 11th as a holiday and the subsequent celebratory chariot races. Therefore, it can easily be argued that Byzantine authors, when reflecting on the column’s history, were keen to associate it with the foundation day. Perhaps, the reason behind this being that the monument was intimately associated with the city’s rebirth and the cult of Constantine.

The completion and dedication of the Column of Constantine between 324 and 330, from the very beginning, was deeply connected to the re-foundation of Byzantium as Constantinople. The logistics involved in setting up such an impressive monument required much planning and innovation to transport the sixty-ton porphyry drums from the harbor and up the Mese to Constantine’s forum. Georgius Harmatolos, a ninth century source, for instance, postulates that it took four years for the drums to be transported by ship and to then be unloaded at the forum. Such an elaborate and lengthy spectacle would most certainly have attracted the attention of the Constantinopolitan populace, easily functioning as Constantinian propaganda. The ability to transport and erect such a monumental structure in itself would certainly advertise the ruler’s power, a probable explanation for why Late Antique emperors after Constantine would continue this trend. In addition, the choice of Egyptian porphyry is significant in that it was a material of the highest quality often associated with royalty and kingship.

Upon the completion of his column, Constantine decreed that day (May 11th) to be celebrated in each subsequent year with chariot races and the procession of his own statue which

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175 Michael and Mary Whitby, trans. Chronicon Paschale 284-628 AD, 16-17.
177 George Monachus, Chronikon (de Boor, 1987). In Bassett, The Urban Image of Late Antique Constantinople, 198.
each succeeding emperor made obeisance to. Malalas describes the protocol for this event, noting that:

“He ordered that on the same day as the Anniversary race-meeting this wooden statue (of Constantine) should be brought in escorted by the soldiers wearing cloaks and boots, all holding candles; the carriage should march around the turning post and reach the pit opposite the kathisma, and the emperor of the time should rise and make obeisance as he gazed at this statue of Constantine and the Tyche of the city.”\(^{179}\)

From studying this passage, we can easily understand this as a pagan cult ceremony to a deified emperor not unlike previous Roman ones like that of Augustus.\(^{180}\) In addition, by showing himself with the city’s Tyche, the representative deity of the city, Constantine was effectively asserting his role as patron deity of Constantinople (Fig. 9). In the early Byzantine era, Constantine’s statue atop the column and the wooden one below probably were interpreted in a pagan context. Here, he was only following the trend of previous pagan emperors who were keen to show themselves in the guise of a deity. The statue atop his porphyry column is a perfect example of this, portraying the emperor as a sun god.

This statue, likely a reused piece from Phrygia or somewhere in Asia Minor, depicted the emperor in the guise of a sun god (Apollo or Helios). The exact nature of it has been the subject of much debate amongst scholars, arguing as to whether it was clothed or nude and the design of its crown. However, recently, Bassett\(^{181}\) and Bardill\(^{182}\) have both convincingly argued that the statue was probably nude and adorned with a radiate crown, asserting Constantine’s divine elevation (Fig. 10). This statue, shown in heroic nudity and donning both a lance and spear, was

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\(^{181}\) Bassett, *The Urban Image of Late Antique Constantinople*, 203.

meant to emphasize the emperor’s elevation above mortals. Here, he accentuated his divine status by his gaze, likely serene with eyes elevated toward heaven.

This “Heavenward Gaze” style was used throughout the Hellenic period, first being adopted by Alexander to assert his divine inspiration (Fig. 11). However, later during the Roman era this iconographic style was downplayed as excessively autocratic. Constantine likely readopted this program to emphasize his status as sole emperor subservient to one deity. Based on numismatic evidence and other Constantinian statues, it is reasonable to assume that the statue’s face exhibited the “Heavenward Gaze.” In addition, this type was also reminiscent of Apollo who was often shown with heavenward gaze in search of divine inspiration for music. Thus, by raising a statue of himself as a sun god high above the cityscape, Constantine thereby set the foundation for his imperial cult and directly associated himself with Helios/Apollo.

To fully understand the appeal behind erecting such a monumental statue referencing the sun god, it will be necessary to examine the precedents of ancient rulers and statues. Likely the sun theme was transmitted from Egypt during Alexander’s conquests and soon repurposed to legitimize that king’s successors. Numerous inscriptions, for instance, describe these rulers in relation to the sun, describing them as “chosen by the sun” or “son of the sun.” In addition, the Rhodes colossus also adopted the sun theme with its monumental statue of Apollo/Helios gazing out upon the harbor. By Constantine’s time, the sun theme would have been a familiar method

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183 Ibid., 32-33.
184 Ibid., 19-24.
185 Ibid., 14-16.
186 Ibid., 19.
187 Ibid., 19.
188 Bevan, 1927, 28, 30, in Bardill, Constantine, Divine Emperor of the Christian Golden Age, 19.
for legitimating an emperor. Therefore, it only seems rational that he would erect a statue of himself towering above in the guise of a sun god, gazing upward to the supreme deity.

Aside from the impressive shining statue above, the column’s base also reinforced the imagery of its summit. Here, was shown an *aurantium coronarium*, a coronation scene often depicted on the bases of Roman monuments. The main source for this scene, however, is a 16th century sketch by Melchior Lorichs which is not attested anywhere else (see Fig. 3). Here, this drawing depicts Constantine, crowned with vertical rays and surrounded by winged victories. Although it is possible that the drawing is merely a product of the artist’s imagination, it is also possible that there was indeed a coronation scene at the base. Based off the author’s drawing and comparative evidence, we would argue that this scene existed on the original structure. In the sketch, the artist also made the effort to accurately record the cracked base from the 5th century. Thus, if he accurately recorded this fact, why would he then fabricate another aspect of the monument? Additionally, another Constantinopolitan monument, the Column of Marcian, has a similar *aurantium coronarium* with comparable winged victories to Constantine’s column in the drawing (Fig. 12). From this evidence, it seems likely that the scene at the column’s base

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192 Ibid., 126.
193 Ibid.
194 Ibid.
was merely covered up by later modern additions. This is further confirmed by an engraving depicting a Turkish festival around the column with its base fully obscured (see Fig. 5).  

Aside from the design of the monument itself, after its completion, it was soon adorned with a variety of objects including gold coins and certain relics. In its Late Antique pagan milieu, it was soon linked to the symbolic Palladium of the classical past. This legendary object was thought to have been imported from Troy to Rome, functioning as a talisman for the political success of the state. Constantine, in an action that asserted Constantinople as the true successor to Rome, translated this relic to the base of his founding stone, the column. Thus, soon after its completion, the porphyry column was augmented with a variety of objects intended to enhance its importance to the new capitol. It was both the iconography of the structure itself at its apex and pedestal as well as the relics soon integrated into its base that made it especially ideal for imperial and religious ceremonies from the reign of Constantine the Great until the city’s conquest in 1453.

Later emperors of Late Antiquity, keen to associate themselves with the city’s founder, used this column’s base as a venue for their coronation. The aurum coronarium would then have been counter pointed with actual coronations. Here, many emperors received acclamation and approval from the senate, circus factions and other Constantinopolitan demographic groups, proving to be an essential stop along any imperial procession route. The fifth century emperor Leo I, for instance, met the Eparch and Senate here, receiving a gold crown and thus their

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198 Ibid., 16-17.
blessing for his reign. For Leo and others proclaimed here, it would have been quite significant to receive the support of the leading Constantinopolitan factions at the exact location of Constantine’s founding monument. This event would intrinsically link any new emperor with Constantine the Great, thereby legitimizing their claim to power. In addition, the column and surrounding forum were not only used to proclaim new rulers, but also were later employed in riots and coups.

During the Nika Riots in January of 532, for instance, the column was the scene of much violence between imperial soldiers and rioters as well as of Hypatius the usurper’s acclamation. Here, much damage was inflicted upon the regions between Constantine’s forum and the Great Palace, the column itself likely becoming a significant landmark during the chaos that ensued. The disgruntled citizens even selected and led Hypatius the Patrician to the base of the column, proclaiming him emperor and bestowing the imperial insignia on him. The Chronicon Paschale recounts this incident, stating, “and the people took the same patrician Hypatius to the Forum of Constantine…they carried him on high to the steps of the column…and they put the imperial insignia on the head of the same Hypatius, and a golden torque upon his neck…” Here, this further emphasizes the column’s crucial role in the legitimization of any

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203 Michael and Mary Whitby, trans. Chronicon Paschale 284-628 AD, 120.
204 Ibid., 121-122.
205 Ibid.
new coming emperor. Even in an atmosphere of chaos and destruction, the column was the first place to come to mind as a venue for a new imperial coronation.

Besides serving as a medium for legitimizing newcomers to the throne, it also functioned as an instrument for discrediting former emperors. In the early seventh century, for instance, when the Emperor Phocas was overthrown by Heraclius, his lifeless body was paraded near the column and along the Mese. The *Chronicon Paschale* relates this occasion, stating that “his hand was impaled on a sword, and thus it was paraded along the Mese, starting from the Forum.” Here, it is significant that this morbid event was initiated in direct proximity to the column, the same monument where many emperors possibly even Phocas were first proclaimed emperor.

Besides often being mentioned in relation to imperial events, the column is brought up frequently when damages were inflicted upon it. During the reign of Theodosius II, for instance, a significant portion of the stone at its base fell away, prompting the emperor to encase the entire monument with metal rings. The *Chronicon Paschale* notes this incident, stating, “a great stone tore away during the night from the lower stonework of the porphyry column…And in the same year all the drums of the same column were bound.” Here, due either to structural imperfections or natural occurrences, Theodosius II was compelled to fortify the column, thereby leaving his imprint on such a symbolic monument. In addition, the column statue’s orb and

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207 Ibid., 152.
208 Ibid.
210 Ibid., 65.
211 Ibid.
spear fell due to earthquakes in the reigns of Zeno\textsuperscript{212} and Justinian\textsuperscript{213} respectively, likely compelling those emperors to replace them. Thus, from these examples, it becomes apparent that later emperors were often compelled to repair the column. Therefore, as the structure aged, later emperors could assert their personal mark on the monument through renovations. Here, emperors were not only inclined to link themselves politically to the monument but architecturally as well.

