

Constantinian Influence upon Julian's Pagan Church

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Constantine's endorsement of and support for the Church left their marks in certain areas. His nephew Julian reacted against state-supported Christianity and promoted his own unique version of state-supported paganism. Previous scholarship had identified this as a 'pagan Church' co-opting features from Christianity, but this view has recently been challenged. This article argues that the traditional understanding of a 'pagan Church' is correct, and that it drew specifically upon some features of the Constantinian Church in the areas of theological content, leadership and symbols.

When the Emperor Julian came to sole power, he not only restored the legal status of pagan sacrifice, but also implemented significant changes to paganism.¹ In a seminal series of articles, Walter Koch termed Julian's restored paganism 'une église païenne'.² Although many scholars have utilised this framework, few have added much to it, with the exception of Oliver Nicholson's article in this JOURNAL which, based on comparisons with the changes that Maximinus Daia made to paganism during the Great Persecution, concluded that Julian had indeed drawn on the Christian Church for his own restructuring.³ This concept of Julian's 'pagan Church' now seems to be in danger of unravelling. Those fifth-century church historians who resolutely declared that Julian had attempted to restructure paganism into an imitation of the Christian Church had never lived under organised state

¹ I realise the limitations of the term 'paganism', but believe that it is the least poor description of the diverse group referred to. See the careful discussion in Alan Cameron, *The last pagans of Rome*, New York 2011, 14–32.

² W. Koch, 'Comment l'empereur Julien tâcha de fonder une église païenne', *Revue belge de philologie et d'histoire* vi (1927), 123–46; vii (1928), 49–82, 511–50, 1363–8.

³ Oliver Nicholson, 'The "pagan Churches" of Maximinus Daia and Julian the Apostate', this JOURNAL xlv (1994), 1–10.

paganism; perhaps they simply supposed Julian's paganism to be a mirror image of the Christian Church.⁴ Peter Van Nuffelen has challenged the genuineness of Julian's *ep.* lxxxiva, 'To Arsacius', which provides the key evidence for the emperor's order to his priests to practise the philanthropy and holiness that had been successful for the Christians.⁵ Susanna Elm accepts Van Nuffelen's arguments and dismisses Gregory Nazianzen's claim that Julian created a 'pagan Church' by arguing that this was 'polemics that tell us little if anything about Julian's intentions'.⁶ Taking at face value Julian's statements in *epp.* lxxxiii and cxv of his own tolerance, Elm argues that he 'sought to teach and integrate and not to punish the demoted'.⁷ Theresa Nesselrath concedes that Julian was influenced by some elements of Christianity in the development of his new paganism, but holds that his pagan restoration was 'keine blasse Imitation der Kirche'.⁸ A reader might be forgiven for assuming there would be no 'pagan Church' left. However, a close examination of the evidence supports the received wisdom regarding the 'pagan Church', if perhaps for some different reasons. Julian himself provides evidence in his other works regarding his plans for the new paganism of his restoration, which worked together in a cohesive unity with the rest of Julian's programme and still appears to be largely co-opted from the Christian Church. More specifically, Julian's pagan Church took a great deal of its shape from his response to developments in Christian practice and structure under Constantine and Constantius II, which were reflected in the triumphal narrative of Eusebius. The outworkings of these sources, both broadly Christian and specifically Constantinian, can be seen in three areas: content, structure and symbol. It is the argument of this article that Julian did indeed borrow from the Christian Church and Scriptures, led his religion in

⁴ For example Sozomen, *Historia ecclesiastica* v.16. They also may have portrayed Julian's reign in light of an apology for their own era, influenced by Theodosius' anti-pagan response, but this is outside the scope of this article.

⁵ Peter Van Nuffelen, 'Deux Fausses Lettres de Julien l'Apostat (la lettre aux Juifs, *ep.* 51 [Wright], et la lettre à Arsacius, *ep.* 84 [Bidez])', *Vigiliae Christianae* lvi (2002), 131–50. *Ep.* lxxxiva is treated as genuine by its previous editors Wilmer Wright, Joseph Bidez and Franz Cumont.

⁶ Susanna Elm, *Sons of Hellenism, Fathers of the Church: Emperor Julian, Gregory of Nazianzus, and the vision of Rome*, Berkeley–Los Angeles 2012, 326.

⁷ *Ibid.* 326. Elm shares this view with Mario Mazza, 'Giuliano: o, Dell'utopia religiosa: il tentativo di fondare una chiesa pagana?', *Rudiae* x (1998), 17–42. I believe that this view fails to acknowledge the emperor's encouragement of violence by third parties, as revealed in Julian, *Oratio* xii.357c, as well as the extent of Julian's persecution demonstrated by Hans Christof Brennecke, *Studien zur Geschichte der Homöer: der Osten bis zum Ende der homöischen Reichskirche*, Tübingen 1988, 87–157.

⁸ Theresa Nesselrath, *Kaiser Julian und die Repaganisierung des Reiches: Konzept und Vorbilder*, Münster 2013, 189.

Constantinian fashion and, like Constantine, engaged in building programmes which had religiously symbolic significance.

Intent

Julian's reorganised paganism cannot be clearly understood in isolation from his relationship with and response to his uncle Constantine and cousin Constantius II. Upon the death of Constantine in 337, soldiers murdered Julian's father and most of the rest of his relatives.⁹ Richard Burgess has demonstrated the culpability of Constantius II in this purge.¹⁰ Two non-Nicene Christians, Eusebius of Nicomedia and George of Cappadocia, supervised Julian's education.¹¹ Julian became more heavily involved in theological politics and, according to the fifth-century historian Socrates Scholasticus, was made a lector in the church in Nicomedia.¹² Constantius II raised Julian to the rank of Caesar in 355, under which authority Pierre Smulders and Carl Beckwith have convincingly argued that Julian had a significant role in the Synod of Beziers in 356.¹³ Julian, who had quietly committed to paganism, was thus theologically equipped to confront his cousin in more than just the political realm.¹⁴

After apparently engineering his acclamation as emperor by his troops, Julian confronted Constantius II.¹⁵ In mid-361 Julian emphasised in his *Epistle to the Athenians* that the murderer of his family was Constantine's son, and launched from there into the divine purpose behind himself

⁹ This included his father, Julius Constantius, an elder half-brother, his uncle Flavius Dalmatius, and his cousins Flavius Dalmatius and Flavius Hannibalianus.

¹⁰ Richard W. Burgess, 'The summer of blood: the "Great Massacre" of 337 and the promotion of the sons of Constantine', *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* lxii (2008), 5–51.

¹¹ Julian, *epp.* cvi, cvi; Ammianus xxii.9.4. However, we do not know the extent to which these individuals were involved in actually teaching him.

¹² Socrates Scholasticus, *Historia ecclesiastica* iii.1.

¹³ P. Smulders, *Hilary of Poitiers' preface to his Opus historicum: translation and commentary*, Leiden 1995, 131; C. L. Beckwith, 'The condemnation and exile of Hilary of Poitiers at the Synod of Béziers (356 CE)', *Journal of Early Christian Studies* xiii (2005), 34–5.

¹⁴ Julian's statement on this places his commitment in 351: *ep.* cxi.434cd; cf. Libanius, *Oratio* xviii.18.

¹⁵ Scholars have reconstructed the series of events, which included Julian's address to his Gallic troops informing them of Constantius' order to transfer them to the East, his summoning his officers to dinner, from where they emerged equipped to spread leaflets and dissent, resulting in the ostensibly spontaneous acclamation of Julian: Libanius, *Oratio* xviii.97; Ammianus xx.4.12–22; Zosimus iii.9; cf. I. Müller-Seidl, 'Die Usurpation Julians des Aburünnigen im Lichte seiner Germanen-politik', *Historische Zeitschrift* clxxx (1955), 225–44; Klaus Rosen, 'Beobachtungen zur Ehrengabe Julians, 360–361 n. Chr.', *Acta Classica* xii (1969), 121–49; Glen W. Bowersock, *Julian the Apostate*, Cambridge, MA 1978, 47–52.

being spared.¹⁶ He further expounded on this theme in Spring 362 with his seventh oration in which he addressed the divine plan to revisit and overwrite Constantine's legacy. In *Oration 7, To the Cynic Heracleios*, Julian had Helios inform him that he had been chosen to restore traditional pagan cult and replace Constantius II as the steward of the empire.¹⁷ He further instructed the young emperor 'to cleanse all the impiety',¹⁸ later clarifying that the desired cleansing was also of 'your ancestral house', appropriate as from Julian's perspective Constantine was an apostate, who had abandoned the worship of Helios for the Christian God.¹⁹

Julian's broader statement of intent to confront Christianity developed further, and by mid-362 coalesced into comments that indicated his intent to co-opt features of the Christian Church. Van Nuffelen has dismissed *ep.* lxxxiv 'To Arsacius' as a fifth-century forgery, arguing that the author's use of Ἑλληνισμός and its derivatives to refer to pagan religion are anachronistic at a time when this usage was only frequent among Christians, that the description of Christian philanthropic practices reflects the thorough network of such endeavours in place in the latter half of the fourth century, and that the forger contradicted Julian's statements in the undisputed *ep.* lxxxix.²⁰ Jean Bouffartigue refutes this approach, based on a reconsideration of each of the above points.²¹ He offers three examples from Julian's other works of the language of Hellenism used in reference to religion. In the *Hymn to King Helios*, Julian wrote that the Romans were not only a Hellenic race, but also kept the Hellenic character of faith.²² He makes a convincing case that in the emperor's writing to Libanius of Batnae in Syria, a place holy to the gods, as an Ἑλληνικόν χωρίον, his phrase had unmistakable connotations of religion.²³ In addition, he reminds readers that Julian referred to Abraham's astral divination as evidence that Julian selected a Hellenic

¹⁶ Julian, *Oratio* v.271b–d.

¹⁷ *Ibid.* vii.230c, 232c. In the myth, Julian is merely 'the youth', but all commentators realise the emperor's identification of himself: cf. *L'Empereur Julien: oeuvres complètes*, ed. and trans. Gabriel Rochefort, ii/1, Paris 1963, 76; Polymnia Athanassiadi-Fowden, *Julian and Hellenism: an intellectual biography*, Oxford 1981, 172.

¹⁸ Julian, 'καθαίρειν ἐκεῖνα πάντα τὰ ἀσεβήματα': *Oratio* vii.231d.

¹⁹ *Idem*, 'τὴν προγονικὴν οἰκίαν': *ibid.* vii.234c. Compare with Constantine's house-cleaning mission in Eusebius, *Vita Constantini* ii.55.2. In regard to Julian's response to Constantine's building programme see D. N. Greenwood, 'Pollution wars: consecration and desecration from Constantine to Julian', in Markus Vinzent (ed.), *Studia Patristica, LXII: Papers presented at the Sixteenth International Conference on Patristic Studies held in Oxford 2011*, Leuven 2013, 289–96.

²⁰ Van Nuffelen, 'Deux Fausses Lettres', 136–50.

²¹ Jean Bouffartigue, 'L'Authenticité de la lettre 84 de l'empereur Julien', *Revue de philologie, de littérature et d'histoire anciennes* lxxix (2005), 231–42.

²² Julian, *Oratio* xi.152d–153a.

²³ *Idem*, *ep.* xcvi.400c.

trait.²⁴ Bouffartigue also points out that Julian's imitation of contemporary Christian philanthropy did not require a thoroughly established network of such works, but only a known practice, such as was referred to by Gregory Nazianzen in his attack on Julian.²⁵ Finally, Bouffartigue demonstrates that the alleged contradictions between *ep.* lxxxiva and *ep.* lxxxix are compatible differences of perspective. The instructions in *ep.* lxxxix for priests to remain in temples and have officials come to them during busy times, but in quiet times be free to go and converse with officials, and those in *ep.* lxxxiva for priests to maintain contact with officials in writing rather than paying visits to them, and to receive them in the temple, rather than going out to meet them, are explained as the difference between an official asking to see the priest and the general principle of subordination to authorities.²⁶ The instructions in *ep.* lxxxix for priests to follow the emperor's example and personally give and share funds, and instructions in *ep.* lxxxiva regarding provision for charitable welfare from empire, city and village, are resolved as the difference between personal and structural viewpoints of charity and philanthropy.²⁷ Bouffartigue's argument seems convincing; evidence from Julian's letter will therefore be employed in this article.

In late May or early June of 362 Julian wrote *ep.* lxxxiva to Arsacius, the ἀρχιερέυς or high priest of Galatia, a letter which can be dated by its mention of the request of citizens of Pessinus, so probably written after stopping there on the journey to Antioch.²⁸ In it, he discussed his concerns regarding the advance of Christianity or 'atheism' over against paganism. He lamented paganism's failure to thrive and complacency regarding the Christians.²⁹

Τί οὖν; ἡμεῖς οἰόμεθα ταῦτα ἀρκεῖν, οὐδὲ ἀποβλέπομεν ὡς μάλιστα τὴν ἀθεοῖτητα συνηύξησεν ἢ περὶ τοὺς ξένους φιλανθρωπία καὶ ἢ περὶ τὰς ταφὰς τῶν νεκρῶν προμήθεια καὶ ἢ πεπλασμένη σεμνότης κατὰ τὸν βίον; Ὡν ἕκαστον οἶομαι χρῆναι παρ' ἡμῶν ἀληθῶς ἐπιτηδεύεσθαι.

[What then? We expect this to suffice, and do not see that their philanthropy to strangers, care for the graves of the dead, and the supposed holiness of their lives increased atheism so much? I think that we ought truly to practise each of these.]

Julian continued, prescribing that all priests in Galatia who failed in these virtues or in attending worship should be dismissed. This combined praise of Christian strengths and prescription for using them to restore paganism to its rightful supremacy is enlightening.

²⁴ Idem, *Contra Galilaeos* 356c.

²⁵ Gregory Nazianzen, *Oratio* iv.111.

²⁶ Julian, *ep.* lxxxix.302d–303b; lxxxiva.431c.

²⁷ Idem, *ep.* lxxxix.289b–292d; lxxxiva.430c–431b.

²⁸ Ammianus xxii.9–5.

²⁹ Julian, *ep.* lxxxiva.429d–430a. The text of Julian's epistle is from *Iuliani epistulae leges poemata fragmenta varia*, ed. Joseph Bidez and Franz Cumont, Oxford–Paris 1922; the translation is my own.

Content

Theresa Nesselrath has argued plausibly that pagan sources may have been responsible for Julian's Christian-seeming moralising and some aspects of his philanthropy.³⁰ Although the accumulated evidence along these lines is so muddled that we cannot look exclusively to Christianity for inspiration, there are, however, substantial data that are specifically linked to Christianity.³¹ In this area, I will focus my argument on two specific topics: spiritual practice and recrafting of divinities.

Nesselrath attributes Christian elements in Julian's ideal of a priest to the 'Christian imprinting of his youth'.³² In broader terms perhaps, but this appears not to extend to his detailed pastoral instructions to priests. Recall his perception that Christian practices should be emulated by pagan religion. Julian also described his interpretation of the office of high-priests in a letter to the high priest Theodorus in Spring 362, which is reminiscent of the Pastoral Epistles. Julian instructed him to provide oversight and exhibit virtue and philanthropy.³³ Julian's priesthood emphasised personal holiness, rather than civic stature, as the primary qualification, in a sense making a secular office an overtly religious one.³⁴

In Julian's schema, priests should think piously about the gods, and venerate their temples and images.³⁵ Such piety would be demonstrated by zeal, learning hymns by heart, praying three times daily and philosophical reflection.³⁶ Thrice-daily prayer is an interesting feature, which probably had its roots in the Christian practice of daily prayer at the third, sixth and ninth hours as described in the third century by Tertullian and Hippolytus. Tertullian suggested that prayer at these hours commemorated the gift of the Holy Spirit, Peter's prayer at the sixth hour, and Peter and John going to the Temple at the ninth hour.³⁷ Hippolytus claimed that they were chosen to honour the Crucifixion, corresponding to the times at which Christ was nailed to the cross, when darkness descended, and when he was pierced with the spear.³⁸ Beyond these practices, Julian's terminology for characteristics desired of priests parallels that found in the Pastoral Epistles in the New Testament.

³⁰ Nesselrath, *Kaiser Julian*, 171–5, 184.

³¹ In addition to Koch, 'Comment l'empereur', see Glanville Downey, 'Philanthropia in religion and statecraft in the fourth century after Christ', *Historia* iv (1955), 199–208.

³² 'Jugend ... christlