

“A LAND CLEANSED OF HERETICS”
CULT PRACTICE AND CONTESTATION IN THE CHRISTIANIZATION
OF LATE ANTIQUE CONSTANTINOPLE

BY
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CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

One night early in the fifth century the empress Aelia Eudoxia met a crowd that had assembled near the imperial palace in Constantinople. This group, which John Chrysostom would later insist was comprised of the entire civic body, was preparing to escort the relics of certain martyrs, placed in a casket and covered with a veil, from their temporary location in the Great Church (Hagia Sophia) to their new home in a *martyrion* in Drypia, a suburb nine miles to the west.¹ The empress herself led the procession as it traversed the entire length of the city and illuminated the colonnaded streets with a chain of fire. Eventually the crowd passed through the Golden Gate and arrived at the *martyrion*. Once there, the crowd settled in to await the dawn and the arrival of the emperor Arkadios, while the city's bishop, John Chrysostom, delivered an animated homily describing the journey they had undertaken during the past few hours.² How would this procession and similar events have looked to the population of late antique

¹ John Chrysostom catalogues the civic body into its ranks (monks, virgins, priests, women, magistrates, commoners, slaves, freemen, citizens, and strangers; Τί εἶπω καὶ τί λαλήσω...τῶν μοναχῶν τοὺς συλλόγους; τῶν παρθένων τοὺς χορούς; τῶν ἱερέων τὰ τάγματα; τῶν βιωτικῶν ἀνδρῶν τὸν νόνον, τῶν δούλων, τῶν ἐλευθέρων, τῶν ἀρχόντων, τῶν ἀρχομένων, τῶν πενήτων, τῶν πλουτούντων, τῶν ξένων, τῶν πολιτῶν), a technique that he uses to signal that entire population of the city is (or should be) involved in the ritual action.

² John Chrysostom, *Homily Delivered After the Remains of the Martyrs* (PG 63.467–72). Chrysostom does not specify the identity of the relics involved in the procession, but J. N. D. Kelly argues that the relics were those of Sisinnios, Martyrios, and Alexander from Anaunia in northern Italy. For more on this homily, see Kelly 1995: 140–41; Van Nuffelen 2012: 197.

Constantinople? How did repeated exposure to and participation in such rituals inform and transform notions about civic and imperial religion?

This dissertation approaches these questions by examining people's engagement in civic and imperial cult—that is, with religious practices through which representatives of the city demonstrated and discharged the community's obligations toward the divine—within the specific landscape of Constantinople, from the refounding of the city under Constantine in 324 to the death of Theodosios II in 450.³ In November 324 the Roman emperor Constantine, having recently defeated his rivals in a long civil war, founded a new city at the site of the small Greek polis of Byzantium, located on the peninsula where the Bosphorus meets the Sea of Marmara. Over the course of the following one hundred twenty-five years, the city's religious structures—the patterns of thought and the system of communal action directed toward fulfilling group obligation toward the divine—underwent an extraordinary, and relatively accelerated, transformation. During this period, the religious structures of Constantinople were increasingly conformed to what I will call Theodosian Christianity: a unified vision of Christianity promoted by Theodosios I and his successors, who held the Creed of Nicaea, as remembered through the Council of Constantinople, as the standard of orthodoxy.

My interest here is the public religious practices, particularly those of civic and imperial cult, as well as the intersection of imperial agendas with the lived religion of Constantinople's inhabitants that made this transformation possible. Ultimately, I argue that the religious transformation of the city was accomplished through the ability of

³ All dates are C.E. unless otherwise noted.

certain factions within the imperial and cultural élite (including bishops) to dictate the conditions of a community's exposure to and participation in religious rituals.

RELIGION IN LATE ANTIQUITY

Definitions

Before elaborating on the contribution of ritual action to large-scale social transformation, it is imperative to outline what I mean when employing several key terms:

1. Religion. As scholars have repeatedly discussed, there is no one word in Latin or in Greek that corresponds to the modern notion of religion. Indeed, during much of the Roman period, those activities that we might classify as religious cannot be tied to a distinct sphere of human activity or to a coherent set of beliefs, but rather were inseparable from daily social practices. While there was no unified system of belief or mythological superstructure, certain ways of thinking about and acting toward the gods and other divine beings were shared across the social groups that inhabited the ancient Mediterranean basin.⁴ Among these was a perception of human obligation toward the divine. In classical Mediterranean articulations this obligation was inherently social, and it was the responsibility of privileged members within a group to ensure the welfare of that group (i.e., the family, the neighborhood, the city, the *res publica*) by organizing and conducting the rituals required to fulfill this obligation. Moreover, group membership (e.g., to a *polis*) was demonstrated through participation in these rituals, even if tacitly or

⁴ For a recent analysis of native Roman understandings of what we classify as religion, See Rives 2007: 13-53. The problems inherent in employing "religion" as an analytical category have been much discussed. See especially Smith 2004: 179-94 and Stowers 2008: 437-47.

with some level of resistance.⁵ I want to begin this study from the proposition that for the majority of people during the fourth and fifth centuries, this traditional obligation to the divine, not theology or belief, continued to govern the sets of social actions that we might categorize as religious. This would have been the case even if by the beginning of the fifth century a significant segment of society—most notably members of the magisterial classes—had come to hold that the discharge of that commitment relied on subscribing to a “coherent set of beliefs focusing on an individual deity” as iterated in a particular doctrinal formula or creed.⁶ Within this context, then, I employ the term religion in order to consider the larger patterns of thought that dictated the community’s obligation toward the divine, with the modifiers of “civic” and “imperial” to denote this obligation on the part of representatives of the city and the empire more specifically.

2. *Cult*. Whereas I regard religion to be the larger conceptual *framework* that dictated the community’s obligation toward the divine, I treat cult as the *apparatus* by which those obligations were discharged. This apparatus consisted of sites or objects associated with divine figures (including the imperial *divi* and Christian *sancti*/ἅγιοι), an established vocabulary of ritual action, and a group of individuals charged with the care

⁵ Here Vasiliki Limberis’ definition of civic religion is helpful: “Civic religion is the outward performance of cultic ritual action required of nearly all—if not all—of the population at a temple or shrine through the mediation of a priesthood for the honor, appeasement, and pleasure of a divinity.” Limberis 1994: 2. I would only add that the requirements of civic religion are notional and dependent on one’s status within the community. In other words, segments of a city’s population, particularly those in positions of authority (e.g., magistrates, members of the imperial court, the cultural élite), would be required to make an appearance in the *sensus publicum* of supporting civic religion, whereas such a requirement would be less pressing for others.

⁶ Hingley 2011: 745–46. See also the discussions in Sourvinou-Inwood 2000 and Rives 2007: 23–28, as well as the discussion of ritual space and community in Cole 2004: 12–21. While these discussions focus on earlier periods (classical Greece and early imperial Rome, respectively), and while the religious landscape had changed significantly by the fourth and fifth centuries C.E., the attention of these studies to the fluidity between religious and civic life is helpful for parsing the nuances of cult, and especially civic cult, during our period.

of those rituals (whether the emperor, civic magistrates, traditional priests, or bishops). For the period prior to Constantine, these cults were directed to a variety of deities and similar divine beings, practices often consolidated in scholarship under the category “pagan.” The appropriateness and utility of this category has been discussed extensively over the past generation of scholarship, as it is inherited from late antique Christian polemic and flattens the remarkable texture of the religious landscape.⁷ For the purposes of discussion here, I prefer to refer to these practices as “traditional Mediterranean cult” or, in shorthand, “traditional cult.” I find that the category “pagan” focuses on the individual and presupposes some kind of assertion about internal disposition, such that it becomes an exclusive category that counterpoints “Christian” (or other supposedly monotheistic religious frameworks). In contrast, “traditional Mediterranean cult” shifts the focus to the actual localized apparatus that individuals would have engaged and allows various cults, including Christian cults—by which I mean temples devoted to Christ (e.g., Hagia Sophia), *martyria*, and similar sites—, to coexist as options within the civic landscape.

⁷ The bibliography for these discussions is too extensive to include here. I instead point the reader to a few examples. Alan Cameron, on the one hand, notes the problems with the term, but chooses to use pagan as a category of analysis because he is investigating how Christians view non-Christians. Cameron also addresses the problems of using “polytheism” as a label, particularly its associations with evolutionary theories of religion and assertions about the moral and cultural supremacy of modern Western monotheistic religion, what he characterizes as “an aggressive monotheistic perspective.” Isabella Sandwell, on the other hand, abandons “pagan” in her study of Antiochene religious identities, preferring instead “Greek” when speaking about John Chrysostom’s writings and “adherent of Graeco-Roman/traditional religion” when discussing the writings of Libanios. Al. Cameron 2011: 27, 29; Sandwell 2007: 10–11.

On the fourth-century invention of “pagan” as a designation of religious identity, see Al. Cameron 2011: 15–16. Cameron reports a distinct change in the use of *paganos* in the mid-fourth century, with over 600 instances of this term from the mid-fourth to early fifth century as a way of referring to non-Christians (and non-Jews), either with some degree of neutrality or with derogatory undertones. Previously the term had been used to distinguish civilians from soldiers (not, as has been argued before, to designate rusticity). More recently, Douglas Boin has proposed that the categories of Hellene and *paganus* were primarily utilized in intra-Christian polemic, directed at other Christians as a means of policing behaviors, mimicking the usage of *Hellenismos* in 2 Maccabees; Boin 2014: 167–96.

Admittedly, my use of temple here to refer to Christian cult sites is perhaps a bit jarring. If, as I contend, the larger conceptual frameworks of religion were shared across the various social groups of the late ancient Mediterranean, so, too, were their conceptions of sacralized space. Individuals living in this world would have viewed a physical structure dedicated to Christ in the same way they would have seen a physical structure dedicated to Zeus or Apollo. Moreover, Christian authors during late antiquity openly referred to their own sites as ναοί (temples), a fact that I believe brought these structures into more direct competition with traditional cult sites than is often acknowledged. With these observations in mind, throughout this dissertation I frequently refer to Christian temples in order to highlight this aspect of the competitions between individuals with attachments to traditional cults and those who wanted to situate Christianity more firmly within the structures of civic cult.

3. *Ritual.* A significant aspect of this cultic infrastructure was the performance of ritualized communal action that both discharged the community's obligation to the divine and organized the community. These actions occurred at various levels of group organization, but in this dissertation I will focus on the ritual actions with some level of formal organization beyond the household or monastic community.⁸ Given the variety of public ritual actions, I purposely adopt this somewhat broad approach to ritual and ritualized activity. This broadness allows for the inclusion of devotion to the traditional gods and the practices associated with the variety of Christian and Jewish groups (and

⁸ In no way do I mean to imply here that rituals do not occur at smaller levels of group organization or even on the part of the individual; even rituals performed privately by an individual can be communally oriented. Rather, my focus in this dissertation are manifestations of cult that occur in the public spaces of the city, especially those manifestations that were either endorsed, were perceived to be endorsed, or were hoped to be endorsed by the representatives of the city or the imperial household.

other less well-documented groups for whom we have hints in Constantinople, such as Manichaeans and Pepyzites/Montanists) as well as any points of contact between these supposedly distinct religious groupings.⁹ A broad definition also provides the needed flexibility to think about how various modes of ritualized social activity, from religious ritual to imperial ceremonial, inform and draw from each other.

4. *Imperial Christianity, Theodosian Christianity.* For the period under study here, we find references to a wide array of Christian groups in Constantinople, most (if not all) of whom had ties beyond the city walls. These groups are frequently identified according to such doctrinal and sectarian categories as Nicene (homoousian), Arian (homoiousian/homoian/anomoian), Makedonian, Novatian, Nestorian, and so forth.¹⁰ Individuals associated with these groups vied for imperial favor, which was manifested in competition for the imperial support of a certain individual as a city's bishop. The development of an institution composed of an imperially favored group in opposition to other Christian groups, I refer to as imperial Christianity. By thinking about the structure of Constantinopolitan religious landscape in this way, we can begin to parse the shifting lines of influence and potential for competition and/or alliance between individuals who identify with particular groups, especially in the period before the accession of Theodosios I.

By Theodosian Christianity, I mean the manifestation of imperial Christianity that came into favor under the Theodosian household. On its face, this vision of Christianity

⁹ For possible evidence of these groups in Constantinople, see mentions in rescripts issued from Constantinople: CTh 16.5.7 (May 8, 381), 16.5.59 (April 9, 423), 16.10.24 (June 8, 423). While I think it possible that these groups were visible in Constantinople (hence the rescripts' concerns about their presence), we should be cautious about assuming that this must have been the case.

¹⁰ It is important to note that several of these categories overlap.

consisted of the collective of bishops and their congregations who accepted the creed produced at the Council of Nicaea as its definition of orthodoxy. However, I want to be clear that the weight behind this term is imperial patronage, not doctrinal definition. The particular vision of Nicene Christianity that eventually became recognized by history as “orthodoxy” was not determined until the Council of Chalcedon in 451, and even then this vision remained contested. In the contestations preceding Chalcedon, the definitional boundaries of Theodosian Christianity were undetermined, as evident from the shifting political networks and the fluidity between groups.¹¹ In other words, while imperial or Theodosian Christianity might appear to be in line with stated doctrinal positions, we should not assume that it was these positions, rather than networks of influence, that drove manifestations of imperial Christianity.¹²

History of Roman Religious Frameworks

Traditionally, the study of late antique religion has depended on certain assumptions about civic ritual life after Constantine, which constructs Christian practice as a distinct genus of ritual action, centered on the liturgy as the normative expression of Christian worship.¹³ Consequently, there is a tendency to assume a chronological and

¹¹ I would say that the heated debates about Christology were manifestations of political networks, attempts to position themselves against each other and draw concrete boundaries in the face of fluid social relations.

¹² In addition, I believe that we should allow that the visions of Christian orthodoxy taking shape elsewhere, particularly in the West, might be inflected in a different way than that emerging from Constantinople, even when those visions intersect, overlap, and resonate with the Theodosian Christianity centered around the emperor’s city in the East. In other words, while Christian “orthodoxy” in Rome might be in concord with Theodosian Christianity, and may even appear to be in unity with Theodosian Christianity, referring to it as Theodosian Christianity might obscure important contestations that were occurring between the emperors in the East and West and their respective agents (to include bishops).

¹³ The modern academic study of ancient Christian ritual life emerged in the late eighteenth-century German academy. Beginning with the publication of Gregory Dix’s *The Shape of the Liturgy* in 1945 and Josef Jungmann’s *Missarum Sollemnia* (1946), the primary focus of modern liturgical studies has

imaginative gap between the “old” practices of traditional Mediterranean cults and “new” Christian practice.¹⁴ This perception is partly due to the relative paucity of our data (or at least the fact that it has not been systematically analyzed) for the contours of civic cult, and the continuation of traditional cults therein, in the cities of the eastern empire during late antiquity. Indeed, evidence for traditional cults during late antiquity is rarely considered within the context of civic religion because these cults are generally thought to have been replaced by Christianity as “official” or “authorized” expressions of civic religion after the accession of Constantine. The perception of a decisive rift between the practices of traditional Mediterranean cult and Christian practice is reinforced by a narrative of significant religious difference inherited from Christian polemic. From a perspective that takes Christian rhetoric at face value, the study of early Christian ritual action is largely disconnected from the study of other ritual actions that were practiced during late antiquity, a situation that privileges one category of practice both as the primary locus of Christian ritual activity and as a definitional qualifier for Christian identification.

been to reconstruct the evolution of the Eucharistic liturgy, festal cycles, and, to a lesser extent, the daily office. For a helpful summary of the history of liturgical studies, see T. Berger 2011: 7-17. While Berger’s analysis focuses on the gendering involved in the development of liturgics as a modern academic discipline, her outline is also helpful in highlighting how the development of liturgical studies as an object of “scientific study” also made normative claims about liturgical action. On the whole the discipline has focused on those forms of Christian practice considered by modern liturgical scholars to be representative of orthodox liturgy and therefore useful in constructing a legitimating genealogy for modern liturgical practices. I use orthodox with some flexibility here. Some of the reconstructed rites do not conform to what modern Western scholars consider reflective of orthodoxy, particularly when these rites contain anti-Chalcedonian formulae. However, the rites upon which the discipline of liturgical studies focuses tend to belong to liturgical traditions associated with recognized creedal traditions post-dating the first council of Constantinople (381).

¹⁴ Surveys of traditional Mediterranean cult tend to focus on the “classical” periods—i.e., the 5th and 4th centuries BCE Athens for Greece; late Republican and early imperial period (early 1st century BCE—late 2nd century C.E.) for Rome—as the normative models of civic religion for their respective cities and broader regions. These studies then assume that during the following periods, traditional civic cult either remained relatively static until they eventually disappeared (whether from lack of interest or through forcible closures) or that later developments are indications of decline or corruption.

However, the evidence we have for late antique ritual practice does not support a rigid understanding of religious difference. As I will discuss throughout this dissertation, while the liturgy was certainly an important marker of Christian cult, it was by no means the sole locus of ritual action, and these other loci of Christian rituals had more in common with traditional cult than many of our Christian authors would like to admit. If we focus on Christian liturgy as the primary mode of late antique ritual, we risk ignoring a range of other practices and actors, both those deriving from “orthodox” and “heterodox” circles and those associated with traditional Mediterranean cults. Fortunately, the picture of the late antique ritual landscape has begun to change in recent decades as scholars have pushed against the boundaries of liturgically determined categories and have begun to include other modes of ritual practice, leading to a burgeoning field that investigates the lived religion of late antiquity. The work of Robert Taft, for example, has been instrumental in shifting focus away from the reconstruction of Christian liturgy, particularly due to his insistence on reexamining our sources for evidence of lived religion rather than focusing on reconstructing prescriptive texts.¹⁵ One aspect of Taft’s work that has been influential is his stress on the highly public nature of liturgical practices in the late antique city. John Baldovin’s study of stational liturgy in Rome, Constantinople, and Jerusalem, published over thirty years ago, was similarly instrumental in reexamining Christian ritual actions as events that occurred in civic space and in considering the effect this activity had in conceptualizing public space.¹⁶

¹⁵ Taft 2006: 4–10. In particular, Taft cautions against making definitive claims about the shape of liturgical events before the eighth century.

¹⁶ See Baldovin 1987. Much of the evidence Baldovin used for this study post-dates the fifth century. There are also substantial problems with his reading of late antique social structures. A noticeable example is his assumption that the social transition to Christianity was relatively smooth, particularly in

The shift in perspective offered by Taft and Baldovin has influenced a generation of scholars, particularly social historians, who have been more sensitive to the nuances of diversity and competition in late antique Christianity. A number of recent studies have explored the role of Christian practice in transforming the civic and cultic landscapes of the late antique *polis*. Antioch and Rome, especially, has been the focus of recent study. Emmanuel Soler (2006) has composed an extensive survey of the variety of cult in late antique Antioch, including traditional cult and Christian cult. Christine Shepardson (2007, 2014) has examined the use of spatial rhetoric and practices as means to compete for control over real cult space in and around the city.¹⁷ Clifford Ando (2001) has noted how, through continued engagement in traditional cult in Rome during the late fourth and early fifth centuries, the individuals entrusted with the security of the city (e.g., Symmachus) demonstrated their loyalty to Rome.¹⁸

What has become evident through these studies is the importance of ritual practice within the competitive environment of the late antique city, particularly in its usefulness in marking territory and asserting legitimacy. Public manifestations of cult—that is, the visible apparatus of religion in the form of ritual, the building of cult edifices, the display of and trade in religiously significant objects, and the distinctive dress of ritual

Constantinople and Jerusalem, which he imagines to have been both essentially Christian cities during the fourth century, with relatively minor tensions between Arian and Nicene factions. Isabella Sandwell rightly comments that Baldovin's analysis would not have reflected the situation in other fourth-century cities with more established institutional histories (e.g. Antioch). See Sandwell's critiques of Baldovin in Sandwell 2004: 44–45. I would argue that Baldovin misread the religious landscape of Constantinople and Jerusalem as well. Regardless, Baldovin's work has contributed significantly to our understanding of late antique and Byzantine religion by shifting the focus to ritual events that occurred in public spaces and the possibilities of social formations and inter-religious encounters.

¹⁷ Nathanael Andrade (2010) makes a similar analysis of Chrysostom's activity in Constantinople, focusing on the physical interaction between ritual action and civic topography and the overlap between imperial and ecclesiastical processions.

¹⁸ See especially Ando 2001: 378–79.

specialists—contributed to the construction of a normative civic, imperial, and religious identities. At the same time, we can see a remarkable fluidity that existed across the spectrum of cult practice. This fluidity appears in the language used to discuss the infrastructure for cult, in the ritual actions and spaces utilized for cult, and in the hegemony of the cultural élite within this system. Late antique authors, including Christian authors, frequently employed traditional Greek and Latin terminology for cult agents, spaces, and actions. As I mention above, Christian authors frequently refer to their own sites of cult as ναοί (temples), and the office of bishop of as τὴν ἱερωσύνην (the priesthood), a markedly distinct nomenclature from the ἐκκλησία (church) and the triad of ἐπίσκοπος (bishop), πρέσβυτερος (presbyter), and διάκονος (deacon) typically associated with Christian sites and hierarchical structures.¹⁹ We should of course recognize these choices in language served as a means for authors to position themselves within an élite literary culture or as a way of connecting their institutions to an idealized image of the destroyed temple in Jerusalem. However, language shapes perception, and we should seriously consider its consequences in shaping perceptions of Christian cult.

An important distinction to note here is the difference between “identity” and “identification.” Sociologist Rogers Brubaker has cogently critiqued the use of “identity” as a category of analysis, noting that conceptions of identity are either “too strong” in that they reify and essentialize identity as something individuals and/or groups necessarily have or are softened to the point that identity lacks analytical weight.²⁰ Consequently, Brubaker argues that we should dispense with identity as a category of analysis entirely

¹⁹ See, for example, Gregory of Nazianzus, *Epigrams*, AG 8.15; Sozomen *Eccl. hist.* 2.2.1, 2.3.1, 7.10.4, 7.21.5, 9.2.6.

²⁰ Brubaker 2004: 31–41, esp. 37–38.

in favor of articulating the exact processes we are interested in analyzing. While I agree with Brubaker's criticisms broadly, I still see the notion of identity, properly nuanced, as a helpful tool for studying the processes by which ideas about social groups are created, attached to other ideas, and imposed upon individuals in the late antique imperial context. For the purposes of my study, I consider identity to be a *constructed cultural ideal*, external to the individual, with which a person may identify as influenced through family or class background, education, or formal argument. An identity is a *social category* (e.g., "Christian," "Greek," "Roman," etc.) claimed by individuals in society but never completely realized. From this perspective, the communal practices of a putative group helped to construct the idealized cultural norms—the identities—that guided people's behaviors and sense of belonging to that group.

Within the larger religious landscape of late antiquity, the performance of traditional Mediterranean cult relied on a shared vocabulary—a toolbox, so to speak—of ritual actions: processions, the burning of incense, libations, sacrifice, divination, votive inscriptions and offerings, rhetorical performances, hymns, and the construction of cult edifices.²¹ We can also see individuals identified as Christians and Jews pulling from this

²¹ For the documentation of these ritual actions among practitioners of traditional Mediterranean religion, see Beard 1998.1: 34–37 and 1998.2: esp. 126–29, 134–44, 148–52, 155–62, and 172–73; Rives 2007: 23–27. For the performance of rhetoric within the context of the *panegyreis* (religious festival), see Vryonis 1981: 206–10 and Byron MacDougall's forthcoming dissertation ("Gregory of Nazianzus and Christian Festival Rhetoric," Brown University).

Angelos Chaniotis helpfully discusses the phenomenon of "ritual transfer" (as opposed to "syncretism") that occurred as a result of cultural interactions under Roman rule. Chaniotis argues that ritual transfer could occur through the "diffusion of ritual gesture" as populations became more mobile (i.e., through military occupation or migration) or through the transfer of ritual gestures from one context to another (e.g., the incorporation of gestures reserved for the gods to emperor-cult). Chaniotis identifies an active culture of competition between communities (here he means cities or villages) as a contributing factor in ritual transfer, as delegations encountered ritual performances elsewhere and sought to outperform competing cities by instituting those performances in their own cities. Chaniotis 2009: 22–27. I would add that this phenomenon created a common ritual vocabulary from which individuals could pull when instituting new cult observances.

same toolbox. The processional liturgies of Constantinople have been the focus of much study, but we also find similar processions elsewhere.²² Severus of Minorca, for example, describes the singing of psalms by Jews and Christians as they processed toward the city's synagogue.²³ While Christians, like Jews, professed to no longer perform animal sacrifice during late antiquity, nominal sacrifice continued in the form of the Eucharistic synaxis.²⁴ By the mid-fourth century, Christians are also found burning incense in certain contexts, for example in the presence of the emperor's image and during relic processions. We also have ample evidence for the continuation of votive inscriptions by those identified as Christians, Jews, and occasionally by other religious groups (e.g., Manichaeans), and the building of churches, particularly among members of the imperial family, can be understood as votive acts that would have been recognizable to earlier generations.²⁵

There are also important examples of continuity in the infrastructure and mechanisms of civic cult in the continued exercise of élite control over this infrastructure. During the period of the Roman Republic, an important element of a magistrate's office was to take responsibility for cultic matters. While formal priesthoods were held

²² Notable studies of Constantinopolitan processional liturgies include Baldovin 1987: 167–226; Mayer 1998b; Andrade 2010; and Vicky Manolopolou's forthcoming dissertation ("Processions in Byzantine Constantinople," Newcastle University).

²³ Severus of Minorca, *Letter on the Conversion of the Jews* 13.2–3. This type of shared processional activity may or may not be usual, and in this case, it had disastrous consequences for the Jews of Minorca.

²⁴ Daniel Ullucci argues that our earliest Christian sources do not reject animal sacrifice in itself, but rather they rejected animal sacrifice to gods other than their own. The destruction of the temple in Jerusalem made animal sacrifice impossible under these restrictions, and the adamant rejections of animal sacrifice appeared later. Ullucci 2012: 12–13, 69–117.

²⁵ Examples of imperial temple building in late antiquity include Constantine's building of the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem, Hagia Eirene in Constantinople, St. Peter's in Rome, and the Church at Tyre.

separately from magistracies, most priesthoods were termed appointments drawn from the same class of men who acted as magistrates, and these offices were incorporated into the *cursus honorum*.²⁶ What emerged from the literature and philosophical productions of the Late Republic was an idiom of religious duty in which magistrates engage in civic cult in order to discharge the obligations of the *res publica* toward the gods and wherein the failure to do so could have dire consequences for both the magistrate and the state.²⁷ This idiom continued to be operative during the early years of the Principate and into the second and third centuries, even while responsibility for fulfilling the state's obligations toward the divine were assumed by the emperor and his household.²⁸ Even under the imperial system, however, magistrates were expected to fulfill certain responsibilities in

²⁶ As Mary Beard, John North, and Simon Price observe, during the Republic, the distribution of these priesthoods reveal power-sharing among a circle of Rome's elite families. See Beard 1998.1: 18–30, 103–04.

²⁷ See for example, Cicero's opening statement to *On His House* (1.1), in which he asserts that the founders of the Republic had entrusted the preservation of *religio* and the *res publica* to the same group of men because the two institutions were dependent upon each other: Cum multa divinitus, pontifices, a maioribus nostris inventa atque instituta sunt, tum nihil praeclarius quam quod eosdem et religionibus deorum immortalium et summae rei publicae praeesse voluerunt, ut amplissimi et clarissimi cives rem publicam bene gerendo religiones, religiones sapienter interpretando rem publicam conservarent. A similar sentiment is echoed as late as the sixth century in the preface of Justinian's *Novel* 6 (535): Maxima quidem in hominibus sunt dona dei a superna collata clementia sacerdotium et imperium, illud quidem divinis ministrans, hoc autem humanis praesidens ac diligentiam exhibens...Ideoque nihil sic erit studiosum imperatoribus, sicut sacerdotum honestas, cum utique et pro illis ipsis semper deo supplicent. Nam si hoc quidem inculpabile sit undique et apud deum fiducia plenum, imperium autem recte et competenter exornet traditam sibi rem publicam, erit consonantia quaedam bona, omne quicquid utile est humano conferens generi.

²⁸ By the end of Augustus' life the imperial household had assumed responsibility for the major priestly offices and the preservation of cult sites in the city of Rome, effectively consolidating control over the religious landscape of the city in the hands of the emperor and his family. However, as Beard *et al.* note, Roman emperors did not formally become the leading agents of imperial religious activity; the office of emperor did not primarily exist as a cult functionary, nor did it confine the emperor's cultic duties to any one ritual occasion or action. Rather, the emperor and his household became "*incorporated* [their emphasis] within the religious framework of the city [i.e., Rome]." Beard 1998.1: 186.

matters of civic and imperial cult, and the Roman élite continued to compete for appointments to prestigious priesthoods.²⁹

Augustus' successors continued these patterns of imperial religious sponsorship, and imperial consolidation of the priesthoods became a trend that continued throughout the Julio-Claudian dynasty.³⁰ When later emperors ascended to the throne, particularly after the defeat of their rivals, they would frequently style themselves as new Augusti, entrusted with the most important matters of religion that preserved the safety of the state—renewing cults, refurbishing or dedicating temples, and reinvigorating priesthoods—as one strategy of authorizing their reigns. An apt example of a later emperor relying on this model to assert his legitimacy is Septimius Severus (194–211) because of his connection to Byzantium, the city upon which Constantinople was built. Like Augustus, Severus relied on religious and cultural renewal to assert the legitimacy of his reign and dynastic ambitions.³¹ Following the defeat of his rival in the East, Pescennius Niger, Severus set about asserting his control over the cities that had supported Niger, including Byzantium, by reorganizing their imperial statuses and

²⁹ Beard 1998.1: 192, 206.

³⁰ Beard 1998.1: 186–92.

³¹ The cult sites refurbished by Severus in Rome include the temples of Vesta, Fortuna Muliebris, and the Pantheon. Severus also celebrated the Saecular Games in 204 consciously following the Augustan calculation of 110 years for the games. Severus' wife, Julia Domna, also took an active role in these celebrations, leading the Vestal Virgins and the matrons of the city in their prayers to Juno Regina and the banquets for Juno and Diana. As Charmaine Gorrie has argued, the Severan sponsorship of such Augustan institutions as the Saecular Games and the temple of Fortuna Muliebris (previously restored by Augustus' wife Livia) was not coincidental, but rather an integral part of Severus' efforts to portray himself as a new Augustus. Additional points of contact between Severus and Augustus are Severus' triumphal arch in the Forum Romanum (associated with Augustus' arch) and Severus' repair of the Porticus Octavius. Additional religious foundations were established in Severus' native city of Lepis Magnus. Another part of his religious renewal was the removal of "irreligious" elements in the empire, an action that Éric Rebillard has suggested may be the political context behind the so-called persecution of Christians in North Africa in 197–198. See Gorrie 2004: 65–66; 70; Rebillard 2012: 38.

landscapes.³² For Byzantium, this meant the razing and reestablishing the city as the Colonia Antonina, a distinctively Roman settlement with a forum, bath, stadium, and temples for Apollo, Artemis, and Aphrodite.³³

This idiom of elite responsibility for civic cult continued into late antiquity. The men who became bishops frequently came from the same families who traditionally filled the magistracies and priesthoods of the empire's cities. Moreover, responsibility for the logistics of religion—e.g., the organization of festivals, the delineation and adjudication of authorized cult—continued to be the domain of what we might consider secular authorities, rather than by the bishops whom we might imagine would have been responsible for doing so. The most glaring examples are the emperors themselves. Constantine and his successors clearly saw themselves as the guardians of imperial religion, a subject that I address more fully in Chapter 2.³⁴ Civic magistrates, too, had responsibilities in civic cult. In Rome, for example, the urban prefect was entrusted with the preservation of cult architecture, even when the focus of preservation shifted toward Christian monuments.³⁵ The urban prefect of Rome also seems to have been responsible for some of the actual performance of cult. Ammianus Marcellinus mentions sacrifices

³² Pescennius Niger, the governor of Syria, proclaimed himself emperor from his seat in Antioch. Severus subsequently demoted Antioch, Niger's designated capital, to a village and placed it under the jurisdiction of Laodikea. Millar 1993: 118–119, 121; Butcher 2003: 48–49.

³³ Basset 2004: 17, 19. But see also the arguments of Paul Stephenson and Timothy D. Barnes, who argue that the destruction of Byzantium attributed to Severus actually occurred under Constantine. Stephenson 2009: 192–94 and Barnes 2011: 111–13.

³⁴ See below, pages 46–53.

³⁵ As Beard, North, and Price note, Rome's urban prefect had assumed functions of the Curator of the Sacred Buildings in the fourth century. The monuments repaired or reclaimed during fourth and fifth centuries include the temple of Apollo, the images of the Di Consentes, and even an image of Minerva in the 470s. Beard 1998.1: 382. For attestation for these restorations, see ILS 3222, 4003, 3132. The classic study of the urban prefecture of Rome is Chastagnol 1960.

offered by the urban prefect Tertullus at the temple of Castor and Pollux during the reign of Constantius.³⁶ Some of the traditional duties of cult appear to have been attached to the Roman prefect's counterpart in Constantinople.³⁷ Sources attest to the involvement of Constantinople's urban prefect in resolving religious disputes and organizing religious and imperial ceremony; Honoratus (urban prefect, 337–361) oversaw the trial of Aetios regarding the latter's theological teachings, and Simplicius (urban prefect, 403) organized the *panēgyreis* celebrating the dedication of Eudoxia's statue.³⁸ Later sources also attest to the prominent role of prefects in receiving relics into the city.³⁹ There is, of course, a fine line between being responsible for the organization of ritual events and other mechanisms of the apparatus of civic cult and being an authorized ritual agent. The prefect was neither priest nor bishop. Still, it was a select group of men, who came through the circles of imperial administration, who oversaw the civic and imperial cult.

From this perspective, it is clear that Christian groups, as they came to dominate the mechanisms of civic cult, were both in continuity and in competition with earlier and contemporary modes of cult (i.e., traditional local and imperial cults, Jews, Samaritans,

³⁶ Ammianus Marcellinus, *Hist.* 19.10.

³⁷ Dagron 1974: 291–94; Millar 2006: 10.

³⁸ **Honoratus:** Sozomen, *Eccl. hist.* 4.23.3–4. **Simplicius:** Sokrates, *Eccl. hist.* 6.18.1–2; Sozomen, *Eccl. hist.* 8.20.1–2. Neither Sokrates nor Sozomen mention the prefect in their account, but Theophanes (*Chron.* AM 4898) comments that an (unnamed) urban prefect, whom he identifies as a Manichaean and supporter of paganism, organized the events. Moreover, the dedicatory inscription for the statue, which identifies Simplicius both as prefect and as the statue's dedicator, was discovered in 1848. See CIL 03.736 (=ILS 822, CIG 8614): D(ominae) n(ostrae) Ael(iae) Eudoxiae semper Augustae / v(ir) c(larissimus) Simplicius praef(ectus) urb(i) dedicavit // Κίονα πορφνέην καὶ ἀργυρέην βασίλειαν / δέρεο ἐνθα πόλῃ θεμιστεύουσι ἄνακτες / οὖνομα δ' εἰ ποθέεις Εὐδόξια τίς δ' ἀνέθηκεν / Συμπλίκιος μεγάλων ὑπάτων γόνος ἐσθλὸς ὕπαρχος.

³⁹ The *Chronicon Paschale* places the prefect Aimilianos alongside Arkadios when the relics of Samuel were brought into the city, and Oursos at the *adventus* for the relics of Joseph and Zachariah. See *Chron. pasch.* 406 and 415.

Manichaeans, etc.). Moreover, Christian practices were directed toward the same individuals as the practices of competing religious groups were. Therefore, I argue, it is important to consider more carefully the continuities between the practices of seemingly distinct groups and what those continuities meant for imperial religious structures in late antiquity. I argue that it was the fluidity between competing modes of cult that not only provided a space for competition between groups but also facilitated shifts in religious identifications. It is my contention that we should understand the practices of cult as social tools in their own right and a means through which the perceived Christianization of the city occurred.

THE CHRISTIANIZATION OF CONSTANTINOPLE

My goal in this dissertation, then, is to better understand the social consequences of cultic engagement in the late antique Roman city. To do this, I examine public ritual life in the highly specific situation of Constantinople. While common idioms of ritual engagement existed across the eastern empire because of a shared imperial culture, spread in part by a system of *paideia* among the élite and by competition between cities, we should be careful about assuming that the situation in one city or region is uncomplicatedly indicative of the situation elsewhere. Placing known practices in their local context should serve as a corrective to the tendency to conflate sources and has the potential to reveal more local variation.

The shifts in Constantinople's religious frameworks can be roughly identified in three extended moments of realignment: (1) Constantine's foundation of the city; (2) the restructuring of the city's cultic frameworks under Theodosios I in the 380s; and (3) a

series of strategic moves under Theodosios II to consolidate imperial Christianity during the second quarter of the fifth century. The first extensive realignment in the city's religious structures occurred when Constantine refounded the small Greek *polis* of Byzantium as a dynastic capital. There is no clear evidence that Christian cult edifices were readily identifiable before the refounding of the city, much less a part of Byzantium's imperial religious armature in the way that the temples of Apollo/Helios, Artemis, and Aphrodite on the city's acropolis were.⁴⁰ Constantine is reported to have defunded these temples and forbade animal sacrifice in these locations, while sponsoring the construction of Hagia Eirene at the foot of the acropolis.⁴¹

Constantine's inclusion of Christianity within the infrastructure of civic religion is clearly a moment of innovation, and it is with this shift that we can say that Christianity joined the ranks of imperial cult architecture in the city. However, even at this early stage Constantinople was not a *Christian* city, but rather an *imperial* city, whose religious frameworks accommodated both the cults of the traditional deities and various Christian groups. While the defunding of the traditional temples was surely significant, it is important to note that Constantine left them intact. This situation created no small degree of tension and competition over the proper expression of civic religion, as is evident in the rhetoric of individuals like Eusebios, who in his *Life of Constantine* asserts

⁴⁰ Moreover, our evidence for a Christian population in the pre-Constantinian city is scant and problematic. For further discussion, see Chapter 2, pp. 58–61, esp. p.60 n.46.

⁴¹ Eusebios, *Life of Constantine* 2.45.1, 4.23, 4.25.1; CTh 16.10.2; Sokrates, *Eccl. hist.* 1.16.2, 2.16.16. See also discussion in Limberis 1994: 22–23; Bardill 2012: 261–66. Note that Constantine only restricted the flow money to the temples and forbade animal sacrifice; he did not order these temples' closure or destruction.

Constantine's commitment to Christianity and creates a narrative map of the new city devoid of non-Christian elements.⁴²

The long three decades between 360 and 395 mark a significant shift in the religious frameworks of the empire, and of Constantinople in a more pronounced way. When the emperor Julian entered Constantinople in December 361, he and other traditionalists could view the renewal of the traditional cults and animal sacrifice as very real possibilities. After Julian's death in 363, a series of Christian emperors allowed Christian bishops to gain a firmer grasp over the structures of civic cult in Constantinople. Even so, the situation was by no means decided in favor of Christianity. The death of an emperor, by natural causes or otherwise, could mean a change in the parties responsible for the dispensation of cult, and it would have only taken the appearance of another Julian for traditional cult sites to again receive imperial patronage.

It was not until the 380s that a second decisive shift occurred in Constantinople's religious structures, when Theodosios I (379–395) did precisely what generations of emperors had done before him: he instituted massive reforms in administrative and civic institutions, including religion, as part of a campaign to differentiate himself from his predecessor and to assert his authority as emperor. These reforms involved a radical restructuring of Constantinople's religious landscape upon his arrival in the city in 380, including the destruction of traditional cult sites, the replacement of the city's imperial bishop with a homoousian (that is, a Christian religious specialist who subscribed to the co-divinity of the Father and Son as formulated at the Council of Nicaea), and an increasingly restrictive series of legislation that deprived cult specialists not associated

⁴² See discussion in Chapter 2, pp. 82–90.

with the homoousian position of visible cult space within the city.⁴³ By the time of Theodosios' death in 395, traditional cult had for all purposes been erased from the realm of what was possible for the city's religious frameworks. Theodosios' eighteen-year-old son, Arkadios, reinforced the dynastic commitment to Theodosian Christianity shortly after his accession with a imperial statement depriving non-Nicene groups of cult spaces within the city walls and expelling their clerics from the city.⁴⁴

A third moment in the religious transformation of the city occurred during the reign of Theodosios' grandson, Theodosios II (404–450). Roughly around the time that the younger Theodosios reached maturity, his court reaffirmed the dynasty's commitment to Nicene Christianity and intensified legislative and ecclesiastical pressure against non-Nicene elements from the city in order to produce a vision of a Christian orthodoxy united under the emperor and his bishop in Constantinople as the religion of the empire. It is impossible to determine with certainty the agents behind these moves, but, as I argue in Chapter 5, I believe that Theodosios II himself had a hand in them. Regardless, during this period restrictions against groups that did not conform to Theodosian Christianity intensified, as did competition to gain positions of influence with the emperor, particularly the office of Constantinople's imperial bishop. In conjunction with these legislative moves and the increasing influence of the Constantinopolitan episcopacy, a distinct rhetoric of empire emerged. This rhetoric, which centered on the piety of Theodosios II and the orthodoxy Constantinople's church, mirrored the expulsion of

⁴³ See discussion below, Chapter 3, pp. 108–09, 115–18.

⁴⁴ CTh 16.5.30 (dated March 3, 396).

religious competitors from the civic landscape and the city's emerging historiographic tradition.

My Sources and their Limitations

Our principal sources for the religious landscape of pre-Constantinian Byzantium are Dionysios of Byzantium (second century), who describes the city's landscape prior to its reorganization under Septimus Severus, and Hesychios of Miletus (sixth century, preserved in the later *Patria of Constantinople*), who comments on some of the ancient monuments still visible in his city.⁴⁵ Both of these sources present difficulties for interpretation, the former because of its fragmentary preservation in later texts, and the latter, because Hesychios likely reveals more about contemporary interpretations of his city's monuments than he does about earlier documentation. An important source for early fifth-century Constantinople is the *Notitia Urbis Constantinopolitanae*, a catalogue surveying the monuments of Constantinople according to the regions of the city. Interestingly, the *Notitia* constructs a normative map of the city by erasing non-Theodosian elements from the city's topography.⁴⁶ As we move further into the Byzantine period, the more problematic the sources for Constantinople's religious landscape becomes. The *Parastaseis* (eighth century) and the *Patria* (tenth century) are both interesting compilations consisting of somewhat random assortments of documents concerning the city's landmarks.⁴⁷ The archaeological evidence that would help elaborate

⁴⁵ For a discussion of the date and text of Dionysios of Byzantium, see Rudolf Güngerich's introduction to the text in Güngerich 1958: xliii-iv.

⁴⁶ See further discussion in Chapter 3, pp. 136–37.

⁴⁷ Averil Cameron has described the *Parastaseis* as “a very early example of [Constantinopolitans'] attempts to decipher the traces of the past that surrounded them.” Av. Cameron 1984: vii, 2-3. The *Patria* often preserves notices from the *Parastaseis*, but also expands upon them.

the late antique city is limited primarily to a segment of the hippodrome's *sphendone*, portions of the Theodosian walls, and some of the more significant landmarks along the *Mese* (the city's main thoroughfare), most notably the column of Constantine.⁴⁸ The surviving churches are all of a later date (though the *pronaos* of the Great Church was excavated). A number of inscriptions survive as well.⁴⁹ Notable examples include a bilingual inscription on the Golden Gate in honor of a successful military campaign (perhaps Theodosios I's campaign against Maximus in 391);⁵⁰ another bilingual inscription at the base of the Philadelphion (dating between 393 and 420);⁵¹ the inscription from the base of Eudoxia's statue (dedicated in 403);⁵² and Theodosios II's dedicatory inscription on the Golden Gate (dated to 425).⁵³ As important as this evidence is for helping us to reconstruct the topography of late antique Constantinople, it has a limited capacity to shed light on the practices that occurred in their spaces.

⁴⁸ The reconstruction of Constantinople's topography from late antiquity through the Byzantine period has been an ongoing subject of scholarly attention. The modern study of the city's topography begins with Pierre Gilles' four-volume *De topographia Constantinopoleos, et de illius antiquitatibus libri quator* (Lyon, 1561) of the city's mythical foundations, history, and topography, using Greek sources to reconstruct the monuments that had been lost to the Ottoman city he encountered. Gilles' work was followed by that of Charles Du Fresne Du Cange's *Historia byzantine duplici commentario illustrata* (Paris, 1680), based on Gilles and literary sources. During the twentieth century, Raymond Janin (1953 and 1964) produced a series of studies of Constantinople's landscapes, including ecclesiastical topography. For surveys of the archaeological remains, see Krautheimer 1986: 70–73; Bassett 1991: 88 and 2000: 494; C. Mango 2000: 181.

⁴⁹ Many of the inscriptions that survive from the fourth and fifth centuries are highly fragmentary and are frequently found in spoliation, thus limiting their utility for this study. These inscriptions are joined by those recorded in literary works; see for example a supposed inscription from the Gate of Eugenios referring to Julian in GA 9.689. This Julian has been assumed to be the emperor Julian; however, other prominent Julians are attested for the city, one of whom was prefect during the reign of Zeno (474–491).

⁵⁰ CIL 3.7405=ILS 9216. Of particular note is the phrase “ὁ θεὸς καλῶς ἡγεγμέν σε.” For speculation that the inscription is related to the 391 campaign, see W. M. Ramsey 1907: 268.

⁵¹ Feissel 2003: 500–502. Denis Feissel has matched lines 1–7 of Greek portion of the inscription to Palatine Anthology 9.800–801.

⁵² CIL 3.736=ILS 882.

⁵³ CIL 3.735.

By far the most immediate evidence for the religious landscape of Constantinople during our period is to be found in the literary records of public speech-acts (orations, homilies, and lectures) that survive from the period. Most significant among these are the homilies and orations produced by Gregory of Nazianzos (episcopacy, 379–381) and John Chrysostom (episc., 398–404) during their tenures in Constantinople as well as the few surviving homilies we have from Nestorios (episc., 428–431) and Proklos (episc., 434–446). In some instances we are fortunate enough to have references from the orations of non-Christian élites, such as Libanios (ca. 314–ca. 394) or the emperor Julian (ca. 331–363), who actively contest Christian claims to legitimacy and occasionally offer glimpses into their own perspectives on cult practice.

Additionally, the histories produced during the fourth and fifth centuries—that is, the histories of Eusebios (to include his *Life of Constantine*), Ammianus Marcellinus, Sozomen, Sokrates, and Philostorgios—provide extensive references to competition between the various factions of the authors’ social worlds as well as invaluable references for local cult events. Similar evidence, albeit a bit more problematic in its utility, can be found in historiography of the sixth through ninth centuries, for example, in the *Ecclesiastical History* of Evagrios Scholastikos and the later Chronicle tradition of John Malalas, the *Chronicon Paschale*, Pseudo-Zachariah of Mytilene, and Theophanes Confessor. Evidence can also be found in the literature detailing norms for ritual activity, including the *Diary* of Egeria, lectionaries, law codes, and the so-called “church orders,” although these sources sometimes tell us less about public cult practice because they are either prescriptive in nature or because they detail practices that occur outside of the public eye. Of special note for the study of the reorganization of religion under the

Theodosian dynasty is the legislation found in Book 16 of the Theodosian Code, particularly those laws promulgated from Constantinople and concerned with removing illicit cult from civic space.

The nature of the literary texts cited above raises several concerns. First, we must read this literature with full attention to the fact that the individuals who produced it were participating in a high literary culture, rooted in an extensive training in classical literature and rhetoric. Their literary productions served as markers of their investment in élite culture and were governed by the dictates of genre and rhetorical conventions, even when these works played with and pushed against those conventions. Homilists, for instance, were frequently trained as rhetors, and their productions were peppered with the tools of rhetoric: stock characters, *topoi*, and allusions and citations (from both classical and biblical texts). This often makes it difficult for us to distinguish between rhetorical technique and descriptions of contemporary life.

In addition, because these works are the artifacts of élite culture, they direct our attention toward the activities and social positioning of the cultural élite. Consequently, one of the major methodological challenges in dealing with this material is the extent to which late antique rhetoric relied heavily on the literary tropes instilled by élite courses of education, a fact that hampers our attempts to gain a clear sense of actual ritual practices and social formations, especially those among non-élite social groups. The bias of this evidence becomes even more apparent when we consider that the sources that survive are often those works considered by later generations to be compatible with orthodoxy and thus worthy of preservation. Important exceptions are the works of traditionalist and non-Nicene authors, e.g., Ammianus Marcellinus, Julian, Philostorgios, the anonymous

“Arian source” reputedly preserved in the *Chronicle* of Theophanes Confessor, and Zosimos. These sources provide interesting evidence for alternate assertions about what became normative Christianity; unfortunately these sources are sometimes fragmentary, and in such instances as Philostorgios, whose work is preserved in a later epitome, we must allow for the possibility that the authors who preserve these texts misrepresent them.

These sources also have limitations associated with questions about audience and transmission history. In the case of homilies, we cannot always be certain about the location at which a homily was delivered, an issue that causes problems in locating specific practices. Questions about the process of collecting and redacting the homilies also complicate our knowledge of real practice. This concern is evident when determining the precise relationship between the spoken and written homily, especially when we consider that some texts preserved as homilies may never have been delivered orally. Similar issues apply to the church orders, because of the complexity of their transmission histories and the added interpretive issues concerning their relationship to real practices.

Second, these sources are driven by ideologies and agendas that often present prescriptions as though they are descriptions of actual events. Christian authors had an interest in persuading their audiences to see firm boundaries between religious groupings, even when such boundaries were not so clear in social interactions or cult practice/space, a point I will explore in more detail in Chapter 3. Even the Christian historians were invested in asserting the superiority of Christianity and presenting one vision of normative Christianity as the teleological culmination of history. Similarly non-Christian authors like Libanios, Julian, and Ammianus Marcellinus were interested in asserting that

Christianity was not a legitimate civic cult and constructed Christian actors according to rhetorical *topoi* in order to discredit it. Such rhetorical positioning hinders our access to how people engaged with public ritual practice and understood the relationship between these events and imperial patronage. In other words, these texts cannot be taken as straightforward records of events, and we must be alert to the ideologies and agendas that drove their production.

Nonetheless, these sources remain useful for exploring the role of ritual life in the Christianization of the city, as they betray a shared anxiety about the potential of religious competitors to influence the population of Constantinople and thus reveal the tenuous nature of the cultural *élite*'s hold over Constantinopolitan religious frameworks. Consequently, we can treat these texts as artifacts of the rhetorical structures that enabled contestations and competitions among the city's cultural *élite*. For example, we can read these texts with particular attention to their ideological agendas and the social configurations their authors hoped to bring to fruition. We can also examine them for shared sites of contention, including flashpoints for religious violence, which provide us mediated access to the strategies used to advance different visions of normative imperial identities.

Theoretical Frameworks

In order to examine the role of public ritual practice in the religious transformation of Constantinople, I analyze the peculiar landscape of city during the course of the fourth and fifth centuries through a variety of relevant theoretical lenses. This allows us to approach the social world in which the people of Constantinople lived

with greater nuance and consider the role of religious ritual in the cultural changes that occurred during this period.

1. Practice, Ritual, and Performance. My primary theoretical frame consists of the theories of practice and ritualization as elaborated by Marcel Mauss, Pierre Bourdieu, and Catherine Bell, who argue that the continuous and repeated performance of actions trains an individual in a social system and enables him or her to act within that system.⁵⁴ However, my interest here is not to produce a study of ritual or performance theory, but rather to utilize these theories to think about how ritual life in late antique Constantinople contributed to large-scale shifts in religious identification. The advantage of utilizing these theories is that they allow us to consider the effects of ritual performance on the person-in-society, an important nuance that allows us to examine the behavior of both individuals within groups and groups composed of individuals. Examining public ritual life in late antique Constantinople through this lenses, I propose, allows us to understand late antique ritual as a set of mechanisms or a space through which interested parties could naturalize social norms and enable shifts in behaviors.

Late antique culture was highly performative and relied heavily on a set of expectations that guided the actions of a wide variety of cultural agents, that is, individuals with a vested interest in dictating the shared identity of a group. In our period the clearest examples of such individuals include the emperor, civic magistrates, bishops,

⁵⁴ Mauss 1979: 95–105; Bourdieu 1977, and Bell 1992. Discussions of these theories are far more extensive than my survey here can provide. Because my aim is not to provide an exhaustive analysis of performance and ritual theory or to establish a new theory of ritualization, I confine my discussion to those theorists that I find to have the greatest explanatory power given the present context.

and other members of the cultural élite.⁵⁵ This aspect of late antique culture has previously been remarked upon in regard to imperial ceremony and the traditional system of *paideia*, in which repeated engagement in prescribed modes of discourse and comportment trained élite bodies to act fluently according to the norms of this performative culture. Civic and religious rituals were similarly performative in so far as they were repeated patterns of behavior that followed a script that communicated a set of cultural assumptions. In a related way, public spectacles (e.g., games, dramas, pantomimes) communicated ideas about what it meant to be an inhabitant of the *polis* or the empire beyond the ranks of the educated élite, and thus facilitated the maintenance of civic and imperial identities.⁵⁶

The cult practices that are the focus of this dissertation occurred in public space and as a consequence were accessible to both those individuals who identified as Christian and those who identified with other religious groups. These practices thus afforded a certain amount of portability across ritualized settings (e.g., imperial processions and relic processions) or activities of daily life (e.g., participating in a procession on a street, then walking that same street later to return home or engage in commercial activity). In some instances, this portability can be seen in the form of easily remembered hymns and formulae that provided participants markers of religious identity. Impressions of ritual actions could continue to shape the individual's understanding of the role of Christianity in civic life long after a ritual event had concluded. Christine

⁵⁵ See the now classic study of Sabine MacCormack on imperial ceremony (1981). *Paideia* in late antique society has been the subject of numerous studies; see esp. Kastner 1998; Av. Cameron 1991: 73–84, 139–40; Brown 1992: 35–58; and the collection of essays in Too 2001.

⁵⁶ See Veyne 1976 (English translation, 1990); the collected articles in Bergmann and Kondoleon 1999; Leyerle 2001: 13–41; Maxwell 2006: 49–56; and Webb 2008: 24–43.

Shepardson has recently argued that such impressions could make the participants of ritual action into moving “loci of Christianity”—nodes of religious identity, if you will, in the social fabric of the city.⁵⁷ Because groups are composed of individuals, individual shifts in perceptions of the religious landscape contributed to shifts in the larger group. Examining cult events as performative actions that construct meaning for the individual and continue to resonate after the duration of the event allows us to better consider how these practices were a vehicle whereby individuals who may not have readily identified themselves as Christian could come to regard Christian practices as part of state cult, thus naturalizing Christianity within the civic landscape and facilitating the Christianization of a city.

Yet these modes of performance were often contested and critiqued across social groups. Christian bishops frequently derided the performance of traditional, non-Christian cultural forms (e.g., rhetoric, theatrical production, ritual procession) and attempted to distance themselves from such performances, even while creatively engaging the very same mechanisms of performance. Prime examples of such critique are demonstrated by the invective of John Chrysostom against the ongoing production of the traditional spectacles of the city, particularly the theater and horseraces, or the festivals of Jews in Antioch.⁵⁸ What might these critiques and innovations reveal about the exchange and transformation of cultural ideas, and religious frameworks?

2. *Social Groups, Religious Diversity.* There has been a tendency in modern studies on late antique religious diversity to treat religious groups as discretely bounded

⁵⁷ Shepardson 2014: 186–87.

⁵⁸ See especially John Chrysostom’s *Against the Games and Theaters* and his homilies *Against the Jews*.

entities, largely because our sources treat them as such and encourage their audiences to do the same. However, recent studies have increasingly recognized that the distinction between Christians and competing groups during this time period is largely an artificial construct promulgated by Christian authors who were interested in asserting such divisions.⁵⁹ For those who were not the religious élite of Constantinople, would “Christian” be the primary identification individuals would provide if asked?⁶⁰ To paraphrase a recent remark by Peter Brown, the everyday Christians of fourth-century Constantinople did not spend their entire time being Christians.⁶¹ I propose that we begin with the identification of Constantinopolitan and ask what that identification would have meant for individuals’ social experiences as we move from the early fourth century toward the mid-fifth century.

My approach to this question depends on a theory of group formation as laid out by Rogers Brubaker, whose work on modern census data demonstrates the interplay between the assignment of social categories and group formations.⁶² Brubaker argues that cultural entrepreneurs, individuals with invested interests in a putative group, develop already-existing social categories (e.g., ethnicity, religion) in order to distinguish members of these categories from those of other categories. This type of activity

⁵⁹ See for example, Lieu, North, and Rajak 1992; Lieu 2004; Perkins 2009; and Rebillard 2012.

⁶⁰ Individuals identified among the religious élite of Constantinople include Paul of Constantinople, Makedonios, Gregory of Nazianzos, John Chrysostom, Nestorios, and Proklos. I recognize that this is a very modern question. I also wonder whether even the religious élite would identify first as Christians and second as Romans.

⁶¹ Brown, December 19, 2013, “Review of *From Shame to Sin: The Christian Transformation of Sexual Morality in Late Antiquity*, by Kyle Harper” (Harvard University Press) (New York review of books: <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/archives/2013/dec/19/rome-sex-freedom/>).

⁶² Brubaker 2004: esp. 7–18, 64–78.

facilitates the establishment of a recognizable group identity as seen from both inside and outside that group, even when the group itself is not a bounded entity and supposed members identify themselves in any number of ways depending on social situation or circumstances. In the cases that Brubaker studies, the process of census-taking creates exclusive distinctions between non-exclusive identifications and forces an individual to choose an identity, a process upon which ethnopolitical entrepreneurs can then capitalize.

A similar process can be seen in the activities of late antique Christian homilists, who construct strict boundaries between cultic groups (Christian vs. “pagan”, Christian vs. Jew, Nicene vs. Arian, etc.) and demand their listeners to choose between those categories. Following Brubaker, Éric Rebillard has recently analyzed the social processes involved in Christian self-identification in Roman North Africa over the course of the second through the fourth centuries. Relying on Brubaker’s work, Rebillard considers the various “category memberships” that would have governed the lives of individuals in North Africa. He further looks for evidence of how “salient” a given identity would have been for various individuals (i.e., “its probability of being activated in a situation”), in tandem with the contexts in which those identities would be activated (“the condition in which an identity is actively engaged, as opposed to being latent and inactive”).⁶³ While Rebillard’s analysis tends to reify identities, his study is helpful for thinking about the ways in which certain cultural agents, particularly bishops, sought to influence the behaviors and loyalties of those who identified themselves, however loosely, as Christians.

⁶³ Rebillard 2012: 4.

We should, then, be cautious about assuming that our own analytical categories would be meaningful to the average Constantinopolitan (i.e., a non-specialist). This is not to say that what we might perceive as religious and sectarian categories were entirely inoperative for individual actors, for these categories clearly mattered immensely to the authors of the period, who frequently had a stake in demarcating sharp boundaries between religious groups and imposing identifiable markers for group membership, most notably through the recitation of doctrinal formulations. Ultimately, however, adopting these categories for our own analysis can be misleading, for they impose assertions of boundedness and obscure the fluidity of cultic configurations on the ground.⁶⁴ Moreover, such categories do not recognize that a bishop could attract a following in a way that could be less connected to his doctrinal leanings than to his personality and rhetorical skill.

3. Competition, Religious Violence. Transitions in the primary cult identification among the population of Constantinople can also reflect competition between the various factions within its cultural élite. Here, Pierre Bourdieu's theorization of habitus, taste, and class distinction can be helpful in teasing out the dynamics and misrecognitions involved in these competitions.⁶⁵ Frequently, attachment to a particular group is manifested through the adoption of theological formulae, as seen in fervent doctrinal debates of the period. This attachment may also be marked by distinct choices in ritual action, for instance, Julian's choice to practice animal sacrifice and divination, or the preference for bread and wine sacrifice and the veneration of relics. In other instances, however,

⁶⁴ For the use of categories by social entrepreneurs to construct notions of a bounded group and for a critique of adopting these same categories for our own analyses, see Brubaker 2004: 10, 37.

⁶⁵ See Bourdieu 1984: esp. 49–55, 438–67.

distinction in the scripts utilized in cult action (i.e., ritual) is less clear, especially among those who do not number among the élite. Such fluidity in cult practice is evident in such examples as soldiers who do not realize that they have participated in traditional cult when they offer incense or in the hymnographic competitions between Christian groups in the streets of Constantinople.⁶⁶ Consequently, the competition witnessed on the level of opposing factions of cultural élites might be marked by distinctions in taste, even when these distinctions may not be reflected in changes in ritual practice among the lower ranks of Constantinopolitan society.

Another way in which competition between groups is manifested in late antique cities is through violence, as has been much discussed in recent studies.⁶⁷ While certain cults and their primary actors held imperial favor, other cults and their actors would flirt on the margins of official cult. These groups may not always have been illicit, although sometimes they were, as is the case of the Manichaeans and other groups that were targeted by imperial rescripts during the 380s.⁶⁸ Depending on the current political climate, the dynamics of official religion could change, sometimes quite quickly. We should not downplay the potential for real conflict between cultic groups or the degree to which ritual itself could be perceived as a violent action. Political instability often offered

⁶⁶ **Incense:** Sozomen, *Eccl. hist.* 5.17; Philostorgios, *Eccl. hist.* 2.17. **Hymnographic competition:** Sokrates, *Eccl. hist.* 6.8; Sozomen, *Eccl. hist.* 8.8.

⁶⁷ The pervasiveness of violence in the Roman empire is well documented, and there is a growing corpus of literature addressing the role of violence in identity formation and the maintenance of boundaries in late antiquity. See esp. Castelli 2004; Gaddis 2005; Frilingos 2009; Drake 2011; and Shaw 2013; as well as articles in the volume on violence in late antiquity edited by Drake (2006).

⁶⁸ For example, CTh 16. 5.6 (January 381), 16.5.7 (May 381), 16.5.11 (July 383). For the compilation of the Code, see Honoré 1998: 123–27, 136–53; Harries 1999b: 22–25; J. Matthews 2000: 55–62, 67–70, and Curran 2000: 161–69. For discussion on the evidentiary value of the Theodosian Code and strategies for reading its evidence, see Millar 2006: 7–13.

an opening for a marginalized group to gain traction and attempt to reposition itself within the lines of imperial religion, as when a group of Makedonians burned the house of Nektarios, the Nicene bishop under Theodosios I's patronage, when rumors of the emperor's defeat by a usurper reached the city in 388.⁶⁹

Modern theories of violence can help us tease out the role of these conflicts in creating a sense of groupness. Here I largely follow David Riches, who defines violence as “an act of physical hurt [done to others] deemed legitimate by the performer and illegitimate by (some) witnesses.”⁷⁰ The benefit of Riches' definition is that it considers violence to be a relational act and takes into account differences in perspective and contestation over how the act is interpreted by the parties involved. In short, this definition opens a way for us to consider how violence is a strategy for human action, regardless of questions of legitimacy and cultural context. One should, however, include non-physical acts (e.g., intimidation, rhetorical coercion, and ostracism), because these, too, are acts of harm and have the potential to change the agency of those involved, even if the intentions behind and/or the consequences resulting from those actions are misrecognized. In other words, by violence I mean any act, physical or verbal, that inflicts bodily harm, destroys property, or is intended to limit the agency or rights of its victim(s) while increasing the status, power, or agency of its perpetrator(s).⁷¹ It should be

⁶⁹ Sokrates, *Eccl. hist.* 5.13; cf. Snee 1998: 160.

⁷⁰ Riches 1986: 8. Riches' definition is adopted, critiqued, and modified by other theorists. Pamela Stewart and Andrew Strathern, for example, note that Riches' definition encourages us to think about violence as a rational and premeditated action, when in fact neither condition is necessary. See Stewart and Strathern 2002: 6–7.

⁷¹ This does not mean that such an act must be successful to be considered violent. While many analysts focus on physical violence, Bettina Schmidt includes symbolic and imagined violence in her analysis; see Schmidt 2011: 67–69. Riches prefers to discuss violence “in terms of a loss of social prestige”

noted that under my broad working definition of violence, even textual production can be considered an act of violence.

This theoretical work has obvious limitations when applied to the study of the ancient world, not least because our access to social situations is significantly constrained by the nature of our sources and because modern assumptions about the normative mechanisms of “the State” do not align neatly with imperial Roman power structures. In addition, the labeling of acts as violent by cultural agents, including modern analysts, is frequently tied to the definitions of power, in which power is the legitimate exercise of physical force and violence the illegitimate exercise of such force. Such a distinction, however, removes a significant corpus of events from our analysis of violence as a strategy of social behavior.⁷² We can become blind to the violent actions of the entities that we have deemed legitimate. This blindness is compounded when studying late antique violence, as our sources carry their own perceptions about the legitimacy of the incidents and individuals they present.

Approaching the study of Constantinopolitan civic cult from these perspectives offers a greater degree of analytical flexibility, in that it corrects a tendency to flatten the city’s cultic landscape into a single Christian paradigm, particularly a post-Theodosian,

rather than as “an assault on the human psyche;” Riches 1986: 23. I contend that the loss of social prestige corresponds to a loss of agency, in that it reduces the traction of that individual’s or group’s efforts to dictate social norms.

⁷² See Whitehead 2004: 11–12, 16 and Carlson 2011: 15. Riches makes the important observation that the performer of violence deems his action legitimate, whereas the victim and (some) witnesses contest the legitimacy of the action; Riches 1986: 2–3, 9–11. My use of violence as a category of analysis here does not impute any moral judgment regarding those actions or the legitimacy or illegitimacy of those actions. Indeed, I am wholly uninterested in assigning such value judgments. Rather, I want to consider the ways cultural producers can mobilize popular sentiment toward their preferred social configurations.

Nicene Christian orthodoxy. Reconsidering the cult landscape with a view towards “imperial” and “civic” cult allows us to draw a map of Constantinople that takes into account the range of “tangible” cult activities that individuals would have encountered, that is, those aspects of cult practice that were visible in the public eye and available for engagement by the inhabitants and visitors to the city. Tangible cult would have included imperial representatives entrusted with “official” civic cult as well as those individuals on the fringes of “official” cult, but still in the public eye. This would also include cult life on smaller scales, including the local cult sites in the city’s urban districts and neighborhood shrines, such as the shrine at Karya mansion, the shrine of the Forty Martyrs at the city walls, and the numerous shrines constructed to house the relics imported to the city by the Theodosian dynasty. This highly localized activity is sometimes more difficult to extract from the sources, often coming into view only when the imperial household engages with these sites. Consequently, these locations can only be examined as far as those sources will allow.

At the same time, it is important to note that scholarly analysis has a tendency to make social processes appear clean and uncomplicated, when in fact those processes are extremely messy, rife with conflict and competing interests. While my analysis in this dissertation often focuses on larger patterns of thought and social mechanisms, my ultimate goal is to produce a more nuanced analysis of public ritual activity in late antique Constantinople, and by extension, for similar activity in other late antique Roman cities.

In a certain way, this dissertation might appear to be a study of conversion in so far as it examines how people can come to place themselves within a new religious

system. Fundamentally, however, this study is not about conversion at all, but about large-scale social changes over the course of a few generations. In modern parlance, conversion implies choice and a relatively high degree of autonomy or individuality. While there were many instances in which the average late antique Constantinopolitan may have had the agency to make such choices about “religious affiliations,” I argue that a more complex set of dynamics are involved in studying Constantinopolitan civic religion, which dictated individual, familial, and social group participation in what appears to us to be clearly determined Christian practices. I would even venture to say that the confluence of factors necessary for this rearrangement of civic religion during the fourth century was at times a matter of chance; saying this, however, does not deny the efforts undertaken by religious agents (bishops, monks, magistrates, the emperor) to organize religious frameworks in their favor.

As with any study, my study necessarily glosses over certain social dynamics and distinctions. First, on the whole I have set aside a substantial segment of actors within the Constantinopolitan population, namely its growing ascetic community. These individuals were major players in the ecclesiastical politics of the city, especially in the closing years of the fourth century and the entirety of Theodosios II’s reign. This omission is intentional. This “group” of people was in no way unified or homogenous, and our access to the earliest networks and the activities of individual ascetics in the period before the Theodosian dynasty is limited. Any attempt to trace their networks and formative activities must be the subject of its own study.⁷³ However, I have endeavored to bring the

⁷³ Peter Hatlie has attempted to do address the earliest period of ascetic communities in Constantinople in his study of the history of monasticism in the city; however, he envisions fairly organized groups of monks living in nascent monasteries and sharing doctrinal commitments. As should be apparent from my arguments in Chapter 3, I find these assumptions problematic and believe a reexamination of this

more prominent of these individuals into my discussion without allowing the complexities of these networks and to distract from my larger arguments.

Second, I am faced with the unfortunate limitations involved in identifying the distinct ways in which certain sub-groups within the city engaged with cult. Of particular note in this regard is an examination of the ways in which women engaged in public ritual life. As much as I would like to examine how the women's engagement in civic cult differed from men's engagement, we rarely have access to such data. Important exceptions include John Chrysostom's descriptions of the presence of the empress and virgins in relic processions; Sokrates' narrative of violence against homoousian women during the reign of Constantius; and Sozomen's account of Eusebia the Makedonian deaconess who possessed the relics of the forty martyrs.⁷⁴ Interpreting these comments is challenging, for while the narratives may reveal real practices, in many cases their authors may be using women, and especially the perpetration of violence against women, as a way of impugning competitors. That said, these narratives suggest that women were engaging in cult in interesting, and to their authors' eyes, contestable, ways. Moreover, as Bell notes, rituals reproduce social structures, including gender hierarchies, and make those structures appear natural. The participation (or even non-participation) in the actions of civic cult would situate women within social hierarchies of late antique Constantinople.⁷⁵

period is in order. Sarah Insley is currently working on a project that promises to address this problem. See Hatlie 2007: 62–89.

⁷⁴ See John Chrysostom, *Homily Delivered after the Remains of the Martyrs* (PG 63.468–69); Sozomen, *Eccl. hist.* 9.2.

⁷⁵ The same can be said of other groups not privileged by our sources, e.g., slaves, Goths, non-residents.

OUTLINE OF THIS STUDY

The following chapters explore the mechanisms and performance of civic cult in Constantinople as they developed during the fourth and early fifth centuries. I consider the workings of civic cult broadly speaking; that is to say, I explore the practices of everyday social relations as they occurred through collective ritual engagement in the public spaces of the city, led by specialists on behalf of the civic community. Throughout this study, I attend to rhetoric, particularly its construction of and appeals to a sense of groupness, as it intersected with these structures and practices.

Chapter 2 outlines Constantinople's religious landscape under Constantine. As we will see, Constantine refounded Byzantium in 324 with a decidedly imperial character. While Constantine granted Christian cult sites a place within this rapidly developing landscape, we should not imagine that Christianity had supplanted traditional cults. Rather, traditional paradigms of imperial religion, including the centrality of the emperor as both an agent and object of cult, governed the frameworks of civic cult. I argue that Christian élites sought to recast the traditionalist landscape they encountered into one that could solidify their new, and still insecure, position within imperial religious structures. I conclude the chapter by exploring one instance of this type of reinterpretation, namely, Eusebios of Caesarea's *ekphrasis* of the Apostoleion, Constantine's mausoleum, in which he dictates how the viewer should experience the monument as a Christian temple, stripped of its traditional resonances. I conclude that Eusebios' reinterpretation of the mausoleum elided Christian and imperial practices in a prominent and highly charged, physical location and thus provided a focal point for constructing a normative, imperial Christian identity.

Chapter 3 builds upon these observations by examining the landscape of the city during the roughly sixty years following Constantine's death. There I interrogate the rigidity of religious categories communicated by late antique élites and consider the competition among different actors for imperial favor. This competitive environment, I argue, led to conflicts, even violence, within Constantinople's social landscape, of which cultural entrepreneurs could take advantage in their efforts to construct boundaries between religious groups. I then examine the politics of memorialization, in which groups strove to control the memories embedded in the city's monuments and to erase or vilify their competitors through those same monuments.

In Chapter 4 I approach the formation of the group and its boundaries from a different perspective, namely, the performance of ritual. Two dynamics are crucial here: the highly performative nature of ritual action and the citationality between modes of ritualized actions. I begin the chapter by examining John Chrysostom's formulation of the psychagogical role of *mimesis* (imitation) and his anxiety over the disastrous consequences of engaging in the wrong types of practices. For Chrysostom individuals were never simply passive witnesses to ritualized behaviors. Their mere presence within the performative environment brought them into the drama of these social events and forced their consent to the meanings, hierarchies, and commitments communicated therein. Moreover, as I argue in the second half of the chapter, despite the fact that our sources construct and want to impose clear divisions between the rituals of different groups, they also reveal that the communal rituals of late antique Constantinople cited each other; they loosely followed and improvised on a script or shared vocabulary of action in ways that created, reinforced, and shifted meanings. Consequently, ritual action

was a valuable tool for Chrysostom and others interested in forming notions of groupness and in facilitating large-scale shifts in religious identification within the contested physical landscape.

My approaches in Chapters 3 and 4 are applied to two different periods: violence and memory in the period between 337–381, with the aftereffects of those memories in the fifth century; and the performance of ritual in the short period of John Chrysostom's episcopacy, 397–404. This focus is the consequence of the fact that these are the periods for which the respective evidence is the richest. However, I would argue that these social processes occurred throughout the entire period under investigation.

With Chapter 5, I turn to the continued development of Constantinople's religious structures under Theodosios II (408–450). I argue that it is during this period that we see the fruition of Theodosian Christianity, as the imperial administration orchestrated a series of legislative and ecclesiastical moves aimed at homogenizing civic and imperial cult under the formulations of Nicaea as represented through communion with the imperial bishop at Constantinople. Theodosios II became the sole Augustus in the East at the young age of seven, and as he attained his majority he faced the challenge of asserting his authority within the structures of imperial administration. I propose that the consolidation of imperial religion provided the emperor one way to do this and note that the increasing monopoly of Theodosian Christianity within imperial religion coincided with key moments in the young emperor's maturation, namely, the attainment of his legal majority in 415/6, his marriage and the birth of his first child in 421/2, and his "full adulthood" from 428 onwards. These moves were accompanied by the development of a

rhetoric of Christian imperial identity that tied the authority of Theodosios II and the bishop of Constantinople to their perceived commitments to Nicene orthodoxy.

Finally, a quick note is in order regarding the conventions I have adopted for Greek names and toponyms. In general, I have chosen to transliterate Greek names rather than use their Latin (or English) variations. Conventions among studies of the eastern late antique Mediterranean have increasingly followed this practice. Hence, I refer to the Apostoleion rather than the Church of the Holy Apostles, and to Theodosios, Sokrates, and Nestorios. In some important instances, this practice has the benefit of defamiliarizing certain actors or locations in a way that allows for a greater conceptual range to appear. For example, when we refer to the edifice in which the bodies of Constantine and subsequent emperors were entombed as the Apostoleion, the building's simultaneous resonances as an imperial mausoleum, a Christian cult site, and a locus of traditional emperor-cult can be allowed to operate in tension with each other.

However, perfect consistency is not possible, particularly regarding certain names (e.g., Constantinople, Constantine, Nicaea), for which the Latin variations and their English renderings are deeply ingrained in modern scholarship. In these cases, transliteration would be jarring enough to distract from the arguments herein, and I consequently leave those names and toponyms in the more familiar English renderings.

CHAPTER 2 CONSTANTINE, CONSTANTINOPLE, AND CHRISTIANITY

In November 324 construction began in the small Greek city of Byzantium. Six years later, on May 11 330, Constantine formally dedicated his city, designating it a New Rome. Constantinople has frequently been called a Christian city, a new Christian capital for the first Christian emperor. However, the cultic environment of Constantinople's early decades is more complicated. The goal of this and the following chapter is to map out the spectrum of possible religious structures in Constantinople during the period between Constantine's foundation of the city and the death of Theodosios I in 395. The present chapter focuses on imperial religion in the city during Constantine's lifetime, whereas the next chapter will examine the competition to control the narratives of religious history in the half-century following Constantine's death. I begin with a discussion of the emperor's traditional place in Roman religious structures, before examining the religious landscape of Constantine's new city. I argue that the traditionalist tenor of Constantinople's topography presented challenges to Christian interpreters, who struggled to reinterpret that landscape as Christian. I conclude with a study of Eusebios of Caesarea's *ekphrasis* (descriptive speech) on the Apostoleion, Constantine's mausoleum, as an example of Christian efforts to strip imperial monuments of traditional resonances in order to impose Christian meaning in their stead. Eusebios' efforts to control the interpretation of Constantinople's landscape give us a foretaste of the contests between

religious actors for control of that landscape that occur repeatedly in the century following Constantine's death.

CONSTANTINE AND THE IDIOM OF IMPERIAL RELIGIOUS DUTY

A persisting point of debate in modern scholarship is the degree of Constantine's commitment to Christianity and his intentions for transforming the religious landscape of the empire.¹ One factor underlying this debate is a widely held assumption, based in part on Eusebios' presentation, that Constantine represented a functional break from the earlier paradigms for the imperial religious responsibility, exhibited through the transformation of the office of emperor into a primarily, if not entirely, secular position.² However, the modern political categories that separate secular and religious authority would have been utterly meaningless to an inhabitant of the ancient Mediterranean basin. Such a separation had little, if any, history in Roman cultural structures or in the

¹ The positions on Constantine's participation in traditional cultic paradigms can be divided into roughly two camps. On the one hand is the position, following the testimony of Eusebios, that Constantine intentionally initiated a radical transformation of the empire's religious structures through the suppression of traditional cult, even if his efforts were met with varied levels of success. Timothy D. Barnes, for example, has repeatedly defended the general reliability of the Eusebian narrative, while recognizing Eusebios' errors in chronology, distortion of sources, and ideological motives; Barnes 1981: 247 and more recently 2011: 7–8, 9–13. On the other hand is the position that while Constantine personally favored Christianity and enacted certain measures to protect and even privilege Christians, his general policy was one of tolerance toward both Christianity in its various permutations and traditional cults. This position is exemplified H. A. Drake, who argues that intolerance (or more properly religious coercion) against traditional cults originated from the bishops rather than Constantine. See especially Drake 2000: 320–21, 346–49.

² As Gilbert Dagron and H. A. Drake have both noted, the characterization of the emperor's authority as "secular" is the result of being ensconced in post-Enlightenment Western political theory, with its strong instinct to construct barriers between secular and ecclesiastical authority. Drake argues that theories and principles that underlie the modern state relegate certain spheres of activity into the "secular" and the "religious." Particularly important is the circumscription of the "religious" to "preparation for the afterlife" with little room (or tolerance) for the divine interaction in affairs of the state. As Drake notes, such a division of labor, so to speak, does not fit Roman notions of religion. Similar objections are raised by Dagron, who connects the modern dichotomy between Church and State to attempts to determine whether Byzantine emperors, beginning with Constantine, were considered priests. Drake 2011: 214–15; Dagron 2003: 2–3.

development of the office of emperor. Rather, these spheres had long been intertwined, with secular agents acting as religious agents and vice versa.³ Moreover, throughout most of Roman history, the emperor was assumed to be a prominent figure in Roman imperial religion, both as the holder of a collection of prominent priesthoods and as the object of cult.⁴ Constantine's acts of patronage in the building of cult sites were clearly in line with an ancient practice of emperors establishing or refurbishing temples in honor of the gods who aided in their success, and like his predecessors, Constantine continued to fulfill the roles expected of the emperor in the traditional cult practices of the empire, from participating in the rituals of civic religion to being an object of cult himself.⁵

These religious duties can be seen most visibly in the continued identification of the reigning emperor as *pontifex maximus* during the fourth century.⁶ As *pontifex maximus* an emperor would have expected to exercise his judgment in matters concerning imperial religion and, on occasion, more local religious matters. Constantine's convening

³ See discussion in Chapter 1, pp. 14–18.

⁴ The role of the emperor in Roman religion, especially in the early empire, has been explored in a number of excellent studies. See especially Rives 1995: 63–65, 75–76 and 2007: 149–156; Beard 1998.1: 186–91; Av. Cameron and Hall 1999: 148–56. For the counter position that emperors were not the object of cult, see Liebeschuetz 1979: 242–43.

⁵ See Eusebios, *Life of Constantine*, esp. book 3. It should also be noted that Eusebios, our main source for Constantine's religious activities, paints Constantine as the new Augustus, who brings new life to the failing health of the empire and sets aright the decline in matters of cult. For a brief summary of the consonance between Constantine and Augustus, see Limberis 1994: 7–10, 38. In later rhetoric, Constantine himself would become an exemplar of emperorship, both as the good emperor and as the bad emperor. Consider, for example, Themistios' invocation of Constantine in his praise of Jovian as a “very Constantine” (in contrast to Constantius and Julian, whom he had praised during their reigns) in *Oration* 5.70d. As I note in Chapter 5 (pp. 231–34), Constantine becomes the primary authorizing agent for Theodosios II, particularly in Sozomen's assertion that Constantine founded the city as a pristinely Christian civic space, rehabilitated and enhanced by Theodosios I and defended by Theodosios II.

⁶ James Rives (2007: 46) cautions against imposing a model of hierarchy in which the emperor exercises his authority as *pontifex maximus* over other civic priests outside the city of Rome. However, I believe that our evidence suggests that Constantine, Julian, and the emperors of the Theodosian dynasty understood this title as having wider jurisdiction outside the city of Rome.

of and insistence in sitting at the Council of Nicaea fits within the purview of the emperor's role as *pontifex maximus*, as do his directives against animal sacrifice and establishment of Sundays as festal days.⁷ A number of scholars have argued that Constantine interpreted this title literally and depended on its weight to advance pro-Christian legislation and to insert himself into Christian doctrinal debates. Vasiliki Limberis, for example, has argued that Constantine's assertion to the bishops that he was *episkopos* "to those outside (τῶν ἔκτος)" depended on the title of *pontifex maximus*.⁸ In his *Life of Constantine*, Eusebios even intimates that it was the emperor himself who performed the divine mysteries:

On days of the Feast of the Saviour...[Constantine] would perform the divine mysteries with his whole strength and body, on the one hand wholly dedicated to purity of life, and on the other initiating the festival for all. He transformed the sacred vigil into daylight, as those appointed to the task lit huge wax tapers throughout the city...When dawn interposed, in imitation of the beneficence of the Saviour he opened his beneficent hand to all the provinces, peoples, and cities, making rich gifts of every kind to them all.⁹

⁷ **Council of Nicaea:** Eusebios, *Life of Constantine* 3.5.3–6.1. **Ban of animal sacrifice:** Eusebios, *Life of Constantine* 2.45.1, 4.23, 4.25.1; CTh 16.10.2 (with the caveat that this law was issued under Constantius II in 341). Later in the fourth century Libanios claims that Constantine had not banned animal sacrifice; Libanios, *Oration* 30 (On the Temples). **Establishment of festal days:** Eusebios, *Life of Constantine* 4.18.2–3; CJ 3.12.2; for Constantine's inclusion of Fridays as fast-days, see Sozomen, *Eccl. Hist.* 1.8.11–12.

⁸ Eusebios, *Life of Constantine* 4.24. The significance of the phrase ἐπίσκοπος τῶν ἔκτος is much debated. Straub understood Eusebios' employment of the phrase as evidence of the fourth-century bishop's attempt to reconcile Constantine's exercise of traditional imperial authority within Roman religion with Christianity's new position in imperial religion. He further argues that this phrase is Constantine's assertion of his divinely ordained authority over the empire in both secular and religious matters. Limberis and Dagron read Eusebios' rhetoric here as a means of reigning in imperial power in matters of religion, and thus asserting the authority of the bishops over and against that of the emperor. Straub 1967: 49–52; Limberis 1994: 24; Dagron 2003: 133–35. Some scholars have regarded the phrase as an interpolation: Seston 1974: 130.

⁹ Eusebios, *Life of Constantine* 4.22.1–2: ταῖς δὲ τῆς σωτηρίου ἑορτῆς ἡμέραις...τὰς θείας ἱεροφαντίας ἐτελείτο, ὥδε μὲν ἀγνεῖα βίου ὅλως ἀνακείμενος, ὥδε δὲ τοῖς πᾶσι τῆς ἑορτῆς ἐξάρχων. τὴν δ' ἱερὰν διανυκτέρευσιν μετέβαλλεν εἰς ἡμερινὰ φῶτα, κηροῦ κίονας ὑψηλοτάτους καθ' ὅλης ἐξαπτόντων τῆς πόλεως τῶν ἐπὶ τούτῳ τεταγμένων, λαμπάδες δ' ἦσαν πυρὸς πάντα φωτίζουσαι τόπον... διαλαβούσης δὲ τῆς ἕως...πᾶσιν ἔθνεσι λαοῖς τε καὶ δήμοις τὴν εὐεργετικὴν ἐξήπλου δεξιάν, πλούσια πάντα τοῖς πᾶσι δωρούμενος. (Trans. Av. Cameron and Hall 1999.)

Eusebios presents a Constantine who is actively engaged in the ritual life of the empire, not simply by arranging for particular ritual actions, but also by performing them himself. On account of the challenge this presents to a secularizing reading of Constantine's reign (not to mention the discomfort of an emperor performing the mysteries), some interpreters have been nervous about this passage and have attempted to distance Eusebios from the possibility that he is implying that Constantine is officiating at liturgy.¹⁰ However, Eusebios' language seems to me quite explicit: Constantine does not merely participate in the rites, but he *performs* (ἐτελεῖτο) and *leads* (ἐξάρχων) them.

Constantine's immediate successors continued to exercise their authority as *pontifex maximus* in cult matters. We can see this in Constantius' appointments of imperial bishops (e.g., Eusebios of Nikomedia) as well as in Julian's dismissal of those same bishops and the measures he took to reorient imperial cult after the death of Constantius. While it is often assumed that the title of *pontifex maximus* was finally abandoned by Gratian between 375 and 383, it seems clear to me that the Theodosian dynasty continued to follow an earlier pattern of imperial engagement in matters of cult, even if its members did not formally adopt the title.¹¹ For example, an imperial

¹⁰ See, for example, Straub 1967: 49–50.

¹¹ The evidence for the abandonment of the title following the reign of Valentinian (364–375) is unclear. As historian Alan Cameron has noted, the evidence is largely circumstantial, based on the absence of inscriptional references to the emperor's pontifical office for Theodosios I and his successors and the assertion of Zosimos, a sixth-century historian who faulted Constantine and his successors for abandoning traditional religion, that Gratian refused the title. Cameron argues that even before Gratian imperial titulature was frequently abbreviated and suggests that the inclusion of *maximus* in titulature could be a reference to this office. Cameron documents only four examples of full titulature, including *pontifex maximus* in its extended form, in the fifty years following Constantine: ILS 732 (for Constantius); ILS 753 (for Julian); ILS 771 and CIL 2.4733 (both for Valentinian). In addition to these inscriptions, we can include Julian's inclusion of the Greek form of the title (ἀρχιερεὺς) in his titulature (Letter 57 [Wright] and *Misopogon* 362b) and the modified title of *pontifex inclitus* in the titulature of the fifth and sixth centuries. See discussions in Al. Cameron 2007: 355–356, 363–65; Barnes 2011: 25.

pronouncement (preserved in the Theodosian Code) from Theodosios I dating to February 28, 380, and addressed to the people of Constantinople delineates the boundaries of imperial Christianity within the walls of Constantinople:

All peoples who are ruled by the administration of our Clemency shall practice that religion which the divine Peter the Apostle transmitted to the Romans, as the religion which he introduced makes clear even unto this day. It is evident that this is the religion that is followed by the Pontiff Damasus and by Peter, Bishop of Alexandria...that is according to the apostolic discipline and the evangelic doctrine, we believe in the single Deity of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, under the concept of equal majesty and of the Holy Trinity...[Those who do not follow this rule] shall sustain the infamy of heretical dogmas, their meeting places shall not receive the name of churches, and they shall be smitten...by the retribution of Our own initiative.¹²

The letter constructs the normative Constantinopolitan worshipper by assent to the theological formulae of Nicaea and maintaining *koinonia* with Damasus of Rome and Peter of Alexandria. In short, this document could be seen as a programmatic policy statement regarding legitimate civic cult—activity well within the traditional jurisdiction of the *pontifex maximus*.¹³ As I will discuss further in Chapter 5, Theodosios II asserts

¹² CTh 16.1.2: Cunctos populos, quos clementiae nostrae regit temperamentum, in tali volumus religione versari, quam divinum Petrum apostolum tradidisse Romanis religio usque ad nunc ab ipso insinuata declarat quam que pontificem Damasum sequi claret et Petrum Alexandriae episcopum virum apostolicae sanctitatis, hoc est, ut secundum apostolicam disciplinam euangelicam que doctrinam patris et filii et spiritus sancti unam deitatem sub parili maiestate et sub pia trinitate credamus. Hanc legem sequentes Christianorum catholicorum nomen iubemus amplecti, reliquos vero dementes vesanos que iudicantes haeretici dogmatis infamiam sustinere nec conciliabula eorum ecclesiarum nomen accipere, divina primum vindicta, post etiam motus nostri, quem ex caelesti arbitrio sumpserimus, ultione plectendos.

¹³ As Neil McLynn notes, however, this letter was issued from Thessaloniki by Theodosios I several months before his arrival in Constantinople. McLynn further argues that the magistrates did not view the letter as an “official sanction” for Nicene bishops and that we should not read this “law” as evidence that the emperor “had committed himself irrevocably” to Nicene theology. McLynn 2005: 82–84. In addition to the February 380 letter is a subsequent one promulgated on January 10, 381 (CTh 16.5.6), this time from Constantinople, which explicitly identifies the creed of Nicaea as the standard of orthodox imperial Christianity.

this same authority in his directives concerning religion in both Constantinople and the empire.¹⁴

In light of these preliminary challenges to the secularizing paradigm, I propose that we consider Constantine's cultic activities within the historical context of imperial religious paradigms. It is generally clear that Constantine brought Christ into the official pantheon of the state and thus invited the cult of Christ to enter the civic landscape, but it is also clear that this invitation did not immediately entail the eradication of traditional cult practices. Despite injunctions against animal sacrifice, the traditional temples were left intact, even protected, and there was no legislation forcing the population of the empire to participate in Christian ritual practices. Constantine seems to have taken his office as *pontifex maximus* sincerely and understood its application to the religion of the empire as a whole, not exclusively to either Christianity or traditional state cult. This position has been argued before, most notably by H. A. Drake, who considers the conjunction of the traditional idiom presented in the title *pontifex maximus* and the Christian "injunction to return hate with love" as the basis of Constantine's policy of religious tolerance.¹⁵

Where I differ from Drake is that in my view, while Constantine certainly took advantage of his status as *pontifex maximus*, that same status imposed on him certain expectations regarding his place within imperial cult. The emperor's traditional role in

¹⁴ See below, pp. 217–30. For now I point the reader to CTh 16.5.65 and NTh 3.

¹⁵ Drake 2000: 466. For counterarguments that characterize Constantine's policy toward traditional cults as "intolerance" or actively persecutory, see Barnes 1981: 210–11, 247–48, and reiterated in 2011: 16. Casting the dynamics of Constantine's "religious policy" in terms of tolerance or intolerance (or indeed as a policy) is misleading, because it implies modern Western ideals about religious freedom and diversity. In a late antique context, I would argue that tolerance does not imply a lack of negative pressure or coercion, nor does it imply concord between religious groups, much less an easy inclusion of competing groups akin to modern models of religious diversity.

matters of religion did not simply cease once Christianity had become an imperial religion. The extent to which Constantine allowed the continuation of traditional Mediterranean cult practices, particularly in the latter years of his reign, is a point of contention, as is his own engagement in these practices.¹⁶ One piece of evidence that suggests that Constantine engaged in traditional practices is a representation of the emperor performing animal sacrifice during his *decennalia* in July 315 on the Arch of Constantine in Rome.¹⁷ As Jonathan Bardill notes, this image could be the result of spoliation, but I think he is right to speculate that the populace of Rome would have at least expected the emperor to offer sacrifices. An anonymous panegyric records that Constantine consulted (but rejected) the haruspices before meeting Maxentius' army at Milvian Bridge in 313.¹⁸ In 320 a lightning strike at the Colosseum also led to a

¹⁶ Constantine's engagement with traditional cult has long been controversial. See the excellent analysis of the problems Constantine's reign presents to scholarship in Dagron 2003: 127–29 and Van Dam 2011: esp. 5–14 and 219–223; see also Van Dam's wonderfully illustrative reverse chronology on pp. xii–xiii, which highlights the accretion of historiography (or even hagiography) of Constantine against his own activity. Above all, we should not assume that Constantine was a consistent agent or that his stance toward cult was static or unconstrained by convention and the actions of other agents. This temptation can be curtailed, I believe, by following the advice of Gilbert Dagron, who has rightly challenged that the key to understanding Constantine's role in the cult life of the empire—and, I argue, that of Constantine's successors—is to ask not whether and how Constantine was “pagan” or “Christian,” but rather how Constantine was “emperor.” Dagron 2003: 127–28. For a succinct critique of tendencies in the discipline of history to treat agents as consistent in their actions and possessing full freedom to act, see Drake 2000: 24–26.

¹⁷ Bardill 2012: 276. Bardill, however, is hesitant to assert that these sacrifices did occur, arguing “there is reason to wonder whether these reused sculptures are misleading, since Eusebius mentions only prayers and bloodless sacrifices.” Perhaps Bardill is too quick to trust Eusebios' account. Even if the representations on the Arch are due to spoliation, the image of Constantine as an emperor fulfilling his traditional cultic duties is significant. Based on the anonymous panegyrist's omission of a description of the expected Capitoline sacrifice during his description of Constantine's triumphal procession in Rome (*Pan. Lat.* 12.19.2–4), Johannes Straub and Richard Krautheimer both argue that the emperor refused to offer the sacrifice. I am not convinced that an argument from silence is evidence enough that Constantine did not perform the sacrifices, but neither do we have firm literary evidence that he did. See Straub 1967: 41–42; Krautheimer 1983: 42 n.3.

¹⁸ *Pan. Lat.* 12.2.4.

consultation with the haruspices, this time whose validity Constantine affirmed.¹⁹ It had traditionally been the prerogative of a consulting magistrate or emperor to affirm or veto the results of public haruspicy.²⁰ Barnes dismisses this latter incident as the result of “political preoccupation” on the part of Constantine, but it seems to me that distraction with other contingencies, particularly emergencies, can reveal much about the reality of praxis in the face of normative theological dictates.²¹

Sources post-dating Constantine suggest that practices traditionally associated with emperor-cult also continued during Constantine’s reign. Philostorgios and Sokrates, both writing from Constantinople during the second quarter of the fifth century, describe the erection of statues of Constantine in temples across the empire, where they would receive *proskynēsis* and acclamations.²² Other sources attest to the continuation of these rituals throughout the period. Themistios describes the ritual of *proskynēsis* in an oration honoring Constantius: “The more polished of them approach a little closer to you and touch upon your crown, your cloak, your inviolate belt and your glittering robe.”²³

¹⁹ CTh 16.10.1: “If it should appear that any part of Our palace or any other public work has been struck by lightning, the observance of the ancient custom shall be retained, and inquiry shall be made of the soothsayers as to the portent thereof. Written records thereof shall be very carefully collected and referred to Our Wisdom. Permission shall be granted to all other persons also to appropriate this custom to themselves, provided only that they abstain from domestic sacrifices, which are specifically prohibited.” (Si quid de palatio nostro aut ceteris operibus publicis degustatum fulgore esse constiterit, retento more veteris observantiae quid portendat, ab haruspibus requiratur et diligentissime scribtura collecta ad nostram scientiam referatur, ceteris etiam usurpandae huius consuetudinis licentia tribuenda, dummodo sacrificiis domesticis abstineant, quae specialiter prohibita sunt. Trans. Pharr 2001.) See discussion in Curran 1996: 71–72.

²⁰ Beard 1998.1: 22–23, 29.

²¹ Barnes 1981: 52.

²² Constantine’s image: Sokrates, *Eccl. hist.* 1.18.1; Philostorgios, *Eccl. hist.* 2.17.

²³ Themistios, *Oration* 1.2a: ὅσοι δὲ αὐτῶν κομψότεροι, μᾶλλον σοι προσίασιν ἐγγυτέρω, στεφάνου τε ἀπτόμενοι καὶ χλαμύδος καὶ ζώνης ἀκηράτου καὶ χιτῶνος μαρμαρυγῶν. (Trans. Heather and Moncur 2001.) John Matthews provides an overview of the practice’s development, particularly under the Dominate, in J. Matthews 1989: 244–49.

Similar rituals of reverence were expected for the statues of the emperor and the imperial family. In the mid-360s, Gregory of Nazianzos endorsed the ritual of *proskynēsis*, claiming that the mere donning of imperial regalia was not enough to confer imperial rank. Rather, Gregory asserted, the emperor must receive public honors, in person and through effigy.²⁴ In addition, the emperor received formalized and choreographed acclamation in a number of settings, including the hippodrome and the senate house.²⁵ In some instances, these acclamations shade into the honors received by the emperor in *proskynēsis*; the relationship between the two actions is fuzzy when they are directed towards the emperor or his family.²⁶ The continued importance attached to such ritualized reverence is perhaps most readily comprehended from Theodosios I's violent reaction in 387 when the Antiochenes destroyed the statues of the imperial family.²⁷ Imperial forces

²⁴ Gregory of Nazianzos, *Oration* 4.80: Νόμος ἐστὶ βασιλικὸς, οὐκ οἶδα μὲν εἰ καὶ πᾶσιν ἀνθρώποις παρ' ὅσοις τὸ βασιλεύεσθαι, Ῥωμαίοις δὲ καὶ τῶν λίαν σπουδαζομένων εἰκόσι δημοσίαις τιμᾶσθαι τοὺς βασιλεύοντας· οὐ γὰρ ἔξαρκούσιν οἱ στέφανοι καὶ τὰ διαδήματα, καὶ τὸ τῆς ἀλουργίδος ἄνθος, οἳ τε ἀριθμούμενοι λογχοφόροι καὶ τὸ τῶν ἀρχομένων πλῆθος, συγκροτεῖν τοῦτοις τὴν βασιλείαν· ἀλλὰ δεῖ καὶ **προσκυνήσεως** αὐτοῖς, ὅφ' ἧς σεμνότεροι δόξωσιν· οὐχ ἦν αὐτοὶ **προσκυνοῦνται** μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ τῆς ἐν **πλάσμασί** τε καὶ **χρώμασιν**, ἧν ἡ τὸ σέβας αὐτοῖς ἀπληστότερόν τε καὶ τελεώτερον. Susanna Elm argues that Gregory began composing *Oration* 4 while Julian was still alive, but the final redaction of the oration did not occur until after Julian's death. As Elm notes, the crucial passages for dating are 4.6.18 and 4.10. In the first passage, Gregory comments on the renewed freedom of the *logoi*, understood to be a reference to the end of Julian's prohibition against Christians holding positions as teachers in the schools in 362. The second passage refers to a dispute in Nazianzos, which has been resolved by the time Gregory composed *Oration* 6 in 364. For a summary of the debates regarding the dating of the text, see Elm 2012b: 342–43 nn. 27 and 28.

²⁵ See, for example, the extensive acclamations recorded for Theodosios II in CTh, "Minutes of the Senate," 5. Proclaimed by the Senate at Rome, these acclamations are composed of twenty-two refrains, each repeated from eight to twenty-eight times.

²⁶ It should be noted, however, that during this period magistrates also received acclamations, and in these instances, these actions did not carry the cultic overtones that they did when directed toward the emperor. The difference, I suspect, lay in the heightened sense of cult surrounding the emperor. My thanks to Bryan Brinkman for drawing the acclamation of civic officials to my attention. Brinkman's dissertation on these acclamations is in progress.

²⁷ See the collection of John Chrysostom's homilies (*On the Statues*) on the events surrounding the riots; Libanios, *Orations* 19–23. See also the later account in Theophanes, *Chron.* AM 5883. For discussion, see Sandwell 2007: 137–39, 173–76.

arrested many individuals who had participated in the riots, and in fear of further retaliation others fled the city while the Antiochene bishop Flavian led a delegation to Constantinople to plea for clemency.

Late antique emperors also continued to receive traditional funeral rites, and, as Susanna Elm notes, this included declarations of the emperor's apotheosis.²⁸ Upon his death, Constantine's body was placed in a golden coffin and escorted to imperial palace in Constantinople, where he received the same honor and dignity as when he lived.²⁹ Constantius then escorted his father's body to the Apostoleion, which the emperor had erected to be his mausoleum.³⁰ After Constantius died of illness as he marched against Julian, his body was similarly conveyed to Constantinople, where it was also laid in the Apostoleion. According to Libanios, Julian assembled the population of Constantinople to meet Constantius' corpse at the harbor and led the public lamentations for his predecessor. He then placed his imperial regalia upon the deceased and accompanied the body in procession to the Apostoleion.³¹ Julian, too, received similar honors once his body had been retrieved from the battlefield. His officers conducted the initial rites in the imperial tents before entrusting the emperor's body to the army for escort to Tarsus for

²⁸ Elm 2012b: 457.

²⁹ Sozomen, *Eccl. hist.* 2.34.5: τιμὴ δὲ καὶ τάξις ὥσπερ εἰς ζῶντα ἡ αὐτὴ ἐγένετο παρὰ τῶν ἐν τοῖς βασιλείοις.

³⁰ According to Eusebios, Constantine only revealed his intentions for the complex shortly before his death, and, as H. A. Drake observes, Eusebios himself subtly claims that he had prior knowledge of this purpose, a hint that has led to the fiction that Eusebios was the emperor's intimate. See Drake 1988: 33.

³¹ Libanios, *Oration* 18, 120. Gregory of Nazianzos claims that Julian had not performed these rites willingly but rather that his hand was forced by the army; Gregory of Nazianzos, *Oration* 5, 16–17. Cf. Sokrates, *Eccl. Hist.* 3.1.50; Philostorgios, *Church History* 6.6. Cp. the account of Ammianus Marcellinus (*Hist.* 21.16.20–21), who claims that it was Jovian who carried out the proper honors and escorted the body to Constantinople, with no mention of Julian's role in the funeral rites. However, Julian's performance of these rites would have been a means by which to assert his legitimacy as Constantius' heir.

burial.³² At some point later, Julian's body was translated to Constantinople to join his predecessors in the Apostoleion.³³ These rites were accompanied by declarations of the emperors' apotheoseis. According to the late fourth-century historian Eutropios (writing ca. 370), Constantine, Constantius, and Julian were each apotheosized, as were Constantine's father (Constantius Chlorus) and Jovian.³⁴

Some modern scholars have argued that these ceremonies should not be taken as evidence of emperor-worship, and therefore were not religious actions. Johannes Straub, for instance, assures his audience that the rituals of veneration for the emperor were "only metaphors."³⁵ Straub clarifies his position slightly, relating elements in the emperor's court to those in the "celestial prototype" and vice-versa. J. H. W. G. Liebeschuetz has argued a similar position, namely, that these actions and their incumbent divinizing language were simply "conventions of the genre [of panegyric] and of court ceremony," and that despite the religious vocabulary the imperial office remained "perfectly secular."³⁶

³² Ammianus Marcellinus, *Hist.* 25.5.1, 25.9.1213; Libanios, *Oration* 18, 306; Zosimos 3.29.2, 3.34.3. Gregory of Nazianzos claims that Julian attempted to throw himself into the river so that his body could not be recovered and his apotheosis could not be questioned. Gregory of Nazianzos, *Oration* 5, 14.

³³ Elm credits the translation of Julian's body to Theodosios I as a means to assert his connections to the Constantinian Dynasty; Elm 2012b: 438–39. A tenth century catalogue lists Julian among the emperors buried at the Church of the Holy Apostles, providing evidence of a tradition that his body was later translated to Constantinople. See Constantine VII Porphyrogenitos, *Book of Ceremonies* 43. See also discussion of the apparent removal of Julian's body to Constantinople in Downey 1959: 46. But see arguments against this identification in Woods 2006: 364–71.

³⁴ Eutropios, *Breviarium* 10.1, 10.8, 10.15, 10.16, 10.18. Eutropios served as the *magister epistolarum* under Constantius (sometime before 361) and later as the *magister memoriae* under Valens (369). For a summary of Eutropios' career, see Bird's introduction to this text (1993: vii–xvii). Bird identifies this Eutropios as the Eutropios who later served as proconsul of Asia under Valens (ca. 371) and eastern consul under Theodosios I (387).

³⁵ See Straub 1967: 53. Similarly, Limberis argues that the emperor's statue was greeted as emperor, but no longer as a god. Limberis 1994: 35.

³⁶ Liebeschuetz 1979: 238–39.

It is not quite accurate, however, to argue that during the fourth century, or even the fifth century, most people would have understood these rituals as *only* metaphors...if they were metaphors at all. It is my contention that such dismissal of religiously inflected language and action ignores the real impact of language and ritual performance on social perception. It is telling that during the fourth century, Christian bishops were quite anxious about the significance of these actions. Gregory of Nazianzus attempts to purify *proskynēsis* of its traditional cultic resonances, condemning Julian for having mixed the poison of idolatry with this customary action by adding images of the gods to his own.³⁷ However, given Gregory's anxiety that "Julian's poison" was meant to ensnare Christians into unknowingly participating in the worship of these deities, I argue that there were some individuals who would have viewed such rituals of veneration as acts of worship. In fact, imperial legislation against the observance of emperor-cult does not appear until 425, when Theodosios II forbade public *proskynēsis* for his statue on festal days.³⁸ Isolated, these pieces of evidence might not indicate the continuation of emperor-cult during late antiquity, but together this constellation of evidence points to continued engagement on some level with emperor-cult.

³⁷ Gregory of Nazianzos, *Oration* 4.81: Ὡςπερ οἱ τοῖς βρώμασι καταμινύοντες τὰ δηλητήρια, μίξαι ταῖς ἐξ ἔθους τῶν βασιλέων τιμαῖς τὴν ἀσέβειαν, καὶ εἰς ἓν ἀγαγεῖν νόμους Ῥωμαίων καὶ εἰδώλων **προσζύνῃσιν**...ἀλλ' ἢ τῇ τῶν βασιλέων τιμῇ τὴν τῶν εἰδώλων συμφέρεσθαι, ἢ τῇ τούτων φυγῇ τοὺς βασιλέας ὑβρίζεσθαι, μικτῆς οὐσης τῆς **προσκυνήσεως**.

³⁸ *CTh* 15.4.1: Si quando nostrae statuae vel imagines eriguntur seu diebus, ut adsolet, festis sive communibus, adsit iudex sine adorationis ambitioso fastigio, ut ornamentum diei vel loco et nostrae recordationi sui probet accessisse praesentiam. Ludis quoque simulacra proposita tantum in animis concurrentum mentis que secretis nostrum numen et laudes vigere demonstrent; excedens cultura hominum dignitatem superno numini reservetur.

The emperor, then, was very much at the center of Roman religion, both as a primary agent and as an object of veneration. The question, then, is how this very traditional structure of Roman religion played out in Constantine's new city.

THE TRANSFORMATION OF A CITY

The small Greek *polis* of Byzantium was perhaps one of the most unexpected cities for the development of a Christian imperialism. Compared to other late antique cities that were prominent in Christian historiography and intellectual development (e.g., Antioch, Alexandria, Jerusalem), the city had neither strong claims to an ancient Christian population nor a place in Christian mythological narratives.³⁹ Prior to Constantine's selection of Byzantium as his dynastic capital, the city was almost, if not entirely, absent of Christian associations.⁴⁰ Sarah Bassett has convincingly argued that Constantine's interest in the site was not for associations with Christianity, but rather for its strategic location and its potential as a canvas for his dynastic ambitions.⁴¹ The civic

³⁹ By mythological narratives, I mean the cycles of stories about Jesus' apostles and other Christian figures circulating before the beginning of the fourth century. Legends about the apostle Andrew's foundation of a church in Byzantium only begin to appear in the ninth century. See Dvornik 1958: 172–75.

⁴⁰ The presence of any Christian groups before 330 is uncertain. Sokrates' comment that Constantine enlarged Hagia Eirene (*Eccl. hist.* 2.16.16) has led to some speculation that a minority Christian population was present in the pre-Constantinian city of Byzantium. This evidence, however, is circumstantial, with no contemporaneous literary or archaeological evidence to confirm it.

⁴¹ Bassett 2004: 21–22; see also Dagron 1974: 25, 29–31. It is worth noting that while Constantine refounded Byzantium as an imperial capital, it is misleading to characterize this move as a decisive replacement of other capitals. John Vanderspoel is careful to distinguish between the city's status as a "dynastic seat" under Constantine (following the model of Diocletian's patronage of Nikomedeia) and its transformation under Constantius into a capital in 357, through the establishment of governing institutions (i.e. a Senate with the same authority as its counterpart in Rome). Other cities continued to serve as imperial capitals during this period, or at least before Theodosios II, and the emperors continued an ancient practice of founding cities bearing imperial names (e.g. Eudoxiopolis, Arcadiopolis, Theodosiopolis). The representational and spatial competition with Rome would increase over the next century. See Dagron 1974: 27–29; Millar 2006: 15; Vanderspoel 2012: 224.

topography of Byzantium, which had been reorganized as the Colonia Antonina in the third century following Septimius Severus' defeat of his eastern rivals in 195/6, already hosted an armature with imperial resonances: a hippodrome, a monumental bath complex known as Zeuxippos, an imperial basilica complex, colonnaded streets (the most important being the Mese, the main east-west avenue through the city), and a forum known as the Tetrastoon.⁴² In addition, the city's cult landscape was still marked with prominent temples, several of which were in locations that made them visibly prominent, including the temples of Apollo/Helios, Artemis, and Aphrodite on the acropolis and the shrine of the Dioskouroi in the Hippodrome.⁴³ Paul Stephenson has recently argued that Constantine's rival Licinius had utilized Byzantium as one of his capitals. While there is no direct evidence to support this claim, if Stephenson is correct, such circumstances would have added to the site's appeal for Constantine.⁴⁴

In general, we are poorly informed about the physical landscape of Constantinople at the time of Constantine's death in 337. Nearly all our evidence for this early period is literary, and that evidence is shrouded in the rhetorical embellishments of those with vested interests in how the city's landscape was to be perceived.⁴⁵ Of what we

⁴² Bassett 2004: 19–20.

⁴³ Dagron 1974: 372–74. How long the shrine of the Dioskouroi stood is unknown; by the sixth century at least it appears that the temple was no longer standing, its statues having been incorporated into the gates of the hippodrome. Hesychios mentions a former temple of Hecate, which was similarly incorporated into the architecture of the hippodrome. See Zosimos, *New History* 2.31.1; Hesychios of Miletus, 15.

⁴⁴ Stephenson 2009: 194–96. Stephenson's suggestion is asserted as fact by Barnes (2011: 112).

⁴⁵ Our archaeological evidence for the Constantinian city is scant, as excavation has been extremely curtailed because of the current city. Visible evidence includes the foundations of the hippodrome; the base and column that held Constantine's statue in the Forum of Constantine. The remains of the Theodosian city are not much better. Extant are some of the monuments that lined the hippodrome's *spina*; portions of the triumphal arch in the Forum of Theodosios; two later palaces (Lausus and Antiochos) north of the hippodrome; the base for the statue of Eudoxia that stood in the Augusteion; and sections of

know, it is clear that Constantine's new city was not visibly recognizable as a "Christian" city during his lifetime, nor did it boast a civic landscape that asserted a vision of Christian primacy, much less actively excluded non-Christian cult. Of the cult sites Constantine built, only two were associated with Christianity, namely, Hagia Eirene and an imperial mausoleum.⁴⁶ These sites were outnumbered by other sites that bore traditional cult resonances: the temple of Rhea/Cybele, the Tychaion, the shrine of the Dioskouroi, the Augusteion (which I suspect was a locus of imperial cult), and the Capitolium.⁴⁷ Additionally, Constantine left the temples of the Severan city intact, much to the chagrin of such Christian authors as Eusebios and Sozomen, both of whom wanted

land and sea walls. Cyril Mango has traced what he believes to be segments of the Mese along Cerrahpaşa Caddesi in the modern city. The *propylaion* and *pronaos* of Theodosios II's reconstruction of the Great Church (Hagia Sophia) was excavated in 1935, but the remaining structure lies below the current structure, built under Justinian (completed in 537). These excavations also uncovered a street running perpendicular to the structure. Nezi̇h Fıratlı excavated the remains of the Milion (the mile marker located at the beginning of the Mese) in 1967. Remains of the Basilika and the mid-fifth-century Chalkoprateia church have also been found. This catalogue of excavations does not claim to be exhaustive. See Larsen 1937: 1–5; Krautheimer 1986: 70–73; Bassett 1991: 88 and 2000: 494; Berger 2000: 161, 164; C. Mango 2000: 181.

⁴⁶ In the *Notitia Urbis Constantinopolitanae* (231), a catalogue of landmarks from the early fifth century (ca. 412/3–427), Hagia Eirene is known as the "Old Church." The date of Hagia Eirene's construction is uncertain. In the mid-fifth century Sokrates (*Eccl. hist.* 1.16.2) credits Constantine with the church's construction, but his is the earliest testimony linking Constantine to Hagia Eirene. For discussion of the Apostoleion, see below p. 84. n.112. For the date of the *Notitia*, see J. Matthews: 84.

⁴⁷ The sixth-century chronicler Hesychios, fragments of whose work are preserved in the later *Patria of Constantinople*, wants to distance Constantine from the temples of Rhea/Cybele and the Tyche, combining the two goddesses and crediting the establishment of the cult to Byzas, the legendary founder of the Greek settlement. See *Patria* 15. Modern scholars frequently want to reconcile the literary evidence for these cults. For instance, Bardill decides that Constantine moved the statue of Rhea (who was the protectress of the city) from an older shrine to the Tetrastoon and in the process removed her lions, thus "divesting the goddess of her divine aspect" and taming her for the city's Christian population; Bardill 2012: 262–63. For further discussion, see Dagron 1974: 373–74; Limberis 1994: 19, 123–27. We should not divorce the traditional associations of Constantinople's Capitolium from the Capitolium of Rome and the importance of the Capitoline Triad for Roman ideological assertions. See C. Mango 2000: 177; F. A. Bauer 2001: 30; Bassett 2004: 34; Bardill 2012: 263.

to assert Constantine's commitment to Christianity by presenting the refounded city as a pristine Christian landscape.⁴⁸

Some modern historians have characterized Constantine's attitude towards Constantinople's traditional cults as a policy of "benign neglect," in which Constantine turned a blind eye to the presence of the old temples so long as animal sacrifice was not performed.⁴⁹ Sarah Bassett, however, has convincingly argued that Constantine's toleration of the city's traditional cult sites was not the unintentional result of passive neglect, but a component of his conscious efforts to cultivate the city's Greek and Roman cultural identity.⁵⁰ According to Bassett, Constantine and his planners utilized the traditional monuments to reinforce the city's imperial identity by creating an

⁴⁸ Eusebios, *Life of Constantine* 3.48–49; Sozomen, *Hist. eccl.* 2.3. Both authors sterilize the Constantinian landscape of traditional cult, an endeavor that will be addressed more extensively in subsequent chapters. Modern scholarship on the city's foundation has sometimes accepted the assertions of these authors and thus assumed that a primary motive for Constantine was to provide his "new Christian empire" an appropriately Christian capital in contrast to the "pagan" Rome. Vasiliki Limberis comments that Byzantium was easier for Constantine to Christianize because it lacked the infrastructure of traditional cult found in older imperial capitals; Barnes takes a more extreme position, asserting that Constantine completely razed the city as retribution for its inhabitants' support of Licinius, which then enabled the new emperor to rebuild the city as a Christian city. Kevin Wilkinson also asserts the Christian character of Constantinople's topography, but takes the more nuanced position that "pagan" elements were incorporated into the city, but "because Constantine was avowedly Christian, whatever he endorsed was also perforce Christian...Whatever continuities with the pagan past that we might detect, Constantinople was perceived by Constantine's subjects to be a Christian city from its inception." I would argue that Wilkinson's generalization only held true for certain individuals (e.g., Eusebios, Sozomen) with a stake in the city's interpretation and that this image only gained wider acceptance under the assistance of later Christian exegesis. Limberis 1994: 21; Wilkinson 2010: 193–94; Barnes 2011: 111–113.

The organization of the city's cult topography under Constantine does not detract from the importance of Constantine's church foundations in Constantinople and elsewhere in the empire, including those in Palestine and Rome. Such activity indicates Constantine's interest in enabling a Christian monumental presence across the empire, and especially these significant locations. For more extensive treatments of Constantine's engagement in building Christian cult sites across the empire, see Armstrong 1967; Krautheimer 1986: 43–67.

⁴⁹ The implementation of this policy is imagined in several permutations, including the quiet removal of funding that would be necessary to maintain animal sacrifice and the outright closure of the sites and dismantling of their cult apparatus and physical structures. See, for example, Limberis 1994: 22–23; Bardill 2012: 261–66.

⁵⁰ Bassett 2004: 34–35. For earlier important discussions, see Dagron 1974: 400–401 and Saradi-Mendelovici 1990: 53.

interconnected series of architectural groupings along the city's main avenues (see FIGURE 1).⁵¹ I have already mentioned the first, the acropolis complex developed under Septimius Severus, which remained intact and consisted of three major temples and a theater. A second complex stood immediately south of the acropolis and featured the important markers of the city's participation in Roman imperial institutions: the Hippodrome, the imperial palace, the Baths of Zeuxippos, the Tetrastoon (now rededicated as the Augusteion), the forum known as the Stoa Basilika, and the Constantinian temples to Rhea and the Tyche of Constantinople.⁵² Both of these complexes built upon Constantinople's existing armature in a way that constructed a genealogical heritage that imbued the city with a sense of antiquity.

Two sites within this second complex, I argue, should be considered possible loci of traditional imperial cult. The Augusteion contained images of former and present emperors as well as images of the imperial family; as I will discuss more extensively below, these images would have lent themselves to the performance of emperor-cult, with incense, *proskynēsis*, and, as Sokrates comments, games and dancing.⁵³ The temple of the Tyche was dedicated to the tutelary deity who promoted the city's fortune and prosperity and who received cult in the form of processions and incense.⁵⁴ The cult of the city's

⁵¹ See Bassett 2004: 26; see also F. A. Bauer 2001: 28–32.

⁵² Bassett 2004: 23–27, with the minor correction that the Augusteion was located at the *eastern* terminus of the Mese.

⁵³ See discussion below, pp. 71–74.

⁵⁴ Zosimos (*New History* 2.31.2–3) is our source for Constantine's erection of the Tycheion. The sixth-century historian Hesychios (15) attributes the construction of the temple of Rhea, which he identifies with the Tyche, to Byzas, the legendary founder of Byzantium, rather than to Constantine. In his earlier work on Constantinople, which continues to be magisterial, Dagron attempts to explain Constantine's "so-called pagan foundations" as the restoration of statues and "modest" architectural work. Despite this, Dagron asserts that Constantine's activity here had significant ramifications to the city's cultic landscape.

Tyche continued to have a central presence in the city's civic cult into the fifth century, if not later. Sokrates claims that Julian personally offered sacrifices to the Tyche of Constantinople in the basilika.⁵⁵ The seventh-century *Chronicon Paschale* describes the institution of annual festivities in honor of Constantine and the Tyche:

[Constantine] commanded that on the same day of the anniversary chariot races, the same monument of wood should enter, escorted by the troops in mantles and slippers, all holding white candles; the carriage should proceed around the further turning-post and come to the arena opposite the imperial box; and the emperor of the day should rise and do obeisance to the monument of the same emperor Constantine and this Tyche of the city.⁵⁶

See Dagron 1974: 374 (But see also Dagron's later treatment of Constantine's relations to traditional cult, Dagron 2003: 130). Jonathan Bardill is hesitant about Zosimos' account, given this particular historian's hostility toward Christians in general and Constantine in particular. However, it is not entirely unreasonable to suppose that Constantine was responsible for these sites, along with the Capitolium, considering the evidence for Constantine's continued engagement with a variety of traditional practices, from those involved in imperial celebrations (triumphs, *decennalia*, *vicennalia*, etc.), rituals for founding cities, and the dictates of emperor-cult. Bardill 2012: 262.

⁵⁵ Sokrates, *Eccl. hist.* 3.11; cf. Sozomen, *Eccl. hist.* 5.4. The identity of the basilika is uncertain. Sokrates only states that the Tyche is in "the basilika" (ἐν τῇ βασιλικῇ, ἔνθα καὶ τὸ τῆς Τύχης ἵδρυται ἄγαλμα). A. C. Zenos, the most recent English translator of Sokrates (1890) translates the passage to indicate that the Tyche's image had been erected in "the cathedral," itself an ambiguous term, although it is most likely that Zenos had in mind the Great Church (probably Hagia Sophia, but at an earlier period Hagia Eirene held that honor). While this is certainly possible, it is an unlikely usage for Sokrates. When Sokrates refers to Hagia Eirene or Hagia Sophia elsewhere, he uses ἐκκλησία (1.16.2; 2.6.7; 6.18). The only other time Sokrates uses similar terminology is at 2.16.5, in an account describing the extraction of Paul from the Baths of Zeuxippos into the imperial court (βασιλικὰς αὐλὰς). It is more likely that Sokrates means the imperial basilika located across from the Augusteion, although he could mean another basilika in the city. The *Notitia Urbis Constantinopolitanae*, which catalogues the city's landmarks during the early fifth century, records two basilikas for the entire city, only one of which (i.e. the aforementioned basilika) would have been in existence during Julian's reign, the other to be constructed during the Theodosian dynasty. See *Notitia Urbis Constantinopolitanae* 232, 236, 242, and discussion in J. Matthews 2012: 103–104. All the same, Sokrates himself may not have known the precise location of the incident, if his report is not simply a literary *typos* aimed at discrediting Julian.

⁵⁶ *Chron. pasch.* 330: κελεύσας κατὰ τὴν αὐτὴν ἡμέραν τοῦ γενεθλιακοῦ ἱππικοῦ εἰσιέναι τὴν αὐτὴν τοῦ ξοάνου στήλην διοικουμένην ὑπὸ τῶν στρατευμάτων μετὰ χλανιδίων καὶ καμπαγίων, πάντων κατεχόντων κηροὺς λευκοὺς, καὶ περιέρχεσθαι τὸ ὄχημα τὸν ἄνω καμπτόν, καὶ ἔρχεσθαι εἰς τὸ σκάμμα κατέναντι τοῦ βασιλικοῦ καθίσματος, καὶ ἐπεγεῖρεσθαι τὸν κατὰ καιρὸν βασιλέα καὶ προσκυνεῖν τὴν στήλην τοῦ αὐτοῦ βασιλέως Κωνσταντίνου καὶ αὐτῆς τῆς τύχης τῆς πόλεως. (Trans. Whitby and Whitby 1989.) See also Whitby and Whitby 1989: 17 n. 56, in which they note, "a version of the ceremony may have been performed under Phocas." Moreover, they comment, "the non-Christian connotations of this ceremony...have aroused suspicions among those who regard Constantine as a complete and orthodox Christian, but it does seem that Constantinople had a Tyche called Anthusa parallel to Flora at Rome: the whole ceremony with its pagan elements should probably be accepted." John Malalas offers the same account, nearly verbatim; John Malalas, *Chron.* 13.8. The *Chronicon* elsewhere states that upon founding the city Constantine had offered the city's Tyche a bloodless sacrifice (θυσίαν ἀναίμακτον); *Chron. pasch.* 328.

This appears to be the same statue and festival later referred to several times in the *Parastaseis Syntomoi Chronikai* (early- to mid-eighth century), a collection of notes on the topography of Constantinople, which claims that these festivities continued to be observed on the city's *genethlion* (anniversary of foundation) until the reign of Theodosios I.⁵⁷ This same source specifies that the statue was escorted from the Philadelphion to the Forum, where it received hymns and *proskynēsis* from the people of city. It was then raised upon a pillar to a hundred acclamations of “*Kyrie eleison*.”⁵⁸ Franz Alto Bauer has suggested that this ritual had its origins in the cult of the deified emperor and was later remembered as a commemoration of the city's foundation.⁵⁹ This is a possibility, but the testimony of the *Parastaseis* also speaks to the continued expectation that the Tyche was an object of cultic devotion after the “Christianization” of the city.

Between the acropolis and the monumental civic complex, Hagia Eirene was built. As far as our sources allow, this church was the first imperially sponsored Christian foundation in the city.⁶⁰ While Hagia Eirene stood outside both the adjacent complexes, it

⁵⁷ See *Parast.* 5, 38, 56. But also note that *Parast.* 38 claims that the Tyche had been destroyed by Julian, reportedly because the statue bore a cross. For the source's misidentification of this statue, see Av. Cameron and Herrin 1984: 172; see also the notation in Janin 1964: 23–24. For the date of this text, see Av. Cameron and Herrin 1984: 17.

⁵⁸ *Parast.* 56: ὑμνωδίας δεξαμένη εἰς Τύχην τῆς πόλεως προσεκυνήθη παρὰ πάντων... ἔσκατον πάντων τότε ὑψοῦτο ἐν τῷ κίονι, τοῦ ἱερέως μετὰ τῆς λιτῆς παρεστηκότος καὶ τὸ ‘Κύριε ἐλέησον’ πάντων βοώντων ἐν ᾧ μέτροις.

⁵⁹ F. A. Bauer 2001: 35.

⁶⁰ Hagia Eirene is also sometimes characterized as the “cathedral” of the city until the building of the Great Church (Hagia Sophia); see, for example Janin 1953: 8; Peschlow 1977: 21–22; Krautheimer 1983: 47. However, the notion of a cathedral church is anachronistic for this early period, because it presupposes a well-formed ecclesiastical hierarchy in control of a network of subordinate churches. At the very least, referring to the church (or the Great Church afterwards) as the city's “cathedral” is problematic in that the terminology imposes later Western administrative structures onto the cultic topography of Constantinople. For an excellent analysis of church use patterns, particularly the presence of the bishop at the Apostoleion, Hagia Eirene, and Hagia Sophia, in the later fourth century, see Mayer 2000a.

provided a spatial link between the rejuvenated civic complex that asserted the city's new dynastic/imperial identity with the intact cultic complex that grounded those assertions in the city's past.⁶¹ Based on a passage from Sokrates' *Ecclesiastical History*, it has long been supposed that this church replaced an earlier house-church. This supposition, however, over-reads the mid-fifth-century source, for Sokrates only states that Constantine had enlarged a smaller structure.⁶² There is neither accessible archaeological evidence nor literary evidence closer to the construction date of the church to support the presence of an earlier church. Even if Sokrates' testimony is accurate, it does not tell us whether the building activity Sokrates describes was the enlargement of a pre-Constantinian structure or separate building phases under Constantine. If Constantine constructed Hagia Eirene, which I believe is likely, it would be more appropriate to think of the site as an imperially sponsored Christian temple, analogous to the great civic temples in Rome, perhaps even the temple of Apollo on the Palatine, for its close notional and spatial association with the imperial residence immediately to the south.⁶³

Constantine also added three new monumental complexes to the newly expanded city. Two of these complexes, the Forum of Constantine and the Capitolium, were located along the Mese. The Forum of Constantine was located immediately outside the old

⁶¹ The building of Great Church (Hagia Sophia) immediately north of the Augusteion would later pull Hagia Eirene fully into the imperial complex. With the final closure and dismantling of the acropolis temples under Theodosios I, the center of Roman imperial identity was firmly shifted to the Constantinian complex.

⁶² Sokrates, *Eccl. hist.* 2.16.16: Κατὰ δὲ τὸν καιρὸν τοῦτον καὶ ὁ βασιλεὺς τὴν μεγάλην ἐκκλησίαν ἔκτιζεν, ἣτις Σοφία μὲν προσαγορεύεται νῦν, συνήπται δὲ τῇ ἐπωνύμῳ Εἰρήνης· ἣν ὁ πατὴρ τοῦ βασιλέως μικρὰν οὖσαν τὸ πρότερον εἰς κάλλος καὶ μέγεθος ἡύξησεν. Sokrates also mentions Hagia Eirene as one of two churches constructed by Constantine in 1.16.2.

⁶³ Likely built (or at least begun) during Constantine's lifetime. This dating depends on a reference to the palace in Eusebios, *Life of Constantine*, 3.15. For a more extensive study of the palace and its development, see Dagron 1974: 92–97.

Severan walls and centered on the column of Constantine. Flanking this forum were further markers of imperial identity: a Senate house, a Praetorium and prison, and a nymphaeum.⁶⁴ The second complex, housing the Capitolium and the Philadelphion (a public square honoring the tetrarchy), stood at a crossroad at the western end of the Mese.⁶⁵ As with similar monuments in other cities, the Capitolium was dedicated to the Capitoline Triad and asserted Constantinople's ties to Rome and its traditional institutions.⁶⁶ The Philadelphion represented the former harmony between members of the tetrarchy and thus asserted Constantine's connection to Diocletian and earlier imperial ideologies.⁶⁷ The third Constantinian monumental complex, the Apostoleion, stood along the northern branch of the Mese at the highest point in the city. This monument, too, underscored Constantine's imperial claims for his city, for he had designated the structure to be his own mausoleum.⁶⁸

In addition to this significant architectural footprint, Constantine also incorporated an extensive collection of statuary and other smaller monuments assembled from Rome and rival cities in the eastern empire, including Alexandria, Antioch, and Athens.⁶⁹ This

⁶⁴ Bassett 2004: 29.

⁶⁵ For reconstructions of this area, see C. Mango 2000: 177; F. A. Bauer 2001: 30–31; Bassett 2004: 31. As Bassett notes, our knowledge of the Philadelphion is limited; its precise location is unknown, and the monument may have been a stretch of the Mese rather than a building.

⁶⁶ Bassett 2004: 31–32.

⁶⁷ The image of the tetrarchs can now be found at the Basilica of San Marco, Venice. For a description and brief analysis of the monument, see Bassett 2004: 242.

⁶⁸ Dagron 1974: 399; F. A. Bauer 2001: 31. Members of the imperial family continued to be buried in the Apostoleion complex until Constantine VIII (d. 1028). A list of imperial burials at the site is appended to the *Book of Ceremonies*. See C. Mango 1990: 54.

⁶⁹ Bassett 2004: 39. Sarah Bassett has compiled an extensive catalogue of Constantinople's statuary collection through the reign of Justinian. For the collections under Constantine, see Bassett 2004: 50–75.

collection included an array of images used by Constantine to populate the city, from pre-fourth-century emperors to the poets and philosophers of Greek literary culture, as well as statues of cultic significance: Zeus, Poseidon and Amymone, Helios, Hermes, Aphrodite, Apollo, Athena, Artemis, Selene, Kybele, Tyche, Asklepios, Herakles, and the Dioskouroi.⁷⁰ These statues were assembled in collections in various locations throughout the city, particularly those associated with Roman cultural institutions or imperial power, e.g., the Baths of Zeuxippos, the Augusteion, the Hippodrome, and the Forum of Constantine.

Over the past several decades, cultural geographers and archaeologists have drawn attention to the impact of monuments in a shared cultural space. In her study on the archaeology of memory in the ancient world, Susan Alcock has argued that monuments by their very design impart meaning upon a landscape by commemorating a particular event or participating in pre-determined cultural idioms.⁷¹ Moreover, monuments become an ordering feature of a civic landscape, one that “foregrounds,” as Alcock articulates, “the profound affective ties between people and their emotional ‘sense of place.’”⁷² By presenting a place of durable memory, monuments participate in the

⁷⁰ The images of emperors and cultural figures included Marcus Aurelius Carus (282 CE), Septimius Severus, Tiberius, Trajan, Hadrian, the poetess Erinna, Euripides, Hesiod, Homer, Homer of Byzantium, Menander, Pindar, Aristotle, Demokritos, Herakleitos, and Plato. See Bassett 2004: 37.

⁷¹ I follow Michel de Certeau in considering monuments as structuring elements within a cult landscape and as having a certain sense of agency in imparting meaning, particularly through the construction of memory, for those who interact with that landscape. At the same time, the inhabitants of a civic space can resist, reinterpret, and otherwise manipulate monuments and other physical structures, both physically and notionally (to which de Certeau refers as “spatial and signifying practices”). See de Certeau 1984: 100–105; for similar approaches, see Soja 2000: 7; Alcock 2002: 1–19, 23–32; and Tilley 2006: 7–8.

⁷² Alcock 2002: 30.

construction of a collective or social identity, that is, the constructed, normative image of the group against which members of the group can be evaluated.⁷³

I propose that Constantine's building program is a case in point, with its interests in mythical and imperial histories and displays of cultural hegemony. The creation of a monumental landscape not only put the city's participation in Roman imperial ideologies on display but also would have had real effects on how its inhabitants and visitors thought about their place in the Roman Empire. Bassett has demonstrated that the use of monuments to write Constantinople into Roman mythological narratives can be seen in two of the more notable examples from Constantine's visual program, namely, the collections situated in the Baths of Zeuxippos and in the Forum of Constantine. The Bath's collection included eleven gods and demigods, as well as heroes from the Theban and Trojan mythic cycles.⁷⁴ The Trojan cycle was also represented in the Forum of Constantine, whose assemblage of Paris, Hera, Aphrodite, Athena, and Thetis staged the Judgment of Paris. This assemblage shared space with another artifact mythically linked

⁷³ In his reexamination of conversion in late antiquity, James Rives rightly draws attention to the difference between personal identity and social (or communal) identity. The latter, he comments, "requires the existence of people other than oneself to be the same as (as well as people who are not the same but different)." Rives 2011: 277. In my view, collective/social identity is an external, reified, but still amorphous and contestable, construct resulting from the combined products of various modes of social exchange (i.e., monuments, images, inscriptions, literary productions, orations, theatrical performance, etc.). The exemplar of such a social identity never truly exists, but rather this identity is cast or imposed on members of the group. Moreover, I would argue, a normative social identity is rarely articulated, but rather implied, which not only leaves it open to constant negotiation but also contributes to its efficacy as a social tool. At times, a representative member of the group (e.g., Constantine) can be held up as the fulfillment of that identity, but even this is an artificial construction and open to contestation. Appeal to the ideal, e.g., through accusations of deviation, can be used to influence an individual's behavior. In that respect, social identity has consequences for individual identifications. This general theory, while unarticulated, underlies Drake's analysis of interactions between Ambrose and Theodosios I following the destruction of the Callinicum synagogue by Christians in 387, wherein Ambrose used the threat of labeling Theodosios as a persecutor to sway him from reprisal; Drake 2011: 209–10. See also Brubaker 2004: 10 for the imposition of a constructed group identity on individuals purported to belong to that group.

⁷⁴ Bassett 2004: 52–53. The Bath's assemblage included three Apollos, three Aphrodites, a Hermophroditos, a Herakles and Auge, and a Poseidon and Amymone. Bassett notes that such an assemblage as this is consistent with other bath collections.

with the Trojan War, namely the Palladion, the guardian statue rescued from Troy by Aeneas and brought to Rome.⁷⁵ Together these visual presentations of the Trojan cycle appealed to Roman mythic genealogies, rooted in a Greek classical heritage, which connected the glory of Rome to the mythic Troy and asserted Constantinople's legitimate succession in that lineage.⁷⁶ By presenting images that activated Roman mythic genealogies, then, Constantine provided his city with the imperial and cultural history it lacked and implied that Constantinople was the culmination of a historical narrative of Roman hegemony.⁷⁷

Emperor-Cult in Constantinople

Within this traditionalist landscape a significant aspect of the city's cult life during this early period focused on the person of the emperor and his family. Before the 380s, emperors rarely sustained a physical presence in any one city, and Constantinople was hardly an exception.⁷⁸ Consequently, an emperor's active engagement with the cult life of Constantinople was dependent upon the relatively short periods of time that he spent in the city. One important example of Constantine's (at least imagined) engagement with the civic religion of Constantinople is the ritual action of *limitatio* he performed in

⁷⁵ For the myth of the Palladion, see Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Roman Antiquities* 2.66.5.

⁷⁶ Bassett 2004: 68.

⁷⁷ Other examples are the images of imperial history in the hippodrome: Romulus and Remus, Alexander the Great, Augustus, Diocletian, and probably Julius Caesar. See Bassett 2004: 63–64.

⁷⁸ For an outline of the patterns of imperial residence and movement, see Dagron 1974: 77–86. Dagron's summary helpfully pulls out the periods during which the emperor was in residence at Constantinople and illustrates the marked contrasts between the greater frequencies of residency at Constantinople after Theodosios I.

founding the city, recorded in several later sources. According to the Constantinopolitan author Philostorgios, writing in the second quarter of the fifth century,

Constantine, in the twenty-eighth year of his reign, transformed Byzantium into Constantinople and went around its perimeter on foot marking it off, carrying his spear in his hand. Now those following him thought that the area was being extended further than it ought, so one of them went up to him and asked, “How much farther, my lord?” He answered quite plainly, “Until the one who is in front of me stops,” thus making it evident that he was being guided by some heavenly power who was teaching him what to do.⁷⁹

Behind Philostorgius’ description of the foundation are traditions of the founding of Rome by *limitatio*, which date back at least as early as the Augustan period.⁸⁰

Even so, before Theodosios I’s relocation of the imperial court to Constantinople in the 380s, the figure of the emperor maintained a strong cultic presence in Constantinople. This presence took the form of dedications (columns, statues, buildings) and the traditional mechanisms of cult infrastructure, which I believe included emperor-cult. Eusebios claims that Constantine had forbidden the erection of his image in

⁷⁹ Philostorgios 2.9: “Ὅτι Κωνσταντίνον φησιν ὁκτὼ καὶ εἰκοστῷ ἔτει τῆς βασιλείας αὐτοῦ τὸ Βυζάντιον εἰς Κωνσταντινούπολιν μετασκευάσαι, καὶ τὸν περίβολον ὀρίζόμενον βάδην τε περιέναι, τὸ δόρυ τῇ χειρὶ φέροντα· ἐπεὶ δὲ τοῖς ἐπομένοις ἐδόκει μείζον ἢ προσήκε τὸ μέτρον ἐκτείνειν, προσελθεῖν τε αὐτῷ τινα καὶ διαπυθάνεσθαι· “ἕως ποῦ, δέσποτα;” τὸν δὲ ἀποκρινάμενον διαρρήδην φάναι· “ἕως ἂν ὁ ἔμπροσθέν μου στή,” ἐπίδηλον ποιοῦντα ὡς δύναμις αὐτοῦ τις οὐρανία προηγοίτο, τοῦ πραπτομένου διδάσκαλος. (Trans. Amidon 2007.)

⁸⁰ Livy, Ovid, and Dionysius of Halicarnassus each provide accounts of the founding of Rome in which Romulus traces the *pomerium* of the city with a plough. Livy 1.7.2; Ovid, *Fasti* 4.833–48; Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Roman Antiquities* 1.88.2; cp. Plutarch, *Life of Romulus* 11.1–4 and Tacitus, *Annals* 12.23–24. See also Beard 1998.1: 175–179; Benoist 2008: 50–51. Constantine’s *limitatio* of Constantinople effectively establishes a mythological lineage between Romulus, Augustus, and Constantine. As Beard, North, and Price point out, in Tacitus’ account, the right to extend the *pomerium* was reserved for those who had extended the boundaries of the empire. Since the site of Constantinople had already been established as a Roman foundation (Colonia Antonina) and Constantine’s actions actually constitute an extension of the city’s walls, I wonder if a similar claim is being made here about Constantine as an emperor who has extended the boundaries of the empire, in addition to the claim that he is refounding the city as an imperial capital. Dagron suggests that sixth-century literary constructions of Byzas, the legendary founder of Byzantium, might also play into this mythological complex by casting Byzas as both a pagan Constantine and Byzantine Romulus. See Dagron 1974: 375.

shrines;⁸¹ however, as Averil Cameron and Stuart Hall note, Eusebios' account is inconsistent with the Hispellum inscription, a copy of a rescript dated to the 330s (in other words, roughly contemporary with Constantine's building activities in Constantinople). The rescript grants permission to the newly formed city to erect a temple for imperial cult and the celebration of games to honor of the imperial family, provided that the temple "not be polluted by the delusions of contagious *superstitio*," a reference taken to mean traditional sacrifice.⁸² Barbara Burrell has suggested that the *neokoroi* (temples for emperor-cult) were likely to be the last of the traditional cultic structures to be dismantled or converted: "after all, to impugn the dignity and privileges of emperors was dangerous, no matter how anti-pagan the emperors themselves may have been."⁸³ While there is no evidence for such structures in Constantinople itself, it seems to me that there were several locations in the city that could have played a similar role in emperor-cult. One such image of the emperor, albeit not in a temple, was located atop a column in the Forum of Constantine. As reported by Photios, the early fifth-century Constantinopolitan historian Philostorgios describes the veneration of this image:

Our enemy of God accuses the Christians of worshipping with sacrifices the image of Constantine set up upon the porphyry column, of paying homage to it

⁸¹ Eusebios, *Life of Constantine* 4.16.

⁸² ILS 705 ll. 47–48 (=ILCV I.5): *ne aedis nostro nomini dedicata cuiusquam contagiose superstionis fraudibus polluat.* (My translation.) Discussion in Av. Cameron and Hall 1999: 316. See also Burrell 2004: 303. The mid-fifth-century historian Sokrates comments on the establishment of Constantine's image in the temples across the empire shortly after the foundation of Constantinople. He connects this action as an abandonment of traditional cult, but this glosses (whether intentionally or not) over the significance of rituals attached to these images. Sokrates, *Eccl. hist.* 1.18.1: Καὶ μετὰ ταῦτα δὲ ὁ βασιλεὺς ἐπιμελέστερος ὦν περὶ τὰ Χριστιανῶν ἀπεστράφη πάσας τὰς Ἑλληνικὰς θρησκείας...εἰκόνας δὲ τὰς ἑαυτοῦ ἐν τοῖς Ἑλληνικοῖς ναοῖς ἐναποτίθεσθαι διεκώλυσεν.

⁸³ Burrell 2003: 303.

with lamp-lighting and incense or of praying to it as to a god, and of offering it supplications to avert calamities.⁸⁴

Philostorgios does not interpret these actions as simple acts of honoring the head of state; rather they followed a traditional pattern of worship of the emperor as *divi*, marked by prayer, offerings of incense, and the burning of lamps, with the expectation that the suppliants would receive protection from that deity in return.⁸⁵ While Philostorgios' testimony post-dates Constantine by nearly a century and is meant to slander Nicene Christians through Constantine, this type of activity fits well within the parameters of traditional emperor-cult and would have been a natural expression for a population already accustomed to this cult. In short, I think it probable that some activity of this nature would have been practiced in Constantinople during Constantine's reign in the decades following its founding, and perhaps well into the fifth century.

In addition to the image in the Forum of Constantine, I propose that two other possible loci of emperor-cult can be found in the Constantinopolitan landscape. The first is the Augusteion, where Constantine had erected a statue of his mother, and where Eudoxia reportedly erected her own statue at the beginning of the fifth century. Bassett describes this forum as an "almost neutral point of convergence" for the civic, commercial, and religious spaces surrounding it, but, I would argue, if the site *was*

⁸⁴ Philostorgios 2.17: Οὗτος ὁ θεομάχος καὶ τὴν Κωνσταντίνου εἰκόνα, τὴν ἐπὶ τοῦ πορφυροῦ κίονος ἱσταμένην, θυσίαις τε ἱλάσκεσθαι καὶ λυχνοκαΐαις καὶ θυμιάμασι τιμᾶν, καὶ εὐχὰς προσάγειν ὡς θεῷ καὶ ἀποτροπαίους ἰκετηρίας τῶν δεινῶν ἐπιτελεῖν τοὺς Χριστιανοὺς κατηγορεῖ. (Trans. Amidon 2007.)

⁸⁵ Behind this action, too, is the principle that these actions would be efficacious because the act of honoring an image is the same as honoring the prototype. In other words, the emperor-deity is somehow present in his image or knowledgeable of the actions conducted toward the image in his absence.

important for the worship of the imperial family, the convergence was far from neutral.⁸⁶ Rather it was a site that demanded the ritual performance of loyalty to the imperial person in the heart of the Constantinian administrative complex. I think it reasonable to suppose that rituals honoring imperial persons, such as incense sacrifices and *proskynēsis*, would have occurred there. The second site is Constantine's mausoleum at the Apostoleion. As I have already discussed, the apotheosis of deceased emperors continued into the later fourth century. An imperial mausoleum would have been a natural locus of emperor-cult, a physical location at which the city's populace, including the cultural and administrative elite, could venerate the *divus* and thus visibly demonstrate their loyalty to Rome and the current emperor.

From this survey of the early Constantinopolitan landscape, we see three prominent Constantinian architectural complexes comprised of structures with strong resonances with traditional emperor-cult. These sites complement a traditionalist cult environment with prominent temples that stressed the city's continuity with classical foundation narratives and genealogies. The history that Constantine monumentalized in his city was not a Christian history. As I have already noted, the Christian footprint of the Constantinian city was limited to two sites associated with imperial patronage, namely, Hagia Eirene and the Apostoleion. The next firmly identifiable imperial Christian temple would not be added to the landscape until around 360, with the inauguration of the Great Church under Constantius.⁸⁷ Even though the Constantinian city was still relatively small,

⁸⁶ Bassett 2004: 24, 33. For the statue of Helena, see Hesychios 17 and John Malalas, *Chron.* 13.8; for the rites honoring Eudoxia, see Sokrates, *Ecc. hist.* 6.18.1–2 and Theophanes, *Chron.* AM 5898.

⁸⁷ The *Chronicon Paschale* dates the inauguration of the church to 360. Of course, the site would have been identifiable as a Christian temple before its completion, but the extent of time required for construction cannot be determined. Some scholars have wanted to attribute the initial plans to Constantine.

for a new imperial city founded by a supposedly Christian emperor, the Christian architectural presence was minimal, at best—certainly not an ideal situation for those who desired to emphasize the emperor’s patronage of Christian cult.⁸⁸

THE PROBLEMS OF AN INHERITED RELIGIOUS LANDSCAPE

Even if the visual assertion of Christianity’s place in Constantinople was secondary to the display of the city’s Roman imperial identity for Constantine, the place of Christianity in the landscape was a primary concern for others, particularly for the bishops who clamored for imperial favor. It is my contention that the traditional visual program was a source of anxiety for those who wished to assert Christian authority in the landscape. Yet somewhat paradoxically, it was Constantine’s progressive monumentalization of the city that provided opportunities for Christians to insinuate their

While this is certainly possible, I wonder if the attribution is partly motivated by a desire to dissociate the Great Church from Constantius, later regarded as a heretical emperor. Two further sites, the martyria of Akakios and Mokios—the first thought to be located inside the Constantinian walls, the latter in a necropolis outside the gates—may date to the reign of Constantine. Unfortunately, no source close to the Constantinian period mentions the martyrion of Akakios, and as David Woods correctly argues, the testimony of a later historian like Sokrates indicates only that that author knew the site and believed it to date to Constantine. Whenever these structures were built, it is impossible to determine what role, if any, these sites played in patterns of civic worship before Sokrates. The testimony of Sokrates suggests that these sites were primarily local shrines during this period and only occasionally entered the imperial narrative, as for example, when he describes the attempt of Makedonios to relocate the body of Constantine to the shrine of Akakios and a time when Arkadios prays at the shrine. For discussion of attribution and date of the Great Church, see Dagron 1974: 397–99. For Akakios, see discussion in Woods 2001: 202–203.

By the death of Theodosios II in 450, however, the cultic landscape of the city looked significantly different. Those temples that had earlier been a marker of the city’s civic identity had been dismantled. The physical and notional orientations of the cult landscape had shifted from the earlier, traditional loci of sacred space to Christian sites scattered across the city. According to the *Notitia Urbis Constantinopolitanae* (430s) at least twelve imperial church foundations commanded the cultic scene, and smaller shrines, martyria, and similar sites of localized Christian cult dotted the landscape. See J. Matthews 2012: 99.

⁸⁸ For a city of its size, however, two sites during the period may well have been sufficient at this time. Dagron calculates that the Constantinian city was only 7 square kilometers (2.7 square miles) and housed an estimated population of 100,000–150,000. By Theodosios II’s reign, the city had doubled in area and quadrupled in population. Dagron 1974: 524–525, with the caution that population estimates for ancient cities are notoriously imprecise.

own presence in that landscape. As Alcock has argued, despite their appearance of stability, monuments are unstable in meaning and provide the space for individuals to contest assigned meaning and inscribe new ones.⁸⁹ This is precisely what Eusebios did shortly after Constantine's death. Because Constantine had removed the statues from their original settings and placed them in public spaces, Eusebios asserted, they no longer held any cultic significance. Rather, the cult statues were now "toys for the laughter and amusement of the spectators," and their exposure to ridicule corrected those infected with the "error" of traditional worship.⁹⁰ In other words, placing the gods in a public, profane space divorced them from the sacred space of the temple and changed their meanings as monuments.

At the same time, however, Eusebios' attempt to control the interpretation of the statues of their surrounding visual environment betrays how troubling these elements were for those interested in asserting the Christian identity of the city. Modern scholarship on Constantinople has sometimes adopted Eusebios' assertions about Constantine's motives in importing cult statues to the city, or at least softened the impact of the collection by relegating it to an aesthetic program. However, this interpretation privileges and reinforces the efforts of Christian authors to render the traditional gods

⁸⁹ Alcock 2002: 28–29.

⁹⁰ Eusebios, *Life of Constantine* 3.54.2–3: ἔκδηλα τοῖς πᾶσιν ἐν ἀγοραῖς πάσαις τῆς βασιλέως πόλεως προϋτίθετο, ὥς εἰς ἀχήμονα θέαν προκείσθαι τοῖς ὁρώσιν... οἷς θεῶν ὄνματι πλείστας ὅσας ἐκατόμβας ὀλοκαύτους τε θυσίας εἰς μάταιον ἀποδόντες μακροῖς αἰῶσιν οἱ τὴν πλάνην νενοσηκότες ὁπὲ ποτε φρονεῖν ἔγνωσαν, τούτοις αὐτοῖς ἀθύρμασιν ἐπὶ γέλῳ καὶ παιδιᾷ τῶν ὁρώντων βασιλέως κεραιζόμενον. (Trans. Cameron and Hall 1999.) In the following sections Eusebios describes the desecration and melting of gold and silver statues. For similar sentiments, see Sokrates, *Eccl. hist.* 5.16 and Theodoret, *Eccl. hist.* 10.58. See further discussion in Bassett 2004: 48–49. Examples of comparable moves elsewhere in the eastern empire are manifold. Consider, for example, John Chrysostom's derision of the statue at the sanctuary in Daphne (*On Babylas* 6, 8) and the Christian bishop Porphyry's attack on the statue of Aphrodite in Gaza (*Life of Porphyry* 59–61). Cyril Mango has suggested that a similar act of interpretation may have been involved in the conspicuous use of spolia in Christian churches. C. Mango 1963: 63–64.

powerless. For us to insist on the desacralization of these statues is to deny their importance as cultural artifacts, to secularize them in a way that is as much foreign to the period as the secularization of the emperor.⁹¹ The intense debates about the cult statues, the adamant denials about their efficacy, and the deep fears about their threatening presence demonstrate the potency that these statues continued to have, even those in the “profane” spaces of Constantinople.⁹²

The power such images held in the late antique imagination is illuminated by an episode related in the fourth-century *Erotes*, a satirical text exploring the nature of love and physical attraction.⁹³ Having arrived at the temple of Aphrodite in Knidos, the narrative’s protagonists admire Praxiteles’ famed statue of the goddess until they notice a dark flaw on the back of the statue’s thigh. The flaw, they learn, is the result of a sordid encounter: a young man had once fallen in love with the statue and spent entire days at the temple in order to admire her. He would whisper to the goddess as he would to a lover and cast dice to determine whether the goddess reciprocated his affections. As he became more consumed by his desire, he filled the *temenos* with graffiti addressed to the goddess. Eventually, he could no longer contain his passion and concealed himself behind the doors of the temple. Once the gates were closed that evening, he emerged from hiding and had sex with the statue.⁹⁴

⁹¹ Jaś Elsner cautions against the preconceptions that often involve modern reception of this material; Elsner 2007: 3, 24–26.

⁹² See C. Mango 1963: 56. Note, however, that Mango distances Constantine from the statuary collection and leaves ultimate responsibility to “subordinate officials—the *curators*—who were probably pagan, and...simply did the kind of job that was expected at the time.”

⁹³ Pseudo-Lucian, *Erotes* 11–16.

⁹⁴ Elsner notes an extensive literary tradition of individuals having sex with statues. See Elsner 2007: 1 n.3, for references.

This tale from the *Erotes* is intended to be satirical, bawdy, and absurd. Yet the scandalous description is valuable in its exploration of how a viewer responds to the divine and the problems that the prominent display of cult images can introduce. The statue is more than a work of art, and the young man more than an art aficionado. The statue is the goddess herself, captivating in her beauty, and the young man is her devotee, responding to her in a way that is only logically appropriate. This is not the staid response we come to expect from reading the philosophers or the revulsion of the bishops, but a response informed by constant contact with the divine.⁹⁵ The reciprocity of gaze between the human and the divine was powerful and inherently dangerous: without the proper precautions, without the correct interpretative framework to guide the viewing, the devotee could become utterly consumed by the encounter. This is precisely what happens in the case of the young man at Knidos, for having been consumed so entirely by his desire for the goddess, he eventually commits suicide by throwing himself from a cliff.⁹⁶

As Jaś Elsner reminds us, the literature of the Roman Mediterranean was frequently vague about distinguishing between deity and image, an “ambiguity” that “afforded an edge of danger, since incorrect treatment of a statue could be construed as an assault on the deity embodied in it.”⁹⁷ The practices surrounding cult statues—washing, dressing, parading, feeding, worshipping—acknowledged this ambiguity and privileged the divine presence. Additionally, the practices of divination that sought to elicit a variety

⁹⁵ Jaś Elsner explores the dynamic between various responses to art (i.e., the tension between philosophical/literary and phenomenological responses) for the authors of the Second Sophistic. He argues that we cannot take philosophical and literary accounts as the sole (and I would add, primary) mode of interacting with these images, even if they are the normatizing perspectives. Elsner 1996: 526; for further development see Elsner 2007: 115–121.

⁹⁶ Ps.-Lucian, *Erotes* 16.

⁹⁷ Elsner 2007: 11.

of responses from these images—blinking, tears, sweat, utterances—operated precisely on the assumption that these objects were more than mere statues.⁹⁸ While we do not have evidence for all of these practices in late antique Constantinople, we have tantalizing hints for this shared reverence toward cult artifacts: the parading of the statue of the Tyche, the burning of incense before the statue of Constantine, and the dancing performed around the statue of the empress Eudoxia at the beginning of the fifth century.⁹⁹ That some of these practices, particularly ritual processions, became associated with relics during the early fifth century suggests to me a continuity of thought about the presence of the divine in these objects.¹⁰⁰

Statues of the gods, then, were not and could not be neutral images. They were vehicles for the gods, and they were dangerous. The people—perhaps chief among them, the bishops—*believed* in their efficacy, both to benefit their devotees and to harm those who refused to worship them. The certainty of divine presence called for an appropriate response—perhaps one not as dramatic as that of the young man at Knidos, but certainly a need to recognize and honor the divine presence.¹⁰¹ Consequently, the continued presence of the gods in the public sphere encouraged the perpetuation of traditional cult, and it was up to Christian interpreters to deconstruct and neutralize these images. And so,

⁹⁸ Examples can be found in Lucian, *On the Syrian Goddess* 10; Julian, *Oration 5 (Hymn to the Mother of the Gods)*; John Chrysostom, *On Babylas* 5. For more on theurgy, see Soler 2006: 43–44; Karivieri 2010: 403–404; Elm 2012b: 116–18, 123–25, 307–09.

⁹⁹ **Tyche:** *Chron. pasch.* 330; **Constantine:** Philostorgios, *Eccl. hist.* 2.17; **Eudoxia:** Sokrates, *Eccl. hist.* 6.18.

¹⁰⁰ See for example, the relic processions referenced by John Chrysostom in *After the Remains of the Martyrs*, *Against the Games and Theaters*, and *On the Holy Martyr Phokas*. Later sources also note the importance of parading the relics through the city; see esp. Sokrates, *Eccl. hist.* 7.22.15–18, 7.23.11–12, 7.43.1–4; Sozomen, *Eccl. hist.* 8.8, 9.2; and *Chron. pasch.* 330.

¹⁰¹ It may be interesting to the reader that Knidian Aphrodite is documented among the statuary collection assembled at the Lausus Palace in Constantinople. Bassett 2000: 7, 8–9.

when we find Eusebios claiming that Constantine exposed the gods to ridicule, we see the anxiety of an agent of elite Christian culture who was attempting to control the interpretation of space.¹⁰²

Interpreting an Inherited Landscape

Constantinople's relative insignificance for early Christian historiography did not lend itself to cultivating the sort of glorious Christian past memorialized by Antioch, Jerusalem, or Rome.¹⁰³ Constantine had not alleviated this situation with the monuments he imported into the city. Constantine's extension of the city's walls (three kilometers beyond the old Severan walls, quadrupling the size of the city) left vast tracts of land waiting for development and provided an extensive blank canvas on which the empire's elite—senators, rhetors, philosophers, even bishops—could paint their ambitions.¹⁰⁴

And provide new meaning to this landscape is precisely what the Christian inheritors of the city did. Again, Eusebios is illustrative. Throughout his *Life of Constantine*, Eusebios betrays his investment in the construction of an imperial Christian

¹⁰² This same anxiety appears behind accounts of Christian heroes in other late antique locations who defeated the *daimones* that “lived” in the statues. See, for example, *Mark the Deacon* 61, in which a statue of Aphrodite shatters when a cross is brought into its sight. We also have ample archaeological evidence of crosses incised onto the foreheads of statues. Examples include statues contained in Athens' National Archaeological Museum (3665 and 1762), and Rhodes' Palace of the Grand Masters (Byzantine Collection, GX1278); a bust of a man contained in the Thessaloniki Archaeological Museum (1061) appears to be similarly etched. Images of each of these items can be found in Lazaridou 2011: plates 38, 113–115.

¹⁰³ For the memorialization of Christian narratives in Jerusalem and Antioch, see A. Jacobs 2004: esp. 139–158 and 2011: 29–45; Mayer 2009: 357–67; Sandwell 2007: 43–46

¹⁰⁴ The same can be said of Constantinople's history in general. Although the settlement of Byzantium was founded in the seventh century B.C.E., the town was not a major player in the region until Constantine chose to enlarge the site. See Bassett 2004: 18–19; Van Dam 2010: 50–52; Grig and Kelly 2012: 9.

landscape.¹⁰⁵ He notes the construction of Christian sites by members of the imperial family across the eastern empire, particularly in Palestine (i.e., the Holy Sepulcher, the Grotto of the Nativity, the Mount of Olives, and the Oak of Mamre), but in Nikomedia and Antioch as well.¹⁰⁶ Constantine's own city, the bishop asserts, similarly benefited from the adornments of Christian cult, for the emperor constructed "very many places of worship [and] very large martyr-shrines" there, although Eusebios is surprisingly vague about the identity and locations of these sites. He further claims that the emperor "saw fit to purge [the city] of all idol-worship, so that nowhere in it appeared those images of the supposed gods which are worshipped in temples, nor altars in fire, nor feasts of demons, nor any of the other customs of the superstitious."¹⁰⁷ Instead Constantine embellished the city with "emblems of the Good Shepherd" and even adorned the ceiling of the palace

¹⁰⁵ Eusebios, *Life of Constantine* 4.58–60. The *Life* has sometimes been understood to be a biography of the emperor, but it is more appropriately interpreted as an extended set-piece written on the occasion of the emperor's death. The piece follows the structures of the *basilikos logos* (speech in praise of the emperor) and the funeral oration, with a prologue, a narrative of the subject's birth and education, a description of his physical characteristics and character, accounts of his public career, and finally a narrative of his acceptance of death (including his or her foreknowledge and acceptance of impending death). For comparable texts from a slightly later period, see Gregory of Nazianzos, *Orations* 7 (For Kaisarios), 8 (For Gorgonia), and 43 (For Basil); Gregory of Nyssa, *Life of Makrina*; Jerome, *Epistle* 108 (On Paula); Ambrose of Milan, *Funeral Oration for Emperor Theodosios*. For the function of the *basilikos logos*, see MacCormack 1981: 3–5.

It must be noted that significant questions have been raised about the cohesiveness and attribution of the work to Eusebios. Averil Cameron and Stuart Hall, however, convincingly argue that a stylistic analysis demonstrates the overall consistency of the work, and questions over the text's inconsistencies with Eusebios' *Ecclesiastical History* are accounted for by the fact that the *Life* is a funerary oration for the emperor and thus governed by the conventions of epideictic. For more on the debate, see Downey 1951; Barnes 1989; Cameron 1997; Cameron and Hall 1999: 4–8, 46–47.

¹⁰⁶ See Eusebios, *Life of Constantine* 3.25–40, 3.43.1–3; 3.51–53, 3.50; see also Constantine's letter authorizing Christian possession in Palestine at 2.24–42 (esp. 2.40).

¹⁰⁷ Eusebios, *Life of Constantine* 3.48.2: ὅλως δ' ἐμπνέων θεοῦ σοφίας, ἣν τῆς ἐπιγορίας τῆς αὐτοῦ πόλιν ἐπώνυμον ἀποφῆναι ἔκρινε, καθαρῆν εἰδωλολατρίας ἀπάσης ἐδικαίον, ὥς μηδαμοῦ φαίνεσθαι ἐν αὐτῇ τῶν δὴ νομιζομένων θεῶν ἀγάλματα ἐν ἱεροῖς θρησκευόμενα, ἀλλ' οὐδὲ βωμοὺς λίθοις αἱμάτων μαινομένους, οὐ θυσίας ὀλοκαυτουμένας πυρὶ, οὐ δαιμονικὰς ἐορτάς, οὐδ' ἕτερόν τι τῶν συνήθων τοῖς δεισιδαίμοσιν. (Trans. Cameron and Hall 1999.)

with the cross.¹⁰⁸ We should obviously be cautious about overemphasizing Eusebios' testimony as evidence of a strong Christian cult presence in the city, yet it is apparent that his primary concern is asserting Constantine's support of Christian cult.

Eusebios' assertions helped to downplay the problematic elements of a cult landscape that clearly held onto traditional associations; he sought to persuade Constantius to follow his father's model of piety (at least as it was construed by Eusebios). Later the city's landscape would become for John Chrysostom a mark of Christianity's triumph and the power of the martyr's witness as well as a means of defining behavior. For Sozomen, Constantine's supposed cleansing of the city's religious landscape would support his claims about the piety of Theodosios II and the supremacy of the city's Nicene factions. Thus, by rhetorically erasing traditional cult sites from the topography, these authors asserted their own versions of Christianity as the exclusive, legitimate expression of civic religion.

Dictating Viewer Response: Eusebios on the Apostoleion

To reiterate, the Constantinian city was little different from other cities. It hosted traditional cult sites, possessed loci for emperor-cult, and placed Roman and Greek culture on prominent display. Intentionally or not, this monumental landscape psychologically imposed a sense of imperial identity, rooted in Rome's ties to the traditional gods, upon the city's populace. Indeed, it seems to me that the visual presence of sites associated with traditional cult, including emperor-cult, would have presented real problems to Christian bishops attempting to gain a foothold in the city. However,

¹⁰⁸ Eusebios, *Life of Constantine* 3.49. Krautheimer (1983: 61) notes that the painting over the palace gate is of Constantine slaying the enemy, and the ambiguity of the image allowed the dual identification of the enemy as Licinius and Satan; Krautheimer 1983: 61.

these bishops could contain the structuring elements of the traditionalist landscape by asserting Constantine's devotion to Christianity and using rhetoric to reshape people's experience of the landscape.¹⁰⁹

One way that Christian rhetors could influence their audiences' experiences of the Constantinopolitan landscape was to change the meaning of its monuments. A prime example of this type of interpretive work is Eusebios' *ekphrasis* in his *Life of Constantine* of one of the most important landmarks in Constantinople, the Apostoleion. While Eusebios' *ekphrasis* on the Apostoleion continues his program to position the deceased emperor as the paragon of imperial piety and devotion to Christ, it also wrestles with what it means for an individual traditionally treated as a god by the Roman state to be interred within a structure expressly identified as a Christian cult site.¹¹⁰ In order to resolve these tensions, Eusebios plays off his audience's experience of religious and imperial architecture to subtly transform the shrine from an imperial mausoleum into a church dedicated to the apostles of Christ.¹¹¹ By doing so, he can also assert the legitimacy of Christianity in the highly competitive landscape of Constantinople, as it was still negotiating its ties to both traditional forms of cult and Christianity.

¹⁰⁹ For the erasure and reinterpretation of monuments and the role of this activity in constructing collective or social memory, see Alcock 2002, esp. 3–5.

¹¹⁰ Eusebios concludes the sequence surrounding Constantine's death by mentioning the coinage minted on the occasion. On the obverse, the emperor is depicted with his head veiled (in the manner of certain traditional priesthoods), while on the reverse, he is in a quadriga (a chariot drawn by four horses) "being taken up by a right hand stretched out to him from above," a clear reference to his deification. Eusebios, *Life of Constantine* 4.73. An example of such a coin is in the Dumbarton Oaks Byzantine Collection, (an image of the coin can be found in Cameron and Hall 1999: 346). See discussion in Cameron and Hall 1999: 349, although their analysis of the numismatic evidence overstates a distinction between traditional ("pagan," in their terminology) *consecratio* imagery and its application to a "Christian" emperor. It should also be noted that the quadriga also occurs in the iconography of Helios (the Sun).

¹¹¹ Dagron 2003: 139.

The Apostoleion itself no longer stands, and the site is now occupied by the Fatih Camii.¹¹² According to Eusebios, however, Constantine's monument was explicitly marked as a martyrion for Christ's apostles. The shrine consisted of a central altar, surrounded by twelve repositories to honor the apostles.¹¹³ The interior walls were covered with variegated stones, and its coffered ceiling was plated with gold. The exterior was equally majestic, with a roof of copper trimmed with gold and gold and bronze trelliswork set into its walls.¹¹⁴ Surrounding the building was an open-air courtyard, containing a number of smaller structures (e.g., housing, washrooms, and lamp stores)¹¹⁵ necessary to the administration of the shrine. The entire complex was marked off from the surrounding city with porticoes open toward the courtyard. Eusebios' description of porticoes, while ambiguous, suggests that the outer walls were solid and created an architectural play that set the space apart from its surroundings and pulled the

¹¹² According to speculation based on the testimony of Sokrates (*Eccl. hist.* 2.38.35–43), Constantius renovated the original structure following an earthquake, and Prokopios (*The Buildings of Justinian* 1.4.9–18) comments on the significant renovations undertaken by Justinian. The Byzantine structure was destroyed in the fifteenth century. Questions have been raised over the attribution of the Apostoleion to Constantine. Gilbert Dagron, Richard Krautheimer, Averil Cameron and Stuart Hall date the church (and mausoleum within) to Constantine, whereas Glanville Downey argues that Constantine was temporarily buried elsewhere and then transferred to a permanent structure built by Constantius. Downey dismisses Eusebios' statement detailing the emperor's burial at the Apostoleion (*Life of Constantine* 4.71) because he regards it as a later interpolation. More recently Cyril Mango and Jonathan Bardill have argued that the mausoleum itself dated to Constantine, while the church known during the Byzantine period was added to the site later in the fourth century, perhaps under Constantius. The debate is not settled, but I find most persuasive Mango's argument that the original structure was a rotunda mausoleum, which initially served as a shrine to the Apostles as well, and that a new shrine was later added to the site. However, Mango's assertion that Constantine's directives for liturgical services in the structure were necessary because the site was not a church depends too heavily upon later normative notions of liturgy and church. For discussion, see Downey 1951 and 1959; Dagron 1974: 397–99; Krautheimer 1983: 56, 58–60 and 1986: 69; C. Mango 1990: 57; Cameron and Hall 1999: 337–339; Bardill 2004: 54–55.

¹¹³ Purported relics of the apostles were later translated to the site, beginning in 356–357. with Timothy, Andrew, and Luke. See Jerome, *Chronicle* (Helm 240–41); *Chron. Pasch.* 406; Cf. C. Mango 1990: 52–53, 56; Mayer 2000a: 49–60.

¹¹⁴ Eusebios, *Life of Constantine*, 4.58.

¹¹⁵ Eusebios, *Life of Constantine* 4.59: οἰκοί τε βασιλικοὶ...λουτρά τε καὶ ἀναλαμπήρια.

viewer (and potential worshipper) inward toward the sacred.¹¹⁶ Architecture that created spaces where the hidden was revealed as the viewer progressed toward and then into the *temenos* are frequently attested for cult sites in the Roman Mediterranean.¹¹⁷ According to Eusebios' description, the mausoleum would have been an imposing sight in the relatively sparse and open northwestern region of the rapidly growing city, not to mention it would have fit within an architectural idiom that visually and physically (if not in practice as well) set it apart as sacred space.

According to Eusebios, the emperor's sarcophagus was placed in the center of the mausoleum and encircled by shrines for the twelve apostles.¹¹⁸ It has been commonly assumed that this placement physically reinforced Constantine's assertion that he was a thirteenth apostle, and Eusebios suggests that this is how visitors to the site should interpret the arrangement. However, Constantine himself may not have intended this interpretation. For Constantine, his son Constantius, and the members of the imperial court, the placement may have asserted Constantine's divinity rather than his apostolic status. Even during the fourth century, emperors were divinized upon their deaths, and Constantine's placement in the midst of the apostles could be seen as equating the emperor with Christ. Another valence here, which I tentatively propose, is that the placement was an allusion to Helios and the zodiac. Helios imagery frequently converged with imperial iconography throughout the eastern Mediterranean during this period, and

¹¹⁶ Eusebios, *Life of Constantine* 4.59.

¹¹⁷ See Elsner 2007: 22–26.

¹¹⁸ Eusebios, *Life of Constantine* 4.50.3.

Constantine's devotion to the cult of Helios has been documented.¹¹⁹ In Constantinople itself, Constantine was depicted as Helios atop the column in the Forum of Constantine.¹²⁰ Because of its height (37 meters) and situation atop a hill, the statue was one of the most prominent features of Constantinople's civic topography and was likely visible from the Apostoleion.¹²¹ A visual connection between the statue and the Apostoleion may also be hinted at in Eusebios' description of the dome's reflection of the sun. Again, it is impossible to know if Eusebios intended to draw such a connection, but the convergence of imagery is provocative.¹²² If Eusebios was reacting to the presence of Helios imagery or to the emperor's apotheosis, his *ekphrasis* on the mausoleum constituted a radical reinterpretation of Constantine's status after death and the emperor's intentions for the mausoleum.

Eusebios further reorders the cultic associations of the site, relying on narrative chronology to subordinate the site's identification as an imperial mausoleum to its identification as a Christian church. The strong resonance of traditional cultic structures would have been out of step with Eusebios' efforts to portray Constantine as a "Christian" emperor. As Richard Krautheimer comments, "the arrangements willed by Constantine were, to put it mildly, extraordinary. To orthodox Christians they were shocking, so much

¹¹⁹ See Staerman 1990: 361–79; Kraemer 1998: 156–162. For the continued interest in solar imagery later by the emperor Julian later in the century, see Elm 2012b: 286–299. As already mentioned, Helios' vehicle is a quadriga. There are also some images of Christ that are suggestive enough that the viewer could have taken them as images of Helios. See Jensen 2000: 42–43, 110–112. Cf. the appearance of Helios imagery in fourth-century Palestinian synagogues; Magness 2005: 1–52.

¹²⁰ Bassett 2004: 201.

¹²¹ Ward-Perkins 2012: 58–59; J. Matthews 2012: 113.

¹²² Especially considering how common a trope the reflection of sunlight is in *ekphraseis* on temples.

so that in 359, his son...had the sarcophagus removed.”¹²³ Krautheimer perhaps puts too much stock in “orthodox Christianity” as a cohesive block with the influence to dictate imperial policy during Constantius’ reign, but for Eusebios and those of like mind, the primary identification of the site as a place to venerate an apotheosized emperor who had been baptized was no doubt problematic.

Eusebios’ solution was to transform this particular mausoleum into a site for the veneration of Christ’s twelve apostles, figures who by this time were all thought to be martyrs. The presence of such prominent figures of Christian mythology would surely have reinforced ties between the emperor and Christ, and the act of visiting the mausoleum could be interpreted as an act of consenting to the legitimacy of Christianity within the frameworks of imperial religion.¹²⁴ Eusebios’ insistence that Constantine’s primary goal in constructing the shrine was to honor the apostles places the subversion of Constantine’s divinity squarely on the emperor’s own shoulders. He claims that Constantine’s desire for his body to be placed in the shrine was initially secret; only a few people are aware of the intention, including Eusebios.¹²⁵ Eusebios relies on Constantine’s own authority to authorize his reinterpretation—and to a large extent, Eusebios’ rhetorical parry has been successful, for both the authors of Theodosian Constantinople

¹²³ Krautheimer 1983: 60. The evidence for the removal of Constantine’s sarcophagus is highly circumstantial. Sokrates claims that it was actually Makedonius who removed the sarcophagus without imperial approval because the mausoleum was structurally compromised after an earthquake. Sokrates, *Eccl. hist.* 2.38.35–43.

¹²⁴ Krautheimer 1983: 60.

¹²⁵ Eusebios, *Life of Constantine* 4.60.1. As Cyril Mango has commented, “An innocent reader would assume—and was intended to assume—that Constantine built a “temple” that was primarily dedicated to the apostles, and that his intention to be buried there himself, if not exactly an afterthought, was kept secret and became evident only at the end, whereas any contemporary spectator, on seeing a normal imperial mausoleum, would not have put such an interpretation on it. To this I can only reply that the *Vita Constantini*...is a work of propaganda and that it would be highly naive of us to accept all its assertions and insinuations at face value.” C. Mango 1990: 58.

and modern scholars have accepted the bishop's claims about Constantine's intentions for the site and what it meant for Constantine to be a Christian emperor.

Eusebios' stress on the performance of the liturgy in the presence of the sarcophagus, both in the *ekphrasis* itself and later in Eusebios' account of the emperor's internment in the church, further subverts the site's possible position in emperor-cult. Eusebios is explicit here: Constantine wants his body placed in the church because he hopes that those who visit the shrine to invoke the apostles will remember him in their prayers. Consequently, his soul will benefit from the "worship which would be conducted there in honor of the apostles."¹²⁶ Eusebios asserts that this had happened, for God "did not disappoint him of the very things he looked for in his prayers."¹²⁷ The bishop repeats his assertions regarding the site's primary identification as a Christian temple in his account of Constantine's funeral. After Constantius had escorted his father's body to church and laid it in the prepared sarcophagus, he withdrew from the altar to allow the "ministers of God" to conduct the "rites of divine worship." Again, Eusebios' narrative subordinates emperor-cult to Christian worship: while the expected tributes are respectfully paid to the emperor, the people honor God, not the emperor. They weep and petition God on behalf of the emperor's soul. In response to the piety of the people, God grants divine favor to the deceased emperor, by *allowing* his body to remain in the shrine.¹²⁸ The cult of Christ, via the mediation of the apostles, trumps the cult of the emperor, and the mausoleum becomes a church. Moreover, the performance of Christian

¹²⁶ Eusebios, *Life of Constantine* 4.60.2.

¹²⁷ Eusebios, *Life of Constantine* 4.60.4.

¹²⁸ Eusebios, *Life of Constantine* 4.71.1–2.

liturgy in this space, from which the unbaptized were supposedly barred, would have had immense ramifications for non-Christian veneration of the divinized emperor. To demonstrate their loyalty to the emperor, the city's elite would be required to recognize at some level the sacrality of the site and publically consent to Christianity as a legitimate expression of imperial religion, even if they themselves did not identify as Christian.¹²⁹ It is thus quite plausible that Eusebios was playing off this group's attachments to the recently deceased emperor, an attachment that had been cultivated by the constant barrage of public praise and acclamation for the imperial persona and would have included some sense of reverence for the site of the emperor's burial.¹³⁰

Eusebios is not simply describing a building; he is dictating how the viewer, especially Constantius and the elites who gathered around him, ought to engage with that building and understand the presence of the deceased emperor's sarcophagus within. According to Eusebios, the emperor desired this structure for his mausoleum because it was a holy site, dedicated to the mysteries of Christ; it was *not* a holy site by virtue of the presence of the divinized emperor's sarcophagus. Eusebios' *ekphrasis*, then, dictates the experience of religion in the broadest sense and relies on the Apostoleion to make assertions about Christianity's presence in a highly competitive landscape. The

¹²⁹ As far as I can ascertain, there has been no detailed study of the religious commitments of individuals within the administration over the course of Constantine's and Constantius' reigns, much less during the period of transition from Constantine to Constantius (if indeed such an analysis is possible). In her study of Constantius' administration, Chantal Volger passes over this question, except to comment that Constantius intentionally neglected the traditional (western) Roman elite and instead offered positions to those with whom he had prior relationships and who had demonstrated aptitude as administrators. This policy, Volger comments, resulted in the Christianization of the imperial administration by the end of Constantius' reign. However, while the Christianization of the bureaucracy certainly was an effect of Constantius' policy, I think we need to be cautious about assuming that the effect necessarily coincides with the intention behind those decisions; see Volger 1979: 139–140.

¹³⁰ For a brief discussion of the role of rhetorical education in training in training citizens, see Webb 2009: 17–19.

interpretation of the site as a focal point for the marriage of the imperial household and Christian cult would enable it to facilitate assertions about imperial legitimacy and normative Christianity over the following century, particularly for the Theodosian dynasty. The remains of emperors, including Constantius and Julian, were placed in the mausoleum.¹³¹ So too were the purported relics of the Apostles Timothy, Luke, and Andrew in 356/7, which were joined by the relics of John Chrysostom in 438.¹³² During the later fourth century, assertions of orthodoxy frequently occurred in the Apostoleion: Theodosios I installed Gregory of Nazianzus as the imperial bishop at the Apostoleion;¹³³ a gang of Gregory's competitors forced themselves into this same church in order to consecrate Maximus;¹³⁴ and according to Sokrates, it was here that Eudoxia forced John Chrysostom's hand in reconciling with Severian and Epiphanius upstaged Chrysostom by condemning Origen's books.¹³⁵ Thus the mausoleum, an imperial site superimposed with Christian meaning, served as a focal point in the Constantinopolitan landscape that guided the construction of an normative, imperial Christian identity.

¹³¹ Philip Grierson surmises that Theodosios I was responsible for the translation of Julian's remains, as "it is difficult to imagine any emperor later than Theodosios I interesting himself in the matter." Grierson's argument, while speculative, has been generally accepted. If Theodosios was responsible, it may have been a move to situate himself in Constantine's legitimate line. See Grierson 1962: 23, 40–41; cf. Elm 2012b: 439.

¹³² Depositions of the **apostles**: Jerome, *Chronicle*, 240–241; *Chron. Pasch.* 406; Philostorgios, *Church History* 3.2; *Passion of Artemius* 17; see discussion in Burgess 2003: 5–36; deposition of **John Chrysostom**: Sokrates, *Eccl. hist.* 7.45.2–7; see also the brief discussion by Nicholas Constatas, who connects the translation to efforts to reconcile the Johannites and to marginalize the students of Theodore of Mopsuestia (and by association Nestorios); Constatas 2003: 114–15.

¹³³ This is at least the common assumption based on Gregory of Nazianzos' comments in *Poems* 2.1.12.888–904. See discussion in McGuckin 2001: 325–26, 329; Daley 2006: 19–20; Grig and Kelly 2012: 17.

¹³⁴ Again, the identification of the church as the site of the ordination is based on the assumption that the Apostoleion is the "cathedral" under Theodosios I.

¹³⁵ Sokrates, *Eccl. hist.* 6.11, 6.14

CONCLUSION

Constantine died at Nikomedia in the late spring of 337, an event that threw that city into confusion. The members of the imperial court, the city magistrates, and the soldiers who had earlier attended the ailing emperor now approached his body rending their garments, crying out with lamentation, and performing *proskynēsis*. The atmosphere outside the palace matched that inside. The people ran through the city's streets in a mixture of wails and confused silence. Soon Constantine's body was lifted from the deathbed, placed in a golden coffin draped in purple, and escorted to the imperial palace in Constantinople. There the deceased emperor lay in state and received the customary honors until his son Constantius arrived in Constantinople to escort the body to the Apostoleion.¹³⁶

The city that Constantine left behind was not remarkably Christian. Rather, Constantine had constructed an imperial monumental landscape steeped with the resonances of traditional cult. At the same time, he signaled the inclusion of Christianity within imperial religious structures in building Hagia Eirene between the temple complex of Byzantium's acropolis and the new city's administrative center. In this, as in much study of the ancient world, it is impossible to determine intentionality, and we cannot assume that effect indicates intention or even straightforward action. Drake's reminder that actions have unintended consequences, a fact that is often overlooked in historical scholarship, is important here.¹³⁷ Whatever Constantine's intentions in choosing Constantinople as his dynastic capital and introducing Christian elements into a relatively

¹³⁶ Death and funeral of Constantine: Eusebios, *Vita Constantini* 4.64–72; cf. Sokrates, *Eccl. hist.* 1.39–40; Sozomen, *Eccl. hist.* 2.34.5.

¹³⁷ Drake 2000: 25.

traditionalist landscape, this landscape produced a fertile arena for competition and fostered conditions that allowed significant changes to occur within the religious and cultic structures of the empire during the following century. It is to the competition between religious actors, particularly between Christian bishops, and their attempts to gain control over the mechanisms of imperial religion that I turn to in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 3

VIOLENCE, THE POLITICS OF MEMORY, AND RELIGIOUS BOUNDARIES

In the previous chapter, I explored the framework of imperial religion in Constantinople, focusing on the continuity of the emperor's religious obligations and authority with earlier paradigms of civic religion. This traditionalist landscape provided a map wherein cultural agents could contest the parameters of state cult, as exemplified in Eusebios' reinterpretation of Constantine's mausoleum, a site that lent itself to the cult of the emperor, as a Christian site dedicated to the twelve apostles and that subordinated Constantine to Christ. This chapter examines the production of religious boundaries within that contested landscape as the Christian élite inserted themselves into the structures of civic religion during the period following the death of Constantine. The conventional narrative of the fourth century is that the "accepted" religion of the empire was dictated by the doctrinal proclivities of the reigning emperor, thus presenting us with an empire that swung quickly between Nicene and Arian Christianity, with the brief interlude of Julian's revival of "paganism." However, religious boundaries in Constantinople were significantly more porous than this narrative allows, and traditional cult sites continued to be present in the city alongside Christian sites, likely into the early 390s. It was up to the members of the new Christian élite to convince those around them that these boundaries existed and that they mattered. Here I consider the discrepancy between the religious boundaries in the rhetoric of the Christian élite and our evidence for those boundaries on-the-ground, before turning to two related strategies utilized by these

individuals to strengthen those boundaries, namely, the production of violence and the memorialization of that violence. Together, these two strategies were used to create a new history for the city centered upon the initial suppression and ultimate triumph of Nicene orthodoxy under Theodosios I.

THE CONSTRUCTION OF RELIGIOUS BOUNDARIES

When we look to the social landscape of late antiquity, we tend to categorize groups as bounded entities identifiable by “religion” (e.g., Christianity, Judaism, Paganism/Hellenism, etc.) or by doctrinal definitions within Christianity. This tendency is hardly surprising, as much of the literature that survives from the period presents late antique cities as stages upon which Christians clashed with those who were not Christian and where “orthodox” Christians struggled to maintain the unity of the church against the onslaught of heretics and schismatics.¹ This is the picture presented by numerous fourth-century authors, Christian and non-Christian alike, as well as the historiography of the following century that dominates our reconstructions of fourth-century Constantinople.² According to Sokrates and Sozomen (both writing in the 450s), Nicene Christians—that is, what they saw as the true, orthodox church—initially held control of the city’s churches under Constantine and his bishop Alexander, only to see the unity of their

¹ The classic study of Christian diversity is that of Walter Bauer (1964; English translation 1971), who traces Christianity from an initial state of plurality and variation in the late first and second centuries to an increasing semblance of unity in the post-Constantinian period.

² The fourth-century texts invested in this portrayal of the religious landscape are too numerous to enumerate here. I point to a representative few: Julian’s *Misopogon* and *Against the Galileans*; Gregory of Nazianzos’ *Orations* 4 and 5 (Against Julian); Libanios’ *Oration* 30 (On the Temples); and John Chrysostom’s homilies *Against the Jews* (also rendered—even softened—as *Against the Judaizing Christians*).

church shattered following Alexander's death and Makedonios' usurpation of the episcopal throne under Constantius.³ Over the following four decades, the future imperial church suffered extensively at the hands of the dominant Makedonian party until Theodosios I returned the episcopacy to Nicene bishops in 380/1. Interspersed in these narratives are occasional skirmishes with religious outsiders—Novatians, Sabbatians, Jews, Manichaeans, and practitioners of traditional cult.⁴

The usefulness of these types of religious categories for analysis has been under discussion over the past several decades as scholars of late antique religion have noted that the clear distinctions between religious groups articulated by our sources do not necessarily reflect social realities.⁵ Judith Lieu, for instance, has argued that religious boundaries in the Roman world were inherently fuzzy and unstable, with “outsiders” sometimes confusing the boundary markers between groups that we take for granted. Among her examples she includes the second-century philosopher Epictetus' identification of a Jew by baptism, not circumcision, and Lucian's use of terminology generally considered “Jewish” to describe Peregrinus' infiltration of the Christian community (Lieu notes that Peregrinus converses with Christian “priests and scribes” and

³ This narrative is diffused across the histories produced by these authors, but is more pronounced in Sokrates. The primary narrative of Makedonios' episcopacy is found in book 2 of Sokrates (see especially 2.6–7, 12–13, and 38). See also Sozomen, *Eccl. hist.* 3.7 and 3.9.

⁴ **Sabbatians:** Sokrates, *Eccl. hist.* 7.5.2–9; Sozomen, *Eccl. hist.* 7.18.1–11. **Jews:** Sokrates, *Eccl. hist.* 7.4, 7.17; Sozomen, *Eccl. hist.* 2.3.7. **Manichaeans:** Sokrates, *Eccl. hist.* 1.22. The ninth-century chronicler Theophanes Confessor (AM 5898) accuses the prefect who organized the games around the statue of Eudoxia at the beginning of the fifth century of being a Manichaean. **Practitioners of traditional cult:** Sokrates, *Eccl. hist.* 3.1, 3.11, 5.16.9, 6.18.19; Sozomen, *Eccl. hist.* 2.3.7, 5.4, 8.5; see also John Malalas, *Chron.* 13.3, 13.39.

⁵ The literature on religious identity in the late ancient world continues to accumulate. In addition to the work of Judith Lieu, Daniel Boyarin, and Éric Rebillard, see Becker and Reed 2003; A. Jacobs 2004 and 2011; Sandwell 2007: esp. 3–31; Perkins 2009; Gwyn and Bangert 2010; and Shepardson 2014.

eventually becomes the leader of their “synagogue”).⁶ Lieu elaborates that the texts that we study for evidence of religious groups in the Roman world are themselves the artifacts of efforts by cultural élites to make sense of the social networks they encountered and to clarify the differences between groups. Through such texts, authors constructed boundaries that did not reflect real-world situations, and the consumption of those texts helped to bring those boundaries into existence.⁷ Daniel Boyarin has likewise challenged the assumption that religious groups in antiquity (if ever) were fully formed and discrete entities and instead proposes that the rhetoric of orthodoxy and heresy constructed and policed the imagined boundaries between groups. As Christian and Jewish authors constructed boundaries in their rhetoric, Boyarin argues, they erased “the fuzziness of borders, semantic and social” and transformed their imagined communities into what we see in retrospect as differentiated religions.⁸

More recently, Éric Rebillard has examined efforts among Christian authors in North Africa from the late second through the early fifth century to construct boundaries between Christianity and traditional Roman cult. Rebillard relies on the work of sociologist Rogers Brubaker, who, in his work on ethnicity in the modern world, argues that social categories are not self-evident descriptors of real groups, but are rather evoked by individuals in ways that create moments of “groupness” and encourage others to

⁶ Epictetus, *Diss.* 2.9.19–21; Lucian, *Peregrinus* 2. For her discussion, see Lieu 2002: 23.

⁷ Lieu 2004: 9. See also a recent article by Douglas Boin, who argues that Eusebios adopted the categories of *Hellenismos* and *Judaismos* as a strategy of internal polemic directed against other Christians rather than outsiders; Boin 2014: 183–88.

⁸ Boyarin 2004: 2, 14.

identify with these social categories.⁹ Applying Brubaker's observations to the ancient world, Rebillard considers the co-existence of the multiple identifications held by North African Christians (e.g., Roman, North African, Christian). For these individuals, Rebillard argues, one social identity did not exclude the other, but Tertullian, Cyprian, Augustine, and similarly invested agents sought to "activate," or appeal to, their audience's Christian identities in conversation with or opposition to their North African or Roman identities.¹⁰

These and similar studies have helped us think about how religious categories are defined and deployed within social space. In short, Christianity, Judaism, and Paganism/Hellenism became religions as they were defined against each other. The studies of Lieu, Boyarin, and Rebillard focus primarily on what modern analysts would recognize as *inter*-religious polemic, that is, the efforts of individuals to construct and maintain boundaries between what appear to us to be distinct religious traditions. I argue that much the same can be said of what we might consider *intra*-religious polemic, that is, efforts by bishops to define and construct boundaries according to points of doctrine or discipline. In an important study on theological factionalism after Nicaea, Lewis Ayres

⁹ See Brubaker 2004: 10. Rebillard cites an earlier version of this article, published in 2002 in *Archives Européennes de Sociologie XLIII* [2].

¹⁰ Rebillard seems to ignore or be unaware of Brubaker's cautions elsewhere concerning the utility of identity as a tool of analysis. Rebillard treats identity as a hard concept, as something internal to each person, and conceives of individuals possessing a multiplicity of identities. Brubaker, in contrast, classifies scholarly use of identity into two categories: strong conceptions and weak conceptions. Strong conceptions of identity, Brubaker argues, assume too much purchase power for identity and reify it into an object someone or some group "has or ought to have." When applied to a group, a strong conception of identity assumes homogeneity within the group and clear boundaries between groups. Weak (or soft) conceptions of identity, on the other hand, understand identity as something that is unstable, contingent, and constructed, and as something that can be broken apart and negotiated. Such a concept, he asserts, is too weak to perform useful analysis, and the sorts of analysis done under this conception can be performed without invoking identity. See Brubaker 1998: 37–38. As I state in Chapter 1, I use identity as imperfect shorthand for a constructed cultural ideal external to the individual. See above, pp. 12–13.

observes that neither pro-Nicene nor non-Nicene theologies were unified parties; rather the theological map consisted of a diversity of positions. Therefore, he argues, while we tend to categorize individuals into distinct theological positions, we should be careful about allowing those positions to serve as a short-hand in analysis, since it flattens our map of fourth-century theological diversity and obscures the importance of personal networks and shifting alliances.¹¹

These alliances did not necessarily depend on shared doctrinal positions, and even when certain Christian élites appeared to agree on doctrine, their alliances frequently consisted of fragile networks, which could overlap, break apart, and compete with each other for a variety of reasons. It is beyond the scope of my study here to explore these dynamics fully, but a few examples will serve to illustrate this point. Akakios of Caesarea, for example, variably allied with those holding homoousian and anomoian positions, even though his own teaching appears to have been a homoioan position.¹² Another example are the bishops of the Novatian party, who agreed with the doctrinal formulae established at Nicaea, yet remained distinct from the dominant Nicene party that would become the imperial church under Theodosios I.¹³ According to Sokrates, imperial

¹¹ Ayres 2004: 13.

¹² Philostorgios, *Eccl. hist.* 4.12, 6.4; Sokrates, *Eccl. hist.* 3.25. R. P. C. Hanson decides that Akakios' shifts in theological position was motivated by self-interest, as he intended to retain his position as bishop of the important city of Caesarea at all costs; Hanson 2005: 581–83; but also see Ayres 2004: 161–64, who understands Akakios to be more consistently opposed to both positions. Ayres also prefers to refer to the anomoian position as “heterousian” for individuals like Aetios and Eunomios, who taught the “unlikeness [of the Father and Son] *according to essence*,” but not in other respects. Anomoian, in contrast, implies that the Father and Son are unlike in all respects and was used in invective against this position. See Ayres 2004: 145.

¹³ Sokrates comments on the friendship displayed between the homoousians and the Novatians during the reign of Constantius; *Eccl. hist.* 2.38.26.

bishops under Theodosios I were quite willing to allow the Novatians to continue assembling in the city.¹⁴ The networks between imperial clergy and the Novatian bishops, however, were often strained and would come under increasing attack during the fifth century.¹⁵

Even within the ranks of imperial clergy, the fragility of “doctrinal” networks was betrayed in the repeated controversies surrounding episcopal appointments. Considerations beyond doctrinal commitment (e.g., interpersonal friction, civic competition, etc.) often overrode supposed theological agreement. The appointment of Gregory of Nazianzos to the episcopal throne of Constantinople illustrates this point clearly. We might expect other “Nicene” élites in Constantinople and abroad to have supported Gregory’s appointment to the see, especially if he was simply replacing someone who refused to acknowledge the authority of the Council of Nicaea. But it was the opposition from this same pool of individuals that derailed his position near the emperor.¹⁶ A similar example of fissure within doctrinal networks is the hostility toward Meletios, one of two homoousian bishops in Antioch during the later half of the fourth century and whom Gregory of Nazianzos opposed at the Council of Constantinople.¹⁷

¹⁴ Sokrates, *Eccl. hist.* 5.10, 5.20.

¹⁵ Sokrates reports that John Chrysostom attempted to push the Novatians from the city and seize their churches. Sokrates, *Eccl. hist.* 6.19 and 6.22.

¹⁶ For Gregory’s appointment, see Sokrates, *Eccl. hist.* 5.6.1, 5.7.1–2; Sozomen, *Eccl. hist.* 7.5.1–3, 7.7.8–9. Susanna Elm discredits the portrayal of Gregory as someone who swore off the episcopacy in favor of a life of ascetic solitude and properly situates him within an élite culture of competition for access to the avenues of power. See Elm 2012b: 6–9.

¹⁷ During the course of his episcopacy (from 360 until his death in 381 at the Council of Constantinople), Meletios would be exiled three times: in 360/1, in 365, and in 371. For summaries of the Meletian schism in Antioch, see Hanson 2005: 383–84, 792–93, 807; Mayer and Neil 2006: 39–40; Mayer 2009: 360–361; and Shepardson 2014: 80–85.

In light of the dynamic nature of such interpersonal relationships, it is clear that categories of doctrine are not always heuristically useful and in fact do more to obscure tensions and rivalries between individuals than to illuminate real group boundaries within Constantinople's social environment. In other words, our analytical impulse to systematize religious politics encourages us to ignore potentially messier situations beyond these agents. Consequently, it is helpful to reframe our view of the late antique religious landscape in terms of loose networks of individuals who coalesce around a doctrinal stance, individual, or location. From this perspective, we see individuals with investments in particular theological stances for whatever reason—intellectual pedigree, regional or civic patriotism, political advantage, or the persuasiveness of a philosophical argument—who articulate those investments publically and convince others of the correctness of their teaching, even if the “common person” may not have understood the nuances of the theological debates.

The Religious Landscape of Mid-Fourth Century Constantinople

Turning to the religious landscape of mid-fourth-century Constantinople, we can see how messy these boundaries could be. As I outlined in chapter 2, Constantinople did not host a significantly Christian visible architectural footprint at the time of Constantine's death; however, that footprint grew over the following decades as new identifiably Christian sites were built. These included sites associated with the imperial church, namely, the Great Church (Hagia Sophia) under Constantius and the Anastasia under Theodosios I, as well as more localized cult sites like *martyria* and monasteries.¹⁸

¹⁸ The dedication of the **Great Church** is dated by the *Chronicon Paschale* (544) to 360 under bishop Eudoxius. Thomas Mathews and Richard Krautheimer hold that the Great Church was begun under

This transformation was not a neat, organized process, nor was it directed by a single individual. For centuries, emperors and their families had commissioned the construction of religious spaces ostensibly in fulfillment of vows, but also as a means to claim legitimacy or to differentiate themselves from their predecessors.¹⁹ This same pattern continued for imperial building activity in Constantinople, although the emperors directed their votive temples to Christ rather than to the traditional gods.

Christian élites, with their conflicting doctrinal commitments and shifting alliances, competed to control these Christian temples, for physical possession of sacred space translated to a certain degree of leverage. In late antique Constantinople we see a fairly diverse array of labels utilized among Christians: Homoousian (Nicene), Homoian (Arian), Makedonian, Novatian, Sabbatian, Johannite, and more. The number of labels fluctuated as new groups broke from old and then sometimes reintegrated with the imperial church. Though the religious élite readily constructed boundaries between these groups—and deployed many of these labels disparagingly to do so—the differences implied by these categories might not be readily evident in the immediate proximity of ritual events, cult agents, or cult edifices. In many instances, I contend, these groups were almost visibly and aurally indistinguishable from each other and the attendant population

Constantine, with its dedication occurring thirty-four years later. Gilbert Dagron, on the other hand, suggests that the “thirty four years” mentioned by the *Chronicon Paschale* refers not to the founding of the church but to the founding of the city and thus provides no real evidence that Constantine founded the site. Instead, he accepts Sokrates (*Eccl. hist.* 2.16, 2.43) in dating the beginning of construction to 350/1. Jonathan Bardill follows Dagron’s dating. See Mathews 1971: 11; Dagron 1974: 397–99; Krautheimer 1983: 50, 52; Bardill 2004: 27, 54–56. Church of the **Theotokos**: Theophanes, *Chron.* AM 5942; For the early history of **monasteries** in Constantinople, see Hatlie 2007: 64–71.

¹⁹ For temples as both votive offerings and assertions of legitimacy, see Beard 1998.1: 184–186, 190–91, 196–199, and discussion above, Chapter 1, pp. 16–17.

may not have been aware of—or cared—what doctrinal position a religious specialist held. In fact, the fifth-century historian Philostorgios suggests something to this effect:

Even if those of Arius’ school differed in their views from those favoring the homoousian doctrine, still they shared with them in prayers, hymns, deliberations, and almost everything else except for the sacred sacrifice.²⁰

The ritual actions of these two supposedly distinct Christian groups, Philostorgios comments, were identical. Distinctions needed to be applied by those with some level of cultural influence, such as the imperial bishop or his clergy, a respected local ascetic, or a popular visiting bishop. Group distinctions could even depend upon the popular appeal of a bishop. After all, Christian bishops were public performers. They were known for being able to gain a following, and the popularity of a bishop could be more determinative in creating a perception of groupness than his doctrinal positions. The ability to differentiate between groups would have depended on knowledge of the local political situation—and that could change quickly if a Christian cleric changed his doctrinal position or found himself in competition with someone more popular.²¹

²⁰ Philostorgios, *Eccl. hist.* 3.14. Philostorgios continues: “But when Aetios came on the scene [early 360s] and initiated dissension in these matters as well, the members of his sect (τὴν ὁμόδοξον συναγωγὴν) broke off all ties, friendships, and customs that had joined them to those of differing beliefs and set up a party that stood in opposition to them.” (εἰ καὶ διεφέροντο κατὰ τὰς δόξας τοῖς τὸ ὁμοούσιον πρεσβεύουσιν οἱ ἐξ Ἀρείου, ὅμως καὶ εὐχῶν καὶ ὕμνων καὶ βουλευμάτων καὶ τῶν ἄλλων σχεδὸν ἀπάντων πλὴν τῆς μυστικῆς ἐκοινώνουν θυσίας. ἐπιγενομένου δὲ τοῦ Αἰτίου καὶ τῆς ἐν τούτοις διαστάσεως ἄρξαντος, τὴν ὁμόδοξον συναγωγὴν, πάντας δεσμούς καὶ φιλίας καὶ συνηθείας οἷς τοῖς ἐτεροδόξοις συνήπτοντο διαρρήξαντας, εἰς ἀντίπαλον τούτοις μάλιστα παρασκευάσαι καταστήναι μοίραν. (Translation Amidon, with minor emendations.) Note the use of συναγωγὴ to refer to the Arians (perhaps original to Philostorgios, but possibly from Philostorgios’ ninth-century epitomizer, Photios). Sokrates uses this same language in reference to the Arians; this is most pronounced in his contrast between John Chrysostom’s “churches” and Arian “synagogues” in *Eccl. hist.* 6.8.1–4, discussed below in Chapter 4.

²¹ Consider, for example, Meletios of Antioch, who abandoned his homoian teachings in favor of the homoousian position. Reportedly, his entire congregation followed him in this doctrinal change and formed a second homoousian faction in Antioch. For a recent outline of the Meletian schism, see Shepardson 2014: 11–19.

All this is not to say that “ordinary people” were not interested in distinctions based on doctrine, for we have testimony for non-élite interest in debates over theology and differences in practice. Gregory of Nyssa, for instance, describes the chatter of theological debates filling the streets of Constantinople during the council in 381:

Everywhere in the city is full of such talk: the alleyways, the public squares, the avenues, the streets. The garment-sellers, the money-changers, the street-vendors—[they all discuss it]. If you ask about change, he philosophizes to you about the Begotten and the Unbegotten. If you inquire about the cost of bread, he answers, “the Father is greater, and the Son is subordinate.” If you should ask, “is the bath prepared?” he declares that the Son came from nothing.²²

While there might be real interest and perhaps even social differentiation on the part of “the common people” based on doctrinal positions, these arguments are driven by a cultural élite with the training to participate in theological debate and the influence to disseminate their positions to the wider population. In fact, Gregory himself is perturbed that non-specialists are engaging in these debates, and in the wrong places—and notably advocating positions out of line with his own!

We must also not forget that Constantinople had a history of traditional cultic activity and that these institutions remained visible in the civic space, if not entirely intact, during most of the mid-fourth century. We tend to imagine that activity at these sites ceased with the edicts of Constantine and the temples suffered further restrictions under Constantius. This may well have been the case, at least “officially.” However, the larger narrative has been shaped by the concerns of a post-Theodosian—and often post-

²² Gregory of Nyssa, *Oration on the divinity of the Son and the Holy Spirit* (GNO X/2: 121=PG 46: 557b): πάντα γὰρ τὰ κατὰ τὴν πόλιν τῶν τοιούτων πεπλήρωται, οἱ στενωποί, αἱ ἀγοραί, αἱ πλατεῖαι, τὰ ἄμφοδα, οἱ τῶν ἱματίων κάπηλοι, οἱ ταῖς τραπέζαις ἐφεστηκότες, οἱ τὰ ἐδώδιμα ἡμῖν ἀπεμπολοῦντες. ἐὰν περὶ τῶν ὀβολῶν ἐρωτήσης, ὁ δέ σοι περὶ γεννητοῦ καὶ ἀγεννήτου ἐφιλοσόφησεν· καὶ περὶ τιμήματος ἄρτου πύθῃ· μείζων ὁ πατήρ, ἀποκρίνεται, καὶ ὁ υἱὸς ὑποχείριος· εἰ δὲ, τὸ λουτρον ἐπιτήδειόν ἐστιν εἶποις, ὁ δὲ ἐξ οὐκ ὄντων τὸν υἱὸν εἶναι διωρίσατο. (My translation.)

Justinian—ecclesiastical and literary culture, a narrative that tends to sterilize the city of “paganism” and to mark Constantine’s reign as the advent of a Christian empire. Contrary to this testimony, we have scattered, but nonetheless important, evidence for the continued practice of traditional cults in other cities of the eastern empire into the fifth and sixth centuries. In Antioch, for instance, both local and Roman cults continued to be active even while the “Christian” emperors Constantius and Gallus were present in the city.²³ Libanios attests to the continued observance of the important Antiochene festivals of Kalends, the Syrian Olympics, and the *Maiouma* during the late fourth century, despite the decline of their prominence.²⁴ In his oration *For the Temples*, dated between 385 and 390, Libanios also hints at the continuation of traditional cult practices when he defends a group of banqueters who were killed by monks for supposedly sacrificing:

Of course they [sacrificed (ἔθυσαν)], but for a banquet, a dinner, a feast, and the oxen were slaughtered elsewhere: no altar received the blood offering, no single part of the victim was burned, no offering of meal began the ceremony, nor did libations follow it. If people assemble in some beautiful spot, slaughter a calf or a sheep, or both, and boil or roast it, and then lie down on the ground and eat it, I do not see that they have broken the laws at all.²⁵

²³ Literary sources mention a number of cult sites in Antioch itself (Apollo, Nemesis, Poseidon, Artemis, Calliope, and Dionysus), with additional sites in Antioch’s affluent suburb, Daphne (Apollo, Zeus, Hecate, Nemesis, and Artemis). For references see Sandwell 2007: 42.

²⁴ Libanios, *Oration* 11.236; *Oration* 41.16. In addition to these examples, Sokrates’ teachers, Ammonius and Helladius, had been priests of traditional cults in Alexandria before fleeing to Constantinople in the wake of the riots of 392 that destroyed the Serapeum. Nicholas Conostas claims that the two men received a ready welcome into the city, “where they were instrumental in disseminating the religious and intellectual traditions of their native city.” Sokrates, however, does not say what role these men may have had in the official civic cults, but one wonders what they may have done in the spaces outside the historian’s narrative. See Sokrates, *Eccl. hist.* 5.16.9; Conostas 2003: 15. Studies documenting and analyzing traditional cult during the late antique period are surprisingly limited, though some systematic work has been attempted. Our knowledge of Antioch and its hinterlands, for example, has benefited from such scrutiny, as has our knowledge of the religious landscape of Roman Egypt; see Frankfurter 1998 (for Egypt); Trombley 2001 (for the hinterlands of Antioch); and Soler 2006 (for Antioch proper).

²⁵ Libanios, *Oration* 30. 17: Οὐκ ἔθυσαν οὖν; ἐρήσεται τις. πάνυ γε, ἀλλ’ ἐπὶ θοίνῃ καὶ ἀρίστῳ καὶ εὐωχίᾳ τῶν βοῶν ἀλλαχοῦ σφαττομένων, βωμοῦ δὲ οὐδενὸς τὸ αἷμα δεχομένου οὐδὲ μέρους οὐδενὸς καομένου οὐδὲ οὐλῶν ἡγουμένων οὐδὲ σπονδῆς ἀκολουθούσης. εἰ δέ τινες

As Libanios continues his defense, however, it becomes evident that the lines between a mere banquet and a sacrifice are extremely thin:

Even if they were in the habit of drinking together amid the scent of every kind of incense, they broke no law, nor yet if in their toasts they sang hymns and invoked the gods...It used to be the custom for country folk to assemble in large numbers at the homes of the village notables at holiday, to make a sacrifice and then hold a feast. This they did as long as it was permitted to do so, and thereafter all the rest [i.e., incense, hymns, and feasting], with the exception of sacrifice, remained permissible. So, summoned on the usual day, they dutifully honored it and the shrine in a manner that involved no risk. That they also thought fit to offer sacrifice no single person has ever said or heard, alleged convincingly or believed.²⁶

Aside from the proper formal elements required of sacrifice, namely, an altar, libations, and grain offerings, all the elements of traditional ritual are present: incense, hymns, toasts. An animal was even slaughtered and roasted. To an outsider—and even to an insider—this “banquet” would be quite easy to mistake for a sacrifice.²⁷

It is difficult to ascertain precisely how many of Constantinople’s traditional sites continued to host ritual activity in the years following Constantine’s death and when particular sites fell into disuse. I contend that the situation in Constantinople was somewhat analogous to that in Antioch, if not as pronounced. Again in *For the Temples*,

συνελθόντες εἷς τι φαιδρὸν χωρίον μόσχον ἢ πρόβατον ἢ ἄμφω θύσαντες τὰ μὲν ἐψήσαντες, τὰ δὲ ὀπτήσαντες κατακλιθέντες ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς ἔφαγον, οὐκ οἶδ’ εἴ τινες οὗτοι παρέβαινον τῶν νόμων. Translations of this oration are from Norman, with minor emendations.

²⁶ Libanios, *Oration* 30.18–19: ὥστ’ εἰ καὶ μετὰ πάντων θυμαμάτων συνέπινον, οὐ παρέβαινον νόμον οὐδέ γε εἰ πάντες ἐν ταῖς φιλοτησίαις ἡδὸν τε καὶ ἐκάλουν θεούς...ἦν ἔθος πολλοὺς ἀγρότας εἰς τοὺς γνωριμωτέρους συνιόντας ἐν ταῖς ἐορταῖς θύσαντας εἶτα εὐωχεῖσθαι. τοῦθ’ ἡνίκα ἐξῆν ποιεῖν, ἐποίουν. μετὰ ταῦτα πλὴν τοῦ θύειν ἢ περὶ τᾶλλα ἔμεινεν ἐξουσία. καλούσης τοίνυν τῆς εἰωθυίας ἡμέρας ὑπῆκουον καὶ οἷς ἀκίνδυνον ἐτίμων αὐτὴν τε καὶ τὸ ἔδος. ὅτι δὲ καὶ θύειν ἄξιον, οὐδεὶς οὐτ’ εἶπεν οὐτ’ ἤκουσεν οὐτ’ ἔπεισεν οὐτ’ ἐπέισθη.

²⁷ To this example, I add the late sixth-century account of the Nikolaus of Sion, a Christian holy man who performed sacrifices (θυσίας ἐπέδωκεν/ἔθυσεν) of oxen for the cities he visited in Anatolia. See the *Life of Saint Nikolaus of Sion* 54–57.

Libanios testifies to the continued presence of traditional temples in Constantinople, albeit “deprived of honor.”²⁸ Libanios further claims that sacrifice was not banned until the reign of Constantius. Julian had rescinded the ban, and it was only reinstituted under Valentinian and Valens and reaffirmed by Theodosios I. Even so, he reminds Theodosios, this ban only included animal sacrifice; incense offerings were allowed.²⁹

In some instances, the traditional cult sites of Constantinople may have been converted into Christian sites. Modern historian Gilbert Dagron has identified two possible instances in the city when traditional temples were replaced by Christian ones, namely, the transformation of the temple of Poseidon into the church of St. Menas and that of a temple of Zeus or Herakles into the church of St. Mokios.³⁰ In other instances,

²⁸ Libanios, *Oration* 30.5: ἐπεὶ κὰν τῇ μετὰ τὴν μεγίστην πρώτῃ νεῶ τινες ἔτ’ εἰσιν, εἰ καὶ τῶν τιμῶν ἐστέρηνται, ὀλίγοι μὲν ἐκ πάνυ πολλῶν, οὐ μὴν ἐξηλθέ γε ἅπαν ἐξ αὐτῆς τοῦτο. On the dating of the text, see Shepardson 2014: 193.

²⁹ Libanios, *Oration* 30.7. The laws to which Libanios refers seem to be (by date of promulgation) CTh 16.10.2 (341 C.E.), 16.10.4 (346 C.E.), 9.16.9 (371 C.E.), 16.10.7 (381 C.E.), and 16.10.9 (385 C.E.). The first of these, which was issued by Constans and directed toward Rome, is also the first recorded law against sacrifice in the Code. Regarding Valentinian, Ammianus Marcellinus (30.9.5) claims that this emperor practiced a policy of toleration, and the law of 371 C.E. is directed at haruspicy rather than animal sacrifice itself. Note also, however, that elsewhere Libanios refers in passing to a law, likely issued by Constantine, banning animal sacrifice. See Libanios, *Oration* 1.27; and discussion in Bradbury 1994: 127–129.

³⁰ Dagron 1974: 376. He draws his conclusions from the testimony of Hesychios, the *Patria*, and Symeon Magistros. At the same time, I wonder if some of these sites continued to hold cultic significance, albeit on a much smaller and less formal scale, so that it made sense to build a new site associated with the Christian deity. Such activity on the neighborhood level is inaccessible, but considering the larger patterns of development in the city, I see no reason to argue that replacement was widespread at this level. Indeed, a replacement model does not fit our evidence for the restructuring of religious space during the fourth century more broadly, as Christian appropriation of traditional sites tended to occur later (fifth century onwards) and then after a period of abandonment. See summary in Larson 2008: 27–52. Saradi-Mendelovici enumerates a total of six cases of temple destruction under Constantine, each for “extremely important reasons;” Saradi-Mendelovici 1990: 48, 54. One example to which Saradi-Mendelovici points is the temple at Mamre (*Life of Constantine* 3.51–53), which is unfortunately highly problematic. This incident fits a larger agenda in Eusebios to purify Christian space, particularly Constantinople and even more so the “Holy Land.” Consequently, we cannot be entirely certain whether this incident occurred, and if it did, whether the “destruction” was a complete dismantling or a reorientation of the site. As Saradi-Mendelovici herself notes, our best evidence for replacement appears in Christian literature, but this evidence does not match the archaeological record. For more on Mamre, see Larson 2008: 192–3. Other

the sites were repurposed. According to the sixth-century chronicler John Malalas, the traditional cult sites on the acropolis that were “dismantled” under Theodosios I were given new lives: the temple of Helios and its surrounding houses were given to the Great Church, the temple of Artemis became a gaming room, and the temple of Aphrodite was converted into a carriage house for the praetorian prefect while lodging houses for prostitutes were erected nearby.³¹ Notably, there are no reports of any overt reactions to the conversion of these sites—no riots, no petitions, no public denouncements by local rhetors.³² Considering this seeming lack of reaction amongst the city’s population to the closure or reuse of the old temples, it seems plausible to me that the population’s shift from traditional cult sites to Christian sites was more likely due to abandonment than any real hostility against these sites.³³ If, as Malalas also claims, the sites had not received

literary examples of replacement appear in the *Life and Miracles of St. Thekla* (2, 4), in which the saint transforms the temples of Athena Kanetis and Zeus into Christian sites.

³¹ John Malalas, *Chron.* 13.3, 13.39. The despoliation and/or the conversion of these structures into Christian churches, frequently dated to the fourth and fifth centuries, was hardly comprehensive. The evidence of the Theodosian Code, used as the basis for a systematic destruction of traditional cult sites, is highly repetitive. This repetition suggests that the imperial program against these sites was not carried out by magistrates in places where, as Burrell puts it, “pagan shrines were winked at, or even vigorously defended, even in the fifth century.” See for example, CTh 12.1.112, 16.17.1–5. For further discussion of evidence in the Theodosian Code for the continued celebration during the fourth century of festivals (with the likely exclusion of public sacrifice), and for traditional Mediterranean cult across the empire, see Burrell 2003: 303–04.

³² The lack of evidence does not mean there was no reaction to the dismantling. A number of possibilities occur to me: that earlier authors do not mention reactions that did occur because they are interested in portraying Theodosios I as an unifying figure; the “dismantling” occurred at an earlier time or later time; or Malalas, writing during the early sixth century from Antioch, is inventing a history for a landscape in the capital.

³³ See Saradi-Mendelovici (1990: 49), who notes an early example of the abandonment of a cult site in Pliny, *Letter* 10.96.10; however, this incident is not quite the same scenario. Pliny mentions here that sites that had suffered neglect were once again becoming active. It is worth noting that the sites had suffered because a number of the city’s population had temporarily participated in a cult of Christ. Other literary descriptions of abandoned cult sites can be found. Sokrates describes the site of a long-abandoned Mithraeum in Alexandria which the emperor Constantius bestowed to the church of Alexandria. Sokrates, *Eccl. hist.* 3.2. Sokrates’ description claims that in cleaning the site, the bishop George discovered evidence of human sacrifice, emphasizing the sinister nature of the mysteries of Mithras. Even if Sokrates’ account is

public funds since Constantine, it would hardly be surprising if Theodosios' dismantling of the temples was in reality a project to refurbish a largely abandoned temple complex already under threat of collapse.³⁴

Of course, the presence of a temple is not necessarily indicative of a consistently active priesthood or even imperial sponsorship of that cult. Yet, I would propose, the mere fact of their presence—and more importantly, of their visual prominence—allowed them to continue to be options for the populace. Traditionalists like Themistios held high-profile positions in court and in civic administration throughout the fourth century. I find it implausible that these individuals would not have practiced some form of worship, even if they were only offering incense, a practice not explicitly forbidden until 392.³⁵ If this was the case, it seems entirely reasonable to suppose that they would have made offerings in the old temples. In the final years of Theodosios I's reign, after several imperial pronouncements in 391 and 392 banning individuals from visiting the traditional temples, such activity may have presented a degree of risk.³⁶ Prior to this, however, it was animal sacrifice, not the temples themselves, that was the object of censure. Indeed, literary evidence attests to people among the Constantinopolitan population who

simply for rhetorical effect, it nonetheless exposes attitudes toward repurposing (private) cult sites that had been abandoned. Such situations of abandonment (or near abandonment) may also be hinted at in allowances made in the Theodosian Code for the dismantling of temples located in remote places. For example, a rescript issued from Rome by Honorius in 407 specifies that temple buildings may be released for public use. See CTh 16.10.18; cf. 16.10.16, which allows for the destruction of a temple provided there be no public disturbance.

³⁴ This scenario has previously been suggested by Krautheimer 1983: 60–61.

³⁵ CTh 16.10.12. It is arguable that earlier legislation against animal sacrifice would have included incense sacrifice, but the vagueness of these statements allowed considerable leeway for interpretation by the officials to whom they had been directed.

³⁶ See CTh 16.10.10 (February 391 from Milan), 16.10.11 (June 391 from Aquileia), and 16.10.12 (November 392 from Constantinople).

continued to engage in the practices of traditional cult. According to the historians of the Theodosian period, Julian met an anxious contingent (Sokrates refers to them as Hellenizers, τοὺς ἐλληνίζοντας) eager to reopen the city's temples and resume the traditional sacrifices to the gods.³⁷ During the 380s, Gregory of Nazianzos lamented those who continued to revere the traditional gods in the city, and even as late as the mid-fifth century we find Proklos deriding the observance of “Greek festivals.”³⁸ Precisely what practices would be used during these festivals is unclear, but it seems to me that they would probably have included incense, processions, and hymns, but not animal sacrifice—or at least not openly.³⁹ Interestingly, these are precisely the same practices performed in Christian festivals, the implications of which I will return to in my next chapter.

To summarize, during the period between the accession of Constantius in 337 and the death of Theodosios I in 395, the religious options in Constantinople remained remarkably diverse. This would have been particularly true during the earlier years of this period, and likely fluctuated and eventually waned as the fourth century progressed. I believe that throughout this period at least some Constantinopolitans would not have

³⁷ Sokrates, *Eccl. hist.* 3.1.45: ἐγίνωσκέ τε σαφῶς τοὺς ἐλληνίζοντας ἀνιωμένους, ἐφ’ οἷς θύειν ἐκωλύοντο, ἐπιθυμεῖν τε καιροῦ δρᾶσθαι, ἐν ᾧ καὶ τὰ ἱερὰ ἀνοιγήσεται καὶ ἔξεσται αὐτοῖς θυσίας τοῖς ἀγάλμασιν ἀναφέρειν. See also 3.11.4.

³⁸ Gregory of Nazianzos, *Oration* 33.6; *Poems* 2.1.16.39–40. Proklos, *Homily* 3 (On the Incarnation), 3. Even later, in the sixth century, Zosimos expresses relief that the fire that broke out near the Senate and destroyed the Muses spared Zeus Dodonaïos and Athena, a welcome sign to “the more refined” citizens that the gods continued to protect Constantinople. Zosimos, *New History* 5.24.6–8.

³⁹ This evidence is difficult to interpret, since contrasting “true worship” with the festivals of the Greeks is a common literary device among both Jewish and Christian authors. For other examples of this type of rhetoric, see Gregory of Nazianzos, *Orations* 28.15, 38.6, and 41.6; John Chrysostom, *Homily* 13 (On Hebrews), 5. Nonetheless, we should entertain animal sacrifice as a possibility outside of official civic cult.

found it problematic to see traditional cult sites side-by-side with Christian temples and, moreover, that some of these individuals may have frequented both. Indeed, for some individuals the distinction between Christian and “pagan,” and much less distinctions between Christian and Christian, would not have mattered; these individuals may well have worshipped at a particular site or sought out the services of a priest or holy person who might grant access to a powerful entity who expected their worship. For others, however, the stakes to differentiate between cults were much higher, and it was in their interest to convince others of this as well.

Operative Religious Categories

Considering the remarkable degree of fluidity within this cult landscape, I propose that the primary operative categories for Constantinopolitan cult life were concepts that roughly coincide with “imperial” or “civic” cult in contradistinction to more localized forms of cult, such as occurred at neighborhood shrines or within the household.⁴⁰ To elaborate, the populace of Constantinople could see certain cult sites and agents as “imperial,” in so far as they were bound up with assertions of empire (and thus to notions of *Romanitas*).⁴¹ As I have previously asserted, even during the fourth century, religion centered on the proper dispensation of obligations to the divine by those individuals entrusted with the welfare of the community. On the imperial and civic levels, these individuals were the emperor, magistrates, and the recognized priests of the city, a

⁴⁰ I include with domestic religious practices the practices of non-familially organized households (e.g., ascetic communities or philosophical schools).

⁴¹ See discussion above, Chapter 1, pp. 3–4.

tripartite structure rooted in the traditional frameworks of Roman religion, dating back to the early empire.

It was the reigning emperor who decided which deities (and here I include Christ and Christian *sancti*/ἅγιοι) deserved attention from the state, and oftentimes he demonstrated a personal interest in the selection of the priesthoods dedicated to those deities. Constantius clearly preferred to control the official priesthoods of the city, and the individuals he backed were Christian.⁴² Julian, on the other hand, in dismissing Constantius' priests, removed Christians from official cult posts and reoriented official cult to the traditional gods.⁴³ During this period Julian also wrote a number of letters, some from Constantinople, regarding the proper exercise of religion. These letters covered a range of cult practices from the importance of animal sacrifice to directives about priesthoods and the proper way to approach a temple.⁴⁴ Julian's successors Jovian and Valens likewise dictated the contours of imperial religion, this time putting the official priesthood first in the hands of Eudoxios, an associate of the anomoian Eunomios, and then in the hands of Demophilos.⁴⁵ Shortly after his arrival in Constantinople in late 380 Theodosios I reorganized the structures of the city's imperial religion, this time

⁴² Albeit the wrong sort of Christian, according to the authors of the Theodosian period.

⁴³ Julian, *Letter* 15, 24 (Wright); Ammianus Marcellinus 22.3; Sokrates, *Eccl. hist.* 3.1.44, 48; Sozomen, *Eccl. hist.* 5.5. Elm partially credits Julian's removal of bishops favored by his predecessor for the ascendancy of homoousian parties in imperial Christianity. Elm 2012b: 55–57.

⁴⁴ Julian, *Ep.* 8, 18, 22; see also *Ep.* 10, in which Julian requests that sacrifices be made in thanksgiving for his safety.

⁴⁵ **Jovian:** Sozomen, *Eccl. hist.* 6.13; John Malalas, *Chron.* 13.27. **Valens:** Sokrates, *Eccl. hist.* 4.2, 4.9; Sozomen, *Eccl. hist.* 6.10, 6.18, 7.2.

installing a homoousian as his imperial bishop.⁴⁶ Though it could not have been known at the time, Theodosios' sixteen year reign would turn out to be a decisive moment that gave supporters of Nicaea enough traction to retain control of the imperial priesthood of Constantinople.⁴⁷

A largely overlooked group within Constantinopolitan cultic structures is the civic magistrates, who seem to have continued to have a significant role in civic cult. Unfortunately, our evidence for these (sometimes non-Christian) agents is tenuous because of the layers of rhetoric that surround their presence. However, as Fergus Millar has observed, of the legislation dealing with matters of religion included in the Theodosian Code (primarily collected in Book 16), the vast majority is addressed to civic officials—prefects, *comites*, and governors. It was these men, not the bishops, who were charged with overseeing officially sanctioned civic cult.⁴⁸ In Rome, the urban prefect's responsibilities included intervening in matters of civic cult and organizing religious festivals.⁴⁹ It would only make sense that Constantinople's prefecture, instated under Constantius in the 350s, would assume similar responsibilities, and there is some

⁴⁶ Sokrates, *Eccl. hist.* 5.7, 5.10; Sozomen, *Eccl. hist.* 7.4–5; John Malalas, *Chron.* 13.37. Against these patterns, Valentinian's reign appears anomalous. Despite his professed support of Nicaea, he made no move to replace the Makedonian Demophilos with a homoousian bishop.

⁴⁷ Theodosios I's reign was the longest period of relative stability since the twenty-four year reign of Constantius.

⁴⁸ See Millar 2006: 10.

⁴⁹ The most complete study of the urban prefecture in Rome, including religious responsibilities attached to the office, remains Chastagnol 1960 (see esp. 137–77). For the parallel duties of the urban prefecture in Constantinople, see Dagron 1974: 292–93. A more recent, but significantly briefer, summary of the Roman prefecture in the late antique period can be found in Salzman 2002: 118–20.

circumstantial evidence to support this proposal.⁵⁰ According to the early-seventh century *Chronicon Pachale*, when the emperor Arkadios processed the relics of the prophet Samuel into the city in the early fifth-century, he did so accompanied not by a bishop, but by the praetorian prefect and the urban prefect.⁵¹ Another suggestion of the prefect's role in organizing festivals appears in the much later (ninth-century) chronicle of Theophanes Confessor, who identifies the urban prefect as the organizer of games for the dedication of the statue of the empress Eudoxia in the Augusteion in 403.⁵² If the prefect was responsible for religious affairs, these responsibilities did not depend upon the prefect's supposed religious affiliation, at least during the fourth century.⁵³

What becomes apparent in this brief survey is that the emperors and civic magistrates were the primary agents responsible for ensuring that 'things go right' in matters of religion, even when the official state cult was now Christian. The average Constantinopolitan might recognize these cult agents and events as "official" in the sense

⁵⁰ Bryan Ward-Perkins (2012: 54) suggests, rightly I believe, that we should regard Constantius' reorganization of Constantinople's civic structures (e.g., raising the rank of the city's senate and the creation of the urban prefecture) as moves of "imitation, and a degree of rivalry with Old Rome."

⁵¹ *Chron. pasch.* Olympiad 296 (406).

⁵² Sokrates, *Eccl. hist.* 6.18; Sozomen, *Eccl. hist.* 8.20. Later authors describe these events as "pagan idolatry." Theophanes (ninth century) identifies the prefect as a Manichaean and a supporter of paganism. Whether the prefect was in reality a Manichaean, however, cannot be determined. Vasiliki Limberis notes that accusations of "paganism" were frequently levied against the urban prefect of Constantinople and were a relatively easy means to discredit political opponents. It seems to me quite possible that Theophanes or his source cast the prefect in these terms in order to discredit the action and thus distance "proper" imperially sponsored Christianity from such events. See Theophanes, *Chron.* AM 5898; Limberis 1994: 44. See also Dagron 1974: 294. For the archaeological remains of the statue's inscription, see Mango 1951: 63.

⁵³ Indeed, the effort to identify the religious affiliation of the urban prefect obfuscates this important aspect of civic cult. Vasiliki Limberis suggests that it was only in 415 that the prefect's perceived commitments to traditional cult became controversial; Limberis 1994: 44, 46. I believe that Limberis is correct here, and that attention to this official's religious commitments are connected to efforts within Theodosios II's court to further consolidate the structures of imperial religion under the rubric of Theodosian Christianity. I explore this point further in chapter 5.

that they were intimately tied to the state apparatus or “sanctioned” in that they were recognized by the emperor and civic magistrates as allowable within the walls of Constantinople.⁵⁴ If this is the case, then the “ordinary” inhabitant of Constantinople would have participated in ritual events not because these events were “Christian,” but because they were regarded to be the rituals of the city. In other words, as citizens of Constantinople, they would be expected to engage in the religion of the city.⁵⁵

Christian bishops inserted themselves into these structures, and their situations were precarious. The people might choose a bishop, who would claim authority over the imperial church, but the privilege to retain that position depended on the favor of the emperor. Like other imperial officials, bishops who managed to obtain imperial recognition could easily lose favor and thus their positions of influence. As we saw above, the dynamics of official religion could change, sometimes quite quickly. Indeed, it seems to me entirely possible that an individual specialist might not have been aware of his own position in relation to imperial sanction at a given moment or may claim to hold a sanctioned position even while existing on or outside the margins of sanctioned cult.

Those cult agents not currently in imperial favor would flirt on the margins of official cult and frequently appeared in the city’s public spaces. These individuals competed for access to imperial patronage and for control of certain cult sites within the

⁵⁴ It should be noted, however, that even these categories risk imposing artificial distinctions, and there were certainly degrees of overlap between them.

⁵⁵ A sentiment along these lines is expressed by Libanios in describing individuals who appear to have converted to Christianity under duress: “They go to their ceremonies, join their crowds, go everywhere where these do, but when they adopt an attitude of prayer, they either invoke no god at all or else they invoke the gods.” (ἔρχονται μὲν γὰρ ἐπὶ τὰ φαινόμενα <καὶ> τὸν τούτων ὄχλον καὶ διὰ τῶν ἄλλων ὧν οὗτοι πορεύονται, καταστάντες δὲ εἰς σχῆμα τὸ τῶν εὐχομένων ἢ οὐδένα καλοῦσιν ἢ τοὺς θεοὺς; translation Norman); Libanios, *Oration* 30.28.

city, particularly Hagia Eirene as we will see below in the competitions of Makedonios and Paul. Sometimes individuals even established new sites when older sites were placed outside their reach. For example, Gregory of Nazianzos, finding himself excluded from the imperial church in Constantinople by Demophilos, began leading eucharistic *synaxes* in a small oratory on the property of his cousin Theodosia.⁵⁶ Political instability could offer an opening for marginalized individuals to gain traction and attempt to reposition themselves within the lines of imperial religion, as happened in 388 when rumors of Theodosios I's defeat by a usurper reached the city and the followers of Dorotheos (the leader of the now-illicit Arian clergy) burned the house of Nektarios, the Nicene bishop under Theodosios' patronage.⁵⁷

Such "non-imperial" groups may not always have been illicit, though imperial and civic representatives increasingly used the mechanisms of Roman law to target religious competitors. Before the reign of Theodosios I, the focus of imperial legislation against traditional cult was directed toward practice, specifically animal sacrifice, while the

⁵⁶ For Theodosia the cousin/patroness of Gregory, see Daley 2006: 15. The location of Theodosia's house and the Anastasia is unknown, but locations both south of the hippodrome and to the north of the Mese/west of the Stoa Basilika have been proposed. Daley comments, "in any case, [it] seems to have been only a short walk from the imperial palace and the center of the city's life," citing that some liturgical processions to the Great Church began there. I am not convinced that liturgical procession can be used to argue for close proximity between the two churches; some processions can occur over quite a distance, and in the scheme of things, the Apostoleion is not far (only 3.5 kilometers/2.17 miles) from the Great Church. For a brief summary of arguments, see Daley 2006: 195–96 n.77.

A further example may be the construction of the Great Church. There are hints that this construction was not simply the institution of a new, imperial foundation, but also a direct competition and replacement of Hagia Eirene, which plays a prominent role in narratives about the suppression of Nicene Christianity under Constantius and was associated with the deposal of Paul and the massacre of his followers (discussed below). The presence of the new site would have allowed Constantius to skirt these associations, and its closer spatial proximity to the palace and direct ties to Constantius would have enabled Makedonios to gain an advantage over Paul's faction.

⁵⁷ Sokrates, *Eccl. hist.* 5.13. I use "illicit" here because Theodosios I had previously issued sanctions against these individuals. See CTh 16.5.11 (383 C.E.), 16.5.12 (383 C.E.), 16.5.13 (384 C.E.).

continued physical presence of cult sites was largely a non-issue to the imperial administration.⁵⁸ With Theodosios I, however, the legislation begins to demonstrate an increased concern for limiting the visual accessibility of ritual actions performed by these groups. Between 381 and 388 Theodosios I sent notices to various locations in the East restricting the visibility of non-imperial cult groups, most notably the Manichaeans, Arians, and Apollonarians.⁵⁹ For instance, in May 381 Theodosios I instructed the praetorian prefect Eutropios to prevent the assemblies of Manichaeans. While the primary concern of this law is the curtailment of inheritance rights, the visibility of Manichaean cult is addressed as well. “Manichaeans,” Theodosios I directs Eutropios, “shall not establish...their accustomed tombs of feral mysteries; they shall be kept completely from the sight of the throngs in the municipalities.”⁶⁰ Notably, the wording of the law falls just

⁵⁸ See for example CTh 16.10.3 (346 C.E.) concerning the preservation of traditional cult sites at Rome because of their value to Rome’s traditional civic institutions. See also CTh 16.10.8 (382C C.E.) allowing not only for the continued protection of a temple in the Osrhoene province, but also the continued celebration of its festivals (aside from animal sacrifice). In fact, it is not until relatively late that we find a more systematic attempt to erase traditional cult sites. See for example, CTh 16.10.16 (399 C.E.) concerning for the peaceful dismantling of cult sites in the city’s hinterlands. In this case, the erasure of these sites from the countryside would remove “the material basis for all superstition,” and would leave imperial Christianity and its adjacent cults (e.g., the cults of local and/or authorized Christian heroes) without competition from the traditional cults. See Saradi-Mendelovici 1990: 49.

⁵⁹ Property and inheritance rights were to be denied to individuals determined to belong to these groups, but more importantly, these groups were to be prevented from assembly and performing ritual anywhere accessible to the population of a city or a town.

⁶⁰ CTh 16.5.7.3. It is interesting to note that the law includes Manichaeans under a variety of names that it claims they have falsely assumed: Encratites, Apotactites, Hydroparastate, Saccophori, and other unmentioned names. Cp. CTh 16.5.11 (July 383, from Constantinople). A law addressed to the same Eutropios, dated earlier in 381, carries similar instructions directed against those who do not subscribe to the formulation of Nicaea. As Pharr translates CTh 16.5.6.1, the directions are that “crowds shall be kept away from the unlawful congregations of all heretics,” thus suggesting a concern to limit public access to the assemblies, but not necessarily prevent their priests from engaging in ritual. However, the Latin here, as Pharr notes, could alternatively be translated as “the throngs of all heretics must be restrained from unlawful congregations.” Whichever translation reflects the motivations behind the legislation, the result would be the same; namely, public assembly of non-Nicene groups would be prevented and therefore the larger population could not interact with them.

short of completely disallowing representatives of groups that do not conform to the narrowing definition of Theodosian Christianity from engaging in ritual action altogether; rather the concern is the assemblage of a group that could attract the notice of the people. Theodosios I repeated these directions in 383 and 384 to a new praetorian prefect, this time forbidding the assembly of groups that were now outside the boundaries of the imperial church, including the recently ousted Makedonians.⁶¹ While in the West during the early 390s, Theodosios I began issuing stronger pronouncements against traditional cult, prohibiting not only sacrifices, but even visits to temples and domestic offerings.⁶²

We of course should be cautious about the usefulness of the Theodosian Code as a source for actual practice, since law codes are prescriptive rather than descriptive in nature, and the Code itself is the result of the selective compilation, redaction, and reordering of earlier laws in a way that fits a particular agenda under Theodosios II.⁶³

⁶¹ CTh 16.5.11 (383 C.E.); 15.5.13 (384 C.E.). See CTh 16.5.12 (393 C.E.), authorizing Postumianus to confiscate the property where such assemblies have occurred.

⁶² CTh 16.10.10, 16.10.11, and 16.10.12.pref. I find the last of these is the most profound for its prohibition of the traditional offerings of incense, lamps, and wreaths for the *Lares*, the genius, and the *penates*: Nullus omnino ex quolibet genere ordine hominum dignitatum vel in potestate positus vel honore perfunctus, sive potens sorte nascendi seu humilis genere condicione fortuna in nullo penitus loco, in nulla urbe sensu carentibus simulacris vel insontem victimam caedat vel secretiore piaculo larem igne, mero genium, penates odore veneratus accendat lumina, inponat tura, serta suspendat.

The increased restriction of traditional cult practices may have some connection with political and military tensions faced by Theodosios I in the West, including attempted usurpations by Maximus (383–388) and Eugenius (392–394). The defeat of Eugenius is sometimes described as Theodosios I’s final triumph over “paganism.” (See, for example, Holum 1982: 6: “the ultimate confrontation of a Christian emperor with the forces of traditional paganism.”) These laws also roughly coincide with Theodosios I’s elevation of his younger son Honorius as Augustus in the West in 389 (Arkadios had previously been elevated to this status in the East in 384), his (rescinded) order in 388 that retribution be made after Christians destroyed a synagogue in Callinicum, and the emperor’s involvement in the Thessalonika massacre in 390. Correlation does not necessarily indicate causation, but the constellation of events points to me that Theodosios I was shoring up his line of succession and that a more stringent religious policy was one strategy in this endeavor. I am indebted to Ross Kraemer for the multiple conversations we have had on this point.

⁶³ I explore the relation between the Code and the agenda of Theodosios II’s court below in Ch. 5, pp. 228–30. For the compilation, editorial decisions, and organization of imperial statements into a

Moreover, as is frequently noted, these laws were not consistently enforced and were often localized in their aim.⁶⁴ Nonetheless, they help to illustrate that concerns to force cult agents to conform to a determined understanding of imperial religion increased during the reign of Theodosios I and that even then an illicit cult could exist within civic space, though more clearly outside the bounds of imperial religion.

What I want to stress from the above discussion is just how permeable the boundaries between the official cult configurations and other forms of public cult were. Julian's patronage of traditional cults is one moment when we see non-official cult practices slide into the realm of official cult. The ensuing accusations against both Christian and traditional cult specialists may be moments that expose just how fluid the transitions between sanctioned cults were at the time. This shift appears all the more significant in our sources because of the great chasm constructed between the two groups by those with a stake in asserting boundaries, but similar shifts occurred between individuals that appeared much more similar on the ground, namely, Christian bishops with opposing doctrinal positions. Similarly, continued Christian rhetoric against Hellenes hints at anxiety over their presence in the city and the potential of their festivals to lure the populace away from the "proper" festivals dedicated to the Christian god.

"comprehensive" legal catalogue, see Honoré 1998: 123–27, 136–53; Harries 1999b: 22–25; J. Matthews 2000: 55–62, 67–70, and Curran 2000: 161–69.

⁶⁴ See Millar 2006: 8–9; Shepardson 2014: 204–213. For a late antique critique of imperial officials who do not enforce these prohibitions, see Maximus of Turin, Sermon 106.2.

AN ARENA FOR COMPETITION

As I suggested earlier, the “average” Constantinopolitan would have participated in ritual events because they were part of the official religion of the city, not because they were “Christian.” If the operative religious categories I have proposed pushed against the categories of doctrine or schism and the assertions of groupness and boundaries constructed by the religious élite, they also opened a space for these same individuals to compete for imperial favor and to accumulate the cultural influence to dictate the terms of normative religion. Helpful for approaching these dynamics is the work of sociologist Rogers Brubaker, who argues that groupness is a contingent event, that is, it is a moment of “extraordinary cohesion” and “intensely felt collective solidarity.”⁶⁵ Invested cultural agents—individuals with a heightened stake in the existence of a group—take advantage of these moments of groupness to construct social categories, build fences between imagined groups, and impose patterns of behavior or thought upon other individuals who identify with those groups. By casting our analysis in this way, we can consider how appeals to constructed identities enable or even encourage individuals to slide between religious categories. In other words, the religious boundaries described in our texts were not *simply* literary constructions; they were constructions that *did* something, for they brought their distinctions into fruition and encourage a sense of groupness.

Rhetoric was one way of encouraging a sense of groupness in late antiquity, and it is one that has been extensively studied.⁶⁶ Violence, too, operated as a social strategy to

⁶⁵ Brubaker 2004: 12.

⁶⁶ See, for example, the excellent studies of the construction of religious groups in late antique rhetoric in Av. Cameron 1991: esp. 122; North 1992: 174–93; Iricinschi and Zellentin 2008: 1–21; Sandwell 2007: 63–119 and 2012: 523–42; as well as the bibliographic essay in Gwynn 2010: 15–132.

construct boundaries between groups. Incidents of violence created moments of groupness among both the perpetrators and the victims. Interested cultural agents could take advantage of those moments to make assertions about who belonged in (or outside) the group, what actions were acceptable to the group, and where the group fit within late antique society. By looking at incidents of religiously inflected violence, we can see moments when individuals on the margins of civic religious structures attempted, and sometimes succeeded, to gain purchase into the realm of “imperial religion,” while those who held imperial favor fought to retain their favored status.⁶⁷

There is, of course, a significant difficulty in regards to our sources for violence in late antique Constantinople. Although sources dating to the mid-fourth century are relatively plentiful, they are all immersed to some degree in projects of boundary construction. Consequently, these sources privilege one side of these contestations. Our access to alternate perspectives is often severely limited, and this poses a significant challenge for our ability to observe the dynamics of conflict during this formative period. Moreover, references to practices, incidents of competition, and visible social formations are diffused across the corpus of material. The most immediate evidence to the competitions of the fourth century—homilies, orations, and tractates written in the midst of these events—only infrequently provide evidence of outright violence.⁶⁸ Later sources,

⁶⁷ A growing body of literature addresses the role of violence in identity formation and the maintenance of boundaries in late antiquity. Many focus on specific incidences of violence, but some consider violence and its role in social formation more broadly. See esp. Castelli 2004; Gaddis 2005; Frilingos 2009; Shaw 2009; Drake 2011; as well as the articles in the volume on violence in late antiquity edited by Drake (2006).

⁶⁸ For example, Gregory of Nazianzos’ accounts of being stoned in *Orations* 23.5, 42.27; *Carmen* 2.1.12.104–06, 665. Curiously, though Sokrates and Sozomen both adopt Gregory’s narrative, they do not repeat Gregory’s story about his stoning. See Sokrates, *Eccl. hist.* 4.1, 5.7; Sozomen, *Eccl. hist.* 6.17, 7.5. I

on the other hand, most notably the historians of the fifth century (Philostorgios, Sokrates, and Sozomen), provide more explicit and detailed narrations of events and practices in Constantinople. Yet their work also presents complications, for they are bound up in the ideological battles of their own day.⁶⁹ Despite the challenges that this presents, the fifth-century historians also offer unique opportunities in so far as they present a rich corpus of material. The competitions of the previous century had shaped their own civic community, and the memories of those competitions formed an economy that informed the immediate social environments of these authors. This is not how the fifth-century historians have generally been approached; instead they have been employed as a means of reconstructing earlier events, without recognition of the constructed natures of their narratives and the past and present competitions that informed them. Their participation in the “memory communities” around them can help us to understand the generative force of the violence. The importance of this evidence for studying violence and boundary construction in fourth-century Constantinople cannot be overstated.

A spate of episodic violence between Christian factions under Constantius (337–361), depicted by fifth-century Constantinopolitan authors, particularly highlights how cult agents used violence to maintain or gain control over the definition of legitimate cult in the city.⁷⁰ Sokrates describes this period as a “continuous civil war among Christians”

find the omission of the stoning intriguing, especially for Sokrates, who tends to highlight the violence perpetrated against homoousian factions (i.e., the Novatians, in addition to the imperial church of his day).

⁶⁹ For example, Sokrates’ narratives about the expulsion of John Chrysostom appear to me to be bound up in his polemic against Nestorios and perhaps even in a subtle polemic against the policies of Theodosios II.

⁷⁰ Sokrates, *Eccl. hist.* 2.6–7; Sozomen, *Eccl. hist.* 3.3–4. These instances have been studied from other perspectives, and my goal here is not to rehash those arguments. Rather I hope to offer added nuance

as Christian élites competed for imperial favor.⁷¹ Most prominent among these individuals were the Arian Makedonios and his rival, the Nicene Paul, who vied for the office of imperial bishop following the death of the preceding bishop in 337.⁷² Paul was initially installed by the people as bishop at Hagia Eirene, but he was quickly removed by Constantius and replaced by Eusebios of Nikomedia, a supporter of Arius. Upon Eusebios' death, Paul and Makedonios renewed their competition for imperial favor. This time both men were installed as bishops by their supporters in different churches.⁷³ According to Sokrates and Sozomen, Constantius was determined to prevent Paul's episcopacy and therefore ordered the general Hermogenes to expel the Nicene bishop. In response to this use of force the people rioted, setting Hermogenes' house ablaze and dragging the general to his death. Constantius then arrived in Constantinople, expelled Paul himself, and allowed Makedonios to assume control of the Constantinopolitan church.⁷⁴

As presented by these fifth-century sources, Makedonios' episcopacy was a reign of terror, born in and sustained by bloodshed. On the day of Makedonios' installation,

to our understanding of these incidents in light of the dynamics outlined in the previous sections of this chapter.

⁷¹ Sokrates, *Eccl. hist.* 2.12.6: 'Υπὸ γὰρ τοῦ ἐμφυλίου πολέμου τοῦδε τῶν Χριστιανῶν συνεχεῖς μὲν ἐγίνοντο κατὰ τὴν πόλιν στάσεις, πολλοὶ δὲ ἐκ τῶν γινομένων συντριβέντες ἀπώλοντο. Cp. Sozomen, *Eccl. hist.* 3.7.

⁷² By imperial bishop, I mean the bishop supported by the reigning emperor as the official representative of civic religion and primarily (though not exclusively) associated with the church located closest to the imperial palace (initially Hagia Eirene, and then the Great Church/Hagia Sophia).

⁷³ Sokrates, *Eccl. hist.* 2.12. Sozomen comments that Paul, though beloved by the people of Constantinople, was not a skilled enough politician to avoid the treachery of Makedonios and his supporters; Sozomen, *Eccl. hist.* 3.3.5.

⁷⁴ Sokrates, *Eccl. hist.* 2.13; Sozomen, *Eccl. hist.* 2.7.

imperial soldiers attacked the crowd gathered at Hagia Eirene; over three thousand people were killed.⁷⁵ During subsequent years, Makedonios forced individuals to be baptized and tortured those who refused to abandon homoousian doctrine. He used wooden blocks to pry open men's mouths to force them to receive communion and mutilated the bodies of homoousian women.⁷⁶ Sozomen even accuses Makedonios' henchmen of having assassinated the exiled Paul.⁷⁷ In addition to these measures, Makedonios sought to eradicate his opponents by depriving Paul's followers of their churches and ordering the demolition of the church of the Novatians, another homoousian group. The bishop's goal was to allow these groups no option for worship except at his own liturgies.⁷⁸ Makedonios was even willing to usurp the authority of the emperor. Against Constantius' direct orders, Makedonios attempted to translate Constantine's sarcophagus from the Apostoleion to Hagios Akakios. The people protested, and the ensuing riots filled the church's *temenos*, the adjacent portico, and the street with blood.⁷⁹

I focus here on incidents of violence during Makedonios' episcopacy because they are so pronounced in the narratives of our fifth-century historians, but we can easily point to other violent confrontations that contributed to the economy of memory in Constantinople. For example, the historians remember the aggression that buffeted the homoousian bishop Gregory of Nazianzos (379–81), including Makedonians who burst

⁷⁵ Sokrates, *Eccl. hist.* 2.16.7–16; Sozomen, *Eccl. hist.* 3.9.3–4. Sokrates numbers the dead at 3,150.

⁷⁶ Sokrates, *Eccl. hist.* 2.38; Sozomen, *Eccl. hist.* 4.2.2–3.

⁷⁷ Sozomen, *Eccl. hist.* 4.2.2.

⁷⁸ Sokrates, *Eccl. hist.* 2.38; Sozomen, *Eccl. hist.* 4.2.3–4, 4.20.2–4.

⁷⁹ Sokrates, *Eccl. hist.* 2.42; Sozomen, *Eccl. hist.* 4.21.3–6.

into the Anastasia and stoned him as he celebrated the mysteries.⁸⁰ Another significant incident of violence that appears in the histories involves the Sabbatians, a group that had splintered from the Novatians in the early 380s. According to Sokrates and Sozomen, a panic erupted during this group's illicit celebration of Pascha, an event resulting in the deaths of seventy individuals (though this incident is potentially a fabricated memory, a point to which I will return shortly). The recounting of such episodes of violence, I contend, constructed a history for the city that clearly demarcated the boundaries between Makedonians (Arians) and homooousians (Nicones).

Violence and the Construction of Religious Boundaries

But how did such incidents create or strengthen religious boundaries in fourth-century Constantinople? To explore this, we can turn to modern studies of violence. These studies open a way for us to consider how violence is a strategy for human action, particularly in their important observations about its social consequences.⁸¹ Anthropologist Neil Whitehead, considering the experience of violence by individuals, argues that part of violence's efficacy is in the way it "marks the limit of cultural order." This limit, Whitehead elaborates, is "a highly unstable border, beyond which the lack of

⁸⁰ Gregory of Nazianzos, *Orations* 23.5, 42.27; *Poems* 2.1.12.104–06, 665. See discussion in Daley 2006: 15; Harrison 2008: 77 n.132.

⁸¹ It should also be noted that the ethnographic study of violence, particularly in the escalated, large context of war, is notoriously difficult, as the conditions of study can draw the observer into the conflict and force the observer to make moral judgments about the parties involved in said conflict. For discussions of the problematic position of the participant-observer in such contexts, see Schröder and Schmidt 2001: 12–13; Whitehead 2004: 6–7. In the face of these complications, Schröder and Schmidt modify Riches' triangle of violence to a quadrangle, in which the analyst plays the role of interpreter from narratives produced about violent events, sometimes, as in our case, centuries after those events.

meaning and the denial of sociality lurk constantly.”⁸² Violence tends to erupt when these limits are transgressed; it provides a mechanism by which individuals define and police the borders that divide the acceptable from the unacceptable.⁸³ This is clearly the case in many instances of violence in fourth-century Constantinople. The use of force under Constantius against individuals that advocated homoousian positions (e.g., Paul and his supporters as well as the Novatians) placed these individuals outside the boundaries of imperial religion. The lines had been drawn, and they had been drawn in blood. These boundaries would more or less hold for the following four decades. Shortly after his arrival in Constantinople in late 380 Theodosios I reorganized the structures of the city’s imperial religion, this time installing a homoousian as his imperial bishop.⁸⁴ As religious boundaries shifted and were inverted, violence once again marked those boundaries. Now Theodosios I levied the threat of force against Makedonios’ successor Demophilos, who wisely decided to remove himself from the city. Violence, then, was a generative force—it defined and enforced boundaries, and it ordered and reordered society.

However, violence does not simply mark boundaries; its performative nature enables it to produce meaning for those involved. Violence, David Riches argues, depends on the interactions of individuals within what he refers to as the “triangle of violence”: the *performer* or *perpetrator* of violence inflicts harm upon his *victim* under

⁸² Whitehead: 2004: 9.

⁸³ Whitehead notes further, “violent actions...are deeply infused cultural meaning and are the moment for individual agency within historically embedded patterns of behavior.” Whitehead 2004: 9.

⁸⁴ Sokrates, *Eccl. hist.* 5.7, 5.10; Sozomen, *Eccl. hist.* 7.4–5; John Malalas, *Chron.* 13.37.

the (proximate) observation of a *witness* or witnesses.⁸⁵ The observer may be immediate (perhaps even a victim, too), slightly removed from the act of violence, or even a witness to the effects of violence (e.g., the physical damage) rather than the act itself. In the modern world, witnesses are made through representations (and re-presentations) of the violent act in mass media. It is through these interactions between performer, victim, and witness that meaning is generated and judgments are made about right and wrong, the socially acceptable, and power relations. In other words, violence is never meaningless—it always opens a space for the creation of new meaning. If we consider this triangle of violence within a late antique context, we can see how witnesses could be created through the mediation that occurred in story-telling, homilies, hagiographies, visual depictions, and historical narratives.

These observations about the performative aspect of violence illuminate further how the violence of the fourth century created a sense of groupness that could be manipulated by cultural agents. I return to one of our mid-fourth-century examples, namely Constantius' order to Hermogenes to remove Paul from Hagia Eirene. In Constantius' perspective this order was the legitimate exercise of force against an individual he regarded to be a malcontent and rabble-rouser, and he regarded the subsequent murder of Hermogenes an act of sedition. Similarly, Makedonios' actions against Paul's supporters seem to have been generally condoned by Constantius, albeit

⁸⁵ Riches 1986: 8–9. Pamela Stewart and Andrew Strathorn expand Riches' triangle of violence to account for the complexity of violence in collective contexts, attending to the temporal dimension of such acts and potential shifts in their interpretation. See Stewart and Strathorn 2002: 4.

tacitly if we are to believe Sokrates and Sozomen.⁸⁶ For later Theodosian authors, however, the significance of Constantius' actions had changed. Constantius' removal of Paul and punishment of Hermogenes' murderers had become the actions of a tyrant, whereas the murder of Hermogenes was a valiant act of heroism against this tyrant. Far from being the legitimate reaction to a usurper, Makedonios' episcopacy was now, in the words of Sokrates, full of "murders, battles, kidnappings, and civil wars," deeds that "made him hateful not only to those injured, but also to those of his own party."⁸⁷ The meaning of Hermogenes' death and subsequent retaliation was negotiable and depended on a number of further factors: the relationship between the performer of violence and recognized authorities; the success of the act; and subsequent reinterpretation. Sokrates, Sozomen, and others who participated in their memory community subverted the old regime's display of dominance and used the memory of violence to justify current action against those associated with the Makedonians.⁸⁸ The previous aggression against Paul and his followers now served a new role by providing a foundational narrative that defined the boundaries of imperial Christianity under the Theodosian dynasty.

⁸⁶ Sozomen alludes to this alternate interpretation of events when he reports that the followers of Arius and Makedonios (τὰ Ἀρείου καὶ Μακεδονίου) claim that Paul took possession of Hagia Eirene illegally; Sozomen, *Eccl. hist.* 2.3.1. Michael Gaddis has observed this type of narrative violence in late antique rhetoric generally serves to mark debates about the legitimacy of exercises of power, noting that how sources treat particular agents and episodes depends upon the partisan position, doctrinal or otherwise, of the author. Gaddis also notes that this rhetoric participates in an ancient philosophical discussion about the legitimate exercise of power and appears repeatedly in the rhetoric of the period. See Gaddis 2005: 260-281.

⁸⁷ Sokrates, *Eccl. hist.* 2.38.33-34: Τοιαῦτα μὲν οὖν τὰ Μακεδονίου ὑπὲρ τοῦ Χριστιανισμοῦ κατορθώματα, φόνοι καὶ μάχαι καὶ ἀνδραποδισμοὶ καὶ ἐμφύλιοι πόλεμοι. Αὕτη μέντοι ἡ πράξις οὐ μόνον παρὰ τῶν ἡδικομένων, ἀλλὰ καὶ παρὰ τῶν οἰκείως πρὸς αὐτὸν ἐχόντων δίκαιον κατ' αὐτοῦ μῖσος εἰργάσατο. (My translation.)

⁸⁸ For the subversion of violence as means of "reclaim[ing] agency and political identity," see Schröder and Schmidt 2001: 6, 8.

In summary, incidents of violence during the fourth century produced “moments of groupness,” whereby the limits of a group could become fleetingly visible. However, these boundaries were constantly under negotiation, and what was a boundary marker in one incident was transformed by subsequent interpretations. Nonetheless, because of the performative nature of violence, the meanings produced in those moments could make an impression upon those involved: the performer(s), the victim(s), and the witness(es) to these events. These meanings could endure past the limits of an incident of violence, as media representations, including narrative retelling and commemorations, shaped cultural expectations. In other words, the ability to control the interpretation of violence—to manipulate the memory of violence, so to speak—provided a further tool for generating social boundaries.

MEMORY MANIPULATION AND SOCIAL FORMATION

The mobilization of sentiment against a target group—especially if this mobilization drew on violence or memories of (real or imagined) past violence—would have been a particularly effective means to construct boundaries between groups. As sociologist Paul Connerton notes, memories of violence against the current hegemonic party help construct the new party’s legitimacy. They “construct a barrier between the new beginning and the old tyranny” by recalling and criminalizing the actions of the past, while deflecting attention from the actions of the new regime.⁸⁹ In other words, the memory of violence, like the violence itself, is a social tool by and through which groups

⁸⁹ Connerton 1989: 9–10, 14–15, quoting page 10; see similarly Schröder and Schmidt 2001: 4; Alcock 2002: 26–27; Stewart and Strathern 2002: 161, 166; and Schramm 2011: 8.

are formed. While the social world of late antique Constantinople is vastly removed from the case studies offered by Connerton, his discussion of social or collective memory can help us think about the conversations occurring in Constantinople.⁹⁰ The now favored homoousian élite of the Theodosian period constructed memories of violence that delegitimized the past (Makedonian) regime and legitimized their own (Nicene) regime. After all, it only takes a well-placed story for an execution to become martyrdom.⁹¹

Of course, “memory” is tricky, for it is highly malleable and can be easily “planted.” A potential example of this malleability is the “recollection” of the Sabbatians, a group described by Sokrates and Sozomen and associated almost exclusively with Constantinople.⁹² Both authors trace the group to a former Jew by the name of Sabbatios, who converted to Christianity and became a Novatian presbyter. In his ambition for power Sabbatios convinced others to abandon the Novatian bishop and follow him in observing the Jewish Passover in the early 380s, an incident that resulted in the death of seventy individuals. However, a number of oddities surround this group. Interestingly, Sokrates and Sozomen, both of whom write approximately eighty years after the

⁹⁰ This approach has been taken before, most notably and eloquently by Elizabeth Castelli in her 2004 study of the formative role of martyrdom narratives in early Christianity. Citing the foundational theoretical work of Maurice Halbwachs on collective memory, Castelli notes that memory is “a socially constructed version of the past,” which “provid[es] the conceptual and cognitive constraints that render past experience meaningful in and for present contexts.” Religious transformation, she adds, involves the past in that the past is used to authorize the present. See Castelli 2004: 12. For a concise outline of Halbwachs’ work as it relates to early Christian social formation as well as a summary of criticisms of his work, see Castelli 2004: 11–24. See also Alcock 2002: 1–19, 23–32; Fentress and Wickham 1992: 25.

⁹¹ Examples from early Christian literature abound. As an illustration, I point to Ignatios of Antioch, to whom is attributed a collection of letters framing his upcoming execution as a martyrdom. H. A. Drake has also noted that the threat of being labeled a persecutor constantly hung over imperial action; see Drake 2011: 199–200. For a more thorough study, see the aforementioned work of Elizabeth Castelli.

⁹² Sokrates, *Eccl. hist.* 7.5; Sozomen, *Eccl. hist.* 7.18.1–11, 8.1.8.

purported events, are our first literary references to an individual by this name.⁹³ As far as I can ascertain, neither Sabbatios nor the ill-fated Pascha appear in any surviving source dated closer to the 380s.

The Sabbatians as a group are almost as elusive. At first glance, our earliest reference to this group would seem to date to 381/2, as one of the groups anathematized in Canon 7 of the Council of Constantinople. However, this Canon does not appear in the earliest collections of the canons, but is rather supplied by a letter dating to the mid-fifth century by Patriarch Gennadios I of Constantinople.⁹⁴ Interestingly, Gennadios' letter does not mention the Sabbatians, an intriguing omission given the paucity of evidence for this group.⁹⁵ If we set aside the Canon, the earliest explicit references to this group in either Latin or Greek are two references in the Theodosian Code, the earlier of which dates to April 423.⁹⁶ In both cases the Sabbatians are simply listed among other groups labeled as heretics and closely associated with the Novatians. One earlier law dating to March 413 mentions individuals who call themselves Protopaschites, which I speculate is

⁹³ A mention of Sabbatios also appears in (pseudo-)Didymos the Blind, *On the Trinity* 1.30.19, a text attributed by the manuscript tradition to an Egyptian monk active in the late fourth century. There are, however, good arguments that this text actually dates to the sixth-century. The reference to the Sabbatians is cursory and interrupts the flow of the argument, and I suspect that it is a marginal gloss that crept into the text during transmission. Even if the text, which survives in a single eleventh-century manuscript (Rome, Biblioteca Angelica, gr. 116), is from the fourth century, there is no way to date the gloss.

⁹⁴ Gennadios I to Martyrios of Antioch. For the transmission of the Canons of Constantinople, see Tanner 1990: 22–23. Heinz Ohme has interpreted the omission of Canon 7 and the existence of the Gennadios' letter as evidence that the Canon was not promulgated at the Council of 381; Ohme 2012: 50.

⁹⁵ One further possible reference appears in the work of Ephrem of Edessa (*Hymns Against Heresies* 2.6), who mentions a Sabbatian woman who interpreted scriptures from the throne on the bema. If this woman is related in any way to the group in Constantinople, which seems unlikely to me, his mention dates the group at least a decade earlier than Sokrates' and Sozomen's narrations, as Ephrem died in 373.

⁹⁶ CTh 16.5.59 (April 423) and 16.5.65 (May 428).

a reference to this same group. The law refers to them as “deserters and fugitives from the company of the Novatians.”⁹⁷

In light of this general lack of evidence, it is valid to ask whether Sabbatios or his followers existed in Constantinople, or whether they existed as early as Sokrates and Sozomen suggest they did. It seems possible to me that the posited group is based on individuals who engaged in some sort of Sabbath observance and calculated Pascha according to the Jewish calendar.⁹⁸ Perhaps these individuals identified themselves as Jews, a group that is otherwise notoriously difficult to locate in fourth-century Constantinople despite much later attestations of a synagogue in the Constantinople’s Chalkoprateia neighborhood that was subsequently converted into a church for the Theotokos under Pulcheria.⁹⁹ If such a group existed, I would suggest that these

⁹⁷ CTh 16.6.6.1: Novatianorum collegio desertores ac refugae.

⁹⁸ I use Pascha here to refer to both late antique Christian and Jewish festal observance, to stress the ambiguity of the festival(s), especially for Christian bishops who objected to “Judaizers.” The linguistic proximity between the name of the group (and its supposed founder) and Sabbath strengthens my suspicion.

⁹⁹ The source for the supposed synagogue’s conversion is the ninth-century Theophanes Confessor, *Chron.* AM 5942; later in this same work Theophanes credits the conversion of the synagogue to Justinian (AM 6069). We have no concrete archaeological evidence for this site. Overall, our sources for late antique Constantinople largely neglect the possible presence of Jews in the city, except when they are converts (especially for Sokrates and Sozomen) or potential adversaries (see for example, Proklos, *Homily* 2 [On the Incarnation] 9; *Homily* 4 [On the Nativity], 3). Because the placement of Jews in the narratives of Sokrates and Sozomen demonstrates the efficacy of Christianity in Constantinople, I suspect that these references are primarily literary devices. A notable, possible exception is Sozomen’s opening diatribe against Jews (to whom he refers as Ἑβραῖοι) who refuse to acknowledge Christ despite the evidence of his power; see Sozomen, *Eccl. hist.* 1.1: Ἐννοια μοί ποτε ἐγένετο, τί δὴ ἄρα τοῖς μὲν ἄλλοις ἀνθρώποις ἐτοιμοτέρα συνέβη ἢ περὶ τὸν θεὸν λόγον πίσις, Ἑβραίοις δὲ δύσπιστος καίτοι τὰ θεῖα πρὸς βεβεῖν ἐξ ἀρχῆς παρεληφόσι καὶ τὰ περὶ τῆς παρουσίας τοῦ Χριστοῦ, ὅπως ἔσται, πρὶν γένηται μαθοῦσι διὰ τῶν προφητῶν. I agree with Oded Irshai (2014: 148), who argues that we need to take seriously these historians’ criticisms of the Jews, although I am more hesitant about taking their descriptions of confrontations with Jews in Constantinople as straightforward accounts than I am about confrontations with other groups (though I hope it is clear that I do not believe even those accounts are straightforward). More often than not, violent clashes with Jews in the narratives of these authors occur in *other* cities—Alexandria, Antioch, etc.—whereas Jews in Constantinople tend to be willing to convert. Instead, Sabbatians seem to have been given the substitute role for the “violent Jew” in Constantinople.

individuals participated in some aspects of imperial religion but not others, and because of this Christian bishops saw them as Christians who “Judaized.”

Ultimately, however, I am less concerned about whether Sabbatios or his followers “actually existed” and more interested in what the memories of their existence could do. Whatever our answer to the question of the Sabbatians’ existence, the *idea* of such a group would serve a powerful social function in so far as it reinforced the boundaries between Christians and Jews, and even suggested the dangers of associating with those not inside the imperial (that is, the Theodosian) church. Sokrates describes the carnage that sprang from this group:

Not long afterwards [Sabbatios] celebrated the feast in anticipation [i.e., immediately before the Christian Pascha]; and many rushed toward him, and while they were observing the customary vigil, a certain demonically-caused (δαιμόνιος) confusion descended upon them, as if their bishop Sisinnios were coming against them with a great crowd. When disorder arose because they believed this was the case, they trampled each other since they had confined themselves in a tight place at night, with the result that over seventy of them perished.¹⁰⁰

Embedding the memory of the Sabbatian massacre, like the violence instigated by Makedonios and his followers, constructed a particular view of the imperial landscape and articulated the limits of acceptable cult. It also served as warning against attending religious festivals led by the wrong people. Heretics were the handmaidens of death.

¹⁰⁰ Sokrates, *Eccl. hist.* 7.5.7–8: Μετ’ οὐ πολὺ γὰρ τὴν ἐκ προλήψεως ἑορτὴν <εὐθὺς> ἐπετέλει, καὶ συνέρρεον πρὸς αὐτὸν σφόδρα πολλοί, καὶ τὴν ἐξ ἔθους παννυχίδα ποιούντων θόρυβός τις δαιμόνιος ἐνέπεσεν εἰς αὐτούς, ὥς ἄρα Σισίννιος ὁ αὐτῶν ἐπίσκοπος σὺν πολλῷ πλήθει ἔρχεται κατ’ αὐτῶν. Καὶ ταραχῆς γενομένης, οἷα εἰκός, ἐν νυκτὶ καὶ στενῷ τόπῳ ἀποληφθέντες ἑαυτοὺς συνέτριψαν, ὥς ἀπολέσθαι ἐξ αὐτῶν ὑπὲρ τοὺς ἑβδομήκοντα ἀνθρώπους. (My translation.) Sozomen does not go into as much detail about the supposed affair.

The Performance of Memory

As Connerton explains, part of the utility of collective memory, particularly memories of violence, is that memories are not simply narratives, but are often performed within social spaces.¹⁰¹ Connerton points to the ceremonies of the National Socialist Party during the Third Reich, particularly the annual commemoration of the Putsch (Hitler's failed attempt to seize power in November 1923, which resulted in the death of sixteen members of the Party). In these commemorations, Connerton explains, Hitler presented a myth of history, in which the earlier fiasco was "re-interpreted and re-presented as neither a defeat nor meaningless nor futile."¹⁰² This type of "ritual reenactment" trained its participants to focus their attention on certain aspects or perceptions of a past event and to ignore others, thus shaping the shared memory of the social group.¹⁰³ Because of the way such rituals involve the body as a tool for commemoration, ritual reenactment is perhaps the most obvious mode of performing memory, but narratives of the sort I have been examining here are another.¹⁰⁴ So, too, is monumental commemoration, whether by constructing a monument as an explicit commemoration of an event (to use an example from modernity, the National September 11 Memorial and Museum in New York) or by implanting memories of an event onto an already existing landmark (again, a modern

¹⁰¹ Connerton 1989: 41.

¹⁰² Connerton 1989: 42–43.

¹⁰³ Connerton 1989: 63.

¹⁰⁴ For the central role of the body in ritual reenactment, see Connerton 1989: 68–69.

example would be Tiananmen Square).¹⁰⁵ These acts of commemoration are all “means of transmitting social memory.”¹⁰⁶

Connerton’s observations about the performance of memory help us to better understand how fifth-century memories of violence reinforced religious boundaries. We can see that these incidents were not only commemorated in the narratives of Constantinopolitan historians, but also “performed” within the city’s topography in so far as these authors locate these incidents within the monumental landscape of the city.¹⁰⁷ Makedonian aggression against the future imperial church was recalled at sites associated with imperial power (the Apostoleion and Hagia Eirene), but also at other Christian sites, such as Hagios Akakios and Hagios Paulos. The Sabbatian massacre was located at the Forum of Arkadios and the unlocatable (and possibly fictitious) tomb of Sabbatios. Hagia Eirene was simultaneously the throne of Nicene bishops who stood against Arius and his teachings and a martyrium for three thousand Christian martyrs.¹⁰⁸ The Anastasia church is a place where “orthodoxy” rose from the dead and emerged triumphantly under Theodosios I and Gregory of Nazianzos. This memorialized landscape constructed a history of Nicene triumph after decades of oppression.

The importation of relics contributed to this new history by making the narratives of Christianity physically and cultically present to Constantinopolitans. The embedding

¹⁰⁵ For monuments as performances of memory, see Alcock 2002: 30.

¹⁰⁶ Connerton 1989: 52.

¹⁰⁷ It should be noted, though, that we cannot access actual rituals of commemoration at these sites. Nonetheless, I maintain that telling stories about a place is arguably an act of commemoration, if not within the same mode of remembering as what Connerton refers to as ritual reenactment. See Connerton 1989: 61.

¹⁰⁸ Sokrates, *Eccl. hist.* 1.37.7–9, 2.16.7–16.

of Christian narratives in the Constantinopolitan landscape in this way began fairly early. Constantius reportedly installed the relics of Andrew, Timothy, and Luke in the Apostoleion in the 350s, and during this period, too, the Makedonians supposedly brought the relics of the Forty Martyrs of Sebasteia.¹⁰⁹ The Theodosian dynasty appropriated these early relics and imported additional relics. Theodosios I reportedly brought the relics of John the Baptist to the city.¹¹⁰ By the late fourth century legends circulated about Helena's retrieval of the True Cross and the nails of the crucifixion, which were believed to be deposited under the Column of Constantine and woven into the imperial regalia.¹¹¹ These sites were joined by martyria for the city's own martyrs: Mokios and Akakios, who reportedly perished in Constantinople during the persecution of Diocletian; and Martyrios and Markianos, two clerics reportedly executed by Constantius.¹¹² Like the memories of violence embedded in the monumental architecture of Constantinople, these martyria facilitated the creation of collective or group memory

¹⁰⁹ Sozomen, *Eccl. hist.* 9.2.

¹¹⁰ Sozomen, *Eccl. hist.* 8.4. Sozomen relates that Valens had earlier attempted to bring the remains to the city, but John refused to go any further than the territory of Chalcedon, and Valens was required to build a martyrion for the biblical hero there. It was the "orthodox" Theodosios I whom John allowed to escort him the remaining distance.

¹¹¹ See Ambrose of Milan, *On the Death of Theodosios I* 40; Sokrates, *Eccl. hist.* 1.17.

¹¹² **Akakios:** Socrates, *Eccl. hist.* 2.19, 2.38, 6.23; Sozomen, *Eccl. hist.* 4.21; *Notitia Urbis Constantinopolitanae* 237. **Mokios:** *Parastaseis* 1. Note the late date of this testimony. As important as Mokios is for modern reconstructions of the Constantinian city, it is also worth noting that the fifth-century *Notitia Urbis Constantinopolitanae* does not mention the church. **Martyrios and Markianos:** Sozomen, *Eccl. hist.* 4.3. See also discussion in Dagron 1974: 376, 391–401. Bardill (2012: 253) reports that the earliest mention of the martyrion of Akakios is in 359, but this date is based on the testimony of Socrates (2.38) and Sozomen (4.21) regarding Makedonios' attempt to move the body of Constantine. Bardill too readily believes the constructed mythology, arguing that Mokios and Akakios are genuine martyrs from Byzantium under Diocletian. It is possible that these sites date to the reign of Constantine, but no source closer to Constantine mentions them. In regard to the martyrion of Akakios, David Woods (2001: 202–203) correctly argues that the testimony of a later historian like Sokrates indicates only that that author knew the site and believed it to date to Constantine. The same logic should be applied to the martyrion of Mokios.

by recalling events that had (or were believed to have) occurred in that space or importing memories from elsewhere into the city's common space.¹¹³

The process of inscribing meaning upon monuments through commemorative activities and interpretations also involved stripping the landscape of unwanted clutter in order to accommodate the preferred narrative. Sozomen, for instance, eradicated the traditional temples from the narrative landscape of the Constantinian city:

[When Constantine founded his new city,] the attraction of the faith in Christ was so great that many Jews and nearly all the Hellenes became Christian on the spot...[the city] was not tempted by (ἐπειράθη) altars, Greek temples, or sacrifices, except a short time during the reign of Julian and [that] quickly ended. Constantine honored this city, newly built of Christ and sharing his own name, and adorned it with many large prayer-houses (εὐκτηρίοις οἴκοις). And even the divinity assented to the desire of the king and confirmed through its manifestation that the prayer-houses throughout the city were holy and redeeming (σωτηρίους).¹¹⁴

A similarly sterilized picture of the city emerges in a slightly earlier Constantinopolitan document, the *Notitia Urbis Constantinopolitanae* (ca. 412/3–427). Whereas this inventory of the city's civic architecture mentions at least twelve Christian temples, it remains completely silent on non-Theodosian elements—the old temples, the supposed

¹¹³ These relics could even be put to service to assert the triumph of orthodoxy. For example, the fifth-century empress Pulcheria is said to have “rescued” the relics of the Forty of Sebasteia from the Makedonian martyrion where they lay hidden for the previous century.

¹¹⁴ Sozomen, *Hist. eccl.* 2.3: εἰς τοσοῦτον γὰρ τῆς εἰς Χριστὸν πίστεως ἐπαγωγός ἐστιν, ὥς πολλοὺς μὲν Ἰουδαίους, Ἕλληνας δὲ σχεδὸν ἅπαντας αὐτόθι χριστιανίζειν. ἀρξαμένη δὲ βασιλεύειν, καθ’ ὃν συνέβη χρόνον καὶ τὴν θρησκείαν εἰς πλῆθος ἐπιδιδόναι, οὔτε βωμῶν οὔτε Ἑλληνικῶν ναῶν ἢ θυσιαῶν ἐπειράθη, πλὴν ὅσον παρὰ Ἰουλιανοῦ τοῦ βασιλεύσαντος ὕστερον πρὸς ὀλίγον ἐπεχειρήθη καὶ αὐτίκα ἀπέσβη. ταύτην μὲν οὖν ὡσεὶ τινα νεοπαγὴ Χριστοῦ πόλιν καὶ ὁμώνυμον ἑαυτῷ γεραίρων Κωνσταντῖνος πολλοῖς καὶ μεγάλοις ἐκόσμησεν εὐκτηρίοις οἴκοις. συνελαμβάνετο δὲ καὶ τὸ θεῖον τῇ προθυμίᾳ τοῦ βασιλέως καὶ ταῖς ἐπιφανείαις ἐπιστοῦτο ἁγίους καὶ σωτηρίους εἶναι τοὺς ἀνὰ τὴν πόλιν εὐκτηρίους οἴκους. (My translation.) John Chrysostom presents a similarly sterilized landscape in the final years of the fourth century: “Where now is an altar, where a temple, where a seer, where images [of the gods], where cult statues, where demons’ celebrations and festivals? Haven’t these all been put to flight like dust and thrown out, and everywhere the true religion rules spiritual sacrifices?” John Chrysostom, *On all the Martyrs* 16. Wendy Mayer and Bronwen Neil (2006) translated this homily from the unedited manuscript, Stavronikita 6, ff. 138v–146r.

Chalkoprateia synagogue, the column of the Goths (a group associated with Arianism during the period), and even the column of Constantine are all absent from its map of the city.¹¹⁵ Neither of the landscapes presented by Sozomen and the *Notitia* align with what we know of the city's monuments from other sources, but that was not important to their producers. Rather, these landscapes erased non-Christian elements from the city. Constantinople had been purified of taint and made worthy of Christ.

At the same time, though, the process of sterilizing a landscape can intentionally leave the scars of those who have lost the privilege to determine the meaning of events. Arius, for example, is remembered in Theodosian accounts as having died an especially harrowing death in a latrine near the Forum of Constantine. Having dissembled before Constantine regarding his acceptance of the Christological formula of Nicaea, Arius was to be received into communion by Alexander. As he passed through the Forum of Constantine, however, Arius was struck by intestinal pain and retreated to a nearby latrine, where he loosed his bowels and bled to death. Sokrates asserts that even in his time the latrine could be found behind the forum's market, and all who passed the spot would point at it and remember the place as the death of the arch-heretic.¹¹⁶ Sozomen tells a similar story of Arius' death, although he omits the location and claims that people

¹¹⁵ It is worth noting that in contrast to the historians of the period, for whom control of sites is a paramount issue, the *Notitia* does not address questions of orthodoxy, factionalism, and "ownership" of cult sites. Perhaps these omissions are simply a matter of genre and style, yet at the same time, the catalogue is essentially a map of the city in narrative form. However, the document does include other "civic" monuments (the hippodrome, the theater, and the baths). For discussion, see J. Matthews 2012: 113. It is likely that the temples on the acropolis had already been dismantled as John Malalas (*Chron.* 13.39) later asserts, but I do not think the *Notitia* can be used as straightforward evidence for their dismantling.

¹¹⁶ Sokrates, *Eccl. hist.* 1.38: Ὁ δὲ ἀφεδρῶν ἄχρι νῦν ἐν τῇ Κωνσταντινουπόλει δείκνυται... ὅπισθεν τῆς ἀγορᾶς Κωνσταντίνου καὶ τοῦ ἐν τῇ στοᾷ μακέλλου, πάντων {τε} τῶν παριόντων ἐγειρόντων τὸν δάκτυλον κατ' αὐτοῦ ἀειμνημόνευτον τοῦ θανάτου τὸν τρόπον ἀπεργαζόμενος.

were afraid to approach the latrine, until a rich Arian purchased the property and built a house in its place so that people might forget that it had been such a place of infamy.¹¹⁷ Recognizing the physical location of Arius' death amounted to a grotesque voyeurism that would serve as a warning to others sympathetic to Arius' teachings and as a reminder that imperial favor no longer supported those teachings.

Similar erasures happened to other illicit groups. The fifth-century historians also rewrote a cult site built by Makedonios. When Theodosios I arrived in Constantinople, Sokrates and Sozomen recount, the emperor signaled his patronage of Nicene bishops by translating the relics of Makedonios' rival Paul to this church and rededicating it as Hagios Paulos.¹¹⁸ Two sites associated with the Sabbatians were similarly erased: the church where the supposed Paschal massacre took place had been razed and replaced by the Forum of Arkadios, and the martyrion of Sabbatios, a supposed pilgrimage site for the Sabbatians, "disappeared" when the fifth-century bishop Attikos removed Sabbatios' body to an undisclosed location.¹¹⁹ In each of these cases an imperial monument lay over

¹¹⁷ Sozomen, *Hist. eccl.* 2.30.6–7. The death of Arius is also told by Epiphanius (*Panarion* 69.10.2–3), Rufinus (*Church History* 10.14), and Theodoret of Cyrus (*Eccl. hist.* 1.13), all of whom provide significantly fewer details than either Sokrates or Sozomen. A further account appears in the *Parastaseis* (39), which adds that a slab of marble had been erected during the reign of Theodosios I to mark the site as "an object of discussion to passersby, to vent on them dung and urine and spittle" (πρὸς αἰσχύνῃν τοῖς διερχομένοις σφετερίζειν τούτοις καὶ κόπρους καὶ οὔρα καὶ ἐμπύσματα; translation A. Cameron and J. Herrin 1984). As Ellen Muehlberger notes in a forthcoming article, accounts of Arius' death become progressively more specific and graphic (forthcoming in *Past and Present*). It seems to me that the creation and attention to locations associated with memories of the atrocities of competing groups engendered an "anti-sacred" landscape, so to speak, which may have included a pattern of behaviors associated with those sites. Unfortunately, we have very little access to these behaviors, but if Sokrates, Sozomen, and Philostorgios are any indication, they could have included the repeated retelling of stories about a site and the incidents that "occurred" there.

¹¹⁸ Sokrates, *Eccl. hist.* 5.9; Sozomen, *Eccl. hist.* 7.10.

¹¹⁹ Sokrates, *Eccl. Hist.* 7.25.10: Πυθόμενος γοῦν ποτὲ τοὺς διὰ τὸ Ἰουδαϊκὸν Πάσχα Ναυατιανῶν χωρισθέντας, τὸ σῶμα τοῦ Σαββατίου ἐκ τῆς Ῥόδου μετακομίσαντας...καὶ θάψαντας ἐπὶ τῷ τάφῳ εὐχέσθαι, πέμψας διὰ τῆς νυκτὸς εἰς ἕτερον τάφον τὸ τοῦ Σαββατίου

the scars of violence against the future Theodosian church. The placement of Paul's relics in a church associated with Makedonios rewrote the site's historical significance and transformed it from a marker of Makedonian supremacy to a bastion of Nicene orthodoxy. This transformation healed the wounds inflicted by Makedonios while allowing a scar of these events to remain intact as a warning against those who would dissent from the imperial church. The supposed Sabbatian monuments were clutter to be stripped from the (narrative) landscape in a way that allowed its scars, too, to remain. In both instances, these transformations are reminders to a fifth-century audience of the violence heretics bring to the city and thus a warning against those who would dissent from the Nicene church.

We can consider such acts of memorialization not only as the residue of past violence, but also as continuing acts of violence themselves. In his study on the practices of memory in the Roman world, Charles Hedrick has noted that the power of the *damnatio memoriae* was not in the complete erasure of an individual, but in the fact that signs of condemnation remained:

So the [statue] remained on display, its mutilation a continuing reminder of the disgrace of the public enemy. Likewise, bans on mourning and mention of the name of the traitor had the effect of keeping the memory of the traitor alive, not destroying it: one can avoid using a particular name so long as one *remembers* that it is not supposed to be used. The name of the enemy survives, and wherever it is erased the erasure itself is displayed as a sign, and reminder of what lies beneath it. Despite appearances, political repression here does not work to destroy memory, but (indirectly) to foster it.¹²⁰

σῶμα κρυβῆναι ἐκέλευσεν. Οἱ δὲ συνήθως ἐλθόντες καὶ ἀνορωρυγμένον τὸν τάφον εὐρόντες τοῦ λοιποῦ σέβειν τὸν τάφον ἐπαύσαντο.

¹²⁰ Hedrick 2000: 113. See also Connerton's comments on the importance of forgetting for the new regime's efforts to establish their legitimacy: "The attempt to break definitively with an older social order encounters a kind of historical deposit and threatens to founder upon it. The more total the aspirations of the new regime, the more imperiously will it seek to introduce an era of forced forgetting." Connerton 1989: 12. But as Michel de Certeau reminds us, spatial practices are not always easily contained by the

Like the practices of *damnatio memoriae* discussed by Hendricks, the *damnationes memoriae* of fifth-century Constantinople reminded the people who passed by them or who read them to “forget” the violence of the past. But the forgetting was all the more potent for the memories it preserved.

In these ways, I argue, memorialization was a means for invested individuals to construct group boundaries and eliminate potential competition. The accuracy of the details related was not important when embedding those memories on the landscape. What was important is that by “placing” such memories in clearly identifiable locations, cultural agents could shape the people who moved through them. A location like Hagia Eirene did not merely stand as an empty building in the landscape awaiting the flurry of human activity to bring it temporarily to life. Rather, it was a memorial, a place where the nascent orthodox church stood against the ravages of its persecutors and resisted the illegitimate exercise of imperial power. It was a place where the dead walked, where the living entered their presence and paid tribute to their sacrifices. The *damnationes memoriae* of Arius, the Makedonians, and the Sabbatians served as reprimands and warnings to those who would participate in illicit cult. In short, the new Nicene élites of the Theodosian period could assert their hegemony by appealing to the institutional memory contained within the city’s monumental landscape. Memorialization, then,

cultural élite. “The ordinary practitioners of the city” experience the city on an instinctual, intimate level; they guide themselves along “an urban ‘text’ they write without being able to read it.” They “make use of spaces that cannot be seen.” De Certeau 1984: 93. One could argue that social change occurs as suppressed groups seep into the shadows of the city’s back alleys, telling stories and planting memories until they can emerge once again in the sunlight. For an example of resistance in the face of forced forgetting, consider the memorials for war in post-war Guatemala, documented by Michael Steinberg and Matthew Taylor. Steinberg and Taylor survey the rural areas of west-central and northern Guatemala that had been designated “Red Zones” during the Guatemalan civil war (1960–1996), noting the clustering of memorials for individual victims of government violence in and around Catholic churches and the defacement of government-sponsored memorials. Steinberg and Taylor 2003: 454–56; 459–63.

provided a mechanism by which groups could seize the landscape from formerly hegemonic groups, and even create a new normative landscape by rewriting the old as one would a palimpsest.¹²¹

In conclusion, the narrative landscapes of Sokrates and Sozomen were not “neutral spaces,” but spaces that resonated with human activity past, present, and future. Their city was inhabited and constantly changed by the living as they moved through its streets and buildings, even as those movements were informed, guided, and dictated by the memory or erasure of past events. The monumental architecture of the city provided tangible spaces to house memories, and thus also supplied the physical and mental architecture for the contestations of politics, ideology, and power. In this respect, the physical landscape had a degree of agency—in the rigidity of its walls, in the crumbling of ancient buildings, in the demands it made of its walkers—but that agency was imposed upon by the stories its inhabitants told. These performances of memory in return shaped the individuals who moved through their spaces and heard their stories.

CONCLUSION

During the years following the death of Constantine, the landscape of Constantinople underwent remarkable changes, with the development of a progressively more pronounced Christian architectural footprint and the growth of a diverse Christian

¹²¹ See the remarks of cultural geographer Christopher Tilley: “Landscapes are contested, worked and re-worked by people according to particular individual, social and political circumstances. As such they are always in process, rather than static, being and becoming...landscapes are structures of feeling, palimpsests of past and present, outcomes of social practice...places of terror, exile, slavery and the contemplative sublime. They get reworked, interpreted and understood in relation to differing social and political agendas, forms of social memory, and biographically become sensuously embodied in a multitude of ways.” Tilley 2006: 7–8.

élite that competed for imperial favor. The arrival of Theodosios I in Constantinople in 380 would prove to be a decisive moment, and Nicene Christian élites took full advantage of their opportunity to reform group boundaries. The combined effect of violence and its memorialization was immensely useful in advancing the new vision of imperial religion, in constructing a new historical narrative for the city, and in displacing earlier or competing cultic configurations in order to cement the hegemony of the new group. These stories imprinted memory onto the city's topography: onto its streets and forums, in *martyria*, and surrounding its churches. In other words, the city's monuments provided the substrata for the Nicene élite to memorialize their own histories in bids to gain popularity and imperial support. Like acts of violence, the act of imposing memories onto a landscape was an aggressive process that defined the contours of the acceptable and enforced the lines between allies and enemies.

In essence, when we look at the narratives of anti-Nicene aggression preserved in the economy of memory that informed the work of the fifth-century historians, we are witnessing the creation of Theodosian Christianity. Recognizing the constructedness of these authors' narrative landscapes has significant ramifications for how we read their inheritance of past competitions as well as their own participation in the competitions of the mid-fifth century. Ultimately, the control of Constantinople's institutional memory, and in particular that memory as memorialized within the city's religious and civic space, translated into the control of the discursive web produced between the space (with its memories), its interpreter(s), and the social group. In short, if a group could control the ritual landscape, it could control the interpretation of ritual practice—itsself an important tool of persuasion and civic formation and the focus of the following chapter.

CHAPTER 4

CIVIC CULT PRACTICE AS A TECHNOLOGY OF IDENTITY CONSTRUCTION

In Chapter 2 I examined the conceptual frameworks of religion in late antique Constantinople, paying close attention to the presence of the emperor in the structures of traditional civic cult. In Chapter 3 I explored the degree of competition that existed between religious groups and how those competitions played out in terms of assertions about authority within the frameworks of civic religion in Constantinople. In particular I argued that during the later fourth century, the memorialization of civic space provided competing religious groups the means to assert their hegemony and push others from public view. In this chapter I discuss the public performance of cult ritual as a tool of persuasion and civic formation. My approach here considers emic understandings of the effects of ritual on the person, in dialogue with modern theories of ritual and performativity. I first consider late antique anxieties, specifically those of John Chrysostom, about ritual as a performative action that shaped individual bodies within the collective. Following this discussion, I offer John Chrysostom's seven-year episcopacy in Constantinople (397–404) as a case study in order to examine how ritual performance could enable large-scale shifts in religious identification. The amount of data available during this period makes Chrysostom's tenure particularly rich for examining these processes. I argue that Chrysostom and similarly invested actors took advantage of the public and accessible nature of ritual events in order to encourage their

audiences to recognize certain practices as being normative expressions of imperial religion.

PERFORMANCE, PRACTICE, AND SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIONS

As I discussed in Chapter 1, a significant portion of religious life in late antique cities involved communal acts of honor, supplication, and petition directed toward the divine realm, acts that situated the social body in relation to a deity or deities.¹ However, ritual events were not exclusively communicative acts directed at the divine. Ritual events also had social consequences, in that they relied on, reinforced, and transformed social hierarchies, constructed boundaries between groups, and produced perceptions of normative religious structures. Consequently, ritual engagement was of the utmost concern to late antique authors.

To consider the importance attached to ritual performances, I begin with three stories about individuals engaging in ritual actions deemed problematic by observers. Each incident is reported to have occurred during the short period between 361 and 363 when the emperor Julian was promoting traditional Mediterranean cult. The first is told by Gregory of Nazianzos in his first invective against Julian, completed in late 364 or early 365, that is, within a year or so of Julian's death. Gregory tells of a trap devised by the emperor to ensnare the soldiers of his army. To receive his pay each soldier was required to offer a pinch of incense, a seemingly innocuous gesture for an army

¹ For a brief survey of the history of ritual studies as related to late antiquity, see Chapter 1, pages 8–11.

accustomed to such displays of loyalty.² Yet this simple act created tension one evening when a group of these soldiers gathered for dinner. After the meal, some in the company called upon Christ and signed themselves with the cross. Their companions immediately reacted:

- What is this? Do you invoke Christ after denouncing him?
- How did we denounce him? What is this strange accusation?
- You threw incense on the fire.

Realizing that they had unwittingly participated in a non-Christian ritual, the soldiers were frantic. They sprang from the table and, driven wild by madness, raced through the agora proclaiming their loyalty to Christ:

- We are Christians! In our souls we are Christians! Let everyone hear this, and above all, let God for whom we both live and die [hear this]. We have not lied to you, Savior Christ! We have not denied the blessed contract! Even if our hands have somehow stumbled, our thoughts did not participate! We were outwitted by the emperor, not enticed by gold. We strip off our impiety. We purify ourselves by blood!

The soldiers then threw their payments in Julian's face and presented themselves for martyrdom. Their public denunciations led the remainder of the army to realize the emperor's trap.³ In retaliation Julian exiled the soldiers, not desiring to provide new martyrs for the Christians.

² Gregory of Nazianzos, *Oration* 4.83. For the date of *Oration* 4, see Elm 2012b: 342–43 nn. 27 and 28.

³ Gregory of Nazianzos, *Oration* 4.84: εἶτα τοῦ πότου προελθόντος εἰς τὴν συνήθη ψυχροποσίαν, ὡς οὐδενὸς ὄντος αὐτοῖς δεινοῦ, τῇ ψυχροφόρῳ κύλικι, Χριστὸν ἐπειπεῖν μετὰ τῆς σφραγίδος ἄνω βλέψαντας. Τῶν δὲ συσσίτων τινὸς θαυμάσαντος, καί: “Τί τοῦτο;” εἰπόντος, “Χριστὸν ἐπακαλῆσθε μετὰ τὴν ἄρνησιν;” “Πῶς ἡρνήμεθα;” φάναι τοὺς ἡμηνήτας, “καὶ τί τὸ καινὸν τοῦτο ἄκουσμα;” Τοῦ δὲ, “ὅτι κατὰ τοῦ πυρὸς ἐθυμιάσατε,” φήσαντος, καὶ τοῦτο εἶναι διδάξαντος τὴν ἄρνησιν, εὐθὺς ἀναπηδήσαντες τοῦ συμποσίου, καθάπερ ἐκμανεῖς καὶ παραπλήγεις, ζήλω καὶ θυμῷ ζέοντες, διὰ τῆς ἀγορᾶς θέειν βοῶντες καὶ λέγοντες: “Χριστιανοὶ, Χριστιανοὶ τὰς ψυχὰς ἡμεῖς· ἀκουέτω πᾶς ἄνθρωπος, καὶ πρὸ πάντων Θεὸς, ᾧ καὶ ζῶμεν καὶ τεθνηξόμεθα. Οὐκ ἐψευσάμεθά σε, Σῶτερ Χριστέ· οὐκ ἡρνησάμεθα τὴν μακαρίαν ὁμολογίαν. Εἴ τι καὶ ἡ χεὶρ ἔπταισεν, ἀλλ’ ἡ διάνοιά γε οὐκ ἠκολούθησεν. Βασιλεῖ κατεσοφίσθημεν, οὐ χρυσοῦ

My second tale comes from Sozomen, who wrote his history nearly a century later (ca. 448/9). During Julian's days as Caesar in Gaul, Sozomen relates, the pious Valentinian had served in the Jovian legion until Julian exiled him, ostensibly for failing in his duties of command. However, Sozomen explains, the real reason for the banishment was another crime entirely:

While Julian was still among the Celts in the west he went into a certain temple and sacrificed. And Valentinian was with him, for it was the ancient custom among the Romans that the leader of the Jovian and Herculean legions accompany the emperor as swords at his back, so to speak. But when they were about to cross the threshold of the temple, the priest held out some moist saplings and sprinkled those entering according to Hellenic custom; and because a drop fell on his tunic, Valentinian bore it with indignation (for he was a Christian) and abused the one performing the lustration. They also say that while the emperor watched [Valentinian] quickly cut out and cast off as much of his garment as was touched by that drop of water. Julian was incensed because of this and not long afterwards exiled him to Melitine in Armenia without reprieve.⁴

Interestingly, Valentinian's presence at a temple for a sacrifice was not at issue—after all, he was simply performing his duty as the emperor's bodyguard. The problem only arose once Valentinian was touched by the physical materials of the ritual.

My final story appears much later, in the ninth-century chronicle of Theophanes. Despite the late date, this tale, like Gregory's, reveals continued anxiety about the effects

τραυματῖαι γεγόναμεν. Ἀπεκδυόμεθα τὴν ἀσέβειαν, αἵματι καθαιρόμεθα.” Εἶτα τῷ βασιλεῖ προσδραμόντες, καὶ τὸν χρυσὸν προσρῖψαντες λίαν νεανικῶς. (The excerpted translation is my own.)

⁴ Sozomen, *Eccl. hist.* 6.6.3–6: ἔτι διάγων Ἰουλιανὸς ἐν τοῖς πρὸς δύσιν Γαλάταις ἦκεν εἰς τινα ναὸν θύσων· συνὴν δὲ αὐτῷ καὶ Οὐαλεντινιανός· ἔθος γὰρ παλαιὸν Ῥωμαίοις τὸν ἡγούμενον τῶν Ἰοβιανῶν καὶ Ἑρκουλιανῶν...κατὰ νότου ἐγγὺς ὡσανεὶ φύλακας ἔπεσθαι τῷ βασιλεῖ. ἐπεὶ δὲ ἔμελλεν ὑπεραμεῖβειν τοῦ ναοῦ τὸν οὐδόν, θαλλοὺς τινας διαβρόχους κατέχων ὁ ἱερεὺς νόμῳ Ἑλληνικῷ περιέρχαινε τοὺς εἰσιόντας· ἐκπεσοῦσης δὲ σταγόνης ἐπὶ τὴν αὐτοῦ ἐσθῆτα χαλεπῶς ἤνεγκεν Οὐαλεντινιανός (ἦν γὰρ Χριστιανός) καὶ τῷ ῥαίνοντι ἐλοιδορήσατο· φασὶ δὲ καὶ τοῦ βασιλέως ὀρώντος αὐτίκα περιτεμεῖν καὶ ἀπορρίψαι σὺν αὐτῇ τῇ ψεκάδι ὅσον ἐβρόαχῃ τῆς ἐσθῆτος. τὸ δὲ ἐξ ἐκείνου μηνίων Ἰουλιανὸς οὐ πολλῷ ὕστερον κατεδίκησεν αὐτοῦ τὴν Μελιτινὴν τῆς Ἀρμενίας διηνεκῶς οἰκεῖν. (My translation.)

of Julian's policies on the worshippers of Christ.⁵ After commenting on the apostasy of soldiers on account of Julian's deceit, bribery, and coercion, Theophanes tells of the fates of two clergy who apostatized. The first is the Antiochene presbyter Theoteknos, who "was tricked from his vow, and voluntarily (αὐτομάτως) went over to idolatry. God punished him immediately. For he was eaten by worms, lost his sight, ate his tongue and died." The second is Heron, a bishop of the Thebaid visiting Antioch, who also voluntarily (αὐτομάτως) apostatized. Like Theoteknos, "God immediately punished him...as an example to frighten the multitude. His limbs became weak with putrefaction and he lay prostrate in the street and expired before the eyes of all."⁶ We may ask whether the deceptive circumstances contributing to these acts of apostasy would have limited the clergy members' culpability, but for Theophanes even their participation in traditional rituals was clearly voluntary and entailed condemnation.

The pressing question faced by each of these actors was whether engagement in the rituals of a particular group made one a member of that group. Precisely when and under what circumstances was an individual considered a participant in ritual action? Must one consent to truly participate? For the authors just cited, circumstances that limited an individual's freedom to act do not appear to govern how his participation was perceived by others. Rather, participation in Julian's sacrifices tainted the Christian and

⁵ I think it likely that Theophanes' narrative derives from Gregory of Nazianzos.

⁶ Theophanes, *Chron.* AM 5855: καὶ Θεότεκνος πρεσβύτερος ἐν προαστείῳ Ἀντιοχείας ἐκκλησίαν πεπιστευμένος ἐξ ὑποσχέσεως ἀπατηθεὶς αὐτομάτως ἐπὶ τὴν εἰδωλολατρείαν ἐχώρησεν· ὃν ὁ θεὸς ἐτιμωρήσατο παραχρῆμα. σκοληκόβρωτος γὰρ γενόμενος καὶ τὰς ὄψεις ἀποβαλὼν, τὴν γλῶσσαν ἐσθίων ἀπέθανεν. καὶ Ἡρὼν, ἐπίσκοπος τῆς Θηβαίδος, αὐτομάτως ἀπεστάτησεν ἐν τῇ Ἀντιοχείᾳ πόλει, ὃν ὁ θεὸς παρευθὺ εἰς παράδειγμα καὶ φόβον πολλῶν ἐτιμωρήσατο οὕτως· σηπεδόνης νοσήματι διαλυθέντων αὐτοῦ τῶν μελῶν ἐν τῇ πλατείᾳ ἐρριμμένος ἐν ὀφθαλμοῖς πάντων ἐξέψυξεν. (Trans. C. Mango and Scott 1997.)

placed him outside the ranks of the *ekklesia*. For Gregory's soldiers and Theophanes' clergy, the smallest gesture, even unknowingly or under duress, was enough to mark them as participants in a particular ritual system, sometimes with dire consequences. For Sozomen's Valentinian, on the other hand, it is clear that his presence at Julian's sacrifice did not indicate his participation, but rather it was physical touch that signaled his transition from observer to participant. From a modern standpoint, identifying these individuals as "worshippers" may be overly deterministic, given that none of these actors, except perhaps the Egyptian clergy visiting Antioch, intentionally worshipped the emperor or the traditional gods. Nonetheless, to a third party these individuals would have appeared to be worshipping a deity other than Christ. Therein lay the problem according to Gregory, Sozomen, and Theophanes. Engagement in ritual had direct and tangible consequences on the person's orientation toward the divine realm. Put another way, participation and consent were in the eyes of the beholder; perception governed reality.

The Habits of the Soul: John Chrysostom's *On Vainglory*

Concerns about bodily actions in the formation of an individual's character figure prominently in pedagogical literature during the late antique period. Among this constellation of literature is a treatise by John Chrysostom, *Address on Vainglory and the Right Way for Parents to Bring Up Their Children*, a critique of elite culture and a guidebook for Christian education.⁷ While efforts to date the text precisely have proven

⁷ Similar discussions can be found in the works of Libanios, Basil of Caesarea, Augustine of Hippo, and Ambrose of Milan. Jaclyn Maxwell provides a cursory discussion on Christian pedagogical interest in habit in late antique Christian culture, noting the penchant of Christian bishops for "meddling with the habits of ordinary people." Maxwell 2006: 144-48. For an earlier Christian example of this type of

inconclusive, *On Vainglory* illuminates Chrysostom's perspective on the processes that created a Christian ethos, a perspective shared with homilies throughout his preaching career.⁸

Chrysostom opens his treatise by lamenting the injuries wrought against the Church and the soul by Vainglory (κενοδοξία), whom he describes as a prostitute perfumed, adorned, and deceptively beautiful, but in truth a *phantasia* and a stage-act waiting to ensnare her victims.⁹ She has tricked the ambitious man into spending lavishly to host her theater shows, a trap that leaves his household destitute and himself abandoned by those who once adored him.¹⁰ The reason for this behavior, Chrysostom claims, is that such men have been misled by the vanity of worldly culture:

Oftentimes men, who have deprived themselves of the necessities and are wasting with hunger, still care for their household possessions. And, if you ask them why, they answer: "I must keep my position (τὸ σκήμα)"...I hear many who are admired for this. "So and so," someone says, "takes thought for his position (τὸ

literature, see Clement of Alexander's *Paidagogos* (late second/early third century). For more on education in late antique society, see esp. Kastner 1998; Av. Cameron 1991: 73–84, 139–40; Brown 1992: 35–58; and the collection of essays in Too 2001. Sara Rappe notices that the rejection of "traditional paideia" is not as radically Christian as it might appear, as philosophical schools similarly advocated the abandonment of the educational canon and practice (after, of course, the student had utilized that same system to arrive at a point at which the study of philosophy was possible); see Rappe 2001: 405–08.

⁸ Based on what she interprets to be allusions to daily life in Antioch and to tensions between the parties of Flavian and Evagrius over the episcopacy of Antioch, Anne-Marie Malingrey hesitantly dates the text to 393/4, thus several years before Chrysostom's relocation to Constantinople; see her introduction to *On Vainglory* in Malingrey 1972: 46–47. I am not convinced that these allusions are strong enough to pinpoint the composition date, as the practices Chrysostom describes could also fit the patterns of Constantinopolitan daily life. Moreover, significant tensions also existed in the ecclesiastical ranks of Constantinople, specifically between Chrysostom and the city's monastics.

⁹ John Chrysostom, *On Vainglory* 2. A strong element throughout John Chrysostom's discussions about correct behavior is his use of sensory rhetoric, especially in his appeal to his audience's sense of disgust to discourage them from participating in non-Christian practice. For an extensive discussion of sensory rhetoric in late antique literature, see Harvey 2006b: esp. 125–34, 206–10.

¹⁰ John Chrysostom, *On Vainglory* 4–6.

σχῆμα). His couch is spread and he has an abundance of bronze vessels; he is the manager of his own house.”¹¹

Vainglory has convinced the man that his most important possession is τὸ σχῆμα, a word Chrysostom uses to refer simultaneously to one’s station in society and the behaviors and physical objects that made that station visible to others.¹² Inclusion among the social élite demanded that a particular outward appearance, through civic patronage, social networks, dress, and displays of wealth. Social position was a thing to be performed.

Chrysostom blames this misguided concern for fulfilling the expectations of society squarely on a child’s father, who has failed to properly shape his son’s malleable soul.¹³ Rather than attending to the necessary training in virtue, the negligent father surrounds his son with adornments and luxury and instills in him a love of material

¹¹ John Chrysostom, *On Vainglory* 14, 15: Πολλάκις τῶν ἀναγκαίων τινὲς ἑαυτοὺς ἀποστερήσαντες καὶ λιμῷ φθειρόμενοι τούτων οὐκ ἀμελοῦσι τῶν σκευῶν. Κὰν ἐρωτήσης αὐτοὺς, “τὸ σχῆμά μου, φησὶν, ἔχειν ὀφείλω”...Καὶ ἀκούω πολλῶν ἐπὶ τούτῳ θαυματούμενων. “Ὁ δεῖνα, φησὶν, ἔχει τὸ σχῆμα αὐτοῦ· ἡ κλίνη ἐξεστρωμένη ἐστὶν καὶ σκεύη χαλκᾷ ἔχει πολλά· οἰκοδεσπότης ἄνθρωπός ἐστιν.” (Trans. Laistner 1951, with emendation.)

¹² At its most fundamental, classical meaning, σχῆμα indicates the shape or outer appearance of an object. This is the sense Plato uses when describing the σχῆμα God fashioned for the kosmos and the σχῆμα of the human body in the *Timaeus*. In the *Republic* Plato uses this term to describe appearances or façades, particularly in respect to impersonation. Elsewhere in the *Republic* Plato uses σχῆμα to denote the functions or occupations individuals assume for the state to function properly. See Plato *Timaeus* 33b, 44b–d; *Republic* 2.365c, 3.393c–d, 4.421a. Σχῆμα can also refer to one’s bearing, dress, equipment, a character, or a role, notably in the context of stagecraft. See, for example, Sophocles’ *Antigone* 1.1169, when the messenger refers to a tyrant’s σχῆμα, and Demosthenes’ reference to the character of the city as a σχῆμα: νῦν ἡ πόλις εἰς ὑπηρέτου σχῆμα καὶ τάξιν προελήλυθεν (“the city now exhibits the σχῆμα and rank of an underling;” *Against Aristocrates*, 23.210). Similarly, Polybios records the dismay of the Roman people upon hearing of the loss to Hannibal, reporting that they received the news of defeat κατὰ σχῆμα (Polybios, *Histories* 3.85.9). For late antique authors familiar with the classical rhetorical tradition, σχῆμα would have had performative connotations: what to wear, what to eat, how to speak, gesture, and walk, and how to interact with others within a certain context, social class, or dramatic persona. Compare John Chrysostom’s description of the appearances of poverty and wealth as mere masks, which death rips from the actor to reveal the true, hidden state of the soul in *Homily 2 On Lazarus and the Rich Man* 3 (PG 48.986.47–56) and *Homily 6 On Lazarus* 5 (PG 48.1034–35). Σχῆμα is also the word used for the monk’s habit. See, for example, Athanasios, *Life of Antony* 25; Sozomen, *Eccl. hist.* 3.14.5.

¹³ John Chrysostom, *On Vainglory* 16: πάντα μηχανᾶται ὁ πατήρ οὐχ ὅπως αὐτοῦ τὸν βίον ὀυθμίσειεν, ἀλλ’ ὅπως αὐτὸ καλλωπίσειεν καὶ χρυσίοις καὶ ἱματίοις περιβάλῃ...ἐξ ἀρχῆς αὐτῷ χρημάτων ἔρωτα περιττὸν ἐντιθεὶς καὶ πείθων περὶ τὰ ἀνόνητα ἐπιοῆσθαι.

possessions. So too, Chrysostom elaborates, does a daughter raised in the women's quarters surrounded by adornments become ill tempered and an immense burden to her bridegroom.¹⁴ Fortunately, Chrysostom explains, virtue can and ought to be fostered from the earliest age, for the child's soul is like soft wax, ready to receive impressions that will harden into a seal (τύπος) that marks his character: "Should good instruction be impressed upon the soul while it is still soft, no one will be able to destroy these things when they have set firm, even as does a waxen seal."¹⁵ For this reason the experiences of childhood are fundamental in setting a person's disposition, and it is crucial for parents to manage a child's environment and education properly. Each of the body's senses, Chrysostom explains, is a gateway through which sensory experiences can enter and guide or corrupt the developing soul.¹⁶ Therefore the child's parents and teachers must closely guard these gateways, especially those of vision and hearing, until he reaches

¹⁴ John Chrysostom, *On Vainglory*, 16–18. There is an undertone of gendering in the rhetoric here, as Chrysostom implies that the young man raised to direct himself toward physical pleasures is fashioned to behave as a woman.

¹⁵ John Chrysostom, *On Vainglory* 20: Ἄν εἰς ἀπαλὴν οὖσαν ἔτι τὴν ψυχὴν ἐντυπωθῇ τὰ καλὰ διδάγματα, οὐδεὶς αὐτὰ ἐξελεῖν δυνήσεται, ὅταν σκληρὰ γένηται ὡς τύπος, ὥσπερ καὶ κηρός. (Trans. Laistner 1951, with emendations.) Chrysostom also compares the child's soul to a pearl that obtains its shape from the diver, statues sculpted by artists, and a newly-founded city that has not yet been exposed to the attacks or corrupting influence of foreigners; *On Vainglory* 21, 22, 25. As Ruth Webb has noted, Chrysostom's thought relies on earlier philosophical theories of *aesthesis*, or sense-perception, in which an experience is likened to a *typos*, or seal, which imprints the soul to create a memory. Webb 2008: 178–80. For examples, see Plato, *Timaeus* 67a–c; Aristotle, *On Memory* 450a–b; Diogenes Laertius 7.45–46; Cicero, *Academics* 2.21; Aristides, *On Music* 2.4; Apuleius, *On Plato*, 1.14.209–210.

¹⁶ John Chrysostom, *On Vainglory* 27: ὑπὲρ γὰρ τῆς οἰκουμένης ἡμῖν ἡ νομοθεσία καὶ πόλιν κτίζομεν σήμερον. Ἔστωσαν οὖν οἱ μὲν περίβολοι καὶ πύλαι <αἱ> τέσσαρες αἰσθήσεις· τὸ λοιπὸν ἅπαν σῶμα ὥσπερ τεῖχος ἔστω, πύλαι δὲ αὐτῷ οἱ ὀφθαλμοί, ἡ γλῶσσα, ἡ ἀκοή, ἡ ὄσφρησις, εἰ βούλει καὶ ἡ ἀφή· διὰ γὰρ τῶν πυλῶν τούτων καὶ εἰσίσαι καὶ ἐξέρχονται οἱ τῆς πόλεως ταύτης πολῖται· τουτέστιν οἱ λογισμοὶ διὰ τῶν πυλῶν τούτων καὶ φθείρονται καὶ κατορθοῦνται.

maturity and has been properly trained.¹⁷ It is only through Christian practices, combined with an orientation toward the Christian scriptures, that this task can be accomplished.¹⁸

Chrysostom's anxiety over the effects of habit upon the soul are informed by his own educational background. These discussions have a long tradition in Greek philosophical writings, particularly in systems of psychagogy, that is, the training of the rational human soul in virtue through *mimesis* (imitation).¹⁹ As Ruth Webb explains, the late antique system of *paideia* depended upon young men's "successful mastery of patterns of behavior and speech, and even of attitudes or points of view," a mastery which served as "both a sign and a condition of belonging to a particular group, and this mastery is acquired largely through observation and imitation."²⁰ Yet *mimesis* was about much more than copying the behaviors of one's elders and teachers—it also included matters of dress and sensory stimuli. Costume, for instance, could have a profound effect upon the individual's soul.²¹ We saw this above in Chrysostom's admonishments about adornment, and we see it elsewhere, for example when, in a series of homilies on Lazarus

¹⁷ John Chrysostom, *On Vainglory* 3, 55–57.

¹⁸ John Chrysostom, *On Vainglory* 19; see also *ibid.*, 39–46, in which Chrysostom outlines how to teach children scripture, beginning with simplified tales, which are revisited and elaborated upon as the child matures.

¹⁹ A full bibliography of this tradition is outside the scope of this dissertation. However, the foundational articulations of *mimesis* and virtue are Plato's *Republic* (esp. books 2 and 3) and Aristotle's *Politics* (esp. books 7 and 8). For further discussion of the importance of forming virtuous habits in Plato and Aristotle's idealized liberal education, with added attention to the "performance" of wisdom, see Nightingale 2001: 133–173.

²⁰ Webb 2008: 157.

²¹ Webb points to numerous examples of this anxiety, including Severos of Antioch's assertion that merely donning the costume of a worshipper of Zeus made one, in reality, a worshipper of Zeus and a hagiographic account of a mime who became a Christian martyr when he donned a deacon's robe. See Webb 2008: 156–57.

and the Rich Man, Chrysostom warns his audience that luxuries corrupt the soul and cause it to exude a discharge of evil through the body.²² Put simply, one could never simply don a costume, for the essence of the character portrayed threatened to seep into the actor.

John Chrysostom's observations align with the educational and psychagogical theories of his time, but they are also astute observations about social behavior that have been supported by modern theories of practice and performativity. Foundational in these discussions are theories on the person as an embodied social agent as formulated by French sociologists Marcel Mauss and Pierre Bourdieu. As Mauss observes, the techniques by which an individual navigates social interactions and inhabits space are the result of years of repetitive, deliberative (but often subtle) practice that trains the body to perform in particular ways within given contexts.²³ By emulating the actions of others inhabiting the same social environment, one trains one's body to perform according to social expectation.²⁴ The techniques, habits, or strategies acquired by the socially

²² John Chrysostom, *Homily 1 on Lazarus and the Rich Man* 8 (PG 48.974.16–17). See also *Homily 3 on Lazarus and the Rich Man* (PG 48.998.46–52): “When you see a man passing his life in immorality and enjoying great wealth, and suffering nothing terrible, on account of this especially you must lament: because he is held by vice and the harshest putrefaction, he increases his moral sickness, and through luxury and indulgence he becomes more wicked.” (Ὅταν ἴδῃς ἄνθρωπον πονηρίᾳ συζῶντα, καὶ πολλῆς ἀπολαύοντα τῆς εὐημερίας, καὶ οὐδὲν πάσχοντα δεινόν, διὰ τοῦτο μᾶλλον θρήνησον, ὅτι νοσήματι κατεχόμενος καὶ σηπεδόνι χαλεπωτάτῃ, τὴν ἀρρώστιάν ἐπιτείνει, διὰ τῆς τρυφῆς καὶ τῆς ἀνέσεως χείρων γινόμενος. My translation.)

²³ Mauss 1979: 99. Mauss famously comments that “the body is man's [sic] first and most natural instrument,” the object through which the individual interacts with the physical and social environment. See Mauss 1979: 104.

²⁴ Mauss 1979: 101. Mauss refers to the cumulative acquisition of strategies for the acting body as *habitus*, clarifying that “these ‘habits’ do not vary just with individuals and their imitations; they vary especially between societies, educations, proprieties and fashions, prestiges. In them we should see the techniques and work of collective and individual practical reason rather than, in the ordinary way, merely the soul and its repetitive faculties.” *Habitus*, Mauss further argues, demands the “triple consideration” of biology, sociology, and psychology, and is intimately bound to processes of education, as “the child, the adult, imitates actions which have succeeded and which he has seen successfully performed by people in

embedded individual are both visceral and culturally specific, and consequently impossible, or nearly so, to unlearn.²⁵ In this respect, Mauss' "body techniques," or *habitus*, are almost a matter of muscle memory, a way of forming the motions necessary to intuitively navigate the social and physical environment. Bourdieu appropriates Mauss' notion of *habitus* to discuss strategies for acting within a social body. Through the processes that socialize individuals to a group, Bourdieu argues, the group develops systems of social cues and responses they intuitively consider effective or appropriate. By these cues, the socially embedded individual acts strategically for his or her advantage. Importantly, the subjects do not realize that they are learning these cues, and consequently the resulting structures appear natural. Agents thus act within their social environment on an intuitive level, even if individuals are occasionally self-reflective in the strategies they employ.²⁶ The development of *habitus* is ultimately a reciprocating process that produces an intuitive knowledge of how to navigate the social scripts of a society in the process of the producing (and reproducing) these scripts.

In light of the deep, intuitive learning that occurs through mimesis, it is unsurprising that the theater would occupy such a central place in John Chrysostom's

whom he has confidence and who have authority over him. The action is imposed from without, from above, even if it is an exclusively biological action, involving his body. The individual borrows the series of movements which constitute it from the action executed in front of him or with him by others." Mauss 1979: 101–02.

²⁵ To illustrate this point, Mauss describes the difference in English and French digging techniques, recalling the English soldiers working with his (French) unit during World War I who had immense difficulty using French shovels because they required a different technique than the English bodies had learned.

²⁶ Bourdieu 1977: 78–79. Bourdieu refers to the naturalization of learned social strategies as "genesis amnesia." The "socially informed body," Bourdieu adds, is a sensing body, not only in respect to the traditional physical senses but also in regards to a countless array of additional social senses that enable the individual to engage with others in the social environment. See Bourdieu 1977: 124.

discussion of education. Crucial here was his fear—or rather certainty—that the viewer would emulate the characters that he had seen on stage.²⁷ For Chrysostom the spectacle and the actor within it are active forces that force themselves upon the passive audience.²⁸ Therefore, the theater, with its disgracing sights and sounds, should be particularly avoided. A father should not allow his son to attend the shows in the theater, where he will become a victim to its assaults, but instead should take the boy there as the shows conclude so that he might observe and understand the shame those who have attended bring upon themselves.²⁹ The detrimental effects of the theater appear repeatedly elsewhere in John Chrysostom’s preaching, both in Antioch and later in Constantinople. In *Homily 10* on the Acts of the Apostles, for instance, Chrysostom describes the enjoyments of the theater as an enduring mischief and a plague that bores itself into the souls of the spectators, who then sing snatches of songs or recite portions of dialogue from the plays on their way home or during their daily activities.³⁰

²⁷ This theory about the impact of the sights is shared by other critics of the theater, including Tatian and Ailios Aristeides. See Webb 2008: 185.

²⁸ Webb 2008: 170–71.

²⁹ John Chrysostom, *On Vainglory* 77, 79.

³⁰ John Chrysostom, *Homily 10 On the Acts of the Apostles* 4 (PG. 60.90): Οὐκ ἔστι τὸ θέατρον τοῦτο, ἀγαπητὲ, κιθαρωδῶν οὐδὲ τραγωδῶν, ἔνθα μέχρι τῆς τέρψεως ὁ καρπὸς, καὶ τῆς ἡμέρας παραδραμούσης παρήλθεν ἡ τέρψις...ἀλλ’ ὅμως ἄπεισιν ἐκείθεν οἴκαδε ἕκαστος, καθάπερ ἀπὸ τινος λύμης ἀναμαζάμενος πολλὰ τῶν αὐτόθι· καὶ ὁ μὲν νέος ἀπολαβὼν τινα τῶν σατανικῶν ἁσμάτων μέλη, ὅσα ἴσχυσε τῇ μνήμῃ καταθέσθαι, συνεχῶς ἐπὶ τῆς οἰκίας ἄδει· ὁ δὲ πρεσβύτερος, ἅτε δὴ σεμνότερος, τοῦτο μὲν οὐ ποιεῖ, τῶν δὲ ἐκεῖσε λεγομένων ῥημάτων μέμνηται πάντων. The available evidence is too ambiguous to determine provenance for many of Chrysostom’s homilies. In her study of Chrysostom’s homilies, Wendy Mayer reexamines the homilies to determine provenance, in some cases deciding that homilies assigned to one city should be assigned to the other or that there is not enough evidence to assign certain homilies to Antioch or Constantinople. Mayer does not provide a suggestion concerning the provenance for this homily. Here, I am more concerned about determining patterns in Chrysostom’s thought about the effects of performance and rituals on the human soul than about the precise location of a homily’s delivery.

In many instances we cannot be certain whether Chrysostom was speaking to an Antiochene or a Constantinopolitan audience, but in a homily that we know was delivered in Constantinople, Chrysostom similarly cautions those who attend the games and theater productions:

But you sitting up there [in the theater] where there's such a demand to behave disgracefully, if you see a woman who's a prostitute coming on stage with bare head and great shamelessness, dressed in golden garments, weak and corrupt, singing dirty ditties, degenerate tunes, mouthing shameful words, conducting herself so disgracefully (sights which, after you have watched, you take into your mind)—do you hang your head in shame? Do you dare to say that you feel no human emotion? Surely your body isn't stone? Surely it isn't iron...The point is that, even if you aren't intimate with the prostitute, you've copulated with her by desire and have committed the sin in your thought. This doesn't happen either on that one occasion, but when the theater is finished and she has gone, the image of her is stored up in your soul...How will you come in those holy doors? How will you touch the heavenly table? How will you hear the sermon on common sense when you're full of ulcers and so many wounds, and have a mind enslaved to passion?³¹

For Chrysostom, human bodies suffer from the onslaught of sensual impressions and are shaped by the spectacles they witness. The soul of the man who watched the spectacles of the theater would become soft and weak, storing the impressions of the theater with lasting detrimental effect.³² Similar infections are spread by the spectacles of the

³¹ John Chrysostom, *Against the Games and Theaters* 2–3 (PG 56.266.30–267.4, 267.44–268.1): σὺ δὲ ἄνω καθήμενος, ὅπου τοσαύτη πρὸς ἀσχημοσύνην παράκλησις, ὁρῶν γυναῖκα πόρνην γυμνῇ τῇ κεφαλῇ μετὰ πολλῆς τῆς ἀναισχυντίας εἰσιούσαν, χρυσᾷ περιβεβλημένην ἱμάτια, μαλακιζομένην, θρυπομένην, ἄσματα ἔδουσεν πορνικά, κατακεκλασμένα μέλη, αἰσχρὰ προίεμένην ῥήματα, ἀσχημονοῦσαν τοιαῦτα, ἅπερ ὁ θεωρήσας ἂν εἰς ἔννοιαν λάβῃς, κάτω κύπτεις...Εἰ γὰρ καὶ μὴ συνεπλάκης τῇ πόρνῃ, ἀλλὰ τῇ ἐπιθυμίᾳ συνεγένου, καὶ τῇ γνώμῃ τὴν ἁμαρτίαν εἰργάσω. Καὶ οὐδὲ κατὰ τὸν καιρὸν ἐκείνον μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ τοῦ θεάτρου λυθέντος, ἀπελθούσης αὐτῆς, τὸ εἶδωλον ἐκείνης ἐναπόκειται σου τῇ ψυχῇ...Πῶς γὰρ ἐπιβήσῃ τῶν προθύρων ἐκείνων τῶν ἱερῶν; πῶς ἄψῃ τῆς οὐρανίου τραπέζης; πῶς δὲ ἀκούσεις τὸν περὶ σωφροσύνης λόγον, ἐλκῶν γέμων καὶ τραυμάτων τοσοῦτων, καὶ τὴν διάνοιαν ἔχων τῷ πάθει δουλεύουσιν; (Trans. Mayer and Allen 2000.) Compare Chrysostom's sentiments here to Libanios' description of the spectacle as an enjoyment (τέρψις) that enlivens the spectator and makes life more pleasant. Libanios, *Oration* 64.57; see discussion in Webb 2008: 169.

³² Note John Chrysostom's emphasis on the male desire for the feminine body (including the male pantomime who plays female roles). In his homily on the martyr Barlaam, Chrysostom describes desire as a

hippodrome, as those who attend the races “fill the city with cries and disorderly shouting,” threatening to spread the infection beyond the hippodrome.³³ The spectator, then, does not simply emulate what he sees; he becomes it, and he has the potential to spread his derangement to others. In the face of the power of mimesis, Chrysostom’s homilies aimed to alter the audience’s perceptions of themselves and to create a sense of their vulnerability and the dangers they faced.

But just as human bodies bear the spectacles they have seen in the theater or the hippodrome, they can also bear the holy spectacles. In his *Homily on Barlaam* Chrysostom comments that the martyr’s shrine is a new stage:

Don’t let the martyr be admired just for the duration of the present hour, but when they go off home let each person take away the saint and introduce him into their own household...Welcome the crowned victor, and never let him leave your mind. It’s for this reason that we’ve brought you alongside the coffins of the holy martyrs...For truly, while even hearing of a warrior lifts up a soldier, much more so does seeing and viewing and especially when, on entering the warrior’s tent itself, one sees his bloodied sword, the enemy’s head lying there, the spoils hanging up above, the fresh blood dripping from the hands of the person who erected the trophy, spears and shields and arrows and all the rest of his arsenal. It’s for this reason that we too have gathered here. For the martyrs’ tomb is a soldier’s tent.³⁴

raging fire and a rabid dog that constantly attacks the soul (πῦρ ἐστὶν ἡ ἐπιθυμία τῆς φύσεως...κύων ἐστὶ λυττῶν καὶ μεμηνώς); *On the Martyr Barlaam* 2 (PG 50.677). Chrysostom makes similar comments in *Homily 7 On 2 Corinthians*, 5 (PG 61.45): the sight of a beautiful woman stirs the rabid dog that is desire. As Webb comments, Chrysostom constructs an audience that is predominantly male, a strategy that “allows him to reduce audience response to the plain and simple sexual desire of the male spectator for the female performer, a response that is, moreover, automatic and unavoidable, according to Chrysostom.” Webb interprets this strategy as a “deliberate choice” on the part of Chrysostom, as other ancient authors describe audiences comprised of men and women. See Webb 2008: 171. On the pantomime’s ability to embody characters of differing genders, see Webb 2008: 77–79.

³³ John Chrysostom, *Against the Games and Theaters* 1 (PG 56.263): πρὸς τὴν θεωρίαν τῶν ἀμυλλητηρίων ἵππων ἡτομόλησαν, καὶ οὕτως ἐξεβακχεύθησαν, ὥστε πάσαν τὴν πόλιν ἐμπλήσαι βοῆς καὶ κραυγῆς ἀτάκτου. (Trans. Mayer and Allen 2000.)

³⁴ John Chrysostom, *On the Martyr Barlaam* 10 (PG 50.680–81): μὴ μέχρι τῆς παρούσης ὥρας θαυμαζέσθω ὁ μάρτυς μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ οἴκαδε ἀπὸν ἕκαστος ἐπαγέσθω τὸν ἅγιον, καὶ εἰς τὴν οἰκίαν εἰσαγέτω τὴν ἑαυτοῦ...ὕπόδεξαι τὸν στεφανίτην, καὶ μηδέποτε ἀφῆς ἐξελθεῖν τῆς διανοίας τῆς σῆς. Διὰ τοῦτο ὑμᾶς καὶ παρὰ τὰς θήκας τῶν ἁγίων μαρτύρων ἡγάγομεν...Καὶ γὰρ

Again, the image of the spectacle imprints itself upon the viewer and transforms him into its likeness. The martyr's shrine is a new spectacle, a pure theater, and the martyr is an actor worthy of emulation. Unlike the prostitute on stage, who kindles carnal desire, the sight of martyr stirs a holy desire that directs the spectator's body toward God. Christian worship counters the "dirty ditties" of the theater:

[God] mixed melody with prophecy, so that enticed by the rhythm and the melody, all might raise sacred hymns to him with great eagerness. For nothing so arouses the soul, gives it wing, sets it free from the earth, releases it from the prison of the body, teaches it to love wisdom, and to condemn all the things of this life, as concordant melody and sacred song composed in rhythm.³⁵

The pleasure induced by music is natural to the human soul, but demons had taken advantage of that pleasure, introducing strange songs that left the soul weak and soft. To prevent such corruption, God provided the psalms, whose purifying pleasure provides a conduit for the Holy Spirit into the souls who sing them.³⁶

στρατιώτην ἀνίστησι μὲν καὶ ἀκοὴ ἀριστέως· πολλῶ δὲ πλεον ὄψις καὶ θεωρία, καὶ μάλιστα ὅταν εἰς αὐτὴν τοῦ ἀριστέως τὴν σκηνὴν εἰσελθὼν ἴδῃ τὸ ξίφος ἡμαγμένον, τὴν κεφαλὴν τοῦ πολεμίου κειμένην, τὰ λάφυρα ἄνω κρεμάμενα, τὸ αἷμα νεαρὸν τῶν χειρῶν ἀποστάζον παρὰ τοῦ τὸ τρόπαιον στήσαντος, πανταχοῦ δόρατα καὶ ἀσπίδας καὶ τόξα καὶ τὴν ἄλλην ἅπασαν παντευχίαν κειμένην. Διὰ τοῦτο καὶ ἡμεῖς ἐνταῦθα συνεληλύθαμεν. Σκηνὴ γάρ ἐστι στρατιωτικὴ. (Trans. Mayer 2006).

³⁵ John Chrysostom, *On Psalm 41* 1 (PG 55.156.36–44): μελωδίαν ἀνέμιξε τῇ προφητείᾳ, ἵνα τῷ ῥυθμῷ τοῦ μέλους ψυχαγωγούμενοι πάντες, μετὰ πολλῆς τῆς προθυμίας τοὺς ἱεροὺς ἀναπέμπωσιν αὐτῷ ὕμνους. Οὐδὲν γὰρ, οὐδὲν οὕτως ἀνίστησι ψυχὴν, καὶ περὶ, καὶ τῆς γῆς ἀπαλλάττει, καὶ τῶν τοῦ σώματος ἀπολύει δεσμών, καὶ φιλοσοφεῖν ποιεῖ, καὶ πάντων καταγελᾶν τῶν βιωτικῶν, ὡς μέλος συμφωνίας, καὶ ῥυθμῷ συγκείμενον θεῖον ᾠσμα. (Trans. McKinnon 1987.) Chrysostom's discussion parallels the discussion of music in the writings of other fourth- and fifth-century Christian authors. See, for example, Athanasios, *Letter to Marcellinos* 10–11, 29, and Basil, *Homily on the First Psalm* 1. See also the discussion of the Greek musical theory, particularly the effects of sound on the human soul, that lies behind John Chrysostom's approach to biblical recitation in Wylie 1997: 386–392. For a discussion on the recitation of the Psalms as a paraenetic practice, see Kolbet 2006: 88–89.

³⁶ John Chrysostom, *On Psalm 41* 1 (PG 55.157.6–20): Ἀπὸ μὲν γὰρ τῶν ἔξωθεν ᾠσμάτων βλάβη, καὶ ὀλεθρος, καὶ πολλὰ ἂν εἰσαχθεῖ δεινὰ· τὰ γὰρ ἀσελγέστερα καὶ παρανομώτερα τῶν ᾠσμάτων τούτων τοῖς τῆς ψυχῆς μέρεσιν ἐγγινόμενα, ἀσθενεστέραν αὐτὴν καὶ μαλακώτεραν ποιοῦσιν.

From these examples, it is clear that Chrysostom understood that the social environment shaped individuals' habits, including ritual habits. In turn, these habits served as the foundation for a person's moral character. Those subjected to the sights and sounds of traditional imperial culture absorbed its vices, in contrast to those who limited their access, or at least controlled their responses, to these stimuli. Thus the dangers of habit were all the more acute for the undisciplined individual who had not been trained to discern and to avoid the social activities deemed inappropriate by Chrysostom. He also argues that changes in the social body could occur when individuals consciously changed their habits and the habits of those under their charge, especially children. At the same time, changes in individuals must be accompanied by societal changes, especially in excising the stimuli that present harm to individuals (e.g., the shows of the theater and hippodrome) and replacing them with a new spiritual theater (the martyr's shrine and the church). To explore how ritual habituation contributed to large-scale changes in religious identifications, I now turn to John Chrysostom's engagement with ritual within the larger performative environment of Constantinople.

JOHN CHRYSOSTOM'S CITY

In the autumn of 397, the imperial bishop of Constantinople died. Tensions in the city quickly exploded as rival parties maneuvered to install their candidates as new imperial bishop.³⁷ Among the candidates put forward was John Chrysostom, who had

³⁷ Sokrates, *Eccl. hist.* 6.2; Sozomen, *Eccl. hist.* 8.2. See also J. N. D. Kelly 1995: 104–06. As Mayer and Allen note, the level of competition had increased significantly because the rank of Constantinople's episcopacy had been elevated at the Council of Constantinople and because the imperial residence in the city was now nearly permanent. Mayer and Allen 2000: 8.

already acquired renown as an eloquent preacher, skilled teacher, and proven adversary of Arianism during his tenure in Antioch.³⁸ According to Sozomen, Arkadios feared that the Antiochenes would not allow Chrysostom's removal and therefore contrived to lure the popular presbyter from Antioch under a request for his aid in a political affair.³⁹ Chrysostom arrived in Constantinople that November and was officially installed as Arkadios' bishop in the early spring of 398.

Chrysostom's predecessor Nektarios had been the imperial bishop since Gregory of Nazianzos' departure in 381, and during his tenure the religious landscape of Constantinople had become more discernably Christian in tenor. The traditional temples on the acropolis had been closed and their property dedicated for new uses.⁴⁰ Existing Christians sites, such as the Apostoleion and the Great Church, had increased in prominence and become more intimately tied to the imperial family, while new sites, for example the Anastasia church, had increased the visibility of Christianity in the religious

³⁸ Ca. 381–397 (ordination as presbyter 386). The definitive study of John Chrysostom's life remains J. N. D. Kelly (1995), though he has a tendency to take narrative license in his presentation. For John Chrysostom's return to Antioch after a period of ascetic withdrawal and his ordination as presbyter, see J. N. D. Kelly 1995: 38. The precise circumstances surrounding Chrysostom's appointment are unclear, but Palladios (*Dialogue* 5) mentions the interest shown in the Antiochene presbyter by Eutropios, the imperial chamberlain and advisor to Arkadios. Modern historians have taken this suggestion as evidence for Eutropios' involvement in Chrysostom's selection as imperial bishop. See especially J. N. D. Kelly 1995: 105 for Eutropios' possible motives for placing Chrysostom in the episcopal office. For opposition to Chrysostom's appointment among the magistrates and clergy of Constantinople, see the anonymous *Funerary Speech for John Chrysostom* 15. In the manuscript tradition, the speech is attributed to Martyrios of Antioch. For the date of the *Funerary Speech*, see Barnes and Bevan 2013: 5–6.

³⁹ Palladios, *Dialogue* 5. 57–59; Sozomen, *Eccl. hist.* 8.2.15. Cp. *Funerary Speech for John Chrysostom* 13 and Sokrates, *Eccl. hist.* 6.2–4, neither of whom provides any indication of the necessity to spirit John Chrysostom away from Antioch.

⁴⁰ John Malalas, *Chron.* 13.3, 13.39.

landscape of the city.⁴¹ Theodosios I had clearly favored those bishops who consented to the definition of Christian orthodoxy as set out by the Council of Constantinople in 381 and had pushed those who did not agree to this definition from public space by confiscating their cult sites, thus instituting what I refer to as Theodosian Christianity as the imperially sanctioned civic religion of Constantinople.⁴² Within a year of Theodosios' death in 395, Arkadios had reiterated and extended his father's patronage of Theodosian Christianity by denying other groups the possibility of using private homes as cult sites within the city.

The events of the previous twenty years may have made the boundaries between religious groups clearer, and the accompanying legislation demonstrated a clear preference for Theodosian Christians. Still, these circumstances do not mean that competing religious groups had been altogether eliminated from the city. When John Chrysostom arrived in the city in the November of 397, non-Theodosian elements continued to maintain a strong presence in the city. The anonymous author of the *Funerary Speech for John Chrysostom*, writing shortly after Chrysostom's death in 407, complains that the general Gaïnas convinced Arkadios to provide churches for his Arian army within the walls of Constantinople.⁴³ The historian Philostorgios (in Constantinople ca. 425–433) identifies himself as a supporter of Eunomios and consequently is

⁴¹ Theodosios I had accentuated the role of the Apostoleion in order to connect his imperial lineage to Constantine, and in doing so, he tied himself and his chosen bishops to apostolic narratives.

⁴² See discussion in Chapter 3, pp. 115–18. It seems to me that the legislation (CTh 16.5.11, 16.5.12) is vague enough that it allowed for the possibility that non-Theodosian groups continued to have cult sites in the city, but only if they were not visually identifiable as such.

⁴³ *Funerary Speech for John Chrysostom* 49; see also Sozomen, *Eccl. Hist.* 8.4.6.

remembered as an Arian by later authors.⁴⁴ Writing during the 440s, Sokrates and Sozomen identify a group of non-Theodosian Christians (Sokrates refers to them as οἱ Ἀρειανίζοντες) who possessed a church immediately outside the city walls.⁴⁵ According to the letter of the law, this group was complying with their banishment from the civic space; in practice, however, this group was clearly not absent from the city, for it regularly brought its rituals into the city on feast days.

Moreover, the image of a clearly defined Theodosian Christianity in late fourth-century Constantinople is complicated by the sanctioned presence of Novatian clergy in the city. These individuals were not under the authority of the imperial bishop, but because they held Nicaea as the standard of orthodoxy, Theodosios I and Arkadios had permitted them to remain in the city, and according to Sokrates the Novatian bishop, Sissinios, was highly regarded by the imperial household and the city's élite.⁴⁶ This continued diversity (if we can use that word) is in addition to the deep tensions that existed between individuals recognized as representatives of the imperial church. These divisions repeatedly became manifest at moments of transition or political instability, for example in the competitions for the episcopal office following a bishop's death or expulsion.⁴⁷

⁴⁴ Philostorgios identifies himself as a "Eunomian from Cappadocia" in the title of his work. Both Photios and the Suda refer to him as an Arian. See Photios, *Bibliotheca* codex 40 (Bekker 8a); *Suda* A 3397 (Apollinaris of Laodikea), B 150 (Basil of Caesarea), Γ 450 (Gregory of Nazianzos).

⁴⁵ Sozomen refers to them as "those from the Arian heresy" (οἱ ἀπὸ τῆς Ἀρείου αἰρέσεως). Sokrates, *Eccl. hist.* 6.8; Sozomen, *Eccl. hist.* 8.8.

⁴⁶ Sokrates, *Eccl. hist.* 6.22.20.

⁴⁷ These competitions are consistently fierce throughout this period. See *Funerary Speech for John Chrysostom* 14–15; Palladios, *Dialogue* 5.44–52; Sokrates, *Eccl. hist.* 6.2.1–2, 6.20.1–2, 7.26.1, 7.29.1, 7.35.1.

Additionally, we have continued evidence that Constantinople was not an entirely Christian city during Chrysostom's tenure. Among the charges levied against Chrysostom at the Synod of the Oak in 403 was that he had provided sanctuary to a group of Hellenes in the Great Church.⁴⁸ Sokrates mentions the immigration of his own teachers, Helladios and Ammonios, who had held traditional priests in Alexandria, to Constantinople in 392.⁴⁹ Sozomen, too, imagines a great number of Hellenes among those who flocked to hear Chrysostom preach in the capital.⁵⁰ We also have passing references in the writings of Sokrates and Proklos to Jews who lived in the city during this period.⁵¹ Due to the rhetorical part these figures play in their larger rhetoric, these references may not indicate the actual presence of Jews in the late fourth-century Constantinopolitan competitive landscape. Nonetheless, we should allow for the likelihood that there was a visible contingent of Jews in the city.

As I suggest in my discussion of the Sabbatians in the previous chapter, the relationship of Jews to the rituals of the city may have been complicated, and the same questions about engagement in civic religion should be asked of other non-Theodosian groups during the late fourth century. This is certainly a vexed question for which we have no clear answer. Should these individuals refuse to attend the rituals of civic cult (e.g., the empress' and emperor's relic processions), their absence would surely have been conspicuous, at least among certain segments of the population—for example,

⁴⁸ Photios, *Bibliotheca* 59 (Bekker 19a) (§2.9 in Appendix C, J. N. D. Kelly 1995: 300).

⁴⁹ Sokrates, *Eccl. hist.* 5.16.9.

⁵⁰ Sozomen, *Eccl. hist.* 8.5.1.

⁵¹ Sokrates, *Eccl. hist.* 7.4.2–5, 7.5.1, 7.17.7–15; Proklos, *Homily* 2 (On the Incarnation), 9, *Homily* 4 (On the Nativity), 3.

members of the imperial court, high-ranking military officials, and individuals within the cultural élite, some of whom we know were not Christian or not Theodosian Christians. The most prominent example of such individuals is Themistios, a well-known traditionalist and urban prefect early in the reign of Theodosios I (in office, 383–384); examples from Arkadios’ reign include Gaïnas, the Arian Gothic army commander, and the urban prefect Optatos (in office, 404–405), reported by Sokrates to have been a traditionalist.⁵² Perhaps these individuals picked and chose their battles, and even saw themselves in the same position as Valentinian found himself at Julian’s sacrifice in Gaul—as observers, not participants. But where would one draw the line, and how would others perceive their attendance? To answer this question, we must consider the demands the highly performative atmosphere of civic life made upon the inhabitants of late antique cities.

Spectacle and the Performative Space of the Ancient City

Over the past forty years the performative environment of late antique civic life has been the object of extensive study.⁵³ Evident from these studies is how pervasive various forms of public entertainment, or spectacles, were in civic life and how integral these events were for forming a shared cultural identity. On a given day, the late antique

⁵² Sokrates, *Eccl. hist.* 6.18.19: “Ἑλλήν τὴν θρησκείαν ὑπάρχων καὶ διὰ τοῦτο Χριστιανούς μισῶν (“devoted to Greek rites and because of this a hater of Christians”; my translation).

⁵³ The foundational study for ancient spectacle remains Veyne 1976 (English translation, 1990). For more recent studies, see the collected articles in Bergmann and Kondoleon 1999; Maxwell 2006: 49–56; and the summary in Webb 2008: 24–43. For studies of Christian responses to spectacle and their own participation in an élite philosophical discourse about the dangers of spectacle, see Goldhill 2001: 154–94; Maxwell 2006: 51–54; and Webb 2008: 197–216. For John Chrysostom and the theater more particularly, see Leyerle 1993 and 2001; Cardman 2008; and Webb 2008: 175–90. For a diachronic study of the manifestations of *panegyris* (festival), see Vryonis 1981.

denizen could expect to encounter a wide variety of spectacle, from imperial processions, market festivals, theater productions, oratory, races, funerals, and weddings. Particularly important were the shows presented in the theaters and hippodromes under the patronage of local dignitaries, including the imperial family.⁵⁴ Mime and pantomime performances could be found nearly everywhere: on stage, in city streets, at fairs and festivals, in marketplaces, and at private houses.⁵⁵ Rhetors performed their declamations, often in the same venues as other performers. Various performers frequently competed for the same audiences, as is illustrated by Libanios' boast to have drawn crowds away from the races and theater.⁵⁶ Even a city's churches were places of entertainment, where people would congregate to listen to popular preachers.⁵⁷ This atmosphere has led Averil Cameron to characterize late antique cities as "theatrical and dramatic places," where "public life, church councils and theatrical displays alike had become spectator sports," and Ruth Webb to similarly describe the "flourishing festival culture" of eastern cities.⁵⁸

Constantinople's civic space, too, was a vast stage, where daily life involved contact with a variety of spectacles and demanded regular social interaction in the spaces

⁵⁴ Blake Leyerle (2001: 14) notes that in Rome one hundred seventy-seven days of the calendar were set aside for games by the fourth century. While we do not have comparable data for Constantinople, races and theater shows are frequently mentioned in the homilies of John Chrysostom and in the writings of the fifth-century Constantinopolitan historians.

⁵⁵ Webb 2008: 54.

⁵⁶ Libanios, *Autobiography* 37; discussed in Webb 2008: 27.

⁵⁷ Mayer 1997b, 1998a, and 2000b. See also the earlier comments on entertainment in Av. Cameron 1993a: 176. Among the churches associated with John Chrysostom's *synaxes* are the Great Church, the Apostoleion, the Anastasia, the church of the Goths, various *martyria* (e.g., in Drypia and another near the Adrianople Gate), Hagios Paulos, and Hagios Akakios, as well as the extra-urban churches dedicated to Ss. Peter and Paul (located across the Bosphorus), the Maccabean Martyrs (across the Golden Horn), and another unnamed martyrion outside the city walls.

⁵⁸ Av. Cameron 1993a: 174, 177; Webb 2008: 10.

created by their performances. John Chrysostom repeatedly comments on the popularity of public spectacles: the games in the hippodrome, the shouts of which he could hear from the bishop's residence; the processions of relics, which advanced across the streets and waterways of the city; the productions of drama and song staged in the theater; and the throngs who flocked to various Christian temples for litanies and petitions in times of distress.⁵⁹ Half a century later Sokrates and Sozomen refer to other spectacles that occurred during the reign of Arkadios and his son Theodosios II after him: the games and dances held at the statue of Eudoxia in the Augusteion; occasions when Theodosios II led the city in litanies of supplication or thanksgiving (at times interrupting the games in the Hippodrome that the emperor and the city's population were attending); and the empress Pulcheria's public celebration marking the recovery of the relics of the Forty Martyrs of Sebasteia.⁶⁰

To these occasions we can add other public ritualized events. Later sources attest to the annual celebration of the city's *genethlion* (the anniversary of foundation) on May 11, an event that involved processing the city's Tyche to the Forum of Constantine, followed by races in the hippodrome.⁶¹ Averil Cameron and Judith Herrin persuasively argue that these attestations likely report a ritual dating to the fourth century, and I think it highly unlikely that the anniversary of such an important event would have been abandoned during the fifth century, especially when members of the Theodosian dynasty

⁵⁹ References are scattered throughout John Chrysostom's homilies; see especially *Against the Games and Theaters* (PG 56.263–270) and *After the Remains of the Martyrs* (PG. 63.467–72).

⁶⁰ Sozomen, *Eccl. hist.* 8.8; 9.2.

⁶¹ The celebration of the *genethlion* is an interesting case. The first mention of the festival is a mention in the sixth-century chronicle of John Malalas (*Chron.* 13.8). See also *Chron. Pasch.* 330 8 (seventh century); *Parastaseis* 38, 56 (eighth century); *Book of Ceremonies* 1.63, 1.70, 2.52 (tenth century).

were so quick to stress their ties to Constantine.⁶² Arkadios, unlike his predecessors, no longer moved his court to other imperial cities; still, his departures and arrivals in the city would provide occasions of great pomp. Similarly, the arrival of other dignitaries, for example bishops visiting the city from other locations, would frequently draw crowds who received them with songs and processions.⁶³ The installation of an imperial bishop was also a spectacle that drew excited crowds, as we see in an anonymous account of John Chrysostom's own installation on February 26, 398:

When the Sunday came, rumor racing around the ears of all announced what had happened, and a longing...drove those who heard into the church, and all ages and both sexes ran sparing nothing, with no heed of physical shame, bodily weakness, of tearing their clothing, of losing money, things that normally occur in a crowd as it surges forward...At that moment, if the great shout [that went up] was only from human beings, one would have said that all had exceeded their human nature...for the consecration had already been completed, but the acclamations did not cease. Even the [emperor] (for he happened to be inside confirming the decision) was so overwhelmed by the shouts themselves and the multitude of those shouting that he showed his astonishment by his stance, his expression, and his look.⁶⁴

To these events, I also add other similarly public events that we might not immediately think of as entertainment, but shared these performative and highly public characteristics.

⁶² See discussion in Av. Cameron and Herrin 1984: 35–36, 215–17, 242–43.

⁶³ See, for example, the crowd that greeted of Theophilos of Alexander with acclamation and song, described in the *Funerary Speech for John Chrysostom* 39 and Palladios, *Dialogue* 8.36–42. Sokrates and Sozomen identify these individuals as Alexandrian sailors; see Sokrates, *Eccl. hist.* 6.15.11 and Sozomen, *Eccl. hist.* 8.17.1.

⁶⁴ *Funerary Speech for John Chrysostom* 16: Ὡς οὖν ἦκεν ἡ κυρία, ἡ φήμη μὲν διαδραμοῦσα τὰς ἀπάντων ἀκοὰς τὸ πρᾶγμα ἐμήνυσεν, ὁ πόθος δὲ...ἐπὶ τὴν ἐκκλησίαν τοὺς ἀκούοντας συνώθει, πᾶσά τε ἡλικία καὶ γένος ἐκάτερον ἔτρεχε φειδόμενοι οὐδενός, οὐκ αἰδοῦς φύσεως, οὐκ ἀσθενείας σώματος, οὐκ ἐσθῆτος διαρρηγνυμένης, οὐ χρυσίων ἀπολλυμένων, οἷα φιλεῖ γίνεσθαι ἐν συρρέοντι δῆμῳ...τότε εἰ μὲν ἀνθρώπων μόνον ἦν ἡ τηλικαύτη βοή, φαίην ἂν ἅπαντας ἐκβεβηκέναι τῆς φύσεως...καὶ γὰρ ἡ χειροτονία μὲν ἤδη τετέλεστο, ἡ βοή δὲ οὐκ ἔληγε. καὶ αὐτὸν δὲ τὸν τὴν ἀλουργίδα φοροῦντα καὶ τὸ διάδημα περικείμενον—καὶ γὰρ ἔτυχεν ἔνδον ὦν καὶ συναινῶν τῇ ψήφῳ—οὕτως αἱ βοαὶ τε αὐταὶ καὶ τῶν βοώντων τὸ πλήθος ἐξέπληξεν, ὥστε τὸ θαῦμα μηνύειν καὶ στάσει καὶ χαρᾷ καὶ βλέμματι. (Trans. Barnes and Bevan 2013.)

For example, John Chrysostom describes the recent funeral of a magistrate killed in an accident in the hippodrome. Bands of women lamented the young man as his body was processed through the marketplace, a procession Chrysostom contrasts with the wedding procession that the young man, his bride, and the people of the city should have been celebrating.⁶⁵ Indeed, weddings would certainly have provided similar spectacle, filling the city with smells, music, and noise.

Important here is the imposing nature of ritual life in Constantinople in terms of sensory imposition: these events overwhelmed the public spaces with sights, sounds, smells, movement, and the presence of human bodies. It is easy to think that temples or churches were the primary locations for a city's religious life, and while it is certainly true that the city's churches were significant loci for ritual actions, these locations were by no means the sole venues for ritual action. A significant portion of religious life occurred in public space, whereby it was potentially accessible to a large percentage of the city's population. John Chrysostom himself references a number of occasions when the ritual life of the city spilled into the public spaces, including the Forum of Constantine, the Augusteion, the Mese, and even the waters of the Golden Horn. In his homily on St. Phokas, for instance, Chrysostom describes the ritual space occupied by the people of the city:

Yesterday our city was magnificent, magnificent and renowned, not because it has columns, but because a martyr was in our midst, ceremoniously conveyed to us from Pontus...Did you see him as he was escorted through the market place? See him sailing across the sea as well...Let no one keep away from this holy festival. Let no virgin remain at home, let no married woman stick to the house. Let's empty the city, and set course for the martyr's tomb. After all, the imperial couple, too, are joining with us in the festivities...Let's again make of the sea a church by

⁶⁵ John Chrysostom, *On My Father's Working Still* (PG 63.512).

going out there with torches, both getting the fire wet and setting the water on fire.⁶⁶

In describing a procession to Drypia, a suburb to the west of Constantinople, Chrysostom recalls crowds so thick that the pavement could not be seen.⁶⁷ Elsewhere, he mentions crowds pushing towards the “places of the apostles” in the city and crossing the sea to a martyrion for Peter and Paul.⁶⁸ On yet another occasion, he recounts the supplicatory processions that purified Constantinople after a recent earthquake.⁶⁹ Through these ritual actions, Chrysostom explains, the people had made the city a church and sanctified the streets with their feet and the air with their psalms. Not only did the processions and litanies transform the city, but they also transformed their participants as the melodies of the psalms had entered their souls and corrected their impiety and passions.⁷⁰

In sum, communal religious rituals, like other spectacles, were accessible to their audiences and invited participation; they called to the spectator and pulled him into their drama. The patterns of cult activity in late antique Constantinople were not confined to

⁶⁶ John Chrysostom, *On the Holy Martyr Phokas*, 1–3: Λαμπρὰ γέγονεν ἡμῖν χθὲς ἡ πόλις, λαμπρὰ καὶ περιφανὴς, οὐκ ἐπειδὴ κίονας εἶχεν, ἀλλ’ ἐπειδὴ μάρτυρα πομπεύοντα ἀπὸ Πόντου πρὸς ἡμᾶς παραγενόμενον...Εἶδες αὐτὸν διὰ τῆς ἀγορᾶς ἀγόμενον; βλέπε αὐτὸν καὶ διὰ τοῦ πελάγους πλέοντα...Μηδεὶς ἀπολιμπανέσθω τῆς ἱερᾶς ταύτης πανηγύρεως· μὴ παρθένος οἴκοι μενέτω, μὴ γυνὴ τὴν οἰκίαν κατεχέτω, κενώσωμεν τὴν πόλιν, καὶ πρὸς τὸν τάφον τοῦ μάρτυρος μεθορμίσωμεν· καὶ γὰρ καὶ βασιλεῖς κοινῇ μεθ’ ἡμῶν χορεύουσι...Ποιήσωμεν πάλιν τὴν θάλατταν ἐκκλησίαν μετὰ λαμπάδων ἐξιόντες ἐκεῖσε, καὶ τὸ πῦρ ἐνυγραίοντες, καὶ τὸ ὕδωρ ἐμπιπλῶντες πυρός. (Trans. Mayer 2006.)

⁶⁷ John Chrysostom, *After the Remains of the Martyrs* (PG 63.470.40–49).

⁶⁸ John Chrysostom, *Against the Games and Theaters* (PG. 56.265).

⁶⁹ John Chrysostom, *After the Earthquake* (PG 50.713–16). The earthquake occurred in 398. Mayer maintains the homily’s authenticity; Mayer 2005: 27, 126.

⁷⁰ John Chrysostom, *After the Earthquake* (PG 50.714.18–21): Οὐδεὶς ἀσελγὴς, μᾶλλον δὲ καὶ εἴ τις ἀσελγὴς ἐστὶ μεταβάλλεται. Ἀκούει τῆς φωνῆς, καὶ μεταρρύθμιζεται ἡ διάνοια, εἰσέρχεται ἡ μελωδία, καὶ μεταβάλλεται ἡ ἀσέβεια, δραπετεύει τῆς πλεονεξίας τὰ πάθη.

the seemingly more structured space of a church and included events with a high degree of public exposure (e.g., processions, martyrs' festivals, public orations, litanies, vigils, and hymns). Consequently, late antique ritual was amenable to a wide range of ritual participation, from those who presided over ritual events (bishops, priests, magistrates), other ritual agents (the emperor and empress, monks, virgins, the city's élite), "lesser" participants (other laypeople, catechumens, perhaps even non-Christians actively participating in the event), and observers (other people in the city, Christian and non-Christian, who are witnessing, but not actively participating). In other words, an individual need not be Christian to participate; he or she only needed to be present. I would argue that religious actors like John Chrysostom recognized and took advantage of this fact in order to dictate the habits of individuals and shape their perceptions of authoritative civic cult. Therefore, in what follows I will consider how ritualized social action provided these individuals a tool by which they could shift others' perception of and participation in "official" civic religion.

Ritual Practice and Civic Formation

Scholars have noted how influential spectacles of these sorts were as cultural institutions in late antique cities. Spectacles were a means of forming collective civic identities: they formed a "popular school" that instilled cultural knowledge, informed social expectations, and provided the performative backdrop that shaped the late antique person's *habitus*.⁷¹ Here Catherine Bell's discussion of ritualization helps illuminate the social work performed through these communal actions. Like the "body techniques"

⁷¹ For the theater as a "popular school," see Leyerle 2001: 18. I expand her argument here to include the broader performative atmosphere of the city.

discussed by Mauss, ritual actions for Bell are iterative practices that train a body within a culturally specific ritual system. Through repeated engagement with the rituals of one's social environment—and of particular groups within that environment—the individual learns the social scripts of those actions. But this process is more than merely learning scripts, it is the internalization of those scripts in a way that produces a ritualized body.⁷²

“The specific strategies of ritualization,” Bell comments,

come together in the production of a ritualized social body, a body with the ability to deploy in the wider social context the schemes internalized in the ritualized environment. The ritualized body, therefore, is one that comes to possess, to various degrees, a cultural ‘sense of ritual.’⁷³

Through ritualization the individual develops a “sense of ritual,” that is, an acquired practical knowledge that allows the individual to recognize the culturally specific social scripts underlying ritual actions.⁷⁴ It is through ritualization that the body acquires a sense of ritual, and it is through the mastery of this sense of ritual that the body is able to interact with the surrounding environment.

As Bell argues, the ritualized agent recognizes collective action as ritual by the ways in which it utilizes, or cites, the patterns of behaviors associated with other events that have already been recognized as ritual. Thus the body participates with its

⁷² I borrow the concept of iterability, or citationality, from Jacques Derrida, who argues that a performative utterance can only be successful because it reiterates or cites previous speech-acts. Removed from the chain of previous and future events, a singular event has no meaning. See Derrida 1988: 17.

⁷³ Bell 1992: 107–08. Bell's discussion leaves open the possibility of failure or inadequacy in ritualization, resulting in a certain ineptness in an actor's participation in ritual events.

⁷⁴ Bell 1992: 80. Bell's idea of a socially acquired sense of ritual is essential to understanding ritualization as a universal phenomenon, even while accounting for local variations of ritual action. This distinction between the universal and the local is an important one, for Bell presents ritualization not as a universal description of human action, but as a framework within which to understand the possible strategies available to the social body within individual cultural settings.

environment in a process of mutual formation: the social environment shapes and is shaped by the body. Moreover, Bell argues, through this process of ritualization people internalize a wide range of meanings and social constructions, including social hierarchies. The body is not simply something that engages in ritual actions; it is a political field upon which the ritual system maps the dynamics of the system's power.⁷⁵ In this way ritualized actions are "the very production and negotiation of power relations."⁷⁶

If we apply Bell's observations to late fourth-century Constantinople, we can see that the late antique person, by engaging in ritualized activities, developed an intuitive understanding of what ritual was and what it was not, as well as the scripts that were available for communal actions—what parts the actors involved in these actions should play, what physical objects were utilized, and the stages on which, and even the times during which, ritual action should occur. These events also reproduced the hegemonic order by bringing the emperor, magistrates, bishops, and other civic leaders into contact with the general populace. Consequently civic rituals were essential for affirming a unified civic identity and providing the populace a forum in which to form and

⁷⁵ Bell combines Antonio Gramsci's notion of "hegemony" with Kenelm Burridge's notion of the "redemptive process" to account for the agency of the individual within the dynamics of ritualization. Hegemony, following Gramsci's formulation, is "a lived system of meanings, a more or less unified moral order, which is confirmed as nuanced in experience to construct a person's sense of reality and identity...a construal of power that is also, inevitably, a misconstrual since it is power as envisioned and encountered in very particular situations." Meanwhile, Burridge's notion of the redemptive process—that is "that process by which, in a given context of assumptions about power, persons 'attempt to discharge their obligations in relation to the moral imperatives of the community'"—accounts for the reproduction of power relations and the placement of individuals within those relations as well as the endeavor among those individuals to influence those relations in some way. Bell's synthesized notion of "redemptive hegemony," then, "suggests that human practice is characterized by relations of dominance and subjugation." Bell 1992: 83–84.

⁷⁶ Bell 1992: 196.

communicate a consensus, through acclamations and potentially through riots.⁷⁷ Within this environment, public religious rituals were not simply acts of worship; they, too, were forms of entertainment, just as crucial to civic life as the games in the hippodrome, theater performances, and rhetorical displays. Ritualized actions imposed meaning, moral order, and social maps upon the embodied person.

An important observation from Bell's work is that in order for a ritual event to "make sense" to its participants, it must follow previously established scripts, a phenomenon known as citationality.⁷⁸ This phenomenon is clearly observable in our evidence, as late antique society relied on a set of social scripts that constituted, informed, and enabled ritualized behaviors. A particularly illustrative example for Chrysostom's city is the citationality between imperial processions and relic processions. As an imperial city, processions involving the emperor, his family, and other imperial dignitaries were a prominent feature of Constantinopolitan life.

Unfortunately, we have very limited evidence from the fourth century regarding the precise routes taken by these processions. Our best evidence for processional activity actually dates several centuries later, in the *Typikon of the Great Church* and the *Book of Ceremonies*, both tenth-century texts of the city's ceremonial life.⁷⁹ As Cyril Mango rightly cautions, we cannot assume continuity between the directions about the actions

⁷⁷ Maxwell 2006: 56–60; Andrade 2010: 168.

⁷⁸ Bell 1992: 220. Bell herself does not refer this phenomenon as citationality; however her discussion about the ritual scripts corresponds well with Derrida's discussion of citation in Derrida 1977: 17–18; see also Hollywood 2002: 112–14.

⁷⁹ While both texts date to the tenth century, they incorporated earlier material, portions of which likely date as early as the sixth century. See Moffat and Tall 2012: xxv, xxvi.

and routes contained in their pages and the processions of earlier periods.⁸⁰ Nonetheless, the testimony from these sources provides us with plausible permutations for the imperial processional routes of the city.⁸¹ The *Book of Ceremonies*, for instance, outlines the principal routes utilized for the imperial *adventus* (arrival) and triumphal processions (see FIGURE 2). The first of these began at the Hebdomon, located outside the city walls along the Via Egnatia. From there, the emperor would enter the city through the Golden Gate and approach the Hippodrome via the Mese. The second route accommodated the emperor's arrival by sea. This route began at the Strategeion and proceeded southward to the Hippodrome.⁸² A third route recorded in the *Book of Ceremonies* modified the first route by entering the city at the Adrianople Gate in order to include the Apostoleion on the processional itinerary.⁸³ Each of these routes had incorporated the city's more prominent imperial landmarks (e.g., the imperial fora, the Senate-house, the Capitolium, the hippodrome, the Stoa Basilika, Hagia Eirene, Hagia Sophia, etc.).

Because Constantinople was constructed as a stage for the performance of imperial ceremony, it is entirely logical that the same spaces that hosted late antique processions continued to accommodate similar performances during the tenth century, allowing for changes in routes due to urban development during the intervening centuries.

⁸⁰ Mango 2000: 179; cf. Mayer 1998b: 460, 465.

⁸¹ See discussion in C. Mango 2000: 179 and plate 2 therein.

⁸² *Book of Ceremonies* Appendix to Book 1.495–98 (Haldon C665–713). Cf. C. Mango 1986: 118; Mayer 1998b: 465–67.

⁸³ Apparently, this route was utilized by Justinian specifically so he could visit the tomb of his deceased wife, located at the Apostoleion. See C. Mango 2000: 174.

But more importantly, the routes that would have provided the most suitable space for the performance of imperial processions would also have provided the space for large-scale religious processions. During the second half of the fourth century a number of relic processions had occurred. While the locations of the martyria where these relics were deposited were sometimes different, the processions followed the same general scripts in terms of social placements and ritual actors. Moreover, these ritual actions cited the processions of non-Christian/pre-Christian festivals, imperial ceremony, and elite funerals. We know, for instance, that the emperor Arkadios and empress Eudoxia played prominent roles in these processions, and the imagery and language used to describe the *adventus* of a relic to the city mirrors that used to describe the *adventus* of an emperor.⁸⁴

Additionally, we have hints that the routes of the relic processions coincide with the routes reported for later imperial procession. On several occasions, Chrysostom refers to the processions that crossed the Golden Horn or the Bosphorus by boat in order to bring relics, imported primarily from Palestine, into the city or to take people from the city to martyria in the transmarine suburbs. The multi-day festival for the installation of relics at the martyrion in Drypia appears to have utilized several processional routes, as the relics were initially processed across the Golden Horn and to the Great Church, where they were installed for a time before being escorted to Drypia, which lay several kilometers outside the city to the West. The most logical routes for both processions would be roughly the same as those recorded in the *Book of Ceremonies*, the first from one of the harbors on the north shore passing by the Strategeion towards the Great

⁸⁴ See, for example, John Chrysostom, *After the Remains of the Martyrs* 1 (63.469.3–17), *In the Presence of the Emperor* 1 (PG 63.473.9–33), *On Saint Phokas* 1, 3 (PG 50.699.5–23, 700.20–37).

Church, and the second from the Great Church following the Mese to the Golden Gate,⁸⁵ through the Hebdomon, and further along the Via Egnatia to Drypia.⁸⁶

Although ritual actions had to incorporate a constellation of expected elements, at the same time they could produce new meaning by changing other elements (meanings, directions, etc.).⁸⁷ Individual rituals repackaged particular referents, as the relic procession to Drypia does in several ways: in the processional route's direction (east to west rather than the reverse), in procession's temporal occurrence (during the night rather than the day), in the mode of empress' egress (walking rather than riding), and in the emperor's and his army's accouterments (without the symbols of military force in contrast to a triumphal procession). While such activity has often been presented as analogous or adjacent performances, they were an integral part of the same complex of social action that contributed to the ritualization of the late antique person. Indeed, I would argue that Christian public ritual performances—the processions, the vigils, the hymns, and if we extend the model, the sermons—were efficacious precisely because they referenced these previously established scripts.

⁸⁵ Or the region where the Golden Gate would later stand, since it is uncertain whether the Gate had been completed by this time. As C. Mango notes, the earliest attestation for the Gate is the *Notitia Urbis Constantinopolitanae* (ca. 412/3–427); C. Mango 2000: 175.

⁸⁶ I remind the reader once more that this testimony cannot be taken to assert direct continuity over five centuries.

⁸⁷ Bell 1992: 220. Jacques Derrida argues that a performative utterance can only make sense in relation to previous events. While Derrida confines himself to performative language in this discussion, his comments about citationality can also apply to performative action, as Amy Hollywood elaborates. Placing Derrida in conversation with Pierre Bourdieu, Catherine Bell, and Judith Butler, Hollywood argues that rituals are performative acts also governed by citationality: they only make sense when they cite prior social action. See Derrida 1998: 17–18; Hollywood 2002: 108–114; see also Bourdieu 1977: 78–79; Bell 1992: 81, 98–101.

Shifting Religious Identifications

As I discussed in the preceding chapter, late antique authors, Christian and non-Christian alike, were invested in constructing a sense of groupness and boundaries between groups. The fact that these boundaries were so fiercely guarded in polemic hints at the anxiety among these authors over their permeability.⁸⁸ Neither the authors cited at the beginning of this chapter nor John Chrysostom made allowances for ambiguous religious boundaries or for individuals to participate in the ritual practices of various groups. Part of the goal of these authors in formulating such radical difference between the rituals of their own groups and the rituals of others was to construct and to maintain these boundaries. For these authors, religious identity was a zero-sum game—there could be no “both-and” for these agents, only “either-or.” Violence and the transmission of memories of violence was one way to construct and preserve those boundaries. Ritual performances, as embodied social actions, provided one more avenue for producing and solidifying group boundaries.

As we have seen, late antique ritual actions cited other ritual actions, including those of competing religious groups. The loci for citationality would have been precisely those features that invited confusion between modes of different groups: the physical spaces and times in which ritual action occurred, their actors (especially those seen to have prominent roles in leading or supporting ritual), codes of dress and behavior, sequences of movement, modes of speech and musicality (that is, ritual formulae,

⁸⁸ In addition to the work of Judith Lieu, Daniel Boyarin, and Éric Rebillard, discussed above in Chapter 3 (pp. 95–97), I point the reader especially to Sandwell 2007: 63–119, in which she examines both John Chrysostom’s and Libanios’ boundary-constructing activities in Antioch. See also Av. Cameron 1991: esp. 122; North 1992: 174–93; Iricinschi and Zellentin 2008: 1–21; Sandwell 2012: 523–42; and the bibliographic essay in Gwynn 2010: 15–132.

homilies, song, musical accompaniment), and the material objects utilized for the ritual performance. It is consequently unsurprising that public rituals became flashpoints for inter- (and even intra-)group violence. We saw this repeatedly in accounts about fourth-century conflicts: riots erupted during the installation of Makedonios; opponents stoned Gregory of Nazianzos while he celebrated the Easter vigil; and panic erupted during the illicit Sabbatian Pascha. Similar incidents of violence at public rituals are reported for John Chrysostom's tenure in Constantinople, including the stoning of the empress' eunuch at a vigil procession, the forceful seizure of the city's churches shortly before the Paschal vigil, and the attack on women during a baptismal liturgy.⁸⁹

Ritual events were dangerous because the observer could quickly become a participant. A moment when we can see both the danger of this confusion and space it created for competition is in John Chrysostom's inauguration of vigil processions in Constantinople.⁹⁰ According to Sokrates, on the evenings before festival days the Arianizers would gather at the stoas located immediately within the city's gates, where they sang hymns throughout the night. In the morning, the Arianizers would continue singing as they processed through the city before returning to their church on the other side of the city walls.⁹¹ Chrysostom found the arrangement untenable, as it afforded a

⁸⁹ **Stoning:** Sokrates, *Eccl. hist.* 6.8; Sozomen, *Eccl. hist.* 8.8. **Seizure of churches:** *Funerary Speech for John Chrysostom* 91; **Attack at baptism:** Palladios, *Dialogue* 9.189–207; *Funerary Speech for John Chrysostom* 93; Sozomen, *Eccl. hist.* 8.21.1–3. The latter two incidents are actually connected. The emperor ordered the seizure of the churches shortly before the Paschal vigil began so that those attending would be forced to receive communion from (and thus acknowledge) the emperor's newly installed clergy. A segment of the population then removed themselves from the city to avoid just this event, and reassembled outside the walls to conduct the baptismal liturgy, which was subsequently attacked.

⁹⁰ Sokrates refers to these individuals as Arianizers (οἱ Ἀρειανίζοντες), a title I will retain here because of its connotations of actively engaging in a particular identification.

⁹¹ Sokrates, *Eccl. hist.* 6.8.1–3; Sozomen, *Eccl. hist.* 8.8.1–2.

competing group a repetitive and influential means of drawing individuals, no matter their supposed religious commitments, into their performances. Concerned that those who witnessed (and probably engaged in) the vigils were internalizing the doctrines communicated by the hymns of the Arianizers and thus shaping their bodies into heretical bodies, Chrysostom enlisted “his own people” (ἀντιτίθησιν αὐτοῖς τοὺς τοῦ ἰδίου λαοῦ) to perform their own vigil processions.⁹² It was not long before the competing vigils led to a direct confrontation between the two groups. One of the Arianizers struck the empress’ eunuch Briso on the forehead with a stone during Chrysostom’s vigil, and several people from both groups died in the ensuing riot. In response Arkadios banned the Arians from engaging in any further public ritual action.⁹³

As with so many other spectacles, an essential dynamic here is the high degree of accessibility the Arianizers’ ritual performances commanded. Within an environment that presumed that people would engage in any event that occurred in the public stage, the rituals of the Arianizers had the real potential to encourage the people of Constantinople to internalize what Chrysostom considered to be heretical doctrines.⁹⁴ In Chrysostom’s eyes, the people’s unwitting participation in the rituals of the Arianizers could give those clergy leverage within the city’s cult structures and thus provide an avenue to regain imperial patronage.

⁹² Sokrates, *Eccl. hist.* 6.8.4.

⁹³ Sokrates, *Eccl. hist.* 6.8.7–9; Sozomen, *Eccl. hist.* 8.8.5.

⁹⁴ Among the hymns sung in procession was an insulting hymn whose response directly challenged the homoousians (“Where are those who say the Three are one Power?”). Sokrates, *Eccl. hist.* 6.8.4: Ποῦ εἰσὶν οἱ λέγοντες τὰ τρία μίαν δύναμιν; Sozomen (*Eccl. hist.* 8.8.2) reports the same refrain. Remember, for Chrysostom song was a particularly insidious form of spectacle, both for the way it provided enticing entertainment and for the way it made a lasting impression upon the soul.

To the casual observer, the vigils of both the Arianizers and John Chrysostom would have looked the same. They occurred at the same time, in the same physical spaces, using the same ritual actions. They may even have appeared to be the same event. According to Sokrates, the potential confusion between these rituals enticed the people away from the rituals of the imperial church, thus threatening to shift their cultic engagement and identifications. Chrysostom's counter-vigils were effective, partly because his agents were able to put on a more impressive display with the aid of the empress, who donated silver crosses and wax-tapers and provided her endorsement in the presence of her eunuch Briso.⁹⁵ Chrysostom was able to provide a greater spectacle, with a clear endorsement from the imperial family to attract the people to his procession.

However, the real success here was not in persuading people that John Chrysostom's vigils were more ornate or orthodox; rather it was in the final elimination of the Arianizers' rituals from the civic space without disrupting the larger established patterns of ritual life. Chrysostom's vigils utilized similarities in time, place, and action with those of the Arianizers, to create a confusion that enabled its agents, under Chrysostom's direction, to create difference and shift theological commitments. For the common person, however, these shifts may have had less to do with theological commitment and depended more on the popularity of the bishop, the appeal of the performance, and ultimately the elimination of competing performances. By providing counter-vigils in the same space as his competitors Chrysostom was breaking apart a model of ritual engagement in which people participated in the rituals around them because they saw it as part of civic life. Put simply, Chrysostom complicated the natural

⁹⁵ Sokrates, *Eccl. hist.* 6.8.5–6; Sozomen, *Eccl. hist.* 8.8.4.

systems of ritual engagement by constructing that engagement as a *choice*, even if that choice was in practice limited by other factors.

There is a further layer to Sokrates' account, beyond the ritual redirection that the historian attributes to Chrysostom that is worth noting. Sokrates himself performs a shift that distinguishes between and imposes particular meanings upon the ritual actions of the competing groups:

Those who Arianized (οἱ Ἀρειανίζοντες) made their assemblies (τὰς συναγωγὰς) outside the city. Whenever the weekly feasts (I mean the Sabbath and the Lord's day) arrived, on which the synaxes customarily occur in the churches (κατὰ τὰς ἐκκλησίας), they crowded within the gates of the city around the stoas and sang antiphonal odes composed (συντιθέντες) for Arian teachings...John was anxious lest some of the simpler individuals might be drawn away from the church by these songs (ψδῶν) and set (ἀντιτίθην) those of his own people in opposition to them, so that devoting themselves to nocturnal hymns (ὕμνολογίας), they obscured the zeal of [the Arianizers] and made their houses firm in regards to their faith.⁹⁶

The shifts in meaning here are subtle and operate on multiple levels. Even as Sokrates highlights the confusion between the two actions, he constructs a break between the competing rituals through the vocabulary he uses for each group. The Arianizers, in direct contrast to Chrysostom's group, had assemblies (literally, synagogues), not churches; they sang odes, not hymns.⁹⁷ Sokrates' language here identifies the Arianizers—both those of Chrysostom's day and any still present in Constantinople in the

⁹⁶ Sokrates, *Eccl. hist.* 6.8.1–4: Οἱ Ἀρειανίζοντες...ἔξω τῆς πόλεως τὰς συναγωγὰς ἐποιοῦντο. Ἡνίκα οὖν ἐκάστης ἐβδομάδος αἱ ἐορταὶ κατελάμβανον, φημὶ δὴ τό τε σάββατον καὶ ἡ κυριακή, ἐν αἷς αἱ συνάξεις κατὰ τὰς ἐκκλησίας εἰώθασιν γίνεσθαι, αὐτοὶ ἐντὸς τῶν τῆς πόλεως πυλῶν περὶ τὰς στοὰς ἀθροιζόμενοι καὶ ψδὰς ἀντιφώνους πρὸς τὴν Ἀρειανὴν δόξαν συντιθέντες ᾗδον...τότε δὴ {καὶ} Ἰωάννης εὐλαβηθεὶς, μή τις τῶν ἀπλουστέρων ὑπὸ τῶν τοιούτων ψδῶν ἀφελκυσθῇ τῆς ἐκκλησίας, ἀντιτίθην αὐτοῖς τοὺς τοῦ ἰδίου λαοῦ, ὅπως ἂν καὶ αὐτοὶ ταῖς νυκτεριναῖς ὕμνολογαῖς σχολάζοντες ἀμαυρώσωσι μὲν τὴν ἐκείνων περὶ τούτου σπουδὴν, βεβαίους δὲ τοὺς οἰκείους πρὸς τὴν ἑαυτῶν πίστιν ἐργάσωνται. (My translation.)

⁹⁷ Note also Sokrates' distinction between the odes contrived (συντιθέντες) for Arian teachings and those composed to counter those teachings (ἀντιτίθην).

mid-fifth century when Sokrates was writing—with Jews. Arians were far outside the imperial church; they were not even Christians. Their rituals were dangerous, because they seduced the unwary away from the church and transformed them into heretics—or worse.

In addition to these linguistic differences, the vigils break from each other in regards to violence. Chrysostom's appropriation of his competitors' ritual performance could be interpreted as an act of violence, but it is the Arianizers who responded with physical violence by assaulting Chrysostom's vigils. For Sokrates, it was this physical violence of the Arianizers that made the rupture with the accepted scripts visible, and the result was the imperial censure of their vigils and their replacement with Chrysostom's "innovation." Chrysostom had successfully harnessed (and perhaps had engineered) the violence of the night to construct social boundaries, and blame for this violence had been successfully shifted to his victims. The performance generated a firm boundary for religious groups allowed within the walls of the city. The Arianizers had lost.

While Sokrates' account is primarily directed toward a reading public, I would argue that homiletic activity must have had a similar, but far more immediate and penetrating force, for it was through the homily that new interpretive frameworks could be provided for participants within the very context of the ritual activity that housed these frameworks. One notable example of this type of interpretative imposition is the previously mentioned homily delivered by Chrysostom after the earthquake of 398. According to Chrysostom these supplicatory processions had transformed the social order of the city. The houses and marketplaces, where once people had engaged in "satanic symposia," were now pure. The streets, where once could be heard young men singing

the songs of the theater, now resounded with the purity of the psalms and hymns. The song of the people had silenced the anger of God, and the prayers of the poor had created a new foundation so that the city no longer shook from the sins of its rulers.⁹⁸ Similarly, in his homilies for the translation of relics to Drypia (ca. 400–402), Chrysostom constructs a religious significance, in Christian terms, for the movement the civic body had recently performed as it traveled through the Constantinopolitan landscape from the Great Church to the martyrion. During this procession, the bishop describes the empress' careful footsteps as imitating David's dancing as he returned the ark to Jerusalem.⁹⁹ The city itself had become a sea of fire ignited by desire for the martyrs.¹⁰⁰ Constantinople was now a Christian city, a city with no room or desire for other gods or for heretical doctrines.

Again theories of performance can help us to see more clearly how these ritualized communal actions in late antique Constantinople would have contributed to shifts in religious identification. Richard McCall has argued that ritual can broadcast ideologies by serving as a form of metacommunication that asks its participants to “agree” to a shift in reality. This is because ritual creates a social drama within a frame marked off from everyday life. The frames of this drama provide a space for “playing” a role that encourages, even demands, the participants to agree to the meanings communicated through the performance. For McCall these shifts are relatively straightforward, particularly in terms of the levels and modes of participation: a celebrant (or celebrants)

⁹⁸ John Chrysostom, *After the Earthquake* (PG 50.715–16).

⁹⁹ John Chrysostom, *After the Remains of the Martyrs* 1 (PG 63.469.7–10, 18–24).

¹⁰⁰ John Chrysostom, *After the Remains of the Martyrs* 2 (PG 63.470.10–22).

leads the performance, while the audience passively agrees to these shifts in reality within relatively defined frames. McCall's model presumes a high degree of agency and intentionality in an individual's choice to participate in a ritual or similar performance, in so far as the celebrants and attendant worshippers choose (or at least appear to choose) to be present for a performance that occurs in a clearly bounded space and time. McCall's observations are important: participation presents the appearance of an individual's assent to the structures and meanings communicated through ritualized action, but it also conditions the individual to accept those structures as natural.

There is, however, an important caveat that must be applied to McCall's observation. Actual practice is never so neat, and perhaps even less well defined for religious events in late antiquity.¹⁰¹ As Bell argues, ritualized social actions carry within them the ideologies of the dominant class(es), and are thus instrumental for conveying those ideologies to other social classes.¹⁰² The ritualization of the person, then, allows the ritual system to present itself as a consistent and unified whole, all the while masking the constant re-creation of that system to fit the community. This can create the illusion that an individual actor agrees to the meanings communicated through the ritual action. It is my contention that this illusion is the pivotal element of communal ritual action that enables the large-scale shifts in ritual identification of the sort that we observe in fourth-

¹⁰¹ See McCall 2007: 24–27, 54–55. The processes whereby ritual enabled shifts in religious identification also lead to a further consideration, namely the problem of the intentionality of those engaged in ritual activity. Because performance is suggestive of theater and drama with implications of falsity, play, and illusion, one of the critiques that has been raised regarding the use of performance and performativity for the study of ritual is whether its actors also demonstrate dissimulation. By framing my investigation here in terms of performance, performative acts, and performativity, I do not mean to imply that the actors involved in these actions do so with this sense of intentionality. See comments countering this notion of illusion in ritual action in McCall 2007: 43–45.

¹⁰² Bell 1992: 190–191.

century Constantinople. Participation—even if only as a witness, rather than active participants—communicates *implied consent* on the part of an individual to others also engaging in that action. Consequently, the ritual action, and the group to which it is attached, becomes more persuasive and authoritative to those who witness it. However, this illusion of consent also provides space for *resistance* as the individual can reinterpret the significations of the action and the individual's place in the social group.¹⁰³ In more extreme cases, individuals can refuse to participate in events, providing a mechanism to create rupture with social scripts, sometimes with violent repercussions, as I believe underlies the actions, reactions, and interactions of the competing vigils described by Sokrates.¹⁰⁴

The illusion of consent to the meanings communicated through ritual action greatly concerned late antique authors. Some Christian authors asserted that a person had to assent to a ritual action for it to have an impact upon the individual. It is for this reason that Valentinian's presence at the sacrifice performed by Julian was not problematic to Sozomen. His presence did not indicate his participation in traditional cult ritual. He was merely a bystander, not a worshipper. But, remember—Valentinian's presence was only unproblematic to a point. Once the drops of water had fallen upon his tunic, Valentinian was marked as a participant, and it was imperative that he remove himself from the ritual by destroying the object that had drawn him into the ritual. These same concerns appear throughout the literature I have been examining here. The soldiers became idolaters by simply offering a pinch of incense to the image of the emperor, and the bodies of

¹⁰³ Bell 1992: 207–09.

¹⁰⁴ Bell does not address the possibility of violence in resistance.

theatergoers were transformed through the sights and sounds that assault them. Participation was a bodily act, and it changed the body.

This distinction is immensely important. Even if an individual participated unwillingly or unaware of the object of a ritual(ized) act (i.e., toward which deity the ritual was directed), those changes would still occur. Consequently refusal to assent must also be performed bodily. Again, we see this repeatedly: Valentinian destroyed his tunic; the soldiers in Antioch ran through the city with loud protests before casting their gold in Julian's face; Chrysostom demanded that his audience physically remove themselves from the ritualized actions of the theater.

In light of these dynamics, it seems to me that multiple layers of intentionality could have been embedded in the performance of a single ritual event, and it is here that we can begin to consider both the layers of participation and the performative work that ritual does. Certain actors, like John Chrysostom, were undoubtedly highly aware of and intentional about the actions being undertaken. Other actors were certainly less so, and many would have participated without any critical reflection, but still with a sense that these acts of worship belonged to one group rather than another. Some, say an urban prefect who identified with traditional cult, would have participated with some resistance, for his presence at civic ritual would be expected of his office. For still others, the ritual event was entertainment, something to join simply because it is occurring in front of them. Whatever the case, though, an individual's participation in ritualized social action—and here, I include the broad range of social performances of late antique civic life, from street performances to Christian processions—did not necessarily indicate an active agreement with the meanings constructed through those events. However, it did create the

appearance of such agreement, even if an individual was resistant to these actions. Between his articulation of the proper Christian education, his homiletic instruction, and his ritual direction, there can be little question that Chrysostom understood how important the performance of social actions were as a mechanism for shaping civic religion. This suggests a level of intention behind Chrysostom's efforts to change the behaviors of those around him.

A few final examples illustrate how these same processes might have worked in other stages of Constantinople's development. To return to the accounts of Julian's trickery from the beginning of this chapter, it would seem that Julian expected to make this habituation toward ritual work to his advantage. Indeed this is precisely how Sozomen describes the emperor's scheme. Julian had hoped to restore the gods by naturalizing their veneration within the generally acceptable ritual context of honoring the image of the reigning emperor.¹⁰⁵ According to Sozomen, Theodosios I similarly recognized the value of ritual habituation when he prevented access to traditional sites:

Since the emperor saw that the custom (τὴν συνήθειαν) of the past toward the ancestral worship still drew the people to their places of worship, when he began to reign he hindered entry to them, and finally he destroyed many [places of worship]. And because they lacked the prayer-houses (εὐκτηρίων οἴκων), at that time they became accustomed (προσειθίσθησαν) to visit the churches. For it was not without risk even to sacrifice secretly according to Hellenic custom, but a law was established decreeing the destruction of life and property for those who dared to perform these sacrifices.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁵ Sozomen, *Eccl. hist.* 5.17.1–6. Sozomen's source is clearly Gregory of Nazianzos' polemic against Julian in *Oration* 4.

¹⁰⁶ Sozomen, *Eccl. hist.* 7.20.1–2: ἐπεὶ γὰρ εἶδεν ὁ βασιλεὺς τὴν συνήθειαν τοῦ παρελθόντος χρόνου ἔτι πρὸς τὸ πατρῷον σέβας καὶ τοὺς θρησκευομένους παρ' αὐτῶν τόπους ἔλκουσαν τὸ ὑπήκοον, ἀρξάμενος βασιλεύειν ἐκώλυσε τούτων ἐπιβαίνειν· τελευτῶν δὲ καὶ πολλοὺς καθεῖλεν. οἱ δὲ ἀπορία εὐκτηρίων οἴκων τῷ χρόνῳ προσειθίσθησαν ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις φοιτᾶν· οὐδὲ γὰρ οὐδὲ λάθρα θύειν Ἑλληνικῶς ἀκίνδυνον ἦν, ἀλλ' ἐν ἀφαιρέσει κεφαλῆς καὶ οὐσίας νόμος ἔκειτο κατὰ τῶν ταῦτα τολμώντων τὴν τιμωρίαν κυρῶν. (My translation.)

By removing the traditional temples as an option within the civic landscape, Theodosios I was able to redirect his people's impulses for communal ritual action towards Christ and his *sancti/ἅγιοι*. Sokrates relates a similar dynamic occurring in the late 420s when Nestorios convinced Theodosius II to deprive the Makedonians of their churches. Without spaces of their own in which to worship Christ, these individuals reluctantly began to worship at the churches under the control of the imperial bishop, an act he describes as “coming over to the church and agreeing to the homoousian faith.”¹⁰⁷ To these authors—and likely those sharing their city—these reluctant changes in worship patterns would appear, or be made to appear, to constitute consent to new religious identifications.¹⁰⁸

From this perspective, then, the various ritualized social actions that occurred in Constantinople and other late antique cities existed within a larger framework of ritualized behavior and social scripts. Recasting Christian rituals within their performative environment offers a model to consider how these processes may have been influential in shifting religious engagement for earlier periods in Constantinople's history for which we have less evidence. In light of these dynamics, I propose that shifts in religious identification in Constantinople occurred through ritual engagement in a succession of stages, while allowing for varying degrees of intentionality, commitment, and resistance on the part of individuals within the city. In the city's earliest decades

¹⁰⁷ Sokrates, *Eccl. hist.* 7.31.5: τινὲς δὲ αὐτῶν προσεχώρησαν τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ, τοῦ ὁμοουσίου τῇ πίστει συνθέμενοι. (My translation.)

¹⁰⁸ Compare efforts in Constantinople to deprive competitors of ritual space to Augustine's reliance on similar tactics to reconcile Donatists in North Africa.

these processes would have positioned Christianity within the realm of licit cult activity, and later as the primary, authorized vehicle for civic religion.¹⁰⁹ During the last quarter of the fourth century, these shifts in reality demanded agreement to Theodosian Christianity as the city's religion. In other words, the ritual system of late antique Constantinople, like other ritualized systems, was both dynamic and generative; public religious rituals participated with other social actions in ways that produced a space that both allowed for ruptures with older norms and naturalized new norms.

CONCLUSION

The inhabitants of late antique Constantinople, like inhabitants of other late antique cities, had been habituated into engaging with their ritual environments. Ritual events produced meaning because they followed the scripts previously established by these other events. Processions, hymns, vigils, homilies, and other public manifestations of Christian worship could have no meaning or effect in and of themselves. They only had signifying value as part of a chain of activity consisting of both prior and expected subsequent religious rituals. The citationality between ritualized actions—both religious rituals of competing groups and other social actions—explains how interested individuals could utilize ritual activities to shape public perception. It also explains why the stakes of public ritual were so high and why the infiltration of the ritual actions, space, and time of competing groups could escalate to physical violence. We can therefore think of religious ritual as a delicate dance between the ritual agent and the participant-audience, with a full

¹⁰⁹ See McCall 2007: 58.

range of possible responses to the creation and imposition of meaning, while recognizing that its improvisational nature was nonetheless bound by the rules of a script that was constantly pushed and stretched. Importantly, engagement in ritual actions did not demand reflective engagement on every level. In fact, ritual agents depended on a certain amount of complacency, for this would better create the illusion of consent and provide a more open field upon which agents could impose meanings and articulate their vision of the ideal Christian city.

A crucial component for shifting the interpretative frameworks embedded in these rituals was rhetoric. John Chrysostom had no qualms telling his audience what their ritual movements meant. We saw similar interpretive imposition in Eusebios' rhetoric about cult statues in Constantinople and the Apostoleion as well as in the rhetoric about violence during the formative years of the mid-fourth century. Rhetoric also occupied a key role in the formation of an imperial Christian identity during the first half of the fifth century, as we will see in the next chapter.

FIGURE 3: The Reign of Theodosios II

	<u>Western Provinces</u>	<u>Eastern Provinces</u>
401		April 10-birth of Theodosios II
402		January-elevation of Theodosios II
404		Expulsion of John Chrysostom; Death of Eudoxia
408	Stilicho marches East	Death of Arkadios; Theodosios II sole emperor in the East
410	Alaric sacks Rome	
415		Pulcheria declared Augusta
421		Marriage of Theodosios II and Athenais/Eudokia
422		Birth of Licinia Eudoxia
423	Death of Honorios; usurpation of John	
425	Elevation of Valentinian III; betrothal of Valentinian III and Licinia Eudoxia	
		Olympiodoros' <i>History</i>
426		Death of bishop Attikos; installation of Sisinnios
427		Death of bishop Sisinnios
428		Installation of Nestorios
ca. 429		Philostorgios' <i>Ecclesiastical History</i>
431		Council of Ephesus; deposal of Nestorios; installation of Maximianus
434		Death of Maximianus; installation of Proklos
437	Marriage of Valentinian III and Licinia Eudoxia	
438	Promulgation of the Theodosian Code	
446		Sokrates' <i>Ecclesiastical History</i>
448/9		Sozomen's <i>Ecclesiastical History</i>
449		Second Council of Ephesus
450		July 28-death of Theodosios II

CHAPTER 5

CONSTANTINOPLE AND THE PRODUCTION OF A CHRISTIAN CULTURAL IDENTITY UNDER THEODOSIOS II

In Chapters 2 and 3, I examined the transformation of Constantinople's religious landscape, first through Christian interpretations of that landscape and then through the politics of memory. In Chapter 4, I argued that the performance of Christian ritual within the landscape contributed to the identification of imperial religion with Nicene Christianity under Arkadios' bishop, John Chrysostom. In short, control of the ritual landscape, through memories of violence and ritual performance, contributed to the consolidation of normative civic cult in Constantinople under the rubric of Theodosian Christianity.

In 408 the emperor Arkadios died, leaving his seven-year-old son, Theodosios II, the sole Augustus in the East. Theodosios II's reign was to be the longest in late Roman history and witnessed one of the most transformative periods in the religious organization of the eastern half of the empire as the doctrinal commitments of the imperial church were asserted more vigorously and often by more coercive means. In this chapter, I explore these further developments. I begin with a brief history of Theodosios' life, in part to provide a rough chronological framework for the attempted homogenization of Christianity in Constantinople and its vicinity during the first half of the fifth century, but more so to highlight the rhetoric surrounding the emperor and raise important questions about Theodosios' agency in shaping the cultic framework of the city. The second half of

this chapter examines this rhetoric more closely in order to address these questions. A careful reading of the city's emerging historiography, coupled with evidence from the Theodosian Code, suggests that members of the imperial court—if not the emperor himself—were highly invested in regulating and conforming the religion of the empire to Theodosian Christianity, for which Constantinople served as a model. I argue that these moves were reflected upon and engaged with on various levels by authors writing in Constantinople during the second quarter of the fifth century, and that the rhetoric they produced about the piety of the emperor and his city focused on legitimizing the Theodosian project both in Constantinople and the empire.

THE REIGN OF THEODOSIOS II

An extensive amount of primary data survives from the reign of Theodosios II, most of which comes from the final two decades of his life.¹ The most substantial sources for this period include the Theodosian Code (compiled during the 430s), the *Acta* of the series of church councils that occurred during the last two decades of Theodosios' life (though not properly compiled until after his death, and then in a way that authorized the proceedings of Chalcedon), and a number of histories produced by Constantinopolitan authors (also roughly between 427 and 449).² On the one hand, this level of

¹ As Fergus Millar has noted, the last two decades of Theodosios' life have a greater degree of documentation, a fact that has significant ramifications for our access to the first three decades of Theodosios' life; Millar 2006:149.

² The histories written in Constantinople during the reign of Theodosios are those of Olympiodoros, Philostorgios, Sokrates, and Sozomen. On the preservation of the *Acta* through the lens of Chalcedon, see Millar 2007: 16, and his guide in Appendix A. The *Acta* have been compiled in Eduard Schwartz's *Acta Conciliorum Oecumenicorum* I (in 8 parts) and II. An English translation of selected documents can be found in Tanner 1990: 40–74. In addition to these sources, it is worth noting the survival of a papyrus containing a petition from Appion, a bishop from the Thebaid, to Theodosios. Also preserved

contemporaneous documentation provides an almost unparalleled degree of immediate access to a period of roughly twenty years as well as second-hand reports (however formed by rhetorical motives) for the thirty years prior. Of particular note during this period is the intense contestation over cultic definition, especially between bishops of Nicene parties, and imperial involvement in resolving these disputes.

Even so, Theodosios himself remains an illusory figure, for, like emperors before him, his life is constructed according to the dictates of a late antique rhetoric of legitimacy. The fullest picture of the emperor comes from encomia for Theodosios in the histories of Sokrates and Sozomen. Both authors were present in Constantinople during Theodosios' reign and wrote in the last decade of the emperor's life.³ Sokrates claims to have been a native of Constantinople, likely born sometime around 380, and received his education there.⁴ Sozomen was a native of Bethelia, near Gaza in Palestine and later lived in Constantinople.⁵ While there is little agreement on the precise dates of their works, it is fairly certain that Sozomen utilized Sokrates' history when composing his own. Teresa Urbainczyk dates Sokrates' history tentatively between 439 and 443 and Sozomen's composition sometime before 450. Peter Van Nuffelen dates Sokrates more precisely to

on the papyrus are traces of what may be Theodosios II's own hand, the only known example of a Roman emperor's handwriting. See Millar 2007: 22–3, 63–64, and figure III.

³ The most recent English-language study of Sokrates, in dialogue to a small degree with Sozomen is that of Teresa Urbainczyk (1997). Van Nuffelen's 2004 study (in French) is more thorough on both authors.

⁴ Sokrates, *Eccl. hist.* 5.24.9. The possible date of Sokrates' birth is based on his comments that with the accession of Arkadios he was narrating events that had occurred in his own lifetime (6.pref.6) and that he had studied under Ammonios and Helladios (5.16.9), who had relocated to Constantinople during the unrest in Alexandria in the early 390s. See Urbainczyk 1997: 15–16, 19.

⁵ Sozomen, *Eccl. hist.* 5.15.14–17. Because of Sozomen's dedication of the history to Theodosios, some scholars have speculated that Sozomen knew the emperor personally. At the very least, it is safe to assume that Sozomen had contact with the highest levels of Constantinopolitan society.

439/40, again with Sozomen sometime prior to 450. Meaghan McEvoy dates both authors later: Sokrates to ca. 446, Sozomen to ca. 448/9.⁶ The accounts of these two authors are joined by that of Philostorgios, another historian writing in Constantinople earlier in Theodosios' reign, approximately between 425 and 433.⁷

As I have discussed in Chapter 3, modern historians have often appropriated the details of these histories in order to mine data for the fourth and fifth centuries without critically engaging the rhetoric of power and legitimacy in which their authors participated. The same is true in reconstructing the life of Theodosios II. The resulting picture of Theodosios and his reign in modern historiography is generally one of an emperor who, while pious and committed to orthodoxy, was an ineffectual leader and a pawn in the machinations of other agents, particularly his forceful sister Pulcheria, his erudite wife Eudokia, and a succession of scheming Alexandrian bishops.⁸ As problematic as the accounts of the fifth-century historians can be for reconstructing Theodosios' life,

⁶ Urbainczyk 1997: 20; Van Nuffelen 2004: 10, 61; McEvoy 2013: 15. Alan Cameron also has proposed that Sozomen revised his work after the death of Theodosios in 450; Al. Cameron 1982: 265–66.

⁷ Little is known of Philostorgios himself, as his work survives only in fragments, preserved primarily in the *Biblioteca* of the ninth-century Constantinopolitan patriarch Photios. Philostorgios comments that he had met Eunomios in Constantinople before the bishop's exile in 383; Philostorgios, *Ecccl. hist.* 10.6. Phillip Amidon speculates that Philostorgios' composition of his history occurred shortly after the founding of a new university in Constantinople (425). The evidence for this timing is circumstantial, based as it is on its last recorded event, the installation of Valentinian III in 424. Amidon 2007: xix.

⁸ See for example, Kenneth Holum's characterization of Theodosios almost as a hostage (even "a man of principle but little will") in the disputes between the strong-willed Pulcheria and Eudokia and their client-bishops; see Holum 1982: esp. 147–174 (quotation from p. 173). A similar portrait of Theodosios' passivity lies behind Clyde Pharr's comment assigning responsibility for the Theodosian Code to Eudokia. Pharr 2001: 487 n.18. In her recent discussion of the Theodosian consistory, Jill Harries likewise tends to attribute the majority of administrative power to the hands of the top levels of Theodosios' court, while Theodosios himself "provided no consistent leadership or personal legislative programme;" Harries 2013: 76. It should also be noted that politics of gender are involved in the constructions of these women's personalities and their relationships with their male counterparts. Consider, for example, the common portrayal of Eudoxia as the harlot against John Chrysostom the martyred saint, a portrayal dependent on the *Ecclesiastical Histories* of Sokrates (6.11, 6.15–16, 6.18–19) and Sozomen (8.16). A similar depiction of a harlot Pulcheria opposed to the martyred Nestorios can be found in the *Letter to Cosmas*. For a discussion of the "smear campaign" leveled against Eudoxia, see Mayer 2006.

they are central for understanding the roles of both the emperor and Constantinople in the development of a rhetoric of Christian identity during the fifth century. I will analyze this rhetoric and Theodosios' possible interest in extending the hegemony of Theodosian Christianity in the subsequent sections of this chapter, but in order to provide a context for that discussion it is first necessary to provide a brief sketch of Theodosios' life and reign.⁹

Theodosios II was born on April 10, 401, the first emperor to be born and to die in Constantinople—indeed the first to live most of his life in the city.¹⁰ Nine months later, in January 402, the infant Theodosios was proclaimed Augustus. Within the next six years, both of the young Augustus' parents would die (Eudoxia in October 404 and Arkadios in May 408), leaving the barely seven-year-old Theodosios the sole Augustus of the eastern empire.¹¹ This was a perilous moment for the young emperor, as it provided an

⁹ Extensive discussions of Theodosios' reign have been provided previously in studies of the period, and I direct the reader to these studies for a more detailed chronology. Particularly noteworthy in this regard are W. H. C. Frend's (1972) survey of the ecclesiastical disputes of the period; Kenneth Holum's (1982) and Alan Cameron's (1982) discussions of the women of the Theodosian dynasty; and Fergus Millar's (2007) analysis of the linguistic and legal structures that contributed to a distinct imperial administration in the East. Add to these the excellent recent volume of collected essays reexamining the reign of Theodosios II, edited by Christopher Kelly (2013). There remain major points of debate in documenting Theodosios II's life and administration, particularly regarding the extent of Pulcheria's influence and of Theodosios' involvement in the administration of the empire, which I will note in passing in the following outline. For a more thorough study of the problems involved in documenting Theodosios' reign, see C. Kelly 2013a: 17, 19–20. See also C. Kelly's (2013a: 14) measured critique of Holum's work, which he describes as "in many ways still the most intelligent political history of the reign," even if it betrays a tendency to "overstate a good case."

¹⁰ Sokrates, *Eccl. hist.* 7.1.1; Sozomen, *Eccl. hist.* 9.1; Philostorgios 12.7. The precise date of Theodosios' birth is given by the *Chron. pasch.* 401. For the novelty of Theodosios II's residency in Constantinople, which marks the culmination of a pattern begun by his grandfather, see Dagron, 1974: 84–86, Constanas 2003: 9, Millar 2006: 4. The only emperors to be born in Constantinople prior to Theodosios II were Julian and Honorios.

¹¹ Sokrates alleges that Eudoxia's death was divine retribution for her persecution of John Chrysostom, whose exile occurred less than four months before. Sokrates includes a number of additional prodigies indicating God's anger at Chrysostom's deposition, including the burning of the Great Church, the amputation of the legs of bishop Kyrinos of Chalcedon, and a hailstorm that struck Constantinople four days before Eudoxia's death. Sozomen is more circumspect in his implication that Eudoxia's death was divine retribution. Sokrates, *Eccl. hist.* 6.19.6; Sozomen, *Eccl. hist.* 8.27.1; cf. *Chron. pasch.* 404.

opportunity for rivals to usurp the throne. Similar circumstances had arisen previously in the West, and, as Meaghan McEvoy has observed, the success of these administrations depended on a system that could operate rather independently of the emperor while protecting him until he could reach adulthood.¹² This was also the case for Theodosios II. Direction of the eastern empire during Theodosios' childhood fell to existing administrative structures, with power seemingly concentrated in the hands the praetorian prefect Anthemios, the imperial chamberlain Antiochos, and other members of the consistory that formed the inner-sanctum of the emperor's court.¹³ In 414 significant changes occurred in the imperial household and eastern administration, with the apparent dismissal of Antiochos and Aurelian's assumption of the office of praetorian prefect.¹⁴ Modern accounts of Theodosios' life frequently present his elder sister Pulcheria as the driving force behind Theodosios' reign at this point, or at least until his marriage to Athenaïs/Eudokia, the daughter of an Athenian sophist, in 421.¹⁵ Theodosios' and

¹² McEvoy 2013: 8, 115–17.

¹³ Sokrates, *Eccl. hist.* 7.1.1. John Malalas comments that Antiochos had served as the administrator of the imperial household and affairs of state. Whether this was a formal guardianship is a matter of debate. Theophanes (ninth century) asserts that on his deathbed Arkadios had entrusted his children to the Persian king, Isdigerdes. John Malalas, *Chron.* 14.15; Theophanes, AM 5905. As Jill Harries explains, the consistory was integral to the processes of administration. Given the length of Theodosios' reign, this group was hardly stable; over the years its members died, and new members, many of whom had familial ties with existing or former members, rose through the administrative ranks and were brought into the circle. Harries argues that Pulcheria's power, which rested on presenting a public face of imperial piety, did not come close to rivaling that of this group. See Harries 2013: 73–76. For further discussion of the role of the consistory in imperial decisions, see Jones 1964.1: 333–41; Harries 1999b: 38–42; Millar 2006: 194–97.

¹⁴ On Antiochos' dismissal, see John Malalas, *Chron.* 14.15. The reason for Anthemios' departure from the prefecture is uncertain. Holum credits these changes to Pulcheria, who was proclaimed Augusta in July of that year, and speculates that Antiochos had attempted to arrange a marriage between Pulcheria and a relative of Anthemios. While such a scheme is possible, the evidence is entirely circumstantial. Holum 1982: 91, 94. Against Holum, Van Nuffelen and Harries suggest that Anthemios had simply died, but again the evidence here is not definitive. Van Nuffelen 2004: 11; Harries 2013: 72.

¹⁵ This portrayal is built upon Sozomen's description of the fifteen-year-old Pulcheria assuming responsibility for Theodosios' court; Sozomen, *Eccl. hist.* 1.3–9. For the elevation of Pulcheria as Augusta,

Eudokia's daughter, Licinia Eudoxia, was born in 422; the young *basilissa* would marry the western emperor Valentinian III in 437. During this same period, the emperor ordered a massive project to collect and edit the legal writings of the empire (both from the East and the West), the product of which would be promulgated in 438 as the Theodosian Code.

From the perspective of subsequent theological formulations and disputes, by far the most important aspect of Theodosios' adulthood was a controversy centering on matters of doctrine.¹⁶ These events have been studied extensively, and a full account of the debates and political complexities is outside the scope of my discussion, but again a brief summary of events, especially those directly affecting the cult structures in Constantinople, provides useful context for the following discussion. As we have already seen, during the fourth century the imperial bishop in Constantinople had become increasingly important, especially following the changes brought by Theodosios I to the city's religious frameworks and in light of the relative stability of the imperial residence in the city. Rivalry for the city's episcopal throne had erupted in 381 when Gregory of Nazianzos was forced from the position, and again in 398 when Nektarios died. Contention over the position had eventually forced John Chrysostom from

see *Chron. Pasch.* 414. For an example of a modern portrayal of this relationship, see Kenneth Holum's portrayal of Pulcheria, whom he characterizes as a precocious young woman and dominating personality, "an echo, perhaps, of her mother's imperious character, but also the imprint of formative years in a palace society that imposed a strong sense of dynastic prerogatives." Holum 1982: 79–111, quote from p. 90.

¹⁶ The most extensive treatment of events from Nestorios' installation as bishop of Constantinople to the Council of Chalcedon in 451 (after Theodosios' death) remains Frend 1984: 752–773. To the traditional summary of the doctrinal debates are added important examinations of the political aspects of the controversy by Michael Gaddis (2005: 284–287), who analyzes the rhetoric of tyranny utilized by the dominant parties in the dispute; Fergus Millar (2007: 157–67) who examines political alliances and the maneuvers used to gain imperial favor; and Adam M. Schor (2011: 85–90), who outlines the social networks among the bishops (including an illustrative network map for major players from Syria and Palestine on p.89). For a treatment of this series of conflicts with an eye toward Proklos of Constantinople's involvement, see Constanas 2003: 41–56. My outline of events depends on these works.

Constantinople in 404, and Chrysostom's replacement, Arsakios, encountered similar tensions.¹⁷ Those tensions seem to have been subdued following the installation of Attikos in 406, but Attikos' death in 426 ignited a maelstrom between parties hoping to place their candidates in the bishop's office.¹⁸ The choice of Sisinnios as Attikos' successor only settled matters for a short time, as Sisinnios himself died in December 427. Once again, competing parties fought to install their own candidates as bishop; the resulting stalemate lasted four months before Theodosios intervened by appointing an outside candidate, the Antiochene monk Nestorios. To ensure the installation of the new bishop, the emperor sent his *magister militum* to personally escort his chosen candidate from Antioch to Constantinople, and on April 10, 428, Nestorios was installed as the emperor's bishop.¹⁹

Nestorios' career as bishop in Constantinople quickly turned contentious. At his installation on the episcopal throne, Nestorios called upon the emperor to eliminate non-Theodosian cult groups from the city, and by the end of 429 Nestorios was preaching against the appropriateness of *Theotokos* as a title for the mother of Christ.²⁰ Accusations of misgovernment and heresy against the bishop eventually led Theodosios to call a council in 431 to try the bishop. The council in Ephesos was highly controversial: suspecting that his Alexandrian rival, Cyril, was manipulating the proceedings, Nestorios

¹⁷ Sozomen, *Eccl. hist.* 8.23.

¹⁸ Sokrates, *Eccl. hist.* 7.25.22–23.

¹⁹ Sokrates, *Eccl. hist.* 7.26.2, 7.29.1–3; Nestorios, *Bazaar of Heracleides* pp.377–79 (Bedjan=Driver/Hodgson 274–75). A concise reconstruction of events is provided in Constan 2003: 45–46. It is perhaps worth noting that Nestorios' installation occurred on the emperor's twenty-seventh birthday.

²⁰ See Sokrates, *Eccl. hist.* 7.29.5; Evagrius, *Eccl. hist.* 1.9; Cyril of Alexandria, *Against Nestorios* 1.5; ACO 1.1.5, p. 8. For further discussion, see Constan 2006: 47–54.

refused to attend before his potential supporters arrived. Cyril convened the council without Nestorios and condemned the Constantinopolitan bishop *in absentia*. When Nestorios' supporters finally arrived, they held a counter-council, which in turn condemned Cyril as a tyrant-bishop unwilling to discuss matters of doctrine and eager to usurp imperial power. Exasperated by reports of impasse and violence, Theodosios repeatedly sent his officials to investigate, and eventually he accepted the decisions of both councils. Both Nestorios and Cyril were deposed and arrested.²¹ With the removal of Nestorios, Theodosios appointed Maximianos as his new bishop, but unfortunately Maximianos died within a few years. In order to prevent further conflict, Theodosios then appointed a native of Constantinople, Proklos, as the imperial bishop of the city. Proklos would remain bishop of Constantinople until his own death in 446.²²

Even after the arrests of Nestorios and Cyril in 431, disputes continued over Nestorios' teaching, the level of authority the emperor had granted to the bishop of Constantinople (or that successive bishops had assumed), and the influence at court exercised by the bishops of other cities, especially Antioch and Alexandria.²³ In the late 440s, tensions in Constantinople flared once more, this time between Proklos' successor, Flavian, and individuals within the imperial court supported by bishop Dioskoros of

²¹ Nestorios was initially sent back to his monastery, only to be exiled later. Cyril, on the other hand, eventually returned to Alexandria, albeit under suspicion of having bribed officials for his release.

²² Sokrates, *Eccl. hist.* 7. 40.3–4. For a detailed survey of Proklos' career as bishop of Constantinople, see Constan 2003: 80–124.

²³ For a thorough summary of the events of Ephesos and following, including competing synods at Ephesos and the arrest of both Nestorios and Cyril, see Frend 1972: 15–49, who outlines the intricacies of the doctrinal debates, and Millar 2007: 157–67, who analyzes the period from a legal and political perspective.

Alexandria.²⁴ The heightened tensions led to the final proscription of the works of Nestorios (among others) in 448 and a new council at Ephesos in 449. From all appearances, Theodosios had lost patience with attempts to reconcile the two parties.²⁵ In what was the closest an Alexandrian bishop had come to direct imperial sponsorship, Theodosios granted Dioskoros authority to direct the council. Dioskoros excluded those associated with the Antiochene church from attending the proceedings and ordered the deposal of Flavian for supposedly over-exercising his jurisdiction. Dioskoros' secretary, Anatolios, was then installed as Constantinople's new bishop.²⁶

The Legacy of Nestorios

The controversy over Nestorios' tenure in Constantinople seems to have continued to present problems for Theodosios throughout the remainder of his reign. I think it quite possible that whisperings of attacks against the emperor are betrayed in the writings of Sokrates and Sozomen. Both authors were writing as theological controversies resurfaced, and they offer subtle responses to the specter of Nestorios' episcopacy that surely surrounded Theodosios. Sokrates, for his part, devotes much of Book 7 of his history to the controversy surrounding Nestorios, detailing the atrocities the bishop committed against non-Theodosian religious elements in Constantinople and its surrounding regions. Sozomen, on the other hand, never mentions Nestorios explicitly,

²⁴ Dioskoros' attempts to involve Leo, the bishop of Rome, as a counterweight to the imperial bishop in Constantinople only escalated matters. See Gaddis 2005: 290–93.

²⁵ As Michael Gaddis observes, "Theodosios' edicts convening the synod made clear that its purpose was not to reconcile but to 'root out,' not to define faith but to condemn heresy." Gaddis 2005: 299.

²⁶ Flavian was sent into exile, but died *en route*. For a close analysis of Dioskoros' coercive tactics, including his refusal to allow opponents to speak, and Leo's subsequent condemnation of Ephesos II as *latrocinium* (a label meant to delegitimize the council through accusations of illicit violence) in a letter to Pulcheria (450), see Gaddis 2005: 299–309.

but the disputes arising from his episcopacy seem to loom behind his narrative of Constantinopolitan history.²⁷

In Chapter 3 I explored how the interpretation of violence can be deployed as a means to construct social boundaries and create a sense of groupness.²⁸ Accusations of violence also carry with them assertions about the legitimate use of force and authority. As Michael Gaddis observes, narratives of violence figure prominently in the Christian rhetoric of fifth-century ecclesiastical politics to delegitimize the authority of particular bishops. Even when individual bishops utilized the same types of coercive behaviors, Gaddis notes, the interpretation of their actions as violence depended upon the position of the author in relation to that agent.²⁹ Authors typically accentuated the violent characters of bishops regarded as opponents. This is precisely what happens in Sokrates' polemic against Nestorios, who plays a wolf in sheep's clothing. On first glance, Sokrates explains, the Antiochene monk appeared to possess all the qualities desired of a bishop: a strong voice, a command of rhetoric, ascetic discipline, and temperance. Once installed as bishop, however, Nestorios quickly revealed his true character, especially his lack of education, his propensity for violence, and his arrogance. Five days after his ordination, Nestorios ordered the destruction of the Arian *euktērion* (oratory); he was immensely jealous of the popularity commanded by the Novation bishop Paul; and he incited riots

²⁷ In the final book of his history, Sozomen makes clear that it was Theodosios' sister Pulcheria who was responsible for maintaining the "orthodoxy" of the empire. Though Sozomen left his history incomplete and never detailed how Pulcheria accomplished this, scholars of the period understandably assume that Sozomen is referring to her actions against Nestorios here. See Sozomen, *Eccl. hist.* 9.1.9.

²⁸ See above, pp. 124–28.

²⁹ Gaddis elaborates that late antique authors tempered the nature of the coercive act with assertions about the moral character of the agent. A significant portion of Gaddis' study is devoted to the polemic deriving from the Nestorian controversy as it occurred broadly in the East, but he does not address rhetoric about Nestorios extensively. Gaddis 2005: 260–281.

against the Quartodecimans in Constantinople's vicinity.³⁰ To further demonstrate the derangement Nestorios encouraged, Sokrates tells the story of a nearby bishop who soon joined Nestorios' efforts by harassing the Makedonians of Hellespont. The Makedonians responded by assassinating their persecutor, thus providing Nestorios the incentive with which to convince the emperor to deprive the Makedonians of their cult sites in both Hellespont and Constantinople.³¹

Emphasizing Nestorios' violent actions helped to delegitimize his reign as imperial bishop. But this portrayal would have also created problems for the emperor who had appointed him. Throughout his account of the dispute, Sokrates is careful to distance Theodosios from Nestorios' actions, first by defusing responsibility for Nestorios' selection (he refers only to a vague collection of rulers, οἱ κρατοῦντες, who elected the bishop), and then in the way Theodosios is conspicuously absent from the greater part of his narrative.³² Nonetheless, Sokrates' account seems to me to be a subtle recrimination against the emperor, for his haste in choosing an unqualified bishop and for then allowing himself to be influenced by the machinations of Cyril. In Sokrates' narrative Theodosios appears to have been entirely clueless about Nestorios' tyranny, and only when Nestorios attacked the popular Novatian bishop Paul did the emperor realize

³⁰ Sokrates, *Eccl. hist.* 7.29.8–12.

³¹ Sokrates, *Eccl. hist.* 7.31.

³² For Sokrates' defusing responsibility for the selection of Nestorios, see Sokrates, *Eccl. hist.* 7.29.1. Sokrates' narrative on Nestorios' episcopacy is found in *Eccl. hist.* 7.29–34.

the public nuisance his bishop had become. However, he would not call for Nestorios' trial until civil order in Constantinople had completely disintegrated.³³

If Sokrates and Sozomen veil their criticisms of Theodosios' involvement with Nestorios, later authors, namely John Malalas (sixth century) and the compiler of the *Chronicon paschale* (early seventh century), are more direct in their accusations. Particularly noteworthy are these sources' implications that Theodosios was an effeminate, weak-willed boy caught between the protracted and bitter rivalry of two domineering women.³⁴ These same sources also suggest that Hellenism was a corrupting influence in Theodosios' court. The emperor's choice of Eudokia as his bride only added to the temptations of Hellenism.³⁵ Both Malalas and the *Chronicon Paschale* elaborate on Sokrates' report of the empress' origins as the daughter of an Athenian philosopher, from whom she received training in Greek literature and philosophy.³⁶ As Alan Cameron

³³ Sokrates, *Eccl. hist.* 7.29.11, 7.34.1. As Michael Gaddis notes, Sokrates' interruption of his narrative of Nestorios' episcopacy with an account of the slaughtering of slaves in the Great Church accentuates the violence Sokrates associates with the bishop; Gaddis 2006: 283 n.1.

³⁴ By later accounts, the two women devoted their patronage to opposing parties in the disputes that led to the councils of the 430s and 440s, with Eudokia supporting Nestorios, and Pulcheria siding with Cyril of Alexandria. Whether this rivalry arose from their attachments or oppositions to particular bishops or whether their patronage of opposing parties was the result of an already extant rivalry is a matter of debate. The dispute supposedly led both women to publically withdraw from court, Pulcheria to an estate in the suburbs of Constantinople and Eudokia to Jerusalem. Holum accepts these accounts of rivalry between Pulcheria and Eudokia. While such a rivalry is possible, rhetors frequently present women as influential figures behind men, particularly rulers, to make assertions about the character of those men. To provide two earlier examples, Helena was the stabilizing and pious force behind her son Constantine (Ambrose, *On the Death of Theodosios I* 41), and the source of Gallus' wickedness was his wife Constantina (Ammianus Marcellinus 14.4). See Holum 1982: 130–32.

³⁵ John Malalas, *Chron.* 14.3. 19.

³⁶ Sokrates, *HE* 7.21.8–9; John Malalas 14.4; *Chronicon Paschale* 420. Holum notes that two other contemporary historians, Sozomen and Theodoret, do not mention Eudokia, “perhaps because they wrote after 443, when she had fallen into disgrace.” He also raises doubts over Eudokia's connection to Athens and argues that the empress was a native of Antioch. Holum's arguments for Antiochene origins are interesting; unfortunately, they rest on a speech given by Eudokia to the people of Antioch, reported only by Evagrius, who not only states that Eudokia is from Athens, but is also of Antiochene origin himself. Given the conventions of late antique historiography, I think it is entirely likely that Eudokia's speech is an

astutely observes, this recasting in later accounts of Eudokia's father as a philosopher transformed him into a "diehard pagan," who educated his daughter with the same religious commitments.³⁷ In short, for these later sources Eudokia was hardly a suitable consort for a supposedly Christian emperor, and according to their conclusions it was hardly surprising that Theodosios had been led astray by Eudokia's pet bishop Nestorios.

Both of these later texts also raise questions about Theodosios' sexual restraint in a way that questions his piety. For Malalas Theodosios is hardly the image of the ascetic bishop-emperor he is for Sokrates or Sozomen. Rather, the young Theodosios harasses Pulcheria (Malalas' word here is ὥχλει) to help him find a wife, and his sole criteria for his future bride is her beauty:

I want you to find me a really lovely young girl, so that no other woman in Constantinople—whether she be of imperial blood or of the highest senatorial family—may possess such beauty. If she is not superlatively beautiful, I am not interested, neither in high rank or imperial blood or wealth. But whoever's daughter she is, providing she is a virgin and exceedingly beautiful, her I shall marry.³⁸

In answer, Pulcheria and Paulinos introduced the emperor to the young and recently orphaned Athenais. The philosopher's daughter consents to baptism, adopts the name

Evagrian composition, meant to advance the reputation of Antioch by highlighting its imperial connections. Eriikki Sironen has argued against Holum's assertions by presenting evidence for an honorary inscription to Eudokia from the Athenian agora, although this evidence cannot be used as indisputable proof of her Athenian origins. See Holum 1982: 114, 117–18; Sironen 1990: 374.

³⁷ Al. Cameron 1982: 267, 273. Kenneth Holum and Alan Cameron have both argued, with some points of disagreement with each other, that traditional patterns of Greek intellectual life were still dominant during the early decades of Theodosios' reign. See Holum 1982: 84–85; Al. Cameron and Long 1993: 79–83, 91–93.

³⁸ John Malalas, *Chron.* 14. 3: ἐγὼ θέλω, εἰ εὖρης μοι νεωτέραν εὐμορφον πάνυ, ἵνα τοιοῦτον κάλλος μὴ ἔχη γυνὴ εἰς Κωνσταντινούπολιν, εἴτε ἐξ αἵματός ἐστιν βασιλικοῦ εἴτε ἐξ αἵματός ἐστιν συγκλητικοῦ πρώτου. εἰ δὲ μὴ ἐστιν καλὴ εἰς ὑπερβολήν, οὐ χρεῖαν ἔχω, οὔτε ἀξιωματικὴν οὔτε ἐκ βασιλικοῦ αἵματος οὔτε πλούτον, ἀλλὰ καὶ εἴ τινοσδὴ ποτέ ἐστιν θυγάτηρ, μόνον παρθένον καὶ εὐπρεπεστάτην πάνυ, ταύτην λαμβάνω. (Trans Jeffreys, et al. 1986.)

Eudokia, and marries Theodosios.³⁹ Unfortunately Eudokia's beauty leads to trouble, as she is implicated in an affair with Paulinos, who, as Theodosios' groomsman and close confidant, was also the empress' frequent visitor.⁴⁰

These depictions of Theodosios have left us with a picture of a feeble, bookish, ineffectual—even effeminate—weakling of an emperor, particularly when compared to the traditional (adult) soldier-emperors who preceded him.⁴¹ This portrait of Theodosios has been challenged in recent scholarship, most notably by Fergus Millar, who envisions a court apparatus that “‘carried’ a juvenile Emperor as symbolic ruler until such time as he attained a degree of adult authority.”⁴² I agree with Millar's assessment and see Theodosios as an emperor “born in the purple” who faced the relatively unique (though increasingly more common) challenge of asserting his authority as he entered his majority. In other words, Theodosios was interested in not simply reigning, but in ruling. I contend that the consolidation of imperial religion was a crucial component of this endeavor.⁴³

³⁹ John Malalas, *Chron.* 14.4.

⁴⁰ **Paulinos' access to Eudokia:** John Malalas, *Chron.* 14.6; **Suspicion of affair:** John Malalas, *Chron.* 14.8; *Chronicon Paschale* 444. Cp. Evagrius, *HE* 1.21. According to these accounts, Eudokia demanded that her husband allow her to travel to Jerusalem to pray at the holy shrines. While this is not presented as a formal divorce, Eudokia never returned to the Theodosios' court, remaining in Jerusalem there until her death (460). Holum dates the incident, if genuine, to 443; see Holum 1982: 176–177. For another reading of events, see Alan Cameron 1982: 263–64; Hunt 1982: 221–47; and Lenski 2004: 117.

⁴¹ See, for example, such characterizations in Jones 1964: 1.173–74; Holum 1982: 101; and even more recently by Harries 2013: 76; for critiques of these representations, see Elton 2009: 136–38; McEvoy 2013: 3; and Graumann 2013: 109–10.

⁴² Millar 2006: 227.

⁴³ But see C. Kelly's caution that “‘ruling’ and ‘reigning’ may not be so easily distinguishable.” C. Kelly 2013a: 21.

CHILD-EMPERORS AND IMPERIAL RHETORIC

Unfortunately for us, the “real Theodosios” remains buried in the pages of history. But these same pages can help us understand why a particular rhetoric about the emperor developed. As I have already noted, Theodosios became sole ruler in the East at the extraordinarily young age of seven—even younger than his father Arkadios, who was only in his late-teens when he became sole Augustus in the East. The Theodosian line in the eastern half of the empire could easily have ended with Arkadios’ death. After all, it would be almost another decade before Theodosios would reach his majority, and several more years after that before he could reasonably be expected to govern. Surrounding the young Augustus, however, was an army (in some instances, quite literally) of imperial officials committed to the continuation of the Theodosian dynasty and who oversaw the mechanisms of governance. The problem that faced these officials was how to establish and preserve the *auctoritas* of such a young emperor.

This problem was not entirely unique. Beginning in 367, with the elevation of the eight-year-old Gratian by his father Valentinian I, a series of unusually young boys assumed the rank of Augustus at the direction of their fathers or such powerful generals as Merobaudes, Stilicho, and Aetius.⁴⁴ Gratian’s elevation was followed by that of his four-year-old brother, Valentinian II, in 375.⁴⁵ Not quite a decade later, in 384,

⁴⁴ As McEvoy notes, Rome had witnessed a number of young emperors, with a concentration of such ascensions during the early third century. Many of these emperors were teenagers previously, although a few, e.g., Diadumenianus (218) and Philip II (244–249), were as young as nine or ten. Very few of these emperors enjoyed reigns of any great length. Moreover, the standard practice was for these boys to be elevated to the rank of Caesar, to assume the title of Augustus once they had matured (thereupon becoming co-Augustus) or upon the death of the senior emperor. Of special note is the ill-fated elevation of Jovian’s infant son as Augustus in 364 (only three years before Gratian’s elevation). McEvoy 2013: 3–4; 52–53.

⁴⁵ McEvoy 2013: 56.

Theodosios I proclaimed his son Arkadios, then only five years of age, as his co-Augustus; his younger son Honorios would be elevated to Caesar in 389 (he, too, only five years of age at the time), only to be proclaimed co-Augustus with his father and brother in 393. When Theodosios I died in January 395, the eighteen-year-old Arkadios assumed control of the east, while the ten-year-old Honorios held the west under the guidance of Stilicho.⁴⁶ Theodosios II himself would appoint his five-year-old cousin, Valentinian III, as Caesar in 424, then as Augustus a year later.

In a recent examination of this phenomenon, Meaghan McEvoy has demonstrated that in each of these instances, the elevations occurred during moments of political crisis.⁴⁷ Valentinian I named Gratian as co-Augustus following a serious illness, likely in an effort to establish a line of dynastic succession and to reassert his authority against his advisors. The accession of Gratian's brother, Valentinian II, was instigated by the death of their father as the late emperor's advisors sought to prevent the acclamation of popular generals (and perhaps to increase their own influence over the imperial office).⁴⁸ Theodosios I's elevation of five-year-old Arkadios as his co-Augustus may have been intended to solidify his own questionable claims to the purple as well as a challenge to Gratian's position in the West.⁴⁹ The elevation of the young Honorios to Caesar occurred

⁴⁶ McEvoy 2013: 137–142.

⁴⁷ McEvoy 2013: 6.

⁴⁸ Gratian's willingness to accept the general's placement of Valentinian II as co-Augustus, was crucial to maintaining his own position. In discussing Valentinian's near disappearance from historical record following his accession, McEvoy further comments that Valentinian II "dwindled into an imperial redundancy almost as swiftly as he had been thrust into power." McEvoy 2013: 51–57, 61, 64.

⁴⁹ McEvoy 2013: 83. As McEvoy comments, Gratian never recognized Arkadios' promotion. The circumstances of Theodosios I's accession are uncertain; scholars have debated whether Theodosios' elevation was the result of the maneuvers of faction at court or a military coup. For a summary of the debates, see McEvoy 2013: 77–80, esp. 77 n. 44. Add to these dynamics, the religious politics between the

on the occasion of Theodosios I's triumphal entrance into Rome, an event which, while celebrating Theodosios I's defense of Valentinian II from the usurper Maximus, also effectively displaced Valentinian II.⁵⁰ Honorios' subsequent elevation to Augustus followed the death of Valentinian II and attempts by Arbogast and Eugenius to seize control of the western empire.⁵¹ Theodosios II's elevation of Valentinian III only occurred after the months of unrest that followed the death of Honorios and another attempted usurpation.⁵²

In her analysis of these child-emperors, McEvoy argues that their young ages presented significant challenges to the traditional mechanisms of establishing imperial legitimacy. These mechanisms depended heavily upon evidence of effective administration, demonstrated especially through military victory and a passing degree of fluency in elite culture.⁵³ A significant component in affirming this imperial competence was the practice of panegyric, both in the form of public oration and literary production.⁵⁴ These speeches and treatises publically established the virtues of the emperor by

two courts, especially the possibility that Theodosios patronized homoousian bishops in order to distance him from his western rival, who supported homoian bishops. See McLynn 2005: 78, 107; McEvoy 2013: 80, 84.

⁵⁰ Valentinian II was conspicuously absent from the triumphal procession in July 389, and it is possible that Theodosios had already dispatched the seventeen-year-old emperor to Gaul. McEvoy 2013: 92–94.

⁵¹ McEvoy 2013: 97.

⁵² This ascension was accompanied by the betrothal between the young Valentinian and Licinia Eudoxia, Theodosios II's daughter. McEvoy 2013: 229–233.

⁵³ McEvoy 2013: 36–40.

⁵⁴ Orations, although described as one of the most ephemeral practices of the ancient world, were durable in so far as these productions were frequently accompanied by textual productions, whatever the degree of redaction, which have survived. My discussion here does not preclude the importance of other mechanisms of legitimization: visual representations (e.g., statues, coins), building programs, legislation (especially, in Theodosios' case religious legislation), among others.

appealing to a script for legitimate imperial action established by centuries of rhetorical tradition. According to this script, the emperor was the idealized Roman male aristocrat: born of honorable circumstances, steeped in *paideia*, adept in military strategy, and governed by the philosophical virtues of courage, justice, temperance, and wisdom.⁵⁵

But, as Sabine MacCormick has argued, imperial speeches (*basilikoi logoi*) were more than the simple acts of praise; rather, they were public transactions between an emperor and his people that created an impression of consensus by appealing to the established script of legitimate imperial action.⁵⁶ The rhetor simultaneously provided evidence of an emperor's fulfillment of these expectations, even if certain facts had to be manipulated or overlooked, and reminded his subject of those expectations. The emperor, in turn, was constrained by these same expectations. He could, of course, act outside the boundaries constructed for his position, but to do so brought certain risks, including the threat of riots or unrest among his generals. In other words, the imperial speech was part of an elaborate game whose rules each party knew (either by formal training or habitual exposure) and at least nominally agreed to follow.

A child-emperor, however, could not fulfill these expectations, especially demonstrations of military prowess, at the outset of his reign. Neither could an extremely young emperor yet exhibit his full participation in the traditional structures of élite culture. Earlier adult emperors had confronted particular shortcomings through the use of rhetoric that downplayed their deficiencies. Eusebios, for example, had glossed over

⁵⁵ The most systematic exposition of these rules is that of Menander, *The Imperial Speech* (Treatise 2.1–2). See further discussion in MacCormick 1981: 4–7; Russell and Wilson 1981: xi–xxxiv, and now the excellent summary in McEvoy 2013: 27–36.

⁵⁶ MacCormick 1981: 9.

Constantine's non-élite background by stressing his training in the art of war under his father and by casting him as a New Moses.⁵⁷ However, these types of rhetorical maneuvers were more difficult to employ for a child emperor. Instead, as McEvoy demonstrates, we find a different tactic in the rhetoric surrounding these young emperors. Rather than accentuating characteristics that the boys could not yet demonstrate (e.g., skill in the art of war), increasing emphasis was placed on their "spiritual worthiness," displayed in their chastity and piety and confirmed by the divine favor demonstrated through the continuing stability of the empire.⁵⁸ McEvoy further argues that the perpetuation of an emperor's "childlike" qualities into adulthood became quintessential legitimizing components of his reign.⁵⁹ For example, in the case of the former child-emperor Honorios, McEvoy speculates, passivity provided a shield from the machinations of political rivals by leaving the active administration of the empire in the hands of strong generals.⁶⁰

McEvoy's analysis focuses almost entirely on the child-emperors of the West, but similar patterns appear in the elevation of Theodosios II as an infant. In the years prior to Theodosios' birth and elevation to Augustus, Arkadios had experienced a series of challenges to his authority: the controversial consulship of Eutropios in 399; a revolt under the direction of Gaïnas in 399/400; and the very public dispute between John

⁵⁷ Eusebios, *Life of Constantine*, 1.12.1–2, 1.19.1–2; see discussion in Rapp 1998: 685–95.

⁵⁸ McEvoy 2013: 108. Gratian, for instance, was publically lauded for his constant worship of God, his moderation of diet, and his natural modesty. See Ausonius, *Thanksgiving for his Consulship*. 14; and discussion in McEvoy 2013: 107. However, connections between stability and divine favor could backfire, as seen when Theodosios I took advantage of the unrest that occurred during the reign of the young Valentinian II to consolidate his control of the empire. McEvoy 2013: 92–94.

⁵⁹ McEvoy 2013: 18, 127–28.

⁶⁰ McEvoy 2013: 219–20.

Chrysostom and the agents of Alexandrian bishop Theophilus, in which the city's monastic groups became vocal participants. Arkadios was also continuing to experience pressure from the west, with Stilicho asserting claims of regency over the eastern emperor.⁶¹ Because of his young age, Theodosios was particularly vulnerable to potential usurpers after the death of his father in 408. Sozomen describes a succession of such attempts shortly after the boy's accession as sole-emperor, first in Stilicho's preparations to march east in order to replace the young Theodosios with his own son, and shortly thereafter in the Hunnish general Uldin's incursion into Thrace.⁶²

The presentations put forward to legitimate Theodosios' reign bear a striking similarity to those for western child-emperors. The fullest articulation of a rhetoric of leadership directed towards Theodosios II appears in Sozomen's preface to his *Ecclesiastical History*:

For the leader of all to attain one part of these lowly virtues [i.e., the love of adornment, studiousness and literary skill, and military prowess] is considered the greatest thing, and a kingly thing. But of piety (εὐσεβείας), the true adornment of the imperial office, no one has produced such an account. But you, most excellent emperor Theodosios...have cultivated every virtue through the help of God. Draped in the purple robe and crown, the symbol of your honor to those who behold you, you always bear from within the true adornment of imperial majesty: piety and philanthropy.⁶³

⁶¹ McEvoy 2013: 72.

⁶² Sozomen, *Eccl. hist.* 9.5. As Honorios was eighteen at the time of his brother's death, it is possible that Stilicho's foray into the East was an attempt to maintain influence in the imperial courts in the face of Honorios' entering adulthood.

⁶³ Sozomen, *Eccl. hist.* preface.2–3: μέγιστον δὲ καὶ βασιλικὸν ἐνομιζέτο ταυτησὶ τῆς δημώδους ἀρετῆς μόριον ἐν κεκτηῖσθαι τὸν πάντων ἡγούμενον, εὐσεβείας δέ, τοῦ ἀληθοῦς κόσμου τῆς βασιλείας, οὐδενὶ τοσοῦτος λόγος ἐγένετο. σὺ δέ, ὦ κράτιστε βασιλεῦ Θεοδόσιε...πάσαν ἐπήσκησας ἀρετὴν διὰ θεοῦ, ἀλουργίδα δὲ καὶ στέφανον πρὸς τοὺς θεωμένους σύμβολον τῆς ἀξίας περικείμενος, ἔνδοθεν ἀεὶ τὸν ἀληθὴ κόσμον τῆς βασιλείας ἡμφίεσαι, τὴν εὐσέβειαν καὶ τὴν φιλανθρωπίαν. (My translation.)

Sozomon's history was composed when Theodosios was in his mid-forties, and his portrait of the emperor is consistent with the traditional expectations of imperial virtue: erudition, sound judgment, dedication to affairs of state, and benevolence toward inferiors. Of particular note is Sozomen's emphasis on Theodosios' piety (εὐσεβεία) and philosophical virtue rooted in asceticism (the author even uses the term ἄσκησις to describe his practices). Sozomen proceeds to describe the emperor's participation in élite culture, highlighting his training and ability to accurately judge contests of rhetoric.⁶⁴ Sozomen continues by commenting on the emperor's other virtues, particularly his *oikonomia* (aptitude at governance), studiousness, and self-control. The emperor's days are devoted to military training, his nights to study.⁶⁵ Moreover, Theodosios is a polymath whose knowledge and virtue far surpasses that of the biblical king Solomon:

For having become a slave of pleasure, [Solomon] did not preserve the piety that had been the cause of good things and his wisdom. But you, Most Excellent One, are naturally considered the absolute ruler not only of men but also of the passions (τῶν παθῶν) of the soul and the body on account to your self-restraining reason which opposes indolence...I hear that you have also conquered desire (τὴν ἐπιθυμίαν) for food and drink, and neither sweet figs...nor any other ripe fruit is able to overpower you, except just the small amount you touch and taste, having first praised the creator of all.⁶⁶

⁶⁴ Sozomen, *Eccl. hist.* preface.4–5. Not only can Theodosios discern the proper tones of speech and gesture, but he is also intimately familiar with the rules of composition.

⁶⁵ In further indication of his virtues, the emperor refuses to burden his household with his habits, having invented a lamp that burned continuously so that his servants would not be required to attend him during the nocturnal hours. Sozomen, *Eccl. hist.* preface.8.

⁶⁶ Sozomen, *Eccl. hist.* preface.11–12: ὁ μὲν γὰρ δοῦλος γενόμενος τῶν ἡδονῶν οὐ μέχρι τέλους τὴν εὐσέβειαν διεφύλαξε τὴν αἰτίαν τῶν ἀγαθῶν καὶ τῆς σοφίας αὐτῷ γενομένην· σὺ δέ, ὦ κρᾶτιστε, τὸν ἐγκρατὴ λογισμὸν ἀντιτάξας τῇ ῥαστώνῃ, εἰκότως νομίζῃ μὴ μόνον ἀνθρώπων αὐτοκράτωρ εἶναι, ἀλλὰ καὶ τῶν παθῶν τῆς ψυχῆς καὶ τοῦ σώματος...πυνθάνομαι σε καὶ παντὸς ὄψου καὶ ποτοῦ τὴν ἐπιθυμίαν νικάν, καὶ μήτε σῦκα γλυκερά...μήτ' ἄλλο τι τῶν ὡραίων ἐλεῖν σε δύνασθαι, πλὴν ὅσον ἐπιπαῦσαι καὶ μόνον ἀπογεύσασθαι, πρότερον εὐλογήσαντα τὸν πάντων δημιουργόν. (My translation.)

Theodosios' virtue includes the bodily training (ἄσκησις) necessary to ignore the inconveniences of thirst, heat, and cold.⁶⁷ Sozomen provides evidence of the emperor's ascetic discipline and *philanthropia* (benevolence) in Theodosios' response toward a soldier who had offered him water during the heat of a summer's march. Unlike Alexander the Great, who had distained such an offer by pouring it on the ground before his thirsty soldiers, Theodosios praised the gift and returned it for the soldier to quench his own thirst.⁶⁸ Sozomen concludes by proclaiming that the emperor had surpassed all his predecessors by "having gathered all the virtues together and superseded [his] predecessors in the piety, philanthropy, courage, wisdom, judgment, honor, and generosity appropriate to imperial dignity."⁶⁹

A different picture of the emperor emerges in the final book of Sozomen's history.

Whereas Theodosios is a mature agent in the dedication, Book 9 opens with the image of

⁶⁷ Sozomen, *Eccl. hist.* preface.12. Compare Plato's description of the philosopher-king in *Republic* 3.403–412 and portrayal of Sokrates in *Symposium* 198a–212c. Alan Cameron and Jacqueline Long have discussed the importance of Plato's ideal of the philosopher-king in legitimizing rhetoric for late antique emperors. For comparanda, see the *Orations* of Themistius, esp. *Orations* 1 and 3, in which he stylizes Constantius as the philosopher-king; Julians' self-presentation in *Misopogon* 338c–d; and Libanius' portrayal of Julian in his *Oration* 18.40. We can also compare Ammianus Marcellinus' questioning of Constantius' *paideia* (21.16.4–6), meant to impeach the emperor. A similar rhetorical strategy is employed by Zosimos (4.27, 33.1, 41, 44) to attack Theodosios I, whom he describes as prone to luxury and lust. As John Vanderspoel (1995: 81–83) notes, this ideal has a long history in Hellenistic rhetoric of kingship. The classic study of kingship rhetoric is Dvornik 1966; see especially I. 181–91, 241–45 and 270–77 (for pre-Constantinian articulations) and II. 614–30 and 646 (for the fourth century). Vasiliki Limberis (1994: 7–10, 38) has also noted the consonance between Constantine and Augustus in the rhetoric of the fourth and fifth centuries. Conceptions of masculinity are also connected to the paradigm of the philosopher-king, as Susanna Elm explores in a 2009 article on masculinity and philosophy. See also Cameron and Long 1983: 82 and Heather and Moncur 2001: 64–65.

⁶⁸ Sozomen, *Eccl. hist.* preface.12–14.

⁶⁹ Sozomen, *Eccl. hist.* preface.15: πάσας ὁμοῦ συλλαβὼν τὰς ἀρετάς, πάντας ὑπερεβάλου εὐσεβεία καὶ φιλανθρωπία καὶ ἀνδρεία καὶ σωφροσύνη καὶ δικαιοσύνη καὶ φιλοτιμία καὶ μεγαλοφυχία βασιλικῇ προεπούση ἀξία. (My translation.)

the boy-emperor whose piety ensures the stability of the empire.⁷⁰ Sozomen's argument about the necessity of the emperor's piety for the empire permeates the remainder of the unfinished Book 9 and unites the events narrated by Sozomen.⁷¹ Particularly important to note is that even though Sozomen wrote his history when Theodosios was an adult (he was nearly fifty at the time!), throughout Book 9 Theodosios remains child-like, under the perpetual guidance of his sister Pulcheria.⁷² Moreover, it was the child-emperor's piety and not the skilled diplomacy of such individuals as Anthemios (whom Sozomen conveniently writes out of his narrative) that maintained peace with the Persian empire, ensured the aid of Honorios against Stilicho, and caused Uldin's army to dissolve as it marched into Thrace toward Constantinople.⁷³

The attainment of majority was a crucial moment for the continuation of a child-emperor's reign. McEvoy notes that such moments had proven disastrous for earlier experiments with child-emperors in the West. Gratian (d. 393) and Valentinian II (d. 392) had both perished in their early twenties in situations suggestive of attempts "to make the

⁷⁰ Indeed, Sozomen states quite bluntly that it is because of the piety of the court that God was favorable to Theodosios' empire; Sozomen, *Eccl. hist.* 9.1.2; 9.3.3.

⁷¹ The chronology of Sozomen's narrative is vague. The author collapses the first seven to eight years of Theodosios II's reign, erasing the influence of Anthemios and Anthiochos and moving quickly from the death of Arkadios to Pulcheria's consecration as virgin at age fourteen (413/4). Events in subsequent chapters occur before 414, most notably the attempts by Stilicho and Uldin (likely shortly after 408) and the sieges of Rome by Alaric (408–410). Sozomen, *Eccl. hist.* 9.1–9.9.

⁷² Sozomen's account of Pulcheria's role in establishing court piety follows a *topos* of women who direct the piety of their male relatives or associates. Notable counterparts include Helena (for Constantine), Makrina (Gregory of Nyssa), Paula (Jerome), and Melania the Elder (Rufinus). I do not think that the fact that Sozomen is following a literary *topos* discounts the possibility that Pulcheria did adopt an ascetic lifestyle; rather I hold that the relationship between previously established *topoi* can affect behaviors and that teasing out that relationship is complicated. See discussion in Cooper 1992: 153–55; E. Clark 1998: 21–24; S. Matthews 2002: 47–50; Salzman 2002: 169–70; and Kraemer 2010: 127–8.

⁷³ Sozomen, *Eccl. hist.* 9.4; 9.5.

transition from ceremonial to actual power.”⁷⁴ The Theodosian court was faced with a similar circumstance. The difference between Theodosios and many of his western counterparts, however, is that he, like his uncle Honorios, succeeded in this transition.

PRODUCING A CHRISTIAN CULTURAL IDENTITY

There were, of course, a number of avenues by which Theodosios could assert his authority, including legislation and military action.⁷⁵ One of these avenues was religious reform. As we have already seen, religious reform was one of the traditional tools utilized by emperors to claim legitimacy and construct authority. Theodosios’ grandfather and namesake had made similar moves when he had established homoousian bishops as the official, legitimate priests of the empire upon his arrival in Constantinople.⁷⁶ The installation of a homoousian bishop in the imperial priesthood was followed by a concerted program, first under Theodosios I and then under his son Arkadios, to purify the city’s landscape by marginalizing competing cults and factions through the final closure of the city’s temples and the progressive removal of non-Nicene elements from the public eye.⁷⁷ Indeed, controlling perceptions of Constantinople’s cult life became

⁷⁴ McEvoy 2013: 130.

⁷⁵ Theodosios, however, did not exercise his imperial authority by leading military campaign.

⁷⁶ See comments above, pp. 21–22, 111–13.

⁷⁷ A year after Theodosios I’s death, Arkadios issued what could be read as a programmatic reaffirmation of his father’s endorsement of Nicene bishops as the representatives of imperial religion: “All heretics shall know without doubt that they shall be deprived of all places in this City, whether such places are held under the name of churches or are called deaconries or even deaneries, or whether they appear to furnish an opportunity for such meetings in private homes or places...Moreover, all clerics of the heretics shall be expelled from the most sacred City, nor shall they be permitted to convene within these limits. Furthermore, all the aforementioned persons shall be forbidden to come together in profane assemblies for performing a litany within the city by night or day;” CTh 16.5.30 (March 3, 396). Note that related directives (CTh 16.5.31–32) were sent to the praetorian prefect the following month.

central to efforts under the Theodosian dynasty for defining normative imperial Christianity.⁷⁸ I argue that individuals within the court of Theodosios II—whether the emperor himself or members of his consistory—were invested in a project to further define imperial religion and sought to present Constantinople as the paradigmatic city for Theodosian Christianity. While it is impossible to determine how much and when Theodosios was influenced by those around him, I believe that the emperor took an increasingly active role in these endeavors.

The first real push for such definition seems to have occurred between 414 and 416. Because of Pulcheria's prominent role in the history of the period (and largely due to Sozomen's presentation of her involvement), scholars tend to imagine that this initial period of religious consolidation occurred under the direction of the young *basilissa*.⁷⁹ What is little noticed, however, is that this period coincides with the years in which Theodosios entered adolescence and became legally independent. Pulcheria was only a few years older than Theodosios; it makes little sense to grant Pulcheria agency in these matters, but not Theodosios, who had significantly more at stake. The measures to consolidate imperial religion during this initial period may have been taken under the direction of the consistory, but I think it plausible that Theodosios himself had a hand in shaping these policies. A second moment of definition occurred in 423. Theodosios was

⁷⁸ To borrow from the observations of modern sociologist Michel de Certeau, the city serves as a map for those things deemed normative and authorized, through the value judgments placed by its inhabitants on various spaces. However, as de Certeau also reminds us, individuals also contest, subvert, and reorganize the hegemony constructed by this map with their movements through it. De Certeau 1984: 117, 121.

⁷⁹ See especially Holum's characterization of this period as Pulcheria's regime; Holum 1982: 97–102. Holum's characterization of Pulcheria has become widespread in scholarship, but is coming under increasing scrutiny; see, for example, Jill Harries' assessment of Pulcheria as a "public face" of Theodosian piety, with no influence over the deliberations of the consistory; Harries 2013: 73.

now married, with a young child, and consequently would have been in a stronger position to assert his role in the administration of the empire. The final, and more sustained, period of religious consolidation began in 428 and continued for the remainder of Theodosios' life.

These moments of definition are evident primarily in three modes of activity. The first two, imperial legislation and the Constantinopolitan episcopacy, were under the control of Theodosios and his court. A third mode of activity, namely, the development of a particular rhetoric about Christian identity, had connections to the court and depended on images of imperial piety to argue for the legitimacy of Theodosian Christianity.

Early Moves at Religious Consolidation

As I have previously noted, Constantinople's cult landscape remained relatively diverse during the closing decades of the fourth century and even into the early decades of the fifth. Evidence suggests that bishops and clergy not quite within the ranks of the imperial church continued to be tolerated in Constantinople during the earlier years of Theodosios II's reign. In fact, one of the hallmarks of ecclesiastical politics in Constantinople under the Theodosian dynasty was the presence of clergy from other cities, who could appeal to the imperial family or use their networks (especially contacts in local ascetic communities) to influence the imperial Constantinopolitan bishops, frequently to the point of contriving their deposals. We can see this in the examples of Severian, Antiochos, Epiphanius, and Theophilus of Alexandria, all of whom came to

Constantinople during the episcopacy of John Chrysostom.⁸⁰ During Theodosios II's own reign, another such "visiting bishop" was present in the city, namely, Proklos, a native of Constantinople who had repeatedly sought the office of imperial bishop there. After Proklos' first unsuccessful attempt for the episcopacy, the successful candidate appointed Proklos as bishop of Kyzikos. However, the people of Kyzikos rejected Proklos, and he remained in Constantinople at the personal invitation of his sponsor-bishop.⁸¹ Proklos continued his residence in Constantinople even after the installation of Nestorios and became a principle opponent to the new bishop.⁸²

These individuals were each associated with the imperial church in other cities, but similar circumstances surround other groups in early fifth-century Constantinople, most notably the Novatian clergy. These individuals experienced a degree of toleration because of their advocacy for Nicaea as the criterion of orthodoxy—a nominal (at the very least) endorsement of Theodosian Christianity. Sokrates repeatedly remarks upon the esteem and influence the clergy of this group commanded. During his own day, Sokrates comments, the Novatian bishop Paul (*episc.* 419–438) commanded such great respect that Theodosios protected him against Nestorios' attempts to drive him from the city.⁸³ Sokrates also claims that Paul's prayers proved particularly efficacious, sometimes more so than those of the imperial clergy. When a fire broke out in Constantinople and destroyed a significant portion of the city, Paul rushed to the altar of the Novatian church

⁸⁰ Sokrates, *Eccl. hist.* 6.2, 6.11–12, 6.15.

⁸¹ Sokrates, *Eccl. hist.* 7.28.

⁸² Proklos would eventually assume the bishop's throne upon the death of Maximianos in 434.

⁸³ Sokrates, *Eccl. hist.* 7.17.2–5, 7.29.11.

near Pelargos to pray for the preservation of the church and the city. These prayers were heard and answered by God, an event commemorated not only by the Novatians, but by the entire city.⁸⁴ When Paul died the entire city assembled: “in his funeral, he brought together, in a way, all the disparate factions (αἰρέσεις) into one *ekklesiā*, for all the factions processed his body to its tomb while singing psalms.”⁸⁵

During the first fourteen years of Theodosios’ life, there does not seem to have much, if any, effort to change this picture of Constantinople’s religious landscape.⁸⁶ That would change toward the end of 415, when what historians Alan Cameron and Jacqueline Long have called an “outburst of religious activity” occurred.⁸⁷ On October 2 of that year, the relics of the biblical figures Joseph and Zachariah were deposited in Hagia Sophia on its rededication now that the damage from the fire of 404 had been repaired.⁸⁸ Later that same month, and again in November, laws against “heretics” were issued in Theodosios’ name. These notably targeted Eunomians with harsh restrictions, including prohibitions

⁸⁴ Sokrates, *Eccl. hist.* 7.39.1–10.

⁸⁵ Sokrates, *Eccl. hist.* 7.46.2–3: Ὅς τῇ ἑαυτοῦ ἐκκομίδῃ πάσας τὰς διαφόρους αἰρέσεις τρόπον τινὰ μίαν ἐκκλησίαν εἰργάσατο. Πᾶσαι γὰρ αὐτοῦ τὸ σῶμα ἄχρι τοῦ μνήματος σὺν ψαλμωδίαις παρόεμπον. (My translation.)

⁸⁶ It should be remembered, however, that the sources for Theodosios’ administration between 408 and 430 are rather limited, as Fergus Millar has noted. Millar 2006: 149.

⁸⁷ Al. Cameron and Long 1993: 77–78. Cameron and Long disagree with Holum’s interpretation of these actions as part of Pulcheria’s efforts to accumulate power and assume control of the regency. Expressing their skepticism over how involved the “sixteen-year-old Augusta” could have been in these efforts, they instead attribute this efforts to Aurelian; see Holum 1982: 97–100; Al. Cameron and Long 1993: 78.

⁸⁸ Sozomen, *Eccl. hist.* 9.16.4–9.17.6; *Chron. pasch.* 415. Sozomen mentions the discovery of Stephen the Proto-martyr and the biblical prophet Zachariah; the *Chronicon Paschale* mentions the patriarch Joseph and Zachariah, the father of John the Baptist. Al. Cameron and Long also suggest that an initial, unsuccessful attempt to import the relics of Stephen, discovered in Jerusalem in 415, may have occurred the following year under the patronage of the new praetorian prefect Aurelian (414–416). For their argument that Aurelian built a martyrion for Stephen’s relics but failed to acquire them from the bishop of Jerusalem, see Al. Cameron and Long 1993: 73–74.

against performing baptisms, assembling in Constantinople (and, almost as an afterthought, elsewhere in the provinces), and transferring property through gifts or intestacy.⁸⁹ Also in October, a rescript was issued against Gamaliel VI, the Jewish patriarch in Palestine, in which the honorary prefecture previously granted him was revoked and he was barred from judging any cases involving Christians. This same rescript also banned new synagogue construction, allowed for the destruction of existing synagogues in remote places (*in solitudine*) (provided that their destruction did not incite sedition), and forbade Gamaliel or any Jew from “pollut[ing] a Christian or a man of any sect ...with the Jewish stigma.”⁹⁰ It is interesting to note, as Oded Irshai does, that the rescript against Gamaliel was shortly followed by the discovery of the relics of the proto-martyr Stephen on the estate claimed to have belonged to the Pharisee Gamaliel, and according to the later chronicles of Marcellinus Comes (sixth century) and Theophanes (ninth century) these relics were brought to Constantinople.⁹¹ The two events may not have been connected, but the timing is certainly suggestive. At the very least, the

⁸⁹ CTh 16.5.58. Theodosios’ name is recorded on laws pertaining to cultic matters before this, but the majority (twenty-nine out of forty-one) of these pertain to disputes occurring in the West.

⁹⁰ CTh 16.8.22: “Si Christianum vel cuiuslibet sectae hominem ingenuum servum vel Iudaica nota foedare temptaverit vel ipse vel quisquam Iudaeorum, legum severitati subdatur.” (Translation Pharr.) Coleman-Norton and Pharr interpret the “Jewish mark” as a reference to circumcision; see Coleman-Norton 1966: 571n7; Pharr 2001: 470 n.44. A further aspect of this law that I find curious is its differentiation between those who can claim the Christian appellation and those of “whatever sect” (presumably those who would themselves claim to be Christian, but potentially including other cultic identifications as well). Also note the similarity in attitudes toward the synagogues situated *in solitudine* here and the temples similarly situated in CTh 16.10.16 (399 C.E.). As Al. Cameron and Long note, 415 also witnessed anti-Jewish riots in Alexandria. Over the next three years, directives were given to officials in Alexandria regarding the numbers and activities of the *parabalani*, ascetics who tended the sick and who had been identified as agitators in the riots. See CTh 16.2.42, 16.2.43; Al. Cameron and Long 1993: 78. Holum credits these particular measures to Pulcheria’s persecution of Jews and connects them to Cyril’s attacks on synagogues in Alexandria; see Holum 1982: 98.

⁹¹ Irshai 2012: 36 n.55. For the discovery of the relics, see Lucian, *Revelation of St. Stephen*. For their translation to Constantinople, see Marcellinus Comes, *Chron.* 439.2; Theophanes, *Chron.* AM 5920. For the problems with these accounts (i.e., of the translation to Constantinople), see E. Clark 1982: 143, 151.

conjunction of these two moments illuminates the promotion of Theodosian Christianity within imperial religious frameworks.

The imperial injunctions against non-Theodosian Christians and Jews in 415 were joined in December by Theodosios' first "anti-pagan" legislation, barring those "polluted by the error of pagan rites" from military and administrative offices.⁹² This is the first instance wherein non-Christians were barred from these offices. Earlier legislation against traditional cult was directed at the apparatus of cult: prohibitions against sacrifice and festivals, the removal of cult images, the withholding of temple funds, and injunctions against priests.

Another outburst of religious activity occurred almost a decade later, in 423. In February, Theodosios' court affirmed the protection of Jewish synagogues and their assets from seizure, but forbade the construction of new synagogues.⁹³ Two months later, on April 9, the protection of synagogues was repeated, but this time it was paired with injunctions against practitioners of traditional cult and other non-imperial cults, namely, Manichaeans, Phrygians (Montanists), Arians, Makedonians, Eunomians, and now, Novatians and Sabbatians.⁹⁴ These same groups would be targeted again on June 8, 423.⁹⁵

⁹² CTh 16.10.21: "Qui profano pagani ritus errore seu crimine polluuntur, hoc est gentiles, nec ad militiam admittantur nec administratoris vel iudicis honore decorentur." The abbreviated translation in this case is mine—Pharr's translation here potentially obscures the fluidity of religious practice and the ease with which accusations of "paganism" could be levied. It is also worth noting legislation forbidding those "hostile to the Catholic sect" from "performing imperial service within the palace" was issued in Ravenna under Honorios in 408; CTh 16.5.42.

⁹³ CTh 16.8.25. (February 15, 423).

⁹⁴ CTh 16.5.59, 16.8.26, and 16.10.22 (all issued April 9, 423, quite possibly in the same imperial letter). Two further points of interest from these constitutions are worth noting. CTh 16.5.59 is the first time Novatians had been explicitly identified with other targeted non-imperial cult groups, and Theodosios states that he believes there are no surviving *paganoi*. (Paganos qui supersunt, quamquam iam nullos esse credamus, promulgatarum iam dudum praescripta conpescant.)

⁹⁵ CTh 16.5.60, 16.8.27, 16.10.23, and 16.10.24.

This period of active legislation coincides with other significant events for the Theodosian court and Constantinople, namely, the birth of Theodosios' and Eudokia's daughter in 422 and the elevation of Eudokia as Augusta in January 423.⁹⁶ Additionally, the early seventh-century *Chronicon Paschale* reports that a series of earthquakes struck the city on April 7; interestingly, this was two days before Theodosios' first extensive censuring of non-imperial groups in Constantinople, mentioned above.⁹⁷ John Chrysostom had earlier called the city to penitence and purification following an earthquake in 398.⁹⁸ If the *Chronicon*'s date for this earthquake is accurate, it is easy to imagine how individuals within the city could have incorporated the event into a developing program to consolidate the city's religious frameworks under Theodosian Christianity.

The Constantinopolitan Episcopacy

Such was the political climate into which Nestorios entered in the spring of 428, as Theodosios was moving to further consolidate the boundaries of imperial Christianity. History remembers Nestorios more for theological matters than for his actions against non-imperial Christians. Yet, while the reactions to Nestorios' teaching were important for the last decades of Theodosios' reign, the so-called Nestorian controversy that eventually led to the Council of Chalcedon distracts from larger debates occurring during

⁹⁶ See Sokrates, *Eccl. hist.* 7.44.1; John Malalas, *Chron.* 14.8; *Chron. pasch.* 421, 423.

⁹⁷ The *Chronicon Paschale* is our only source for this earthquake, and I am therefore hesitant to draw the connection too strongly. However, rituals of purification are frequently reported in response to earthquakes that struck the city during the fourth and fifth centuries. Both John Malalas (*Chron.* 14.22) and the *Chronicon Paschale* mention an earthquake that occurred on January 26, 447, in response to which Theodosios II led *litai* barefoot for several days. A list of earthquakes in Constantinople, though incomplete, was compiled in Downey 1955 (for our period see pp. 596–97).

⁹⁸ John Chrysostom, *After the Earthquake* (PG 50.713–16). See above, Chapter 4, pp. 169, 183–84.

the fifth century, in which Nestorios himself was an active participant. As Fergus Millar comments, from the perspective of hindsight Theodosios' choice to bring Nestorios to the capital as his bishop precisely at a moment when the emperor was asserting his own piety and the hegemony of Theodosian Christianity appears paradoxical. However, neither Theodosios nor Nestorios foresaw the dispute that would arise.⁹⁹ It is my contention that Nestorios acted precisely in the manner that was expected of the bishop to an emperor already interested in shoring up the boundaries of normative Christianity.

The precise circumstances and political moves Nestorios made upon his installation are difficult to reconstruct, since our earliest narrative account for this aspect of Nestorios' episcopacy is Sokrates, who writes over a decade later and is highly partisan against the bishop. However, the details conveyed by Sokrates suggest Nestorios' involvement in the Theodosian project. The bishop's inaugural words to the emperor demonstrates his commitment to rooting out non-imperial religious elements: "Give to me, oh king, a land cleansed of heretics (τῶν αἰρετικῶν), and I will reward you with heaven; help me overcome the heretics, and I will help you overcome the Persians."¹⁰⁰ Likewise Nestorios' efforts to fulfill this program—his demolition of an Arian chapel in Constantinople, his targeting of the Novatian bishop Paul, and his incitement of riots against the Quartodecimans—similarly point to the bishop's participation in sanctioned endeavors to enforce Theodosian Christianity.¹⁰¹ Nestorios' actions could be interpreted

⁹⁹ Millar 2006: 152.

¹⁰⁰ Sokrates, *Eccl. hist.* 7.29.5: Δός μοι...ὃ βασιλεῦ, καθαρὰν τὴν γῆν τῶν αἰρετικῶν, καὶ γὰρ σοι τὸν οὐρανὸν ἀντιδώσω· συγκαθέλε μοι τοὺς αἰρετικούς, καὶ γὰρ συγκαθελῶ σοι τοὺς Πέρσας. (My translation.)

¹⁰¹ Sokrates, *Eccl. hist.* 7.29.8–12.

as license for other bishops to engage in similar persecutions, and Sokrates is highly critical of both Nestorios and those who followed his lead in targeting non-imperial clergy. In the *Bazaar of Heracleides*, Nestorios himself makes reference to “all the heretics that had been rejected by me.”¹⁰² While he does not elaborate on the nature of his actions, his comments may be in reference to the program described by Sokrates.

Throughout his narrative, Sokrates is careful to distance Theodosios from these affairs, and his narrative suggests that Nestorios’ “vulgar” methods to suppress non-Theodosian Christianity did not enjoy imperial support. However, I propose that behind Sokrates’ presentation lies a subtle recrimination against Theodosios for precisely the opposite circumstances: that Nestorios was acting with Theodosios’ approval, if not active authorization. If this is the case, Nestorios was complying with the expectations of Theodosios, now in his late thirties and interested in further consolidating the cult landscape. This possibility is supported by sentiments expressed in legislation issued in Theodosios’ name from Constantinople less than two months (on May 30, 428) after Nestorios’ installation as bishop:

The madness of the heretics must be so suppressed that they shall know beyond doubt, before all else, that the churches which they have stolen away from the orthodox, wherever they are held, shall immediately be surrendered to the imperial church (*catholicae ecclesiae*), since it cannot be tolerated that those who ought not to have churches of their own should continue to detain those possessed or founded by the orthodox and invaded by such rash lawlessness.¹⁰³

¹⁰² Nestorios, *Bazaar of Heracleides* p. 383 (Bedjan =Driver/Hodgson 277–78): kul-hūn harāṭyqe ’aylein dmen qdim meny ’eštriu wāw. (My translation.)

¹⁰³ CTh 16.5.65: “Haereticorum ita est reprimenda insania, ut ante omnia quas ab orthodoxis abreptas tenent ubicumque ecclesias statim catholicae ecclesiae tradendas esse non ambigant, quia ferri non potest, ut, qui nec proprias habere debuerant, ab orthodoxis possessas aut conditas sua que temeritate invasas ultra detineant.” (Trans. Pharr, with modification.) I recognize that my translation of *catholicae ecclesiae* as “imperial church” is unconventional, but this translation conveys the force of Theodosios’ statement more accurately. As I have argued throughout this dissertation, the groups and structures that came to be identified as the universal church were those who were able to tie themselves to the emperor.

This rescript, addressed to the praetorian prefect Florentius, is the penultimate constitution in the anti-heretical legislation (Book 16, Title 5) of the Theodosian Code. In addition to providing a highly articulated censure of non-imperial churches, this particular constitution includes the longest heresiology in the Code: Arians, Makedonians, Apollonarians, Novatians, Sabbatians, Eunomians, Valentinians, Montanists or Priscillianists, Phrygians, Marcianists, Borborians, Messalians, Euchites or Enthusiasts, Donatists, Audians, Hydroparastate, Tascodrogitae, Photinians, Paulians, Marcellians, and Manichaeans.¹⁰⁴

Of these groups, the Novatians and Sabbatians had rarely been targeted by earlier legislation recorded in Book 16 of the Code.¹⁰⁵ The rescript of 428, however, signals a shift in imperial attitude. Now the Novatians and Sabbatians were unceremoniously inserted into the lists of “traditional heretics.”¹⁰⁶ Nonetheless, their position was slightly better than the other groups listed. Whereas Novatians and Sabbatians could continue in the spaces they already possessed provided they not construct new cult spaces, the other

¹⁰⁴ This particular constitution is the focus of a recent article by Richard Flowers, who compares its heresiology to that of Epiphanius and Augustine. In contrast to these two authors, who present genealogical constructions of heresy, CTh 16.5.65 categorizes heresy according to four groups (“Schismatics,” “Arians,” “Manichaeans,” and “others”); Flowers 2013: 184–92. For speculation that Nestorius was responsible for this law, see Holum 1982: 150–1; Honoré 1998: 115–16; Flowers 2013: 192–93.

¹⁰⁵ Previously these two groups enjoyed a semi-protected status in the preserved legislation—in fact, a law from Constantine in 326 explicitly states that that emperor had not found the Novatians “precondemned (*praedamnare*)” and grants them their own buildings by virtue of this finding. See CTh 16.5.2.

¹⁰⁶ The only other time these groups are catalogued with heresies in Book 16 of the Code is 16.5.59 (April 9, 423). One other mention of the Novatians appears in Book 16, but this is an indictment against those who would depart from the imperial church on the date of Pascha (likely the group that would become identified as the Sabbatians), not a formal censure of the Novatians ; CTh 16.6.6 (413).

groups were forbidden from possessing any buildings or gathering for ritual action.¹⁰⁷ In addition, those identified with any of these “heresies” (presumably, including the Novatians and Sabbatians) could not be employed in imperial service, except as the staff of provincial governors and common soldiers, and they could not make reciprocal gifts or wills. The concern here appears to have been to prevent individuals associated with (or suspected of being associated with) non-orthodox elements from positions of power and influence. These measures bring us back to what I argued in the previous chapter, namely, that by creating a monopoly on authorized ritual action, those invested in Theodosian Christianity could assert their hegemony and dictate perceptions of legitimate religion by controlling access to cult practice.

I propose it was during this period (from 427 onwards) that Theodosios took a more active hand in his court’s attempts to regulate cultic matters and to impose a more defined model of Theodosian Christianity on Constantinople. As I have outlined, moves toward consolidating Constantinople’s religious landscape had occurred earlier in Theodosios’ reign, most notably in 415 and then in 423. The former period of legislation probably occurred under the direction of the consistory. The agents behind the latter are less certain, although I suspect that Theodosios had a stronger hand in them as he entered adulthood. In regard to this new period of legislation, the emperor was now approaching his thirtieth year, and moves to further consolidate the religion of the empire would have been a way to assert his autonomy and to strengthen his position and that of any heir he might produce.

¹⁰⁷ The legislation also asserts the imperial church’s monopoly on baptism. CTh 16.5.65.4.

In addition to selecting a bishop motivated to root out heresy and new imperial legislation against these same groups, this third period of consolidation coincided with the compilation of the Theodosian Code. Begun in 429, the compilation was completed in 437 and promulgated before the Roman Senate in February 438.¹⁰⁸ This entailed the redaction and organization of a century's worth of imperial statements, spanning from Constantine to Theodosios II, most of which were responses (*rescripta*) to particular questions and situations rather than general laws.¹⁰⁹ These statements were now artificially presented as a body of general imperial pronouncements.¹¹⁰ Essentially, as Millar describes it, the Code is an assortment of internal communications, artifacts of an administrative apparatus, now transformed into a collection of laws.

The resulting collection, while not explicitly denying the Roman legal culture extant before the fourth century, constructs a decisive reorientation of society under Constantine.¹¹¹ This reorientation is particularly pronounced in Book 16 of the Code, which addresses matters of religion. No law in this book predates Constantine, lending the assembly a decidedly pro-Christian tone.¹¹² Moreover, even as the Code's reorientation of society pivots on Constantine's patronage of Christianity, that

¹⁰⁸ Honoré 1998: 97. The initiation of the project is recorded in CTh 1.1.5; the promulgation of the code is addressed in Theodosios' first Novel.

¹⁰⁹ Although, as Honoré observes, the stated intent of the project was to include a compilation of Diocletian's legislation, to be then harmonized with the legislation from Constantine onwards. Only the compilation of legislation from Constantine to 437 was realized under Theodosios II; Justinian would finish the project on his own terms. For more complete discussions of the Code's compilation, see Honoré 1998: 123–27, 136–53; Harries 1999b: 22–25; and J. Matthews 2000: 55–62, 67–70.

¹¹⁰ Harries 1999b: 31; Millar 2006: 7.

¹¹¹ Honoré 1998: 124–25.

¹¹² The earliest constitution in Book 16 is 16.2.1, dated October 31, 313, protecting Christian clergy from the demands of public service. The Code conveniently omits any legislation promulgated by Julian (except from his time as Constantius' Caesar) and Jovian.

reorientation depends entirely upon Theodosios himself. Over a third of the constitutions recorded in Book 16 date to his lifetime, and each title in the book (and in the Code as a whole) culminates with Theodosios II's own development and clarification of the topic at hand.¹¹³ The effect is, to quote Christopher Kelly, "the systematic accumulation of authority" that places Theodosios II at the pinnacle of jurisprudence.¹¹⁴ Thus, the Code implicitly accepts and explicitly asserts the primacy of Theodosian Christianity within the religious frameworks of the empire.

Further evidence of Theodosios' program of homogenization, I argue, can be found in traces of an anti-Theodosian reaction in Philostorgios' *Ecclesiastical History*, thought to have been written in Constantinople between 425 and 433.¹¹⁵ While the surviving fragments of Philostorgios' work say relatively little about Theodosios II himself, his commentary is telling. Philostorgios derides the heavy hand of Pulcheria in the young emperor's reign, commenting that Pulcheria supervised each imperial superscription that he signed.¹¹⁶ Additionally, Philostorgios reports the ill-omens that appeared when Theodosios reached adolescence:

On the nineteenth of July at about the eighth hour, the sun was so completely eclipsed that stars appeared. And such a drought followed this event that there

¹¹³ Fortunately, Book 16 is among the portion of the Code for which we have good manuscript support. Interestingly, a disproportionate number of laws dating between 401 and 415 are directed to various forms of non-Nicene Christianity in the West. Due the conventions of imperial proclamations of this sort, Theodosios' name is attached to each of these constitutions. See J. Matthews 2000: 86–7. That so many Western laws would be incorporated for this period, in contrast to the period after 415, suggests to me that the Code's compilers were using activity in the West in order to create a consistent image of the emperor as "being tough on heresy" even during his childhood. However, this impression may simply be the product of the available source material, as some archives for imperial legislation were better sources than others. Nonetheless, the impression remains. See Honoré 1998: 137–141.

¹¹⁴ C. Kelly 2013: 40.

¹¹⁵ For discussion of the date of Philostorgios' history, see above, p. 198 n.8.

¹¹⁶ Philostorgios, *Eccl. hist.* 12.7.

was everywhere an unusually high number of deaths of human beings and animals. There appeared in the sky with the sun while in eclipse a cone-shaped light, which some out of ignorance called a comet...And the year following there began earthquakes that it would be hard to compare to those previous, while along with the earthquakes a fire burst down from the sky that destroyed all hope of safety...And then there was a strange sight to be seen: the waves on fire far and wide as though they were a thickly vegetated landscape, until the conflagration was completely quenched by the sea.¹¹⁷

These omens, Philostorgios claims, were the result of God's wrath.¹¹⁸ Philostorgios does not specify why God was chastising the empire, but if the historian was indeed writing in the late 420s or early 430s, it seems to me quite possible that he was criticizing the steps Theodosios was beginning to take to homogenize the cult of the empire and eradicate those elements deemed outside the boundaries of Theodosian Christianity.

Philostorgios' narrative also critiques Theodosios II by negatively portraying the emperor's predecessors, in particular Constantine.¹¹⁹ As Jill Harries has argued, fifth-century depictions of Theodosios II owed much to Eusebios' Constantine, who is the paragon of piety.¹²⁰ Sokrates and Sozomen both depict a Theodosios who follows Constantine's model in devoting sleepless nights to the study of God, demonstrating philosophical virtue in enduring the elements, and participating in intellectual disputes in the manner of a philosopher-bishop.¹²¹ Constantine is not this model of Christian devotion for Philostorgios. Rather, Constantine disguises the practices of traditional cult

¹¹⁷ Philostorgios, *Eccl. hist.* 12.8.

¹¹⁸ Philostorgios, *Eccl. hist.* 12.9.

¹¹⁹ See also the brief discussion of Philostorgios' description of ritual practices under Constantine above, Chapter 2, pp. 72–73.

¹²⁰ Harries 1994: 37–44.

¹²¹ Cp. Eusebios, *Eccl. hist.* 1.1, *Life of Constantine* 4.29, 4.63; Sokrates, *Eccl. hist.* 7.23; Sozomen, *Eccl. hist.* preface.

as pseudo-Christianity. Cases in point are Philostorgios' accounts of Constantine's foundation of Constantinople and of the worship of Constantine's image by the people of the city. In the former case, Constantine followed the traditional rite of *limitatio*, in which he traced the boundary of the city with a spear guided by an unspecified divine agent.¹²² As I noted in Chapter 2, this ritual (noticeably absent in Eusebios' account of the city's founding) was reminiscent of rituals of Rome's foundation in Livy, Ovid, and Dionysius of Halicarnassus.¹²³ Philostorgios also accused Christians of worshipping the statue of Constantine on the porphyry column, claiming that the people of the city "paid homage to it with lamp-lighting and incense or prayed to it as to a god, and offered it supplications to avert calamities."¹²⁴ In both instances, I propose, Philostorgios was alluding to the emperor's engagement in ritual practices with clearly "pagan" resonances in order to suggest that Constantine was "not quite Christian." If Constantine was not the model of Christian piety, was it possible that Theodosios II followed his exemplar a bit too closely?

Philostorgios' criticisms of Theodosios II were further refracted through his depictions of the emperor's grandfather and father. Theodosios I, according to Philostorgios, "lacked self-restraint and modesty in the enjoyment of luxury, which

¹²² Philostorgios, *Eccl. hist.* 2.9.

¹²³ Livy 1.7.2; Ovid, *Fasti* 4.833–48; Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Roman Antiquities* 1.88.2; cp. Plutarch, *Life of Romulus* 11.1–4 and Tacitus, *Annals* 12.23–24. Admittedly, the imagery presented here may have more to do with depicting Constantinople as the New Rome and Constantine as the New Romulus. All the same, the resonances of traditional cult practice are difficult to ignore. See also my comments above in chapter 2, p. 71 n.80.

¹²⁴ Philostorgios, *Eccl. hist.* 2.17: Οὗτος ὁ θεομάχος καὶ τὴν Κωνσταντίνου εἰκόνα, τὴν ἐπὶ τοῦ πορφυροῦ κίονος ἱσταμένην, θυσίαις τε ἰλάσκεσθαι καὶ λυχνοκαΐαις καὶ θυμιάμασι τιμᾶν, καὶ εὐχὰς προσάγειν ὥς θεῷ καὶ ἀποτροπαίους ἰκετηρίας τῶν δεινῶν ἐπιτελεῖν τοὺς Χριστιανοὺς κατηγορεῖ. (Trans. Amidon 2007, with minor emendations.)

was...the reason why he fell victim to dropsy,” while Arkadios was “short, slight of build, weakly, and dark in complexion,” and whose “dullness of mind was evident in his speech and the way his eyes looked as they drooped sleepily downward beneath their drowsy lids.”¹²⁵ Under these emperors, Philostorgios asserted, the empire had suffered an extraordinary loss of human life, not only from invasion, but also from natural disasters that manifested God’s wrath: famine, plague, attacks by wild beasts, earthquakes, lightening storms, and hailstorms.¹²⁶ Again, Philostorgios implies, this was not exactly the pedigree a pious emperor should boast.

The decision to begin the collection of the Theodosian Code at the reign of Constantine, who had been presented by Eusebios as a prominent lawgiver, suggests to me that there was some level of concurrence in the court for this portrait of Theodosios II.¹²⁷ Intentional resonances between the two emperors are also reflected by Sokrates and Sozomen, whose later histories extended from the reign of Constantine to that of Theodosios II.¹²⁸ I strongly suspect that Philostorgios’ descriptions of Constantine’s

¹²⁵ Philostorgios, *Eccl. hist.* 11.2: ἐπ’ ἀκρασίᾳ βίου καὶ τροφῆς ἀμετρία, δι’ ἣν αὐτὸν ἀλῶναι...καὶ τῷ τοῦ ὑδέρου νοσήματι; and 11.3: ὁ δὲ Ἀρκάδιος βραχὺς τῷ μεγέθει καὶ λεπτὸς τὴν ἔξιν καὶ ἀδρανὴς τὴν ἰσχὺν καὶ τὸ χρῶμα μέλας καὶ τὴν τῆς ψυχῆς νοθεΐαν οἱ τε λόγοι διήγγελλον καὶ τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν ἡ φύσις, ὑπνηλῶς τε καὶ δυσαναφόρως αὐτοὺς δεικνύσα καθελκομένους. (Trans. Amidon 2007.) Zosimos, writing around the beginning of the sixth century, was more explicit in his criticisms against the Theodosian dynasty, commenting on Theodosios I’s profligate lifestyle (particularly his propensity for overeating and sex), deriding Theodosios I and Arkadios for the influence of their wives, and insinuating that Theodosios II was the product of an affair between Eudoxia and John, Arkadios’ close friend. Zosimos, *New History* 4.41, 4.44, 4.49–50, 5.3, 5.18.8, 5.24. Regarding John, the translators are careful to note that this John is not John Chrysostom, but another official in Arkadios’ court. However, with a quick read, it is easy to presume that Zosimos is claiming that John Chrysostom is the father of Eudoxia’s child, and one wonders if this was not Zosimos’ intention.

¹²⁶ Philostorgios, *Eccl. hist.* 11.7.

¹²⁷ Harries 1994: 37–38.

¹²⁸ The preserved narrative sequence of Philostorgios begins with Eusebios and Constantine (1.2). Again, the fragmentary nature of Philostorgios’ text prevents us from knowing the beginning point for his history. Bidez’s edited compilation places Philostorgios’ comments on the authorship of Maccabees (1.1) at the beginning of the *History*; however, this is not a necessary conclusion.

founding of Constantinople and the public worship of Constantine's image were meant to impeach Theodosios and his city. If this is the case, and if Theodosios and his court were already appealing to the memory of Constantine, then Philostorgios may have been employing this same image of Constantine as a way of challenging the legitimacy of Theodosios.

The Rhetoric of an Imperial Christian Identity

This interest among members of the imperial court, including, as I am positing, Theodosios II himself, to conform imperial religion to a unified vision of Nicene Christianity depended heavily upon the marginalization of non-Theodosian elements. The legislative and ecclesiastical efforts to accomplish this goal was mirrored in the development of a rhetoric of imperial Christian identity—most evident in the narratives of Sokrates and Sozomen—that focused on the piety of the emperor and the religious purity of his city. In Chapter 3, I examined components of these authors' portrayals of Constantinople, particularly the way in which they use narrative to eliminate non-Theodosian elements from the city's topography and power structures. Here I turn to the way these authors argue that the preservation of their city and the regions under Theodosios' control depended on his piety and commitment to maintaining Constantinople's orthodox character. Ultimately, the emperor's piety was a crucial rhetorical point for assertions about his legitimacy as well as about the legitimacy of Theodosian Christianity.

Above I discussed Sozomen's presentation of Theodosios' piety. Sokrates, too, presents Theodosios as the paragon of imperial piety:

Though born and nurtured in kingly office (ἐν βασιλείᾳ), he was in no way indolent from his rearing, but he was so exceedingly wise that he was thought by his conversation partners to have acquired knowledge from extensive practical experience. And he had such endurance that he nobly endured both frost and heat, and he fasted often especially on Wednesdays and Fridays (παρασκευὰς ἡμέρας), and he did this earnestly to Christianize perfectly. He structured the court no different than a monastery (ἀσκητηρίου). Accordingly, he along with his sisters rose before dawn to recite antiphonal hymns to God. Because of this, he recited the sacred Scriptures from heart. Indeed he conversed with bishops as an old, well-established priest (ιερεὺς) expounds (διελέγετο) from the Scriptures.¹²⁹

In contrast to Sozomen, Sokrates clearly views the emperor as an adult and the director of court affairs. Sokrates' Theodosios is the exemplar of ascetic masculinity: he fasts, subjects himself to hardship, and willingly endures heat and cold.¹³⁰ This presentation may have reflected actual court life, but its significance lies in its appeals to earlier philosophical and biblical tropes to demonstrate the legitimacy of Theodosios.¹³¹ Theodosios is a new Sokrates of Athens, and like that Sokrates, who stood an entire night barefoot in the snow in meditation, Theodosios is a paragon of philosophical virtue.¹³² At

¹²⁹ Sokrates, *Eccl. hist.* 7.22.2–4: Πρῶτον μὲν γὰρ ἐν βασιλείᾳ τεχθεὶς καὶ τραφεὶς οὐδὲν ἐκ τῆς ἀνατροφῆς εἶχεν βλακῶδες, ἀλλ' οὕτως ἦν φρόνιμος, ὥς τοῖς ἐντυγχάνουσιν νομίζεσθαι διάπειραν πολλῶν εἰληφέναι πραγμάτων, καρτερικὸς δὲ οὕτως, ὥς καὶ κρύος καὶ καῦμα γενναίως ὑπομένειν, νηστεύειν τε τὰ πολλὰ καὶ μάλιστα τὰς καλουμένας τετράδας καὶ παρασκευὰς ἡμέρας, καὶ τοῦτο ἐποίει ἄκρως χριστιανίζειν ἐσπουδακῶς. Οὐκ ἄλλοιότερα δὲ ἀσκητηρίου κατέστησε τὰ βασίλεια· αὐτὸς τοιγαροῦν <σὺν> ταῖς ἑαυτοῦ ἀδελφαῖς ὀρθρίζων ἀντιφώνους ὕμνους εἰς τὸ θεῖον ἔλεγεν. Διὸ καὶ τὰ ἱερὰ γράμματα ἀπὸ στήθους ἀπήγγελλεν. Ἐντυγχάνουσι γοῦν τοῖς ἐπισκόποις ὡς ἱερεὺς πάλαι καθεστὼς ἐκ τῶν γραφῶν διελέγετο· (My translation.)

¹³⁰ This is not to deny that late antique Christian women also performed similar ascetic practices; however, this particular constellation of activity resonates with discussions of the philosophical virtues.

¹³¹ Claudia Rapp (2005: 41–55) has shown that similar constructions inform assertions about episcopal piety and legitimacy during the fourth century. I think the convergence of imagery is not accidental.

¹³² Plato, *Symposium* 220a–b.

the same time, this portrait of Theodosios carries biblical undertones: like Jesus in the temple, Theodosios instructs the bishops in matters of religion.¹³³

Indeed, Theodosios' virtue is not that of a conquering general, but of a philosopher-king and imitator of Christ, who guards the *oikoumenē* through his active piety. Sokrates draws a stark contrast between Theodosios, a true philosopher, and his predecessor Julian, who had only styled himself as a philosopher. Whereas Julian could not control his anger, Theodosios demonstrated self-control. Never, Sokrates claims, did the young emperor attack those who had insulted him; indeed, he had never been seen even mildly irritated. Rather, Theodosios was the paragon of clemency, even commuting death sentences and forbidding gladiators from fighting beasts in the arena.¹³⁴

This is quite a different picture from the Theodosios of later sources who had exiled the urban prefect Kyros because the prefect's popularity threatened his own and had executed his friend Paulinos.¹³⁵ Indeed, Luke Gardiner notes a hint of irony in Sokrates' exposition of Theodosios's clemency, juxtaposed as it is with Theodosios' prayers for the death of the usurper John. Gardiner argues that the Constantinopolitan audience would have been well aware of other recent events, including the execution of

¹³³ Jesus frequently appears teaching in the temple. See, for example, Mark 12:35–37, 14:49; Matthew 26:55; Luke 2:41–52, 19:47–48, 21:37–38. Note that in Luke 2:41–52, it is a boy Jesus instructing the priests. If Sokrates is alluding to the Lukan passage, it is the rare instance when he pictures Theodosios as a child.

¹³⁴ Sokrates, *Eccl. hist.* 7.22.5–12.

¹³⁵ **Exile of Kyros:** Malalas, *Chron.* 14.16; *Chron. Pasch.* 450; and Theophanes, *Chron.* AM 5937. The **Execution of Paulinos:** see above, pg. 207 n.40. Both events are thought to have occurred in the early 440s; this date is based on an entry in the sixth-century chronicler Marcellinus Comes (*Chron.* 440). Holum accepts the accusations of an affair and the subsequent execution of Paulinos. He also names Eudokia as Kyros' *patrona* and attributes the downfalls of Kyros and Paulinos, along with the exiles and executions of several others in 443 to the eunuch Chrysaphios. See Holum 1982: 176–77, 190–94.

Paulinos, that would have undermined these claims of clemency.¹³⁶ I agree with Gardiner's assessment on the undertones of irony, even criticism, in Sokrates' portrayal. Even so, these undertones do not negate the rhetoric of imperial virtue that pervades Sokrates' narrative. If anything, the irony heightens this rhetoric and makes appeals to imperial virtue in order to draw attention to the ways in which Theodosios had stepped outside his character and reminds the emperor of his contract with the people.

According to Sokrates, God had repaid Theodosios amply for his devotion, by answering Theodosios' prayers for the safety of the empire. When a snowstorm descended upon the city while the population was gathered in the hippodrome for games, Theodosios led the populace in supplication:

When the hippodrome was filled with men, the storm intensified with a raging snow fall; the emperor then made clear his disposition toward the divine and addressed the people through the herald: "But it is far better" he said, "for all to disdain the spectacles and to entreat (λιτανεῦσαι) God together, so that we might preserve ourselves from the storm that has beset us." No sooner had he spoken the word did all the people make entreaty with great rejoicing and raised hymns to God with one voice and the entire city became one church. The emperor, dressed as a private citizen (ἐν ἰδιωτικῷ σχήματι), processed to the middle and led the hymns. And he did not err in his hope, for the weather turned calm, and the philanthropy of God yielded to all a surplus rather than a famine.¹³⁷

¹³⁶ Gardiner 2013: 261.

¹³⁷ Sokrates, *Eccl. hist.* 7.22.15–18: Ὡς δὲ πεπληρωμένου ἀνδρῶν τοῦ ἵπποδρόμου ἐπέτεινεν ὁ χειμὼν πολλοῦ νιφετοῦ καταρραγέντος, τότε δὴ τὴν ἑαυτοῦ γνώμην ὁ βασιλεὺς, οἷαν εἶχεν περὶ τὸ θεῖον, δὴλην καθίστησιν, τῷ δήμῳ προσφωνήσας διὰ τῶν κηρύκων· "Ἀλλὰ πολλῷ κρείσσον, ἔφη, καταφρονήσαντας τῆς θεᾶς κοινῇ πάντας λιτανεῦσαι Θεόν, ὅπως ἀβλαβεῖς τοῦ ἐπικειμένου χειμῶνος φυλαχθῆμεν." Καὶ οὕτω πᾶν εἴρητο τὸ ἔπος, καὶ σὺν χαρᾷ μεγίστῃ ἐν τῷ ἵπποδρόμῳ λιτανεύοντες ὕμνους ἐκ συμφωνίας πάντες ἀνέπεμπον τῷ Θεῷ καὶ ὅλη μὲν ἡ πόλις μία ἐκκλησία ἐγένετο, βασιλεὺς δὲ μέσος ἐξήρχετο τῶν ὕμνων ἐν ἰδιωτικῷ σχήματι πορευόμενος. Καὶ τῆς ἐλπίδος οὐχ ἥμαρτεν· ὁ ἄηρ γὰρ εἰς τὸ εὐδινὸν μετεβάλετο, καὶ ἐκ σιτοδείας ἡ τοῦ Θεοῦ φιλανθρωπία εὐετηρίαν παρείχε τοῖς σύμπασιν. (My translation.) A.C. Zenos (1890) mistranslates ἐν ἰδιωτικῷ σχήματι at 7.22.17 as "in official garments." Luke Gardiner notes how risky Theodosios' abandonment of his regalia appears in Sokrates' narrative, as it could signal the abdication of power. See, for example, the usurper Vetricianus, who cast off the imperial garb before Constantius (Sokrates, *Eccl. hist.* 2.28.18). Gardiner 2013: 260.

Immediately after reporting this incident, Sokrates provides further evidence of God's favor towards Theodosios. After the death of the western emperor Honorios, one of Honorios' secretaries, John, usurped the throne and captured the general, Ardaburius, sent by Theodosios to depose him. Not only did an angel appear in the form of a shepherd to guide Ardaburius' son and his troops to a lake near Ravenna where John was holding the general under guard, but God also facilitated the capture of John by draining the lake.¹³⁸

For Sozomen, just as for Sokrates, the security of the empire depends on the piety of the imperial court. Sozomen explicitly sets imperial piety as the theme for the final book of his history: "Above all it seems to me that God has proven that piety alone secures the salvation of emperors; without this [piety] armies, the strength of an emperor, and any other armament are nothing."¹³⁹ Unlike Sokrates, however, Sozomen depicts a court directed not by the emperor alone, but by a celibate imperial couple, Theodosios and his eldest sister Pulcheria.¹⁴⁰ Moreover, Pulcheria assumed the role of mother to prepare the child-emperor for his duties.¹⁴¹ She arranged the best tutors to instruct

¹³⁸ Sokrates, *Eccl. hist.* 7.23.3–10. Upon receiving news of John's capture, Theodosios led the civic body in procession from the hippodrome to the Great Church in praise of God.

¹³⁹ Sozomen, *Eccl. hist.* 9.1.2: ἡ μοι δοκεῖ μάλιστα τὸν θεὸν ἐπιδείξει μόνην εὐσέβειαν ἀρκεῖν πρὸς σωτηρίαν τοῖς βασιλεύουσιν, ἄνευ δὲ ταύτης μηδὲν εἶναι στρατεύματα καὶ βασιλέως ἰσχὺν καὶ τὴν ἄλλην παρασκευήν. (My translation.)

¹⁴⁰ Sozomen, *Eccl. hist.* 9.1.10–11, 9.3.1–2. Holum unfortunately reads Sozomen's portrayal of Pulcheria into Sokrates' account. Sokrates, however, never mentions Pulcheria by name, relegating her to the collective of Theodosios' sisters, whom the emperor governed as a paterfamilias and archimandrite. For Sokrates, Theodosios is responsible for the court piety; Pulcheria has no agency. Holum acknowledges this fact several pages later. See Holum 1982: 91, 95 (with n.77).

¹⁴¹ Sozomen, *Eccl. hist.* 9.1.5–7: ὑπεισελθοῦσα δὲ τὴν φροντίδα τῆς ἡγεμονίας ἄριστα καὶ ἐν κόσμῳ πολλῶ τὴν Ῥωμαίων οἰκουμένην διώκησεν, εὖ βουλευομένη καὶ ἐν τάχει τὰ πρακτέα ἐπιτελοῦσα καὶ γράφουσα. ἠκρίβωτο γὰρ λέγειν τε καὶ γράφειν ὀρθῶς κατὰ τὴν Ῥωμαίων καὶ Ἑλλήνων φωνήν. τῶν δὲ πραττομένων τὴν δόκησιν εἰς τὸν ἀδελφὸν ἀνέφερε· καὶ ἐπεμελεῖτο ὥς

Theodosios in the technical arts demanded of an emperor (horsemanship, weaponry, and literature), but she herself bore the responsibility for training the emperor in princely comportment and piety:

The emperor was taught by his sister to be orderly in public behavior, learning how to drape his robes properly, to sit and walk properly, and to rule his laughter; the appropriate times to be mild or intimidating, and to inquire appropriately into those matters petitioned of him. But not least, she led him into piety; she trained [him] to pray constantly and to frequently go into the churches (ἐκκλησίαις), to present the prayer houses (εὐκτηρίους οἴκους) with votive offerings (ἀναθήμασι) and treasures (κειμηλίοις), and to honor the priests (τοὺς ἱερέας) and other good men and those who pursued philosophy in accordance with the law of the Christians.¹⁴²

If Sokrates' presentation of Theodosios can be said to trade in resonances with Christ in the temple, then Sozomen's Pulcheria alludes to both the Virgin Mary tasked with the rearing of Christ and Helena's influence on Constantine. That Pulcheria traded on resonances with the Virgin has been remarked upon in modern scholarship.¹⁴³ Later sources (beginning in the early sixth century) credit Pulcheria with the foundation of churches for Mary at Chalkoprateia, Blachernai, and the Hodegoi, and with bringing

ἂν μάλιστα βασιλικῶς ἀναχθείη τοῖς καθ' ἡλικίαν παιδευόμενος μαθήμασιν. ἀλλ' ἱππικὴν μὲν καὶ τὴν ἐν τοῖς ὅπλοις καὶ τοῖς λόγοις ἄσκησιν παρὰ τῶν ἐπιστημόνων ἐξεδιδάσκετο.

¹⁴² Sozomen, *Eccl. hist.* 9.1.7–9: περὶ δὲ τὰς προόδους κόσμος εἶναι καὶ βασιλικὸς παρὰ τῆς ἀδελφῆς ἐρρυθμίζετο, ἐσθῆτά τε ἢ χρὴ περιστέλλειν μανθάνων, καὶ τρόπῳ τίνι καθῆσθαι καὶ βαδίζειν καὶ γέλωτος κρατεῖν, καὶ πρᾶος καὶ φοβερὸς ἐν καιρῷ εἶναι, καὶ ἀρμοδιῶς πυνθάνεσθαι τῶν περὶ τοῦ δεομένων. οὐχ ἥκιστα δὲ εἰς εὐσέβειαν αὐτὸν ἤγε, συνεχῶς εὐχεσθαι καὶ ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις φοιτᾶν ἐθίζουσα καὶ ἀναθήμασι καὶ κειμηλίοις τοὺς εὐκτηρίους οἴκους γεραίρειν καὶ ἐν τιμῇ ἔχειν τοὺς ἱερέας καὶ ἄλλως ἀγαθοὺς ἄνδρας καὶ τοὺς νόμῳ Χριστιανῶν φιλοσοφούντας. (My translation.)

¹⁴³ See Holum 1982: 142–43, 154–55; Limberis 1994: 54–55, 57–61. The *Letter to Cosmas* (8) alleges that Pulcheria claimed identity with the Theotokos: “Have I not given birth to God?” (law l'alāhā ildet), to which Nestorios replied that she had given birth to Satan ('aty Isāṭānā iladty). (My translation.)

important Marian relics to Constantinople (most importantly, Mary's girdle, housed at the Chalkoprateia church).¹⁴⁴

The legitimacy of Pulcheria's guardianship over Theodosios depends on the authenticity of her own piety, which Sozomen is quick to defend. In an ostentatious display appropriate to the daughters of the imperial house, Pulcheria enters the ranks of the virgins with her sisters, excludes men from her palace, and turns her household into a women's monastery.¹⁴⁵ Pulcheria and her sisters eat, walk, and pray together; their time is spent weaving, and their manners are restrained.¹⁴⁶ Pulcheria's attention to the piety of the imperial household extends to the purity of the city's, and thus the empire's, religion. The Augusta demonstrates her devotion to Christ by supporting prayer houses, lodgings for the indigent and pilgrims, and monasteries (presumably in Constantinople itself, although Sozomen is vague here), and it was she who prevented "the innovation of counterfeit dogmas" from perverting true religion during her brother's reign.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁴ See Theodore Lecture, *Epit.* 363. Additional relics include an icon of Mary (later supposed to have been painted by Luke the Evangelist) and the shroud of Mary. For a discussion of the sources, see Holum 1982: 142 n.120. Holum is ready to grant credit for the girdle and the shroud to Pulcheria, even when the earliest sources for these relics date no earlier than fifty years after Pulcheria; John Wortley takes a more cautious approach. See Wortley 2005: 172–73.

¹⁴⁵ Sozomen describes Pulcheria's vows as an immensely public event, proclaimed before "God, the priests, and all the people" and accompanied with the erection of an ornate altar in the Great Church. The *Letter to Cosmas* comments that Pulcheria also set up her image above the altar and dedicated her stola as an altar cloth (the author's comments actually suggest that Pulcheria continued to wear her stola, but sometimes lent the garment as an altar cloth during the liturgy). Whether the anonymous author of this letter associated these items with her dedication as a virgin is unclear. Sozomen, *Eccl. hist.* 9.1.4–5; *Letter to Cosmas* 6–7. As Holum observes, by entering the ranks of the virgins Pulcheria assured that she and her sisters would not introduce to the court any husbands, who might expect to influence Theodosios, nor would they produce any potential (or at least legitimate) rivals for the throne. Holum 1982: 93–94.

¹⁴⁶ Sozomen, *Eccl. hist.* 9.3.1–2. Unlike Sokrates, Sozomen does not include Theodosios' personal habits in this description. Pulcheria's household consists of herself and her sisters, although later reconstructions assume that Sozomen does envision a similar lifestyle at Theodosios' palace.

¹⁴⁷ Sozomen, *Eccl. hist.* 9.1.9–10.

It was clearly because of the piety demonstrated by Pulcheria and the court, Sozomen explains, that “God, being merciful and fighting on behalf of their household, bestowed upon the emperor the things proper to his age and sovereignty (τῆς ἀρχῆς), and every plot and battle contrived against him fell apart of its own accord (αὐτομάτως διελύετο).”¹⁴⁸ Though Theodosios had been properly trained in the art of war, he ultimately had no need of strategy or military might; his shield was his piety, and his weapon divine favor. Indeed, throughout Book 9 Sozomen repeatedly reminds his readers that the ascetic piety of the eastern royal couple, the child Theodosios and his sister-consort Pulcheria, was essential to preserving Constantinople and the eastern empire. It was Theodosios’ piety, not physical engagement, that prevented Uldin’s invasion of Constantinople and the unrest of the West from spilling into the East.¹⁴⁹ New heresies had been prevented from flourishing in the city and a multitude of new Christian temples had been built throughout the city.¹⁵⁰ This was all due to the piety of a new Constantine and Helena—Theodosios and Pulcheria. Their efforts to maintain the orthodoxy of the city was proof of their devotion to God, but at the same time, God would not have allowed the city to remain pure had the imperial couple not been devoted to true religion.¹⁵¹

¹⁴⁸ Sozomen, *Eccl. hist.* 9.3.3: διὰ ταῦτα δὲ προφανῶς ἴλεω ὄντος τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ τοῦ αὐτῶν οἴκου ὑπερμαχοῦντος, τῷ μὲν κρατοῦντι τὰ τῆς ἡλικίας καὶ τῆς ἀρχῆς ἐπεδίδου, πᾶσα δὲ ἐπιβουλὴ καὶ πόλεμος κατ’ αὐτοῦ συνιστάμενος αὐτομάτως διελύετο. (My translation.)

¹⁴⁹ Sozomen, *Eccl. hist.* 9.5.3.

¹⁵⁰ Sozomen, *Eccl. hist.* 9.1.9–10.

¹⁵¹ Sozomen, *Eccl. hist.* 9.1.12.

The divine grace experienced by the East is in marked contrast to the misfortunes suffered by the Old Rome and the western empire during this same period.¹⁵² For Sozomen, Constantinople was a pristine center of Theodosian Christianity, whereas the people of Rome continued to prefer the traditional cults.¹⁵³ The misfortunes of Rome were in truth the wrath of God (ὕπὸ θεομηνίας) on account of their “excessive indolence, licentiousness, and unjust and ungodly neglect of strangers.”¹⁵⁴ Peter Van Nuffelen has recently observed that this contrast between the fortunes of Old and New Rome comes into Sozomen’s history from an earlier source, a history published sometime before 426 by the Constantinopolitan bureaucrat and professed Hellene, Olympiodoros of Thebes.¹⁵⁵ Olympiodoros’ history, also dedicated to Theodosios, focused almost exclusively on events in the western court during the period from 407 through 424/5.

Van Nuffelen has persuasively argued that Olympiodoros portrays the Western court as a dark mirror of Theodosios’ own court. In contrast to the piety and virginity observed by Theodosios and his female relatives, Honorios’ court was infected with the

¹⁵² Sozomen, *Eccl. hist.* 9.6.1–2: Τὰ μὲν οὖν πρὸς ἕω τῆς ἀρχομένης πολεμίων ἀπήλλακτο καὶ σὺν κόσμῳ πολλῶ ἰθύνετο παρὰ τὴν πάντων δόξαν· ἦν γὰρ ἔτι νέος ὁ κρατῶν. τὰ δὲ πρὸς δύσιν ἐν ἀταξίαις ἦν πολλῶν ἐπανισταμένων τυράννων.

¹⁵³ Sozomen, *Eccl. hist.* 9.6.3: ἀναγκαῖον ἐδόκει τοῖς ἐλληνίζουσι τῆς συγκλήτου θύειν ἐν τῷ Καπιτωλίῳ καὶ τοῖς ἄλλοις ναοῖς. For Sozomen’s presentation of Constantinople as a pristinely Christian city, see Sozomen, *Eccl. hist.* 2.3, and discussion above, Chapter 3, pp. 136–39.

¹⁵⁴ Sozomen, *Eccl. hist.* 9.6.5: τοῖς γὰρ εὖ φρονοῦσιν ὑπὸ θεομηνίας κατεφαίνετο ταῦτα συμβαίνειν Ῥωμαίοις κατὰ ποινὴν ὣν πρὸ τοῦ ὑπὸ πολλῆς ῥαστώνης καὶ ἀκολασίας εἰς ἀστοὺς καὶ ξένους ἀδίκως καὶ ἀσεβῶς ἤμαρτον. (My translation.) For his part, Alaric acknowledged that some divine force drove him to attack Rome (τις συνεχῶς ἐνοχλῶν αὐτὸν βιάζεται καὶ ἐπιτάττει τὴν Ῥώμην πορθεῖν; 9.6.6).

¹⁵⁵ For biographical information for Olympiodoros and the date of his history, see Van Nuffelen 2013: 130–33. Olympiodoros’ history was utilized not only by Sozomen in the late 440s, but also by the Philostorgios (ca. 425–433) and Zosimos (early sixth century), and survives through the work of these authors and summaries in Photios’ *Bibliotheca*. These fragments have been compiled in Blockley 1983: 2.152–209.

poisons of lust and immorality.¹⁵⁶ Because of Honorios' moral failings, the western empire suffered under the tyranny of those who would usurp imperial power, first Stilicho and then Honorios' brother-in-law Constantius III.¹⁵⁷ Olympiodoros even reports accusations of incest between Honorios and his sister Galla Placidia. To resolve these accusations Placidia's associates plotted to alienate the brother and sister, which only led to physical confrontations that upset the social order of Ravenna.¹⁵⁸ The relationship grew so strained that Honorios exiled Placidia to Constantinople. Honorios eventually died of dropsy, a disease associated with immoral and profligate lifestyles, and thus provided John his opportunity to usurp the throne.¹⁵⁹ Theodosios II only appears at the end of Olympiodoros' account, when his army sweeps in to save the West from its momentous failure, defeat John, and install the young Valentinian III as his co-emperor.¹⁶⁰ Olympiodoros is never explicit about the contrast between the two courts, but, as Van Nuffelen argues, the comparisons are implicit: the abysmal failures of the West, rooted as they were in the impiety and moral weakness of Honorios' court, prove the importance of

¹⁵⁶ Olympiodoros 1.3; According to Zosimos (*New History* 5.27.2–5.28.3), lust was the driving force for Honorios' second marriage to Thermantia, the daughter of his general Stilicho. Thermantia was also the sister of Honorios' first wife, Maria, whose virginity, Zosimos alleges, the girls' mother sought to protect through the use of witchcraft. See Zosimos, *New History* 5.28.2.

¹⁵⁷ Van Nuffelen 2013: 139. Following Constantius' marriage to Placidia, Honorios was cowed into proclaiming his new brother-in-law co-emperor (an elevation not recognized by Theodosios in the East). For his part, Constantius is reported by Olympiodoros as regretting the elevation because it prevented him from the luxurious lifestyle to which he was accustomed. Olympiodoros 33. See also Philostorgios, *Eccl. hist.* 12.12.

¹⁵⁸ Olympiodoros 38.

¹⁵⁹ Olympiodoros 39; Philostorgios, *Eccl. hist.* 12.13.

¹⁶⁰ Olympiodoros 43; Philostorgios, *Eccl. hist.* 12.13–14.

the piety of the Theodosian court—and perhaps provided a reminder to Theodosios to adhere to those standards of piety.¹⁶¹

Sozomen downplays this criticism of Honorios and Galla Placidia. On several occasions Sozomen asserts the piety of the western imperial couple: Honorios' first response upon the death of a conspirator against him was to descend from horseback and publicly thank God;¹⁶² Placidia, like Pulcheria, was a patroness of churches and a protector of religion.¹⁶³ However, hints of Olympiodoros' contrast between the imperial couples appear throughout Book 9, particularly in the way that Sozomen constructs a dialogue between events in the two courts.¹⁶⁴ The favor Theodosios receives from God (9.3.3) is set against Stilicho's destabilization of the West (9.4); the disintegration of Uldin's army in the East (9.5) is followed by Alaric's sack of Rome (9.6). The following ten chapters (nearly half of Sozomen's narrative) is occupied by accounts of campaigns against Rome, at the conclusion of which Sozomen summarily comments on the contrast with affairs in the East: "But during this time affairs in the eastern empire were free from war and were governed with great order contrary to all expectation, since the emperor was still a youth. It seems that God clearly was pleased with the current emperor."¹⁶⁵ The

¹⁶¹ Van Nuffelen 2013: 140–41.

¹⁶² Sozomen, *Eccl. hist.* 9.12.5.

¹⁶³ Sozomen, *Eccl. hist.* 9.16.2. For Pulcheria's patronage, see Sozomen, *Eccl. hist.* 9.1.10.

¹⁶⁴ Van Nuffelen takes Sozomen's downplaying of the immorality of the Western court as an indication that the historian was not close to the Theodosian court: "Just like Olympiodorus, he dedicated his history to Theodosius, but had no real sense about what he could or could not say about the imperial family." See Van Nuffelen 2013: 140.

¹⁶⁵ Sozomen, *Eccl. hist.* 9.16.3–4: ἐν τούτῳ δὲ τὰ μὲν πρὸς ἑὼ τῆς ἀρχομένης πολεμίων ἀπῆλλακτο καὶ σὺν κόσμῳ πολλῶ τὰ τῆδε ἰθύνετο παρὰ τὴν πάντων δόξαν· ἦν γὰρ ἔτι νέος ὁ κρατῶν. ἐδόκει δὲ ὁ θεὸς περιφανῶς ἡδεσθαι τῇ παρουσίᾳ βασιλείᾳ, οὐ μόνον ἐξ ἀπροσδοκίτου τὰ περὶ τοὺς πολέμους ὧδε διατιθεῖς, ἀλλὰ καὶ πολλῶν ἐπ' εὐσεβείᾳ πάλαι εὐδοκιμηκότων τὰ ἱερὰ σώματα ἀναφαίνων. (My translation.)

implication here is that somehow the western court could not properly protect their territory from God's anger, even if Sozomen is nowhere explicit about the cause of that anger.

However, tying the emperor's legitimacy so closely to his piety and commitment to orthodoxy was a dangerous game. Should misfortune befall the city, should the emperor's piety be questioned, so would his legitimacy and the legitimacy of Theodosian Christianity be impugned. This is why the stakes to define and assert the boundaries of Theodosian Christianity were so high during the second half of Theodosios II's reign. Above we saw accusations against Theodosios' piety in John Malalas' *Chronicle* and in the *Chronicon Paschale* for his involvement with Nestorios, but we also see attacks against Theodosios for his failure to defend his former bishop.¹⁶⁶ A full study of these attacks is beyond the scope of my discussion here, but I point to one example, found in the *Bazaar of Heracleides*, a defense written by Nestorios shortly after the death of Theodosios and preserved in Syriac.¹⁶⁷ There, Nestorios describes the disasters that had befallen Constantinople—the famines, plagues, earthquakes, and barbarian attacks. These calamities, he argues, are signs of God's anger toward the emperor for his impiety, which he had demonstrated by failing to uphold true Christian orthodoxy (in Nestorios' view, his own teachings regarding the union of the *prosopa* of Christ).¹⁶⁸ Moreover, Nestorios implies, the destruction of the Forum of Theodosios signaled that the younger Theodosios

¹⁶⁶ See the excellent article by Edward Watts analyzing anti-Chalcedonian presentations of Theodosios II; Watts 2013:269–84.

¹⁶⁷ The *Bazaar* is dated around 451, as it mentions Theodosios' death and Nestorios himself is thought to have died around 451/2. The critical edition of the text is Bedjan 1910.

¹⁶⁸ Nestorios, *Bazaar of Heracleides* 498–505 (Bedjan=Driver/Hodgson 363–68).

had destroyed his grandfather's commitment to orthodoxy.¹⁶⁹ God had revealed the Trisagion ("Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal, have mercy on us") and crosses to be placed in the palace in the forum as signs of the true doctrine and a means to assuage his wrath.¹⁷⁰ Unfortunately these tools only provided temporary relief, for as soon as the immediate dangers had been averted, Theodosios and his city obstinately defended heretical teachings. Ultimately, Nestorios claims, "Theodosios had raised himself against God," and for this reason, "God had taken him from their midst."¹⁷¹

I have argued above that a primary component of Theodosios' religious policies was the removal of non-Theodosian elements from his city, reflected in the legislation issued as the emperor entered his majority, in the compilation of the law code, and in the activities of Theodosios' first chosen bishop, Nestorios. These efforts are similarly reflected in the literature of the period. I have noted several times that Sozomen presents Constantinople as a pristine Christian capital at its foundation under Constantine. For Sozomen, for instance, the city was "not tempted by altars, Greek temples, or sacrifices."¹⁷² Sokrates similarly stresses the divine favor shown to Theodosios for his piety. Nestorios, in contrast, claims that Theodosios had abandoned his commitment to orthodoxy, betrayed the memory of his grandfather, and brought God's wrath upon both Constantinople and the emperor himself. The rhetoric surrounding the person of Theodosios, then, betrays concerns about the emperor's image and the validity of

¹⁶⁹ Nestorios, *Bazaar of Heracleides* 499 (Bedjan=Driver/Hodgson 364).

¹⁷⁰ Nestorios, *Bazaar of Heracleides* 500, 502–03 (Bedjan=Driver/Hodgson 365, 366–67).

¹⁷¹ Nestorios, *Bazaar of Heracleides* 506 (Bedjan=Driver/Hodgson 369): 'damā d-'etnseb men mša'tā te'ādāsis hāw d-meštaqal wā luqbal 'alāhā. (Trans. Driver/Hodgson.)

¹⁷² Sozomen, *Eccl. hist.* 2.3: οὔτε βωμῶν οὔτε Ἑλληνικῶν ναῶν ἢ θυσιαῶν ἐπειράθη.

imperial religion, wherein the legitimacy of both the emperor and his religion depended upon each other.

CONCLUSION

Over the previous four chapters, I have examined the ways that various Christian groups competed for the emperor's patronage and control of Constantinople's cult landscape. We have seen how, over the course of the fourth century, non-imperial groups were increasingly marginalized and their practices pushed out of the public spaces of the city. However, as I have argued in this chapter, the final transformation of the city into an imperial, Nicene, Christian capital did not occur until the 420s, when Theodosios II took an active interest in further defining the boundaries of legitimate cult. It was during this period that Theodosios' administration orchestrated a series of legislative and ecclesiastical moves aimed at further securing Nicene Christianity as the religion of the empire. Moreover, during Theodosios' adult years a particular rhetoric of imperial Christian identity focusing on the emperor and his capital developed. If not officially endorsed by Theodosios, surely this rhetoric helped to promote the sense that the cultic integrity of the emperor and Constantinople had significant consequences for the rest of the empire. Rhetoric about orthodoxy, the piety of the emperor and his city, and Roman identity were mutually reinforcing.

CHAPTER 6 CONCLUSIONS

On July 28, 450 C.E. Theodosios II fell while riding in the suburbs of Constantinople. Two days later, the emperor was dead, leaving no heir and an empire still reeling from the decisions pushed through by Dioskoros of Alexandria at the second council of Ephesus the previous year. The first problem was solved by Pulcheria's marriage to the former tribune Marcian. The solution to the second problem appeared to come when the new imperial couple called for a council to be held at Chalcedon, in which the assembled bishops reversed the decisions of the second council at Ephesus and granted definitive authority to Cyril's earlier council in 431.¹ However, these decisions were not well received in all parts of the empire. Indeed, significant factions of bishops, monks, and other interested parties, especially in Egypt, Syria, and Palestine, vehemently opposed the formulation of Christian "orthodoxy" promulgated at Chalcedon.

Regardless, the massive, if contested, reordering of imperial religion following Chalcedon could happen because of the structures that had developed in Constantinople over the previous one hundred and twenty-seven years. In this dissertation, I analyzed the role of public ritual in the cultural changes that occurred in Constantinople during this period. Throughout the previous five chapters, I have considered the complexity of the Constantinopolitan cult landscape and how a range of practices associated with civic cult,

¹ John Malalas, *Chron.* 14.27; For the events surrounding the Council of Chalcedon, see Frend 1972: 45–49; Holum 1982: 208–16.

from singular events and habitual actions to building programs and rhetorical overlays, contributed not only to the Christianization of the city but also to the eventual dominance of one particular faction of Christian bishops over its civic cult. In the process, this investigation has challenged a number of assumptions that the focus of current research has largely neglected.

The first assumption relates to the religious landscape of fourth-century Constantinople and the boundedness of groups within that landscape. According to conventional narratives about the religious changes that occurred during the fourth century, Constantine's legalization of Christianity in 313 C.E. produced an almost instantaneous transformation of the empire's religion. Magistrates and priests no longer performed sacrifice on behalf of the civic community, especially in a newly founded, "Christian" city like Constantinople. The only acceptable form of cult in the eyes of the emperor was that directed toward Christ. Aside from the brief interlude of Julian's "pagan revival" in 361–363 C.E., the empire had become decidedly Christian and the reigning emperor dictated which Christian sect held control of "the Church." The picture that results from this conventional narrative is of an empire that swung between "Nicene" and "Arian" Christianity until 381 when Theodosios I firmly asserted the creed produced fifty-six years earlier at the Council of Nicaea as the standard of orthodoxy.

Recent studies have complicated this narrative by recognizing not only the continued diversity of the late antique religious landscape but also the importance of competition within that landscape. This is particularly true of studies focusing on religious competition in Rome and Antioch, as well as on the late antique Mediterranean

more broadly.² From these studies it has become clear that both rhetoric and ritual performances were indispensable tools for marking a group's territory and asserting their legitimacy in opposition to other groups. Even so, religious competition in Constantinople itself has remained largely overlooked because of persistent assumptions about Constantine's foundation of the city as a "new, Christian capital," where the primary competitions were relatively minor skirmishes between Arian and Nicene factions.

In other words, this revised narrative does not satisfactorily account for the remarkable diversity and the level of competition evident in the Constantinopolitan landscape during late antiquity and how the contours of those competitions changed. This has required a fresh examination of the conceptual frameworks of religion in Constantinople. As I argued in Chapter 2, the religious landscape and structures of Constantinople during its first decades would have been unfamiliar to Pulcheria and Marcian. Even as Constantine included Christian temples in the civic landscape, their architectural footprint in the new city was relatively insignificant when compared to the sites evoking traditional cult: the temples of Apollo/Helios, Artemis, and Aphrodite on the city's acropolis; the shrine of the Dioskouroi; the temple of Rhea/Cybele; the Tychaion; and a monumental bath complex dedicated to Zeus. Additionally, Constantine populated his new city with a statuary collection that similarly appealed to Rome's cultural cultic heritage. Only two sites within this landscape were associated specifically with Christianity, namely, Hagia Eirene and the Apostoleion. Even for the relatively

² See especially work of Soler 2006; Shepardson 2007 and 2014; and Mayer 2009 on Antioch; and Curran 2000 on Rome. For studies on religious competition in the late antique Mediterranean more broadly, see esp. Ando 2001; Becker and Reed 2003; Boyarin 2004; Drake 2006; Gwynn and Bangert 2010; and Rosenblum, Vuong, and DesRosiers 2014.

small city Constantinople was in 337, this asymmetry is staggering. The contrast between traditional and Christian cult sites becomes even starker if, as I argued in Chapter 2, the Apostoleion was not designed primarily as a Christian temple, but rather as an imperial mausoleum. Indeed, I proposed that the worship of the emperor himself figured prominently into this cult landscape: in the Augusteion, at the Column of Constantine, and in the imperial mausoleum. Each of these sites lent themselves to traditional articulations of emperor-cult, especially the burning of incense and the performance of *proskynēsis*.

In other words, we cannot follow Eusebios in assuming that these sites would have been devoid of cultic significance to the average viewer. Despite later protestations to the contrary, Constantine's city was not a pristine Christian capital. It was an *imperial* city that invited Christianity into its landscape. This situation created no small degree of tension over the proper expression of civic religion and produced a fertile arena for competition. As I have argued, Christians actively engaged this landscape and provided their own interpretations of the monuments before them. We saw this even in Eusebios' own rearticulation of the imperial mausoleum as a Christian temple and the acts of veneration that occurred there upon Constantine's death as a Christian funeral liturgy.

The project begun under Constantine was asserted with increasing vigor over the course of the fourth century. In the years following Theodosios I's arrival in Constantinople, the civic landscape changed significantly: the traditional temples were closed; new Christian sites were constructed; and non-Nicene Christians were removed from the structures supporting imperial religion. It was during this period that a particular faction of bishops gained lasting imperial favor. Under Theodosios I, homoousian

Christians began to gain control of the discourses of legitimate religion, and participation in their rituals became the dominant marker of participation in Constantinopolitan public life. After his father's death in 395, Arkadios reaffirmed these dynastic commitments to Nicene Christianity. Nonetheless, non-Theodosian groups persisted in the public spaces of Constantinople. The moves of Theodosios I and Arkadios did little to alleviate competition between groups; if anything, they shifted the focus of competition from eradicating traditional temples to the control of Christian temples and with that the right to dictate normative Christianity.

This study has therefore identified an unsustainable narrative in modern scholarship, namely, that there were clear lines between religious groups. As I have argued, we cannot presume *a priori* that groupness is self-evident or static. The strength of religious boundaries depended upon the firmness of individual commitments to maintaining those boundaries and the degree of cohesion between individuals who shared those commitments. Groupness itself, however, cannot be assumed. The permeability of these categories fostered a space for invested individuals to compete for access to, and ultimately for control of, the avenues of imperial religion. These agents were highly sensitive to the opportunities that moments of groupness afforded them, and the boundaries they constructed were not merely rhetorical—the rhetoric was meant to bring those boundaries into reality.

This brings us to my second consideration, namely, the generative force of social action. Groupness can be created through a variety of strategies. Rhetoric is one of the most obvious strategies an individual can use to create group identity, and it is therefore the easiest avenue for us to observe the construction of group. However, a close

examination of our sources reveals that Christian agents relied on a variety of methods to construct and claim a Christian civic identity in the very physical landscape of the city. Emperors and the city's cultural élite built spaces devoted to the divine and constructed a Christian mythology within the Constantinopolitan landscape by importing relics. Bishops sought to gain the favor of emperors or those close to emperors to gain control of imperial church space. Christian authors interpreted the inherited landscape, even to the point of impressing memory and significance into that landscape.

Incidents of violence also created moments of groupness and thus opened a space for cultural agents to produce meaning for those around them. As David Riches points out, violence is a performance that creates a relationship between the perpetrator of violence, his victim, and those who witness the act of violence, from which new meanings are produced about morality, social boundaries, and power relations. The generative aspect of violence is evident in Makedonios' oppression of homoiousians, if not under Constantius' order, at least with his tacit approval. Violence's generative potential is also apparent in the reinterpretation of these same actions by later Theodosians authors, who traced their lineage to the victims of Makedonios' violence. As Paul Connerton argues, memories of violence performed by formerly hegemonic groups are powerful tools for new regimes, and this is certainly true for the memories of violence found in the writings of Sokrates and Sozomen.

And yet collective or social memories—not simply narratives, but narratives produced as the history of the group—are malleable and useful resources for those who want to assert boundaries between groups. Nowhere is the transformation of Constantinople's religious framework more apparent than in the Nicene élites'

appropriation of memories of confrontations between religious groups from the previous century. Indeed, the histories produced by Sokrates and Sozomen, and also by their counterparts Olympiodoros and Philostorgios, are carefully constructed pieces of propaganda that engaged the conflicts (real and imagined) of the fourth century in order to advocate for a particular vision of imperial religious identity. The authors frequently blamed incidents of violence on their religious competitors. They sometimes even distance their own groups from acts perpetrated against non-Theodosian groups by attributing this violence to divine retribution.

But the authors I have examined also did more than simply blame others for violence; they wrote violence into the city's physical spaces and wrote their competitors out of that same space. They erased monuments (e.g., temples, churches, memorials) associated with their competitors from their narrative landscapes and at times eliminated competing groups from their narratives altogether. They reminded their readers that certain individuals should be forgotten and created gaping holes that served as warnings against contesting the hegemony of Theodosian Christianity. In other words, the memorialization of violence in civic spaces was an avenue for competing groups to assert their hegemony and push others from public view. Here, I have studied the manipulation of memory as it regards to the construction of religious groups and the shaping of religious identities, but the same can be said of groupness focused on other identifications: social status (elite-plebeian), ethnicity (Roman-Goth), civic identity (Constantinopolitan-Antiochene), *et cetera*.

From this perspective, it becomes clear that gaining control over the narratives of violence and memory was crucial for crippling Nicene bishops' religious competitors.

However, it would be an error to assume that there was a well-organized imperial plan behind these moves. Often, these actions were a series of haphazard events that contributed to the transformation of the landscape, even when later authors claimed that the establishment of a distinctly Christian landscape was the result of some long-term strategic plan initiated by Constantine.

As I argued in Chapter 4, ritual performance was similarly generative. To later eyes tempered by the assertions of Theodosian and later Byzantine historiography, it is easy to think that Christian practices constituted a distinct genus of ritual action with little connection to the actions of competing groups. In this light, religious rituals were actions that individuals would willfully engage because they were members of a particular group. But to see the ritual activities of Christians as utterly distinct from those of other groups would be to neglect the performative and generative potential of ritual practice. In reality, communal Christian rituals drew from the same underlying scripts that made expressions of cult intelligible to the late antique person. For a people enculturated to a system of ritualized behaviors through the habituated performance of particular scripts, the actions and vocabulary of ritual must make sense by pulling from these same scripts. What becomes obvious is that we cannot approach Christianity as an entity entirely removed from other religions in the ancient Mediterranean world.

Because of their participation in established scripts, ritual performances invited confusion between events and allowed for the rearrangement of the mental furniture, so to speak, by reorienting the person toward new religious frameworks. Here, that framework is Theodosian Christianity. This observation explains how ritual could facilitate shifts in identification and also why it could be such a powerful site of conflict.

As I have argued, actors within Constantinople's landscape, including the emperor, magistrates, bishops, and monastics, endeavored to control the interpretation of that landscape. Ritual provided those individuals who were invested in establishing clear religious boundaries with another means to achieve this. Public, communal, ritual actions provided a space to communicate new religious frameworks, to convince those present to agree to a "shift in reality," to use McCall's words.

But did people need to consciously agree to these shifts in reality? Just as individuals might approach religious boundaries with varying degrees of awareness and commitment, so, too, individuals might engage in ritual activities with varying degrees of intentionality. Communal actions, from imperial ceremonial and spectacles to religious ritual events, formed a significant portion of public life in late antique Constantinople. While these actions may have been variously directed—toward the emperor and expressions of *Romanitas*, for entertainment and civic pride, or as acts of honor, supplication, and petition of the divine—they all had social consequences. These acts relied on, reinforced, and transformed social hierarchies, constructed boundaries between social groups and configurations, and produced perceptions of normative civic structures. Indeed, the accessibility of religious rituals in Constantinople allowed for multiple layers of participation, from ritual agents and active participants to observers. But all these individuals were present for—and in—these organized moments of groupness, and they were therefore susceptible to the social consequences of those actions.

According to John Chrysostom, a person's *habitus* is shaped through *mimesis*, or imitation. However, to Chrysostom and his contemporaries, *mimesis* was significantly more than copying behaviors. *Mimesis* had profoundly transformative effects as that

which was external to the body—costume, sights, sounds, smells—was internalized and turned back outward to the world. This was a matter of the deepest learning and nearly impossible to prevent. The individual had to be constantly on guard against corrupting influences, and it was the responsibility of those with authority to protect their dependents. Chrysostom understood how enticing competing ritual events had been for the Antiochene population during his time as presbyter there. Additionally, the tumultuous years of Julian's reign, and those of Jovian, Valentinian I, and Valens after him, were within Chrysostom's own memory. He had experienced firsthand the uncertainty about civic religion those years engendered, and the openings this uncertainty afforded competing groups. He knew that his position as imperial bishop was precarious and perceived the events of competing groups as real threats to that position.

This is why it was so vital to Chrysostom that parents properly educate their children and why the civic environment must be properly ordered. It is also within this context that Chrysostom's actions as the bishop of Constantinople make sense. He was reordering society and eliminating those stimuli that endangered his city, namely, the theater and the ritual actions of those he regarded as competitors. He sought to transfer the attention of his flock to the spectacle of the new, holy theaters of Christ and his martyrs. Chrysostom constructed ritual engagement as a choice, but it was a choice to which there could be only one correct answer. In the competing vigils of the Arianizers and Chrysostom, recounted by Sokrates and Sozomen, we see these dynamics come to the foreground. In this moment, a battle was waged and one side emerged the victor.

The important thing to take away from this discussion is that no matter what commitments, consent, or resistance an individual might have brought when participating

(or even attending) the rituals of civic religion, the fact that that individual was present communicated an agreement to its meanings and ordering performed for the civic community. Perception and reality may not be synonymous here, but they are intricately bound to each other in ways that we may not be entirely comfortable with—and in ways that made Christian social agents like John Chrysostom anxious.

Together the memorialization of violence and the performance of ritual within that landscape contributed to the consolidation of imperial religion in Constantinople under the rubric of Theodosian Christianity. The potential for fluidity between the practices of competing religious groups comes into greater focus when placed in conversation with momentous political shifts that occurred during fifth centuries. For example, during the Theodosian dynasty, Constantinople become an imperial capital in a way that it had not been before. Before this period, an emperor accompanied his army and resided in one of several imperial cities for shorter periods of time. While Theodosios I continued this practice, his son did so with less frequency, and his grandson spent the majority of his life in Constantinople. Because of this reality, Constantinople became more closely associated with the imperial court than any city had since the early empire, save Rome—and because of the changes in imperial structures that had occurred over the previous centuries, I would venture to argue that Constantinople surpassed Rome in this regard. Consequently, beginning in the closing years of the fourth century, and even more so during the reign of Theodosios II, Constantinople assumed a central role in the political and ecclesiastical networks of the eastern empire.

Finally, this study has paid particular attention to the relationship between rhetoric and social competition. One of the more significant challenges for reconstructing cult life

in late antique Constantinople arises in relating the rhetorical constructions of historiographic narratives to the events and conflicts they purport to describe. This is particularly evident in the narratives dating from the sixth century and later (the *Chronicle* of John Malalas or the *Chronicon Paschale*, for example), but it is also true of the historians writing in Constantinople during the mid-fifth century (Philostorgios, Sokrates, and Sozomen), who often serve as our primary witnesses for these events. Collecting and reconciling “factual details” from these authors, who clearly had competing agendas, obfuscates their immediate situations and the rhetorical impact of their accounts. Of course, this problem is not isolated to the study of Constantinopolitan religious politics; it is one that all historians of the ancient Mediterranean confront. But, it gains special significance in Constantinople, because the emerging historiography of the city was participating in the construction (and in some cases the contestation) of Theodosian Christianity, a fact that has not been recognized previously.

Rather than relying on these texts solely for the purposes of reconstructing the history of the city, I have approached this evidence from a different perspective, namely, as the artifacts of competition. In other words, while it is possible—and indeed, in some cases quite probable—that the authors writing during our period relay some information about earlier cultic configurations and competitions in their city, they themselves participated in the competitions of their own day by appealing to and shaping the memories of earlier competitions. Their presentations, then, are more valuable than is often acknowledged, for they can tell us both about the ways in which the local economy of memory was shaped by previous competitions and about their authors’ own expectations and anxieties about the cultic landscape of their city.

This is a particularly important observation when applied to Theodosios II, who became the sole emperor of the east at the age of seven. Such a young emperor could not be expected to exercise his agency as emperor. Some historians have followed Sozomen in asserting that his older sister Pulcheria served as regent during this period, but I do not think this proposal adequately explains the changes that occurred in Constantinople, most notably the acceleration of efforts to homogenize the empire's religious structures under the aegis of Theodosian Christianity. I have proposed instead that these efforts are tied to the unique challenges that a child-emperor like Theodosios II presented to the traditional mechanisms for establishing imperial legitimacy.

Meaghan McEvoy has noted that the transition to adulthood had proven quite perilous for child-emperors of the recent past in the western empire, and I see a similar dynamic occurring in the reign of Theodosios II. As Theodosios entered adulthood in the late 410s and early 420s, his commitments to a homogenous vision of Christianity was asserted with more insistence, and it was during this period that we can see the crystallization of the processes that had occurred haphazardly over the previous century. In Chapter 5 I pinpoint three moments in this transition, which I propose coincide with the progressive exercise of Theodosios II's agency. The first occurred between 414 and 416 as Theodosios entered adolescence and approached his legal majority. During this period, we see the rededication of the Great Church, an increase in the translation of relics, and a series of rescripts from Constantinople alienating non-Theodosian religious elements from imperial religious frameworks. The second moment occurred in the years following his marriage in 421 and the birth of his first (and what would be his only) child in 422, when we see further legislative censure against non-Theodosian groups, including,

for the first time, Novatians. The third period began in 428 as Theodosios approached age thirty and would continue until his death in 450, during which we see the compilation and promulgation of the Theodosian Code and a heightened interest in clarifying the boundaries of Theodosian Christianity in a series of councils aimed at defining orthodoxy.

Throughout this period the imperial administration orchestrated a series of legislative and ecclesiastical moves aimed at securing Nicene Christianity as the religion of the empire. While non-Theodosian groups had been increasingly marginalized over the course of the fourth century, the final transformation of Constantinople into an imperial, Nicene Christian capital did not occur until Theodosius II began to push for a sharper definition of the orthodoxy as communion with the imperial bishop of Constantinople. This legislative censure against non-Theodosian groups strengthened the monopoly on the structures of religion in Constantinople. It is within this context that we can understand both Nestorios' measures against non-Theodosian groups in the Constantinople and the surrounding regions and the compilation of the Theodosian Code, particularly its construction of Christian orthodoxy.

The marginalization of non-Theodosian groups was paired with the development of a particular rhetoric of imperial Christian identity focusing on the religious integrity of the emperor and his capital. We encountered an aspect of this rhetorical activity in Chapter 3, where I examined Sokrates and Sozomen's attempts to purify the city of taint and expel non-Theodosian groups from the historical record. But their rhetoric also served a further purpose. Rhetoric had long served as a means to legitimize emperors, and that rhetoric was all the more important for securing the reigns of child-emperors. This

has been a hitherto under-examined aspect of Theodosios' reign, and completely ignored in studies on the historiography produced during his lifetime.

I cannot state this strongly enough: When we read this literature, we are witnessing the creation of an imperial Christian identity, centered on the person of the emperor and his city. I suspect that the demand to accept a common formulation of theology was being employed by some within Theodosios II's administration, and perhaps instigated by Theodosios himself, as a mechanism for demonstrating allegiance to the emperor in a similar fashion as earlier practices of incense offerings to the statue of the emperor. If this is the case, the discourse emerging from Constantinopolitan circles was strategically situated for exporting Theodosian Christianity to other parts of the empire.

Ultimately, the transformation of Constantinople's religious frameworks was not a neat process. There were many agents at play—the emperor, civic magistrates, bishops, monks, rhetors, and many other individuals that have been lost to us. My approach in this dissertation has therefore attempted to account for the messiness and unpredictability of social relations. People act in unexpected ways, and sometimes they side with agents or groups that the cultural élite—the power players—do not want them to. We saw this during Constantius' reign, when “the people” rioted in response to the forcible removal of their favorite, Paul. We saw it again in the 380s when Gregory of Nyssa complained about tradesmen asserting the subordination of the Son (that is, “Arian” theological positions), and in the early fifth century, when a segment of the population attacked the Great Church and then left the city when Arkadios expelled John Chrysostom. And we saw the messiness of social relations yet again, when “the people” reacted to Nestorios'

teachings. In each of these cases, we can see hints of individuals (even if unnamed) acting against, or in concert with, each other: the emperor, his court, cultural élites, the imperial bishop, bishops from other cities, individuals identified as Jews or Sabbatians, and the frustratingly amorphous entity known as “the people.” We see fleeting moments of groupness, of organization, and of rearrangement; we catch glimpses of people aligning with each other as the moment and circumstances demand. In the end, the group that mattered in late antique Constantinople, at least for the majority of its inhabitants, was not “the Church,” but rather the city, which was in a constant state of flux.

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