Aside from actually physically making their mark upon the porphyry column through repairs and renovations, several post-Constantinian emperors also took it upon themselves to erect their own monumental columns, often designating the site of new fora or residences. Most notably, these were the columns of Theodosius and Arcadius set up in their respective forums and modelled after Trajan’s column and forum in Rome.\textsuperscript{214} After the Theodosians, many 6\textsuperscript{th} and 7\textsuperscript{th} century emperors like Justinian, Justin II and Phocas established columns to celebrate their accomplishments.\textsuperscript{215} Justinian, for instance, erected a reused equestrian statue atop his column in celebration his successes, namely defeating of the Vandals, Goths and Persians who were represented below it.\textsuperscript{216} Additionally, Justin II set up a column marking his private palace, gardens and hippodrome near the Deuteron.\textsuperscript{217} Finally, at the beginning of the 7\textsuperscript{th} century, the usurper Phocas erected a column near the Artopoleia, between the forums of Constantine and Theodosius, only to be assassinated eighteen days after its completion.\textsuperscript{218} The new emperor, Heraclius then finalized the monument by topping it with a cross and inscription, stating

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{212} Ibid. 194.
\item \textsuperscript{213} Theophanes’ \textit{Chronographia} in Bassett, \textit{The Urban Image of Late Antique Constantinople}, 198.
\item \textsuperscript{215} Mango, “The Columns of Justinian and his Successors,” 3-16.
\item \textsuperscript{216} Ibid., 3.
\item \textsuperscript{217} Ibid., 9.
\item \textsuperscript{218} Ibid., 14-15.
\end{itemize}
“Heraclius set up the God-pleasing work of a great emperor.”\textsuperscript{219} Thus, from these examples, it becomes apparent that many Late Antique emperors were eager to follow in Constantine’s footsteps and adorn the Constantinopolitan cityscape with their own individual monuments.

The honorific column was the ideal means through which Late Antique emperors could advertise their ability and successes as rulers. By erecting monuments along the triumphal Mese, they could insure that their columns would be seen and experienced by those passing by. Phocas’ monument, for instance, was ideally positioned between the two columns of Constantine and Theodosius, thereby connecting that emperor with previous renowned ones of the 4\textsuperscript{th} and 5\textsuperscript{th} centuries.\textsuperscript{220} However, although they all attempted to replicate Constantine’s initial monument, none of the post-Constantinian columns were constructed with porphyry, a material exclusively used in Constantine’s pillar. This makes Constantine’s column especially interesting in that it used the material of highest quality and most symbolic of royalty.

\textsuperscript{219} Nicephorus Callistus, VIII in Mango, “The Columns of Justinian and his Successors,” 15. \textsuperscript{220} Ibid., 14-15.
Chapter II - The Christianization of the Column of Constantine in the Early Medieval Era (5th-9th Centuries)

The Column of Constantine, although it was erected in a very much pagan and late Roman context, gradually became Christianized as the centuries passed. During the seventh century, the triumphal or honorary column fell out of use as a means of imperial commemoration in favor of more relevant Christian structures like churches and monasteries. However, this did not mean that the porphyry column itself became obsolete. Instead it acquired its own unique Christian meaning, overshadowing the previous pagan one. Additionally, the early medieval period (5th-early 9th centuries), saw the rise of the cult of Saint Constantine with its focus both at the base of the emperor’s column as well as at that Constantine’s mausoleum at the Church of the Holy Apostles. The presence of such a cult insured that the column itself was not only maintained, but also that several Christian and Biblical objects became associated with the site, notably the nails of the True Cross. Therefore, from this, we can see that the column’s significance and function were very much adapted with the changing political and religious setting of Constantinople.

In this chapter, we will briefly qualify and define all sources that will be referred to here to provide a clear view of how they contribute to our understanding of the column. Afterwards, we will then follow a concise survey of the political and religious history of the time, situating the column within its proper early medieval context. From here, we will then discuss the tradition of sacred objects being associated with the column and the reinterpretation of the monument in its entirety, arguing that this newly augmented column was essential to the Christianized memory of Constantine as well as to the ceremonial landscape of Constantinople.
In order to give a complete and clear picture of the column’s meaning and usage during the early medieval period, this thesis will reference primary sources such as the lost works of Gelasius of Caesarea, the Ecclesiastical History of Socrates,\(^{221}\) the Chronographia of John Malalas,\(^{222}\) The Chronicon Paschale,\(^{223}\) Parastaseis Syntomoi Chronikai,\(^{224}\) and Theophanes Confessor’s Chronographia\(^ {225}\) in order to effectively ascertain when exactly Christian relics were first mentioned in relation to the column. These sources are of a variety of genres, ranging from encyclopedic documents written on different Constantinopolitan structures\(^{226}\) to formal histories\(^{227}\) and year to year chronicles.\(^{228}\) They will be introduced and discussed chronologically, starting with the sources relevant to the late 6\(^{th}\) century and continuing to the early 9th. Then we will discuss the political and cultural events of this age in conjunction with the column’s development of new Christian meanings.

This chapter also will seek to establish when this Christian mythologization of Constantine’s column first began as well as to better understand the political motives for this mythologization. In addition, it will be necessary to inquire as to why Biblical and Christian relics were linked with the column at this time and what political or religious events might have

\(^{221}\) Socrates I, 17: In Bassett, The Urban Image of Late Antique Constantinople, 192.
\(^{227}\) Mango, Nikephoros Patriarch of Constantinople Short History, 1-247.
inspired such associations. In connection with this approach, we will investigate why specifically relics like those of the True Cross and Christ’s myrrh were chosen and not others.

The Christian relics associated with the column during this period (5th-9th centuries) were fragments of the True Cross,\textsuperscript{229} the baskets from the feeding of the multitude,\textsuperscript{230} the thieves’ crosses as well as Christ’s myrrh.\textsuperscript{231} Here, it is noteworthy that all of these objects directly relate to the life and crucifixion of Christ. The baskets, for instance, reference an instance attested in all of the Gospels in which Christ miraculously fed five thousand people with only five loaves of bread and two fish.\textsuperscript{232} In addition, the Thieves’ crosses and myrrh both refer to the crucifixion, serving as the crosses by which the two individuals surrounding Christ were crucified on as well as the ointment or myrrh with which Christ’s body was anointed by Nicodemus.\textsuperscript{233} Here, we must inquire as to why the column gradually accrued more and more relics pertaining to Christ during this time (5th-9th centuries). A likely answer to this (to be discussed further below), is that this was conscious political program to place Constantine’s forum and city within a Biblical tradition as God protected and destined for victory. Here, it is important to note that the inception of this tradition occurred in the years immediately after the reign of Constantine the Great.

The period between the late 4th and early 9th century was an age of profound change in the empire itself and the Byzantines’ understanding of their place in the world, as well as a distinct change in their philosophy towards literature. Late Antique writers describing the

\textsuperscript{229} Socrates I, 17: In Bassett, \textit{The Urban Image of Late Antique Constantinople}, 192.
column were primarily concerned with discussing it in its historical and realistic context. However, by the early 7th century, historical descriptions of it were abandoned for folkloric accounts, attempting to create a mythology for Constantine’s forum and his city. By the mid ninth century, these legends were standardized into the official political and religious ceremony of the state, making the column an essential part of the Byzantine state’s persona as a symbol of imperial victory and authority.

In the years directly after the reign of Constantine (mid to late 4th century), the legend of the discovery and veneration of the True Cross was invented. Egeria, a Spanish pilgrim first mentions the veneration of the True Cross in Jerusalem during her travels from 381 to 384. Here, she notes how the congregation performed obeisance before it and other relics including the Old Testament horn used to anoint kings. Egeria, here, is crucial to our understanding of the relic tradition at the column in that her account is the first to record such a ceremony surrounding the True Cross.

After Egeria, one of the earliest known accounts was that of Gelasius of Caesarea, a church historian working in the 390s, Helena, mother of Constantine and inspired by the divine, traveled to Jerusalem in search of the relics of the crucifixion. After discovering the True Cross and the crosses of the two thieves’ crucified with Christ as well as the nails she then sent some of them to Constantine for memorialization and protection (presumably Constantinople). During this formative period of the Christian relic tradition, Gelasius’ work on the True Cross

236 Wilkinson, Egeria’s Travels, 155-157.
237 Ibid., 155-157, 171-173.
238 Borgehammer, How the Holy Cross was Found From Event to Medieval Legend, 54-55.
239 Ibid., 54-55.
was frequently copied and expanded upon by later writers like Socrates Scholasticus (to be discussed below). Soon Gelasius’ original account of the True Cross would be expanded to affiliate Constantine’s column as the founding monument of Constantinople with it.

The works of Socrates Scholasticus, a late 4th and early 5th century Constantinopolitan church historian, and Hesychios of Miletus, a 6th century chronographer and biographer during the reign of Justinian, contain the first textual attestations of Christian relics associated with the column. Socrates Scholasticus is the first to claim in his Ecclesiastical History that Constantine took a fragment of the True Cross and enclosed it within his statue atop the porphyry column. Hesychios Miletus, a century later, expands on this tradition, recording that the “precious wood and holy relics” as well as the twelve baskets that fed the multitude, a newly attested relic, were deposited at the column’s base. Here, there is a variation in the legend, with these two accounts differing in where exactly on the column the relics were placed. In addition, it is quite likely that the early 8th century Parastaseis Syntomoi Chronikai (to be discussed below), imported the accounts of Socrates and Hesychios into its encyclopedic entries on the column. Thus, from these two Late Antique Byzantine authors, we might gather that there was a gradual Christian mythologization of the column during the 5th and 6th centuries that became more heavily emphasized in the early medieval period. With these sources in mind,

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240 Ibid., 21.
241 Ibid.
242 Socrates I, 17: In Bassett, The Urban Image of Late Antique Constantinople, 192.
244 Socrates I, 17: In Bassett, The Urban Image of Late Antique Constantinople, 192.
246 Ibid., 183, 242.
we can then assert that the reorientation and Christian reformation of the Byzantine imperial office in the late 6th century likely coincided with the growth in importance of the column’s Christian heritage.\textsuperscript{248}

However, after Hesychios there is no direct reference to relics associated with the column until the early 8th century.\textsuperscript{249} The chronicles of the mid 6th and early 7th century, the *Chronographia of John Malalas*\textsuperscript{250} and *The Chronicon Paschale*\textsuperscript{251} respectively, make no mention of these relics, but simply recycle older late antique narratives on the column’s role in the re-foundation of Byzantium as Constantinople into their accounts.

The *Parastaseis Syntomoi Chronikai* is one of the earliest works that might be termed “patriographic” in its coverage of the monuments and statues of Constantinople.\textsuperscript{252} Patriography, as a genre, tends to specifically focus on the monuments and landmarks of cities, in this case Constantinople.\textsuperscript{253} The *Parastaseis*, as a work of patriography, often takes a folkloric approach to the monuments of Constantinople, interpreting them as talismans and objects of suspicion and anxiety.\textsuperscript{254} Here, the authors cover a variety of structures throughout the city including Constantine’s column and other imperial statues ranging in date from Late Roman to the early 8th century with a paragraph describing the 8th century emperor Phillipicus’ image in the Zeuxippos bath.\textsuperscript{255} However, throughout the text, there is little or no attempt at organization or

\textsuperscript{248} Cameron ed. and trans., *Flavius Cresconius Corippus’ In Laudem Iustini Augusti minoris*, 1-14.
\textsuperscript{249} Ibid., 183, 242.
\textsuperscript{251} Whitby & Whitby trans., *Chronicon Paschale 284-628 AD*.
\textsuperscript{253} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{254} Ibid., 1-53.
\textsuperscript{255} Ibid., 131-135, 160-161.
“harmonization” of the material, with later passages frequently returning to topics discussed earlier.\textsuperscript{256} In addition, the language used reveals an evolving medieval Greek, perhaps exacerbated by the profound lack of access to earlier historical sources in this period.\textsuperscript{257} Therefore, the \textit{Parastaseis} is of immense importance as a source since it provides a snapshot into the evolving literary culture of the 8\textsuperscript{th} century which otherwise has meagre representation as well as for its mention of the relics at the column’s base.\textsuperscript{258}

In the \textit{Parastaseis}, Constantine and his column are symbols important both to the ceremonial landscape of the city as well as to its identity.\textsuperscript{259} Perhaps some historical details are lost due to its embroidered depiction of the column and surrounding monuments. However, for cultural history, this is most valuable in that we might glimpse a better picture of how Constantine and his foundation monument accumulated meaning in the medieval period.

This encyclopedic work refers directly to Christian relics at the column’s base in several entries throughout the text.\textsuperscript{260} Here, it mentions several objects like crosses bearing the form of the True cross, the Thieves’ crosses, the myrrh with which Christ was anointed as well as the bread baskets used by Christ to feed the five thousand.\textsuperscript{261} Here, the \textit{Parastaseis} has built on the tradition of Christian relics first noted by Socrates Scholasticus and Hesychios, whilst enlarging the corpus to include the Thieves’ crosses and Christ’s myrrh.\textsuperscript{262} This gradual embroidering of the column with an increasing number of relics and Christian “standard bearers”\textsuperscript{263} over time

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Ibid., 9.
\item Ibid., 16-17.
\item Ibid.
\item Ibid.
\item Ibid., 69, 85.
\item Ibid.
\item Ibid.
\item Ibid.
\item Ibid., 85.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
reflects a Christianization of it and of its history as well as a continued effort of placing Constantinopolitan history into a Biblical framework. For the early medieval period, the *Parastaseis* is a capstone of this, importing and fusing early accounts into its discussion of the relics as well on the ceremonies occurring in the column’s vicinity.\(^{264}\)

The *Parastaseis*’ account of the city’s re-foundation ritual, for instance, has imported a significant amount of material from earlier chronicles like that of Malalas and *The Chronicon Paschale* while also augmenting its own Christian adaptations onto it.\(^{265}\) The legend’s version in the older accounts of Malalas and *The Chronicon Paschale*\(^ {266}\) has much less of a Christian emphasis, simply focusing on the city’s acclamation along with the reverence of the emperor and populace for its’ Tyche. Here, this is still very much a religiously ambiguous ceremony with some obvious pagan remnants still intact like the veneration of the city’s deity or Tyche. By the time of the *Parastaseis*, the account of this same ceremony was modified to have an evident Christian character.\(^ {267}\) In its narration of the foundation ceremony, for instance, the *Parastaseis* interpolates new Christian aspects like that “the statue received many solemn hymns” while the populace shouted out the “Kyrie eleison” (Lord have Mercy) and then the city was proclaimed as priests were praying “O Lord set it on a favorable course…”\(^ {268}\) It is very unlikely that these additional details are relevant to the late antique period, but were added onto the original foundation story as the centuries progressed into the medieval age.\(^ {269}\) Therefore, the *Parastaseis*’

\(^{264}\) Ibid.
\(^{265}\) Ibid., 131, 242.
\(^{266}\) Whitby & Whitby, *Chronicon Paschale 284-628 AD*, 16-18.
\(^{268}\) Ibid., 131.
\(^{269}\) Ibid.
account of the foundation rituals held at the column’s base probably reflects a new medieval understanding of a late antique event.270

Here, we must inquire as to why at this time (the late 6th-early 9th centuries) the column was embroidered with new Christian associations, a distinct departure from its original ambiguous meaning. In order to properly do this, we must examine the political, religious and cultural atmosphere of the age in question.

The late 6th century was a time when the cult of Constantine the Great was returning to prominence as an effective means of imperial legitimization.271 Additionally, now more than ever, the emperor’s authority was advertised and asserted as deriving from the sacred. During the accession of Tiberius II, for instance, that emperor was acclaimed as a “New Constantine” by his predecessor Justin II.272 Similarly, the divine blessings for that emperor’s power were asserted through his coinage, depicting the first instance of the cross on the steps.273 Therefore, this period of political reorganization, would have been an ideal moment to celebrate Constantine’s column and to begin decorating it with new Christian meanings relevant to the time. Thus, it would make perfect sense at a time when emperors were connecting themselves politically with Constantine and Christ that the founder’s monument would be embroidered with Christian objects, thereby linking the current emperor back through Constantine to Christ.

The sieges and trials of the 7th and early 8th century also helped to further develop the belief in Constantinople’s mythic protectors. Specifically, the Byzantine triumph over the Avar

270 Ibid.
siege of 626, for instance, was often attributed to divine intercession of the Virgin Mary or Theotokos physically defending the walls of Constantinople.274 Here, the Chronicon Paschale, lists the Virgin’s presence as a possible reason for the Avar Khagan’s retreat when he saw a “woman in stately dress” appear on the ramparts.275 Thus, the Byzantines often handled the ordeals of this early medieval period through a reliance on objects and images thought to be imbued with sacred authority.276

At the heart of these mythic objects was the True Cross, the most important relic linked directly to the success of the empire and reflective of the Romans’ status as the “Chosen People.”277 Throughout the 7th and early 8th century, crosses including the True Cross were erected, adorned and celebrated all with the aim of emphasizing Byzantine political authority and victory (Fig. 13).278 After the Byzantine defeat of the Persians in 628, for instance, the Emperor Heraclius returned the previously stolen True Cross to its proper place in Jerusalem, venerating it and giving thanks to God for his victory.279 Similarly, Leo III erected a cross in the vicinity of the Great Palace, accompanied by depictions of the prophets, apostles and an inscription in celebration of his recent victory in the Arab siege of 717/718.280 Here, this inscription near the cross may have read, “I turn the enemy to flight and slaughter the barbarians.”281 Thus, here like

275 Ibid., 180
276 Ibid.
278 Ibid., 140-141.
281 Ibid., 140.
in the previous instance under Heraclius, the cross was revered as a way of asserting the empire’s victory and the origin of that victory coming from Christ.282

During the reign of Leo III’s son and successor, Constantine V, the capital was extensively renovated and embroidered with Christian symbols in the form of crosses and ecclesiastical structures.283 Constantine V, for instance, completely rebuilt the old Justinianic church of Hagia Eirene in the 750s, adorning it with a cross mosaic surrounded by a silver and gold background.284 In the 8th century the cross continued to be used in venues like Hagia Eirene as victory symbols likely to celebrate the numerous Byzantine victories over the Bulgarians under Constantine V.285

Similarly, it was during Constantine V’s reign that the Imperial Pharos Chapel was built, first being mentioned in 769 in reference to an imperial marriage ceremony.286 From the beginning, this chapel was famous for housing an impressive collection of relics from the Passion of Christ, including the fragments of the True Cross, the Holy Nail, the Crown of Thorns, the sponge and many others.287 Here, its relic collection increased over time until the last addition of the Stone of Lamentation by Emperor Manuel I Komnenos in the mid 12th century.288 This chapel was housed many of the prime relics of Christianity within the Great Palace campus all the while highlighting the Byzantine Emperor’s close association with Christ

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282 Ibid., 140.
283 Ibid., 212-216.
284 Ibid., 212-214.
285 Ibid., 165, 212-214.
288 Ibid., 68.
as his representative on Earth. It is also probable that during the time in which the Pharos Chapel was accumulating a relic tradition that the Column of Constantine was as well. Both of these reliquaries reflect a heightened effort to tie the Emperor to Christ. The column accomplished this by tying Christian relics to Constantine the Great’s founding monument while the Pharos achieves a similar end by serving as the primary imperial chapel within the Great Palace, exclusively for the emperor.

Additionally, it is likely that it was under Constantine V’s auspices that a chapel to Saint Constantine, his namesake, was first built at the column’s base. Cyril Mango first proposed that it was during the “dark centuries” of Byzantium that the column received this chapel at its base. However, there is no textual attestation of it until the reign of Leo VI (r. 886-912) when it is mentioned in relation to court protocol in the 10th century text of the De Cerimoniis. Therefore, although it is quite likely that the chapel to Saint Constantine was constructed during the reign of Constantine V who was a great builder, we cannot be certain. Thus, the reference to it in the De Cerimoniis provides an essential terminus ante quem for when it was built. This provides a convenient transition into the next chapter where the chapel and the growing list of relics will be discussed in more detail.

In the next chapter, we will study the column as a station along a religious and imperial triumphal route. Here, the column was celebrated as a monument of perpetual victory for the

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289 Ibid.
290 Ibid.
291 Ibid.
292 Ibid., 70.
293 Mango, “Constantine’s Porphyry Column and the Chapel of Saint Constantine, 103-110.
294 Ibid., 110.
Byzantine city and state. Additionally, the increasing number of Christian and Biblical relics associated with it meant that the column was soon linked closely with events of Biblical history.
Chapter III-The Column of Constantine as a Monument of Byzantine Triumph (9th-11th centuries)

From the early 9th century to the mid-11th century under the Macedonian emperors, the Column of Constantine featured heavily in the political and religious ritual of Constantinople. As a station within the processional landscape of the city, the column was almost as important as the Hagia Sophia, being incorporated into forty-six of the sixty-eight processions in existence by the 10th century (Fig. 14).\(^{295}\) In this setting, it played a consequential role in the synaxes or celebrations for certain prophets, apostles and saints as well as for political celebrations like deliverance from sieges or the foundation of the city on May 11th.\(^{296}\) In this chapter, we will qualify and discuss the primary sources of the 10th century relevant to the political and religious ceremonies held near the column like the Patria,\(^ {297}\) De Cerimoniis,\(^ {298}\) and The Typikon of the Great Church.\(^ {299}\) Here, we will argue that at this time the Column and Forum of Constantine played a central role in the triumphal celebrations of the Macedonian dynasty, emphasizing their divine favor and orthodoxy by placing the empire and city within a Biblical and historical schema.

\(^{298}\) Constantine, Emperor of the East. Philotheos. Ed. Anne Moffatt, Maxeme Tall, Johann Jacob Reiske, *The Book of Ceremonies with the Greek edition of the Corpus scritorum historiae Byzantinae. I & II.*
The *Patria*, also a “patriographic” work like the *Parastaseis Syntomoi Chronikai*, has preserved and expanded upon much of the *Parastaseis*’ coverage of the column. This late 10th century work, composed of a collection of notes and anecdotes concerning the topography and foundation of Constantinople, imported a wide array of works into its text. A portion of the writings of Hesychios of Miletus of the 6th century, the *Diegesis* on the construction of Hagia Sophia (also 6th century) as well as the *Parastaseis* itself, for instance, all are included in the final version. Like the *Parastaseis*, it also focuses on sculpture and monuments, discussing the supernatural occurrences surrounding them as well as political events. In addition, similar to the *Parastaseis*, the monuments it discusses often serve as prompts for praising or criticizing those who erected them. A note on a statue identified as that of the Empress Irene (r.797-802) atop a small column in the Hippodrome, for instance, serves as a springboard for briefly discussing the political events of that empress’ reign. Therefore, in many ways, it is simply an updated version of the *Parastaseis* with more extensive narration on the mythic foundation of Byzantium by King Byzas in the first book and extended notes to include monuments constructed up to the end of the 10th century. As a result, it is especially useful for the column in that we can see how the column’s meaning evolved between the 8th and 10th centuries.

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301 Berger trans., *Accounts of Medieval Constantinople, The Patria*.
302 Ibid., viii-xii.
303 Ibid., vii-xxi.
304 Ibid.
305 Ibid., 221.
306 Ibid., 1-357.
307 Ibid.
The *Patria* also updates its account to support 10th century Byzantine religious practices post Iconoclasm.\(^{308}\) One way in which it achieves this, is by adding that the icons of famous 4th century Constantinopolitan clergymen, Metrophanes, Alexander and Paul were supposedly at the column’s base.\(^{309}\) Here, the *Patria* emphasizes the current religious sentiment of icon veneration by linking it with the column.\(^{310}\) Thus, the column is given a new layer of orthodox meaning in the post Iconoclastic era.\(^{311}\) Aside from works of patriography like the *Patria*, the *De Cerimoniis* also composed in the mid 10th century, is quite valuable for understanding how the column was incorporated into medieval Byzantine political and religious ceremonies.\(^{312}\)

The *De Cerimoniis* is a dossier compiled under the auspices of Constantine VII and a later compiler after that emperor’s death.\(^{313}\) Within this text on court protocol are imbedded works from earlier generations, including 6th century entries from Paul the Patrician as well as the entirety of Leo VI’s early 10th century *Banquet Book*.\(^{314}\) Its primary purpose as a source is to preserve and record the protocol for all ceremonies carried out within and around the Great Palace.\(^{315}\) As such it is a document meant for court officials in charge of organizing state ceremonies with the chief aim of insuring that these rituals were not “neglected” or “forgotten.”\(^{316}\) In its coverage of court protocol and processions within the Great Palace and its

\(^{308}\) Ibid., 127.  
\(^{309}\) Ibid.  
\(^{310}\) Ibid.  
\(^{311}\) Ibid.  
\(^{313}\) Constantine, Emperor of the East. Philotheos. Ed. Anne Moffatt, Maxeme Tall, Johann Jacob Reiske, *The Book of Ceremonies with the Greek edition of the Corpus scriorum historiae Byzantinae*, I & II.  
\(^{314}\) Ibid., I & II.  
\(^{315}\) Ibid.  
\(^{316}\) Ibid., 3-5.
surroundings, it is quite similar to a contemporary document primarily focused on liturgical ceremony.

This near contemporary work, *The Typikon of the Great Church*, likely composed in the mid to late 10th century between 950 and 970 C.E., is made up of liturgical directions for certain feast days and urban celebrations. In addition, for each event, it contains instruction for what exact chants and readings are to be performed. Here, *The Typikon* rarely mentions the column directly, but instead frequently references the forum as a prominent intermediate station between Hagia Sophia and more distant locations like the Church of the Holy Apostles. The forum and subsequently the column are included in processions celebrating everything from saints like St. Thecla to political occasions such as those celebrating the new year on September 1st or commemorating the anniversary of sieges or natural catastrophes. Thus, the 10th century author of *The Typikon* has essentially included the forum in every celebration of note occurring in Constantinople whether it be religiously or politically oriented.

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320 Ibid., 43.
323 Ibid., 45, 79, 91, 131,
Since the cult of St. Constantine was essential to the Byzantine political image, it is of course featured heavily in both the *De Cerimoniiis* and *The Typikon of the Great Church.* Here, the forum served as a setting for religious and political events, varying from feast days to military triumphs. By celebrating Biblical and Christian figures along with historical events at the base of the column, emperors were effectively linking themselves into a long tradition of Biblical and Christian history that would therefore guarantee the victorious destiny of the Byzantine state. In addition, through these ceremonies, the Macedonian emperors were emphasizing their association with renowned figures of Biblical and Classical antiquity.

Therefore, in order to truly appreciate the extensive nature of these celebrations, we will briefly discuss some of the more important synaxes from the start of the Byzantine year on September 1st, arguing that the primary purpose of these rituals was to establish the Macedonian emperors within a Biblical framework.

The start of a Byzantine year on September 1st was celebrated with the performance of the Trisagion, a liturgical hymn as well as the *Gloria Patri*, both carried out in the Forum of Constantine at the column’s base. Here, a significant portion of this new year’s celebration took place in the forum, thus showing how crucial Constantine’s founding monument was to the Byzantine mindset. The forum also played a ubiquitous role in the frequent religious occasions.

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celebrating, archangels, saints and Old Testament prophets who were particularly associated with
the Macedonian dynasty by Basil I and his successors.\textsuperscript{327}

Here, by celebrating the most renowned figures of the Old and New Testament, the
current dynasty, the Macedonians, could then position themselves as having divine unction for
their authority just as those from the Biblical period had.\textsuperscript{328} In addition, through linking
themselves both with Constantine’s column as well as the most prominent Biblical and Christian
relics at its base, the Macedonian emperors could then assert their connection back to
Constantine and the foundation of the city as well as affirm their right to rule through “divine
mandate.”\textsuperscript{329} They most effectively advertised this notion through the multitude of processions
and ceremonies carried out at the column’s base, ranging from those honoring archangels, saints
and prophets to those celebrating Constantinopolitan history.\textsuperscript{330}

Of particular note, is the synaxe for the Archangel Michael on November 8\textsuperscript{th} in which the
emperor and his retinue processed from Hagia Sophia through the forum to Michael’s
sanctuary.\textsuperscript{331} Michael, to the early Macedonian emperors was of particular import due to his
intimate association with the affairs of Emperor Basil I.\textsuperscript{332} Basil, for instance, upon usurping the
throne, crowned himself in the Church of the Asomatoi (Archangels Michael and Gabriel)\textsuperscript{333} and

\textsuperscript{327} Mateos S.I., \textit{Le Typicon de la Grande Eglise Ms. Sainte-Croix no 40, X siècle, Introduction, Texte Critique, Traduction et Notes, Tomes I & II.}
\textsuperscript{328} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{330} Mateos S.I., \textit{Le Typicon de la Grande Eglise Ms. Sainte-Croix no 40, X siècle, Introduction, Texte Critique, Traduction et Notes, Tomes I & II.}
\textsuperscript{331} Mateos S.I., \textit{Le Typicon de la Grande Eglise Ms. Sainte-Croix no 40, X siècle, Introduction, Texte Critique, Traduction et Notes, Tome I, 94-97.}
\textsuperscript{332} Gilbert Dagron, \textit{Emperor and Priest, The Imperial Office in Byzantium}, (Cambridge University Press, 2003), 198.
\textsuperscript{333} Dagron, \textit{Emperor and Priest, The Imperial Office in Byzantium}, 198.
later in the *Vita Basilii*, Michael was said to have granted Basil a longer life so that he could see his enemy, Chrysocheir perish.\textsuperscript{334} Therefore, by including the forum in this celebration, the Macedonian House could then link themselves both to Constantine as well as to Biblical archetypes. Here, this approach also was frequently enacted for New Testament figures such as Symeon the God-Reciever.\textsuperscript{335}

Symeon was an especially important prophetic figure in the New Testament, having been prophesied by the Holy Spirit that he would not die until meeting the new born Christ.\textsuperscript{336} The feast of Hypapante or feast of the meeting on February 2nd celebrated this event with a procession from Hagia Sophia through the forum to the Blachernai accompanied by prayers and the *Gloria Patri*.\textsuperscript{337} This synaxe is significant because like many of the other feast days of its kind, it directly links Constantinople and its founding monument, the forum, back to episodes from the life of Christ. Through the celebration of Symeon’s prophecy and interaction with Christ, the emperor could then assert his own role as one destined to interact with God as well.\textsuperscript{338}

The Macedonian emperors were especially adroit in applying Old and New Testament models to their dynasty. They enacted this especially well with the 9\textsuperscript{th} century B.C.E. Old Testament prophet, Elijah, who preached against the worship of the Canaanite god Baal and was said also to have ascended to Heaven alive in a whirlwind.\textsuperscript{339} In the Book of Malachi, he was said to return to announce the coming of the Messiah\textsuperscript{340} and also figured prominently in the

\textsuperscript{334} Ibid., 194.  
\textsuperscript{336} Luke 2:25-34.  
\textsuperscript{338} Luke 2:25-34.  
\textsuperscript{339} 2 Kings 2:1.  
\textsuperscript{340} Malachi 4:5.
Gospels during the Transfiguration of Christ, appearing alongside Moses while Christ was elevated to Heaven.\textsuperscript{341} Therefore, due to his impressive repertoire of accomplishments and qualities, it would be only natural that Elijah would be included in Basil’s dynastic propaganda scheme. In a miniature from the Paris gr. 510, for instance, Basil is pictured with Elijah who hands him Constantine’s labarum, a symbol of imperial and Constantinian authority.\textsuperscript{342} Similarly, the \textit{Vita Basilii} attests a related instance in which the Prophet Elijah appears to Basil’s mother prophesizing that one day “God will hand over the scepter of the Roman empire to your beloved son…”\textsuperscript{343} Here, we can see examples of both visual and textual attestations to the Emperor Basil’s affinity for the prophet.

Basil further expressed his affection for this Old Testament prophet by reintroducing the Feast of Elijah into Constantinople, commemorating the prophet’s elevation to Heaven still alive. During this feast day on July 20\textsuperscript{th}, the procession went from Hagia Sophia through the Forum and ending at the Nea Ekklesia in the Great Palace.\textsuperscript{344} This church, erected by Basil, contained a chapel to St. Elijah as well as that prophet’s sheepskin coat.\textsuperscript{345} Here, this ritual intrinsically linked Constantine’s forum along with one of the most important Old Testament prophets to the Macedonian dynasty. Additionally, it also connected through procession, the New Testament relics at the column’s base with those associated with the Prophet Elijah at the Nea Ekklesia.

\textsuperscript{341} Matthew 17:3; Mark 9:4; Luke 9:30.
\textsuperscript{343} \textit{Vita Basilii} in Brubaker, \textit{Vision and Meaning in Ninth-Century Byzantium, Image as Exegesis in the Homilies of Gregory of Nazianzus}, 159.
\textsuperscript{345} Brubaker, \textit{Vision and Meaning in Ninth-Century Byzantium, Image as Exegesis in the Homilies of Gregory of Nazianzus}, 159.
Thus, the founding column of Constantine and subsequently Constantinople became situated within a Biblical milieu.

The Column of Constantine, however, was not only used to celebrate famous figures from Biblical history, but also to commemorate local Constantinopolitan holy figures like the 4th century bishops Metrophanes (306-314), Alexander (314-337) and Paul (337-339, 341-342, 346-351). Here, these bishops figured prominently in the struggle against Arianism in favor of Orthodoxy with Bishop Alexander himself personally attending the First Council of Nicea (May 20th-June 16th 325) where this heresy was condemned. Therefore, it is no surprise that during the middle Byzantine period icons of these early Constantinopolitan saints would be featured prominently at the base of the column, thereby tying the origins of Orthodoxy with the ruling Macedonian house. Also, it is probable that the late antique condemnation of the great heresy of Arianism could then be linked to more relevant middle Byzantine heresies like that of the Paulicians, significant foes of the Emperor Basil I. Thus, by including these icons at the column’s base, the Macedonian emperors could then connect themselves with both orthodoxy and early Byzantine religious history.

Aside from serving as a crucial venue for the celebration of both Biblical and Constantinopolitan religious history, the Forum of Constantine also functioned as an essential space for the celebration of the history of Constantinople itself. Here, annual ceremonies were held memorializing the city’s foundation on May 11th 330 as well as other observances

347 Ibid., 126-127.
348 Ibid.
intended to commemorate the anniversaries of enemy sieges\textsuperscript{351} and earthquakes\textsuperscript{352} During the city’s birthday celebration, the patriarch and his retinue processed from the Hagia Sophia to the forum where a series of prayers were recited in honor of the Theotokos and Christ.\textsuperscript{353} For this occasion, the group recited the \textit{Gloria Patri} as well as chanting “Deliver our city, ‘O Lord…”, linking the city’s very beginning into a Biblical tradition.\textsuperscript{354} Through this invocation of Christ, the city’s destiny was then intrinsically connected with Christ as the chosen city.\textsuperscript{355} This indeed was the most effective form of legitimization in that it expressed the city and empire’s destiny to rule as the prime Christian state for eternity.

Constantinople’s destiny to rule on forever as the Christian city was further glorified by the celebration at the forum of its survival in the midst of ominous enemy invasions and natural catastrophes. The populace, for instance, commemorated the Avar siege of June 5\textsuperscript{th} 617 under Heraclius, the Arab blockade and siege of June 25\textsuperscript{th} 677 under Constantine IV as well as the Arab siege which lasted from August 15\textsuperscript{th} 717 to August 15\textsuperscript{th} 718 during the reign of Leo III.\textsuperscript{356} By celebrating Constantinople’s survival in the face of menacing enemy invasions through time, the emperor and patriarch could further enunciate both the permanence of the Byzantine imperial office and eternity of their city.\textsuperscript{357} Similarly, by memorializing the occurrence of certain earthquakes like the one on October 26\textsuperscript{th} 740, the city’s eternal survival was further highlighted.\textsuperscript{358} Thus, through the celebration of these events, the column became deeply

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Ibid., 306-307, 320-321, 372-375.
\item Ibid., 78-80, 130-132, 248-249.
\item Ibid., 286-289.
\item Ibid.
\item Ibid.
\item Ibid., 306-307, 320-321, 372-375.
\item Ibid.
\item Ibid., 78-80.
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connected with Constantinopolitan history, serving as a microcosm for the city as a whole. Since the column was the founding and central monument of Constantinople, it is no wonder that many of the ceremonies celebrating the city’s history would be held there.

The column, aside from representing the city, also symbolized the victory and permanence of the Byzantine state in the middle Byzantine era. As a result, it was often incorporated into imperial acclamations and military triumphs under both the Amorian and Macedonian emperors. Here, the forum was featured in the processions of the Amorian Emperor Theophilus with the later Macedonian emperors adopting their protocol. During the triumph of the Emperor Theophilus in 831 over Tarsus, for instance, the emperor processed bedecked in a golden surcoat and tiara from the Golden Gate along the Mese through the forum as far as the Milion. Here, by going through the forum, the emperor’s present victory would certainly be linked into the broader tradition of Byzantine political and military power. Similarly, Theophilus further emphasized his success in reviving the Byzantine state by issuing a new copper follis depicting the emperor wearing the traditional tufa crown with an inscription, stating, “You conquer, ‘O Augustus Theophilus.” Here, Theophilus’ ceremonial policy was continued and adapted by the first Macedonian emperor, Basil, who even used the same gold surcoat as Theophilus for his triumph in 878. Therefore, the Macedonians built upon a layer of ceremonial protocol already in widespread use by the Amorians.

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360 Ibid., 503-506.
361 Michael McCormick, *Eternal Victory: Triumphal Rulership in Late Antiquity, Byzantium and the Early Medieval West*, 149.
Under the Macedonian emperors, the Forum and Column continued to be used as a major intermediate station along the triumphal route of the Mese, going from the Golden Gate to Hagia Sophia or the Great Palace. Here, through their association with the forum and column, the Macedonian emperors could inextricably link themselves to the triumph of Christ, Constantine and Constantinople. Therefore, by having connected themselves with the sacred history of both Christ and Constantine, the Macedonian emperors could then assert a new layer of meaning onto the column, one reflective of that dynasty’s victorious status.

The triumphs carried out by Emperor Basil I, the founder of the Macedonian dynasty, as well as those under his grandson, Constantine VII, perfectly illustrate the forum as a space meant to convey Macedonian victory.363 During Basil’s triumph over the Paulician sect and their capital of Tephrike in 878, for instance, the Eparch of the city decorated the Mese from the Golden Gate to the Chalke, with “laurel, rosemary, myrtle and other flowers,” preparing it for the emperor’s triumphant return.364 In this procession, the emperor and his retinue marched from the outskirts through the Golden Gate to the Forum of Constantine where Emperor Basil and his son Constantine dismounted to receive the patriarch’s religious procession at the Church of the Most Holy Theotokos.365 Afterwards, they then marched along the Mese to Hagia Sophia with labara or military standards and the “blessed great bejeweled cross” displayed in front.366 Here, by enacting a major part of his military triumph at the forum, Basil could then effectively advertise his victory through an interplay of both the column and its relics. In addition, the bejeweled cross

363 Ibid., 498-503, 607-612.
364 Ibid., 499.
365 Ibid., 501-503.
366 Ibid.
at the head of procession would have further emphasized the emperor’s divinely elected status and the Christian empire’s destiny to rule the world.\textsuperscript{367} 

Similarly, during a groundbreaking victory against the Arab emirate of Aleppo in 956 C.E., the forum was featured heavily in a triumph celebrating this success.\textsuperscript{368} For this event, the emperor’s cortege processed from the Great Palace to the forum where the emperor and patriarch ascended the stairs at the column’s pedestal.\textsuperscript{369} Here, the patriarch entered the chapel of St. Constantine at the column’s base while the emperor stood outside by the upraised cross near the chapel.\textsuperscript{370} Shortly following this, the Arab prisoners were then led supplicant before the emperor Constantine VII where the most distinguished prisoner, Abu’l’Asa ir, was ritually trampled by the emperor.\textsuperscript{371} During this celebration, a wide array of Biblical hymns were recited including Moses’ Victory Canticle,\textsuperscript{372} celebrating the delivery from Egypt as well as Psalms 76, 77, 14 and 15.\textsuperscript{373} These Old Testament victory songs were then cleverly followed by acclamations from the populace, praising the emperor as “divinely appointed” and “victorious.”\textsuperscript{374} 

Here, by reciting Moses’ Victory Canticle in relation to a triumph over a prominent Arab leader, the Byzantine empire and its capital city were then interjected within a Biblical framework.\textsuperscript{375} Thus, the Byzantine emperor himself became a New Moses and the Byzantines

\textsuperscript{367} Ibid. 
\textsuperscript{368} Ibid., 607-612. 
\textsuperscript{369} Ibid., 608-612. 
\textsuperscript{370} Ibid., 609. 
\textsuperscript{371} Ibid., 609-610. 
\textsuperscript{372} Exodus 15:1-16. 
\textsuperscript{373} Michael McCormick, \textit{Eternal Victory: Triumphal Rulership in Late Antiquity, Byzantium and the Early Medieval West}, (Cambridge University Press, 1990), 162-163. 
\textsuperscript{375} Ibid.
the chosen people of a New Israel while the Arab Emir was contrastingly villainized as a New Pharaoh.\textsuperscript{376} In this ceremony, through the interplay of column’s relics and Biblical hymns occurring at the Forum and Column of Constantine, the Byzantines asserted their right to rule as the Christian authority over their empire and the Arab caliphate.\textsuperscript{377}

This triumph, taking place primarily within the confines of the forum and column of Constantine, aimed to link the success of the Macedonian dynasty against the Arab emirate into a much more glorious triumphant tradition that could be traced back through Constantine to Biblical history.\textsuperscript{378} By reciting Moses’ Victory Canticle\textsuperscript{379} as well as a selection of Psalms, this 10\textsuperscript{th} century Byzantine victory could then be placed and understood within a Biblical framework. Additionally, imperial acclamations performed during this ceremony, encouraging the Son of God to reign with the ruler, further associated the emperor’s close relationship with Christ.\textsuperscript{380}

Thus, from this sound example, we can then see how through the use of the column, the forum and associated relics, the Macedonian emperors were able to then tie their triumph in with the previous victories of Constantinople, of Constantine the Great and even as far back as Biblical victories like those of Christ and Moses.\textsuperscript{381}

Through its use as a ceremonial station, the Column of Constantine was successfully integrated into middle Byzantine imperial and religious ritual, expressing Byzantium’s destiny and right to rule as the Christian state. Here, the Macedonian emperors ingeniously standardized

\textsuperscript{376} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{377} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{378} Ibid., 607-612.
\textsuperscript{379} Exodus 15:1-16.
\textsuperscript{380} Constantine, Emperor of the East. Philotheos. Ed. Anne Moffatt, Maxeme Tall, Johann Jacob Reiske, The Book of Ceremonies with the Greek edition of the Corpus scriptorum historiae Byzantinae, I & II., 612.
\textsuperscript{381} Ibid., 607-613.
a large portion of state political and religious ceremonies to take place at the column’s base. By doing this, they could then effectively link themselves with Biblical history, Constantinopolitan history and the victory of Constantine the Great himself. Whilst these Macedonian developments have been considered the apogee of the column’s integration with the ceremonial public life of the city, they would soon be subject to innovation under a new ruling house.
Chapter IV - The Column of Constantine during the Komnenoi and Angeloi Dynasties (mid-11th-1204 C.E.)

After the extinction of the Macedonian house in 1056 C.E., there followed a period of internal turmoil and unrest with a series of emperors reigning briefly only to be overthrown. However, this time of decline and disorganization was soon countered with the rise of Alexios I Komnenos who initiated his own Komnenoi dynasty in 1081 C.E. and enacted reforms to strengthen the weakened Byzantine political system.382 Here, Alexios dramatically reorganized the Byzantine state to favor his own family above state bureaucratic officials that had held the highest offices for centuries.383 In addition, Alexios’ reign and the reign of his successors, John II and Manuel I, were marked by the incursion of western powers embarking on crusades as well as the conquest of central Asia Minor by the Seljuk Turks.384 With this newfound political situation, the Byzantine empire faced western adversaries and rivals it had not known in the previous centuries.385 As a result of this, the new dynasty found it necessary to reorganize both the imperial image and ceremonial landscape of Constantinople which in turn affected the role played by the Column and Forum of Constantine.

In this chapter, we will discuss the extent to which the Komnenoi and Angeloi emperors continued the column’s ceremonies codified by the Macedonians and what changes occurred in its use and function under their rule. Through this discussion, we will analyze the significance of the renovations enacted upon the column during the reign of Manuel I and the significance of

382 Elizabeth Michelle Rolston, “The Imperial Character: Alexius I Comnenus and the Byzantine Ideal of Emperorship,” (B.A., University of Canterbury, 2016), 11.
383 Rolston, “The Imperial Character: Alexius I Comnenus and the Byzantine Ideal of Emperorship,” 11.
385 Magdalino, The Empire of Manuel I Komnenos 1143-1180, 1.
that emperor’s imprint on the monument.\textsuperscript{386} In addition, it will also be necessary to briefly discuss the Komnenoi building program at Constantinople and its connection with the Column of Constantine. Here, for this chapter, we will reference primary historiographical sources such as \textit{The Alexiad} of Anna Komnena,\textsuperscript{387} John Kinnamos’ \textit{Deeds of John and Manuel Komnenos}\textsuperscript{388} as well as Nicetas Choniates’ \textit{Annals}.\textsuperscript{389}

By the accession of the first Komnenoi Emperor Alexios’ rise to power (r. 1081-1118), the ideals linked to the imperial office had evolved significantly to emphasize much more heavily the importance of military prowess and family. The 9\textsuperscript{th} century \textit{Hortatory Chapters} of the Emperor Basil I, for instance, encouraged an emperor to exhibit principles such as generosity, philanthropy and peacemaking with little if any emphasis on warfare.\textsuperscript{390} However, by the height of Komnenoi rule in the mid-12\textsuperscript{th} century, the emperor was frequently eulogized as toiling with his soldiers and living “night and day in his armor.”\textsuperscript{391} Additionally, the antique tradition of raising the emperor on his shield was revived during this time, thereby further expressing the importance of the emperor’s relationship with his troops.\textsuperscript{392} However, although the imperial office was refashioned by the Komnenoi, the importance of Constantinian and Biblical models to imperial propaganda did not change. The Komnenoi expressed their imperial image through a variety of building projects as well as imperial and ecclesiastical ceremony, all

\textsuperscript{386} Ousterhout, “The life and afterlife of Constantine’s Column,” 314-315.
\textsuperscript{387} E.R.A. Sewter, \textit{The Alexiad of Anna Komnene}, (Penguin Classics, 2003), 1-584.
\textsuperscript{389} Harry J. Magoulias, \textit{O City of Byzantium, Annals of Niketas Choniates}, (Wayne State University Press Detroit, 1984), 1-441.
\textsuperscript{390} \textit{Hortatory Chapters} in A.P. Kazhdan & Anne Wharton Epstein, \textit{Change in Byzantine Culture in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries}, (University of California Press, 1985), 111.
\textsuperscript{391} Kazhdan & Epstein, \textit{Change in Byzantine Culture in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries}, 113.
\textsuperscript{392} Ibid., 113.
linking the current emperors to heroic figures of the past. The locations of these building projects significantly affected the traditional Byzantine triumphal route through the capital.

It is surprising, therefore that for nearly a century since the death of the last Macedonian ruler that no imperial triumphs were celebrated at Constantinople.\textsuperscript{393} Probably due to his traumatic entry into Constantinople at the start of his reign in 1081 C.E. and the immense destruction it caused, Alexios never held any sort of military or imperial triumph for the entirety of his reign.\textsuperscript{394} This gap in time could have created an atmosphere suitable for reinventing and renovating some of the older Macedonian imperial ceremonies. Alexios and his successor, John II, did exactly this, deciding to completely re-orient the ceremonial route for the celebration of his re-conquest of Kastamon in 1133 C.E to favor the eastern sector of the city, thereby bypassing the Forum and Column of Constantine entirely.\textsuperscript{395} This revision of the imperial avenue, initiated by John II and continued by Manuel, meant that the column as a prime venue for military and political events had perhaps reduced in importance by this time. Thus, this triumphal route was a way for emperors to emphasize the new Komnenian neighborhoods of the city with their foundations like the Blachernai Palace, Christ Pantocrator Monastery and the Orphanage rebuilt by Alexios I.

The column experienced significant damages in the reign of Alexios I when the statue of Constantine was toppled in a storm in 1105 C.E. This event eventually prompted the renovation and re-embellishment of the column at some point during the reign of Manuel I (1143-1180), although the exact date of its renovation is unknown.\textsuperscript{396} Here, we must inquire as to why the

\textsuperscript{393} Magdalino, \textit{The Empire of Manuel Komnenos 1143-1180}, 240.
\textsuperscript{394} Magdalino, \textit{The Empire of Manuel I Komnenos 1143-1180}, 240.
\textsuperscript{395} Ibid., 240-241.
\textsuperscript{396} R. Ousterhout, “The life and afterlife of Constantine’s Column,” 314-315.
column was not repaired earlier under either Alexios or his son, John II. Perhaps both of these emperors were too preoccupied by their own military campaigns and other public works to pay any attention to the column. Nonetheless, the column like the imperial office itself, was eventually refurbished and reoriented under the auspices of the third Komnenian emperor, Manuel I.397

The fact that Manuel spent what was probably a significant amount of energy and resources repairing the column’s upper shaft, proves that it was still central to the emperor’s imperial image and political ideology (Fig. 15,16 & 17).398 Additionally, through his restoration of the column, Manuel could further highlight his linkage with Christ and Constantine as a divinely ordained and legitimate emperor as well as fulfill his role as a great builder and leader of Christendom.399 In repairing the column, Manuel built up the top capital with stonework, and an inscription topped by a monumental bronze cross, replacing the original bronze statue which was probably destroyed in its fall (Fig. 18).400 This inscription still extant, reads, “The entire work which time had damaged was renewed by the pious emperor Manuel.”401 Thus, this notion of renewal as advertised on this inscription was still very much relevant during the Komnenian epoch which not only saw the renewal and renovation of the column, but also of imperial political ideology and ceremonial in general.402

The emperor Manuel I, masterfully displayed his authority to his guest the Sultan Kılıç Arslan II in 1161 C.E. through dramatic court appearances as well as processions to the major

397 Ibid.,” 314-315.
398 Ibid.
401 Ibid., 314.
402 Ibid.
landmarks of the city.\textsuperscript{403} For his reception for this sultan, for instance, Manuel appeared bedecked in a variety of jewels atop a golden elevated throne in his palace hall and also went with the sultan from the acropolis Komnenoi region of the city to Hagia Sophia, flaunting the prominent Constantinopolitan landmarks throughout.\textsuperscript{404} However, although there is no direct textual attestation of it, it would have been difficult for Manuel to avoid showing off the foundation monument of Constantinople, the column of Constantine, still a key piece of dynastic propaganda linking the Komnenoi house to Constantine the Great and Christ.

This new Komnenoi dynastic ideology was not only emphasized through Manuel’s renovation of the column but also through their family mausoleum, in close proximity to Constantine’s Holy Apostles.\textsuperscript{405} This foundation, the Christ Pantocrator Monastery, initially erected by John II and his wife between 1118 and 1124, connected the deceased Komnenoi emperors directly to the most important figures of Biblical history by surrounding their tombs with foundations dedicated to Christ Pantocrator (to the south) and the Virgin Eleousa (to the north) as well as images of Biblical figures throughout.\textsuperscript{406} On the monastery’s \textit{opus sectile floor}, for instance, the Biblical hero Samson is featured heavily, thereby further promoting the dynasty’s martial ideals and their notion of the “valiant emperor.”\textsuperscript{407} Samson, as a Biblical hero, was specifically known for his impressive strength and even functioned as an anti-type for Christ, thereby serving as another way the emperor could link himself with to Christ.\textsuperscript{408}

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\bibitem{Magdalino} Magdalino, \textit{The Empire of Manuel Komnennos 1143-1180}, 240-241.
\bibitem{Kinnamos} Kinnamos, \textit{The Deeds of John and Manuel Komnenos}, 156-158.
\bibitem{Congdon} Congdon, “Imperial Commemoration and ritual in the \textit{typikon} of the monastery of Christ Pantocrator,” 173-174.
\bibitem{Ibid.} Ibid., 173-174.
\bibitem{Ousterhout} Ousterhout, “Architecture, art and Komnenian ideology at the Pantokrator Monastery,” 146.
\bibitem{Judges} Judges 14:19, Judges 16:3, Judges 16:31.
\end{thebibliography}
similar vein, because of the mausoleum’s proximity to the Holy Apostles, the Komnenoi family could then easily link themselves topographically to Constantine’s mausoleum.409

Manuel I, the third Komnenian emperor, further linked himself both to Christ and Constantine through his translation of the relic of the Stone of Unction, the stone on which Christ’s body was held to have been washed after the crucifixion. Manuel ceremonially translated this relic to Constantinople by carrying it on his shoulders from the Boukoleon harbor to the Church of the Pharos in the Great Palace.410 In addition, after his death the stone played an integral role in the ceremonial at Manuel I’s tomb in the Pantocrator Monastery.411 Here, through proximity to his sarcophagus, the Stone of Unction directly linked Manuel’s life and death with the Passion and Crucifixion of Christ.412 In addition, Manuel’s association with the crucified Christ is further accented by a funeral oration composed by Gregory Antiochus which directly relates Manuel’s life and death with that of Christ on the cross.413 Thus, by renovating the column of Constantine and translating one of the key relics of the Passion, Manuel could then directly link himself to Constantine and emphasize his name through association as the “Christ Named” emperor (Fig. 19).414

However, although Manuel was notable for his impressive promotion of Komnenoi political and religious ideals, the conclusion of his reign set the stage for the eventual Latin conquest of Constantinople in 1204.415 The reign of his son and successor, Alexios II, for

410 Magoulias, O City of Byzantium, Annals of Niketas Choniates, 125.
414 Kazhdan & Franklin, Studies on Byzantine Literature of the Eleventh & Twelfth Centuries, 100.
415 Magdalino, The Empire of Manuel Komnenos, 489-493.
instance, quickly devolved into internal disarray with two main conflicting political factions.\textsuperscript{416} The Forum and Column of Constantine even played a significant part in this discord, serving as the prime setting of a riot in 1181 which set imperial troops and supporters of Manuel’s heir, Alexios II, against those backing his mother and interloper Alexios the protosebastos.\textsuperscript{417} During this altercation, priests supporting Alexios II paraded crosses and icons of Christ around the forum in protest against those forsaking the emperor.\textsuperscript{418} This soon devolved into all out fighting with the forum and Augusteon serving as major venues.\textsuperscript{419} Thus, even in the late 12\textsuperscript{th} century the column and forum still functioned as a major space for both political and religious gatherings and would continue to serve as a political space under the Angeloi emperors (1185-1204 C.E.).\textsuperscript{420}

The tenure of the Angeloi dynasty is often described as a period of extreme decline with the Byzantines suffering a series of significant defeats by the Latins and Bulgarians. Due to these significant misfortunes and encroaching foreign powers, the Byzantine populace often reacted with fear throughout the streets and public spaces of Constantinople.\textsuperscript{421} The Forum of Constantine was one such place in which they expressed their anxieties and doubts about Byzantine leadership.\textsuperscript{422} Here, they destroyed a classical bronze statue of Athena, standing on a pedestal in the Forum of Constantine, because they thought that it was beckoning the Latins to enter the city.\textsuperscript{423} Although this perhaps seems irrational by modern standards, this would have

\textsuperscript{416} Magoulias, \textit{O City of Byzantium, Annals of Niketas Choniates}, 132-134.  
\textsuperscript{417} Ibid., 132-134.  
\textsuperscript{418} Ibid., 132.  
\textsuperscript{419} Ibid., 132-134.  
\textsuperscript{420} Ibid.  
\textsuperscript{421} Magoulias, \textit{O City of Byzantium, Annals of Niketas Choniates}, 305-306.  
\textsuperscript{422} Ibid., 305-306.  
\textsuperscript{423} Ibid.
been a reasonable reaction of the Byzantine populace in a time when their place in the world was quickly collapsing.

Between the years of 1204 and 1261 C.E. under Latin rule, it seems likely that there was a major gap in the column’s use as there is no textual evidence that it continued to function under the Latin emperors. Additionally, because of the extreme deterioration to the city in this period due to crusaders destroying and looting large parts of it as well as fires and earthquakes contributing to this damage also, it is unlikely that the later Angeloi emperors or their Latin successors would have paid attention to the column. Thus, because of this break in the column’s ceremonial and break in its veneration we must now inquire as to the extent at which the Palaiologan (1261-1453 C.E.) emperors revived this tradition once they reconquered the city.


Chapter V-The Column of Constantine as a Monument of Palaiologan Revival and Prophecy
(13th-15th Centuries)

Upon Michael VIII Palaiologos’ re-conquest and entry into the city on August 15th 1261 which followed the traditional route to Hagia Sophia through the Forum of Constantine, Constantinople was but a remnant of its former self.426 The city had undergone an immense amount of destruction due to the fires of July 17, 1203, August 19-20 1203 and a third one on April 12th, 1204, causing significant damage to the central and eastern parts of the city where the forum and mese were.427 Additionally, the bankrupted Latin emperors often simply did not have the financial wherewithal needed to maintain the city’s many monasteries, churches and monuments, thereby dooming them to further decrepitude.428 Therefore, Michael VIII was left with the arduous task of reviving and rejuvenating a city with many of its prominent monuments in ruin.429 However, here, he was able to invent his own distinct Palaiologan imperial image and lineage, asserting legitimacy through connections with the previous Komnenoi, Doukoi and Angeloi dynasties while at the same time bestowing upon himself the title “New Constantine.”430

In this chapter, we will examine Michael VIII’s revival and renovation of Byzantine imperial ceremony, inquiring into the role the forum and column of Constantine and its relics played in this process of Palaiologan legitimization. Additionally, by referencing the accounts of Russian travelers, we will analyze the significance of the addition of new Old Testament objects to the relic tradition at the column’s base during this time and will place them within the context

426 Cecily J. Hilsdale, Byzantine Art and Diplomacy in an Age of Decline, (Cambridge University Press, 2014), 27.
428 Ibid., 101-102.
429 Hilsdale, Byzantine Art and Diplomacy in an Age of Decline, 91-92.
430 Ibid., 99.
of later Byzantium and its declining empire.431 Going along with this decline, we will inquire into the extent that ceremonies and celebrations were continued to be held at the column’s base during the Palaiologan era. Additionally, after discussing the monument within this Palaiologan epoch, it will be necessary to consider the column’s as a monument associated with Byzantium’s future. Here, we will reference the Andreas Salos Apocalypse432 as well as the Oracles of Leo the Wise and Tale of the True Emperor,433 contending that these works functioned as a method for Byzantines to rationalize their declining place in the world. However, even during the Palaiologan dynasty, an era of decline, many of the old Roman traditions were revived as an antiquarian approach to reasserting Byzantium’s place in the world.

As Michael arrived at the outskirts of Constantinople in 1261, he elected to revive the old Constantinopolitan ceremonial route which went from the Golden Gate through the forum to Hagia Sophia.434 By doing this, he could directly link himself back to the glorious emperors of Byzantium’s late antique and middle Byzantine past, an era when the empire was a formidable adversary in the Mediterranean world. Michael’s ceremonial entry in 1261, which most certainly passed by the column, emphasized the emperor’s humility and thanksgiving to God and the Virgin for successfully delivering the city back into Byzantine hands.435 In describing this occasion, George Akropolites notes that the mood was “more reverential to God than imperial,” thereby further elucidating the empire’s humbled status at this time.436

433 Brokkar, The Oracles of the Most Wise Emperor Leo & The Tale of the True Emperor, 1-122.
434 Hilsdale, Byzantine Art and Diplomacy in an Age of Decline, 27.
435 Ibid.
436 Akropolites in Hilsdale, Byzantine Art and Diplomacy in an Age of Decline, 28.
Michael VIII further attributed his re-conquest of the city and political victory to divine intercession and celebrated this success by erecting a monumental column sometime between 1261 C.E. and 1280 C.E.\textsuperscript{437} This monument thus emphasized divine approval for Michael’s reign as well as link him personally with Constantine and his initial foundation column.\textsuperscript{438} In addition, atop the column was a monumental bronze statue of Michael offering a model of Constantinople to his namesake the archangel Michael (Fig. 20).\textsuperscript{439} Here, Michael was directly imitating the posture of Constantine in the vestibule mosaic of Hagia Sophia where that emperor is portrayed as offering a model of the city to the Virgin and child (Fig. 21). Thus, through iconographic parallels, Michael could effectively assert his status as a “New Constantine.”\textsuperscript{440} Moreover, the degree of political success of this column is further emphasized by the account of a Russian traveler who mistakes the statue of Michael VIII atop the column as being that of Constantine himself.\textsuperscript{441}

In addition, due to the heinous beginnings of his reign, with the deposition and blinding of John IV Laskaris in 1261, it was necessary for Michael, a usurper, to assert his legitimacy in a wide array of media by advertising the divine sanction for his rule as well as to link himself with the pre-conquest dynasties like the Doukai, Angeloi, Komnenoi and ultimately back to Constantine.\textsuperscript{442} Here, his monumental column, set up directly in front of the Holy Apostles, established Michael as a re-founder of Constantinople and inevitably a “New Constantine.”\textsuperscript{443} In

\textsuperscript{437} Hilsdale, \textit{Byzantine Art and Diplomacy in an Age of Decline}, 145.
\textsuperscript{438} Ibid., 109-129.
\textsuperscript{439} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{440} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{441} Majeska, \textit{Russian Travelers to Constantinople in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries}, 184-186, 306.
\textsuperscript{442} Ibid., 99.
\textsuperscript{443} Ibid.
addition, it was the first column to be erected in Constantinople since the early 7th century. Thus, after witnessing Constantine’s impressive foundation monument, it is likely that Michael found inspiration to build this monument celebrating both his reign and re-foundation of Constantinople like Constantine himself in the 4th century.

The enduring significance of the Column of Constantine is not only attested by Michael’s column, likely inspired by it, but also by the fact that political ceremonies continued to be held at the Column of Constantine well into the 14th century and probably until the conquest of the city in 1453. However, by the composition of the mid 14th century ceremonial text of Pseudo-Kodinos, likely composed at least partially under the auspices of the Emperor John VI Kantakouzenos, the ceremonial held at the column had dwindled to only one annual occasion celebrating the start of the liturgical year on September 1.

Here, this extreme dearth in ceremonies carried out at the column’s base can likely be attributed to the last years of the 12th century and the Latin interlude, a period when large portions of Constantinople were left to neglect and decay. Because of the decrepit state of the forum by this time, this area of the city was simply known as “the Porphyry Column” with the forum itself simply being repurposed as a vineyard.

However, although the Forum of Constantine, no longer maintained its original design or function, the Column of Constantine in the Palaiologan era endured in its Komnenian renovated form. This is specifically attested by Christopher Buondelmonte’s 15th century map which depicts many of the landmarks of Constantinople including the Column of Michael VIII and the

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446 Ibid., 195.
Column of Constantine with its monumental cross still intact (Fig. 22). Because of this, the Column of Constantine endured as an attraction for those traveling to Constantinople.

Russian travelers like Stephen of Novgorod (1348-1349 C.E.), Russian Anonymous (1389-1391) and Zosima the Deacon (1419-1422) all describe it and attest to new Old Testament objects added to the relic tradition at the column’s base since the 10th century.\footnote{Majeska, \textit{Russian Travelers to Constantinople in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries}, 35, 145, 185, 260-263.} All three of these narratives to some extent describe the baskets from the multiplication of loaves as well as a new relic, Noah’s axe, that was thought to be interred inside the column.\footnote{Ibid., 35, 145, 185, 260-263.} In addition, interestingly enough, Zosima the Deacon is the only visitor to claim that Moses’ rock was inside the column as well.\footnote{Ibid., 185, 260-263.} Here, we must inquire as to why these relics were thought to be there at this particular time (14th-15th centuries) and what pertinence they had to the political context of later Byzantium.\footnote{Ibid.}

In his study on the Russian travelers’ accounts, George P. Majeska asserts that it was quite probable that the old relics of the Passion at the column’s base like the fragments of the True Cross and Thieves’ crosses were exported to the West during the Latin rule (1204 C.E.-1261 C.E.).\footnote{Ibid., 263.} Therefore, with the Palaiologan re-conquest and revival of the city in 1261 C.E., it would have been necessary for the new Byzantine emperor to renew the relic tradition at the column’s base just as it was necessary for him to repair the city’s ecclesiastical and monastic foundations and walls.\footnote{Ibid., 263.} Thus, the new additions of relics at the column’s base like Noah’s axe

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\begin{itemize}
\item \footnote{Majeska, \textit{Russian Travelers to Constantinople in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries}, 35, 145, 185, 260-263.}
\item \footnote{Ibid., 35, 145, 185, 260-263.}
\item \footnote{Ibid., 185, 260-263.}
\item \footnote{Ibid.}
\item \footnote{Ibid., 263.}
\item \footnote{Ibid.}
\end{itemize}
and Moses’ rock were a Palaiologan effort to replace the lost relics while at the same time expressing a distinctly late Byzantine political attitude.

In the Old Testament, both Noah’s axe and Moses’ rock were employed by these figures with the aid of God as objects of salvation to rescue God’s chosen people from impending doom. With the help of his axe, for instance, Noah built an ark which would save his family and animals from drowning in a flood while Moses, on the other hand, struck a rock to provide water for the children of Israel in an arid desert. Thus, both these objects would have had specific pertinence to the Byzantine empire in the Palaiologan epoch, most certainly looking to divine aid and salvation for a chosen people in a time when they were encroached on all sides by eastern European powers and the Ottoman Turks. These dire political realities at times compelled Byzantines to look to the future for a better age in which the empire would return to its original position of authority in the world.

During the years leading up to the collapse of the Byzantine Empire and especially after its complete conquest by the Ottoman Turks in 1453, the prophetic tradition grew in importance as a way for Byzantines and post-Byzantines to look to the distant future with hope for the re-establishment of an orthodox empire. Works like The Andreas Salos Apocalypse, the Oracles of Leo the Wise and Tale of the True Emperor fulfilled this need in a period when all previous Byzantine lands were being conquered and the very fate of orthodoxy itself appeared dismal. Both sources envision significant events occurring at the forum and base of the column of Constantine.

456 Brokkar, The Oracles of the Most Wise Emperor Leo & The Tale of the True Emperor, 1-122.
The Andreas Salos Apocalypse, an eschatological text written originally in the 10th century but with a manuscript tradition continuing through the 14th century, for instance, details the future events of the apocalypse and includes a major scene at the Column of Constantine.\textsuperscript{457} Here, it asserts that as the city is being flooded during the last days only the column itself will remain unsubmerged since it contains the nails of the True Cross.\textsuperscript{458} In addition, according to its narrative, since the column is the only monument above water, ships will come and moor themselves to it, thereby providing the column with a purpose and function even in the apocalyptic future.\textsuperscript{459} With this account in mind, the addition of Noah’s axe to the relic tradition at the column’s base becomes even more relevant since it fits perfectly into this delineation of Constantinople’s apocalypse by The Andreas Salos Apocalypse and the future second flood that it predicts would occur just like in the Old Testament.\textsuperscript{460}

However, aside from this apocalypse, the forum or Plakoton also features prominently in the Oracles of Leo the Wise and Tale of the True Emperor.\textsuperscript{461} These oracles or “wish prophecies,” dating after 1453, primarily cover the end of times and the revival of Byzantine imperial power to Constantinople.\textsuperscript{462} Here, during the age in which Byzantium had been eclipsed and conquered, post-Byzantines felt compelled to mythologize their future to imagine a day when the revival of Byzantine power would occur and the Ottoman Turks would be defeated.\textsuperscript{463} Central to this legend, was the idea that the True Emperor would appear in Constantinople at the “end of the dominion of Ismaelites” (Muslims) as the Lord’s anointed meant to defeat

\textsuperscript{457} Ryden, “The Andreas Salos Apocalypse. Greek Text, Translation and Commentary,” 222.
\textsuperscript{458} Ibid., 222.
\textsuperscript{459} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{460} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{461} Brokkar, The Oracles of the Most Wise Emperor Leo & The Tale of the True Emperor, 91.
\textsuperscript{462} Ibid., 22, 27.
\textsuperscript{463} Ibid., 27.
Byzantium’s enemies. According to this myth, after appearing in Constantinople, the emperor would prepare “places of execution in the middle of the city on the crowded Plakaton,” thereby proving that the Forum and Column of Constantine still had prominence as a space even in the minds of post-Byzantines. In this context, it would make perfect sense, that as a microcosm for Constantinople itself, the Column of Constantine would endure as an essential religious and symbolic space.

Thus, at the conclusion of the Byzantine age, the Column of Constantine still remained a monument imbued with meanings pertinent to the past, present and future.

464 Ibid., 30.
465 Ibid., 91.
Conclusion

From its foundation and dedication in 330 C.E. to the current day, the Column of Constantine was a monument of layered and ever developing meaning. As a monument directly linked to the foundation of Constantinople, it would be forever associated with that city’s wellbeing and history, functioning as a totem for the city and Byzantine empire. In addition, during the early Byzantine empire, the column was associated with the city’s founder and patron deity, Constantine the Great, fitting into the tradition of late Roman triumphal columns like that of Trajan or Marcus Aurelius. Here, the column held an ambiguous meaning, straddling the pagan and Christian spheres as a monument not yet fully Christianized.

However, as time progressed the Column of Constantine’s pagan interpretation became overshadowed by the growing Christian one which eventually led to the inception of the relic tradition associated with the column. By linking major Christian relics with the column like the baskets and fragments of the True Cross, early medieval Byzantines bestowed upon the monument a new Biblical meaning. In addition, because significant relics of Christ’s Passion were thought to be at the column, in the medieval period, the Column of Constantine grew in importance as a monument linked to religious and political legitimacy. Therefore, this growing relic tradition at the column, ensured that it became an object essential to the legitimization of the current emperor and dynasty.

Here, through proximity to the column, the emperor could assert his connection both to Constantine the Great and Christ as God’s chosen ruler on earth. In the middle Byzantine period, the column was incorporated into all manner of religious, city and imperial ceremonies, making it an object of multi-faceted use and meaning. The Column of Constantine, in this instance, became not only linked with Constantinopolitan history but also directly to the events of Biblical
and sacred history. Thus, through association with it, the emperor could assert his status not only as a legitimate successor of Constantine the Great but also as a divinely chosen leader like Noah, Moses or Christ himself.

Even as the Byzantine empire neared its end, the Column of Constantine persisted still as a monument of ceremonial importance to Palaiologan Constantinople and linked with events yet to come. Here, it was incorporated into all aspects of time—Biblical, Constantinopolitan and finally apocalyptic. Once Constantinople and its last emperor fell in 1453 C.E., the column yet endured as an object and talisman of central importance to the city, being venerated by the Ottoman Turks as a monument tied directly to city’s history and founder, Constantine the Great. In addition, as the centuries progressed, many of the other triumphal columns within the city were soon dismantled like the Column of Theodosius and Justinian in the 16th century and the Column of Arcadius in the 18th century. However, the Column of Constantine was not only allowed to remain standing by the Ottomans but also repaired by them on several occasions. Here, this speaks to the continuing importance of the Column of Constantine or Cemberlitaç to early modern Ottoman Constantinople.

Today, it remains situated along the modern Divan Yolu visited by travelers and tourists alike, serving as a reminder of the once prominent Byzantine state and its identity. Thus, by conducting a cultural history on a monument like the Column of Constantine, we as scholars can gain a much more in depth knowledge of how Byzantines understood and used the structures surrounding them. A study like this is inevitably not only focused on the column alone but on how the column was interpreted by those who experienced it. In the future, we hope to continue this study on the Column of Constantine’s reception and interpretation to include the Ottoman and modern Turkish era.
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From: Cyril Mango, “Constantine’s Porphyry Column and the Chapel of St. Constantine,” Δελτίον Χριστιανικής Αρχαιολογικής Εταιρείας 10 (1981): Fig. 1, 108.

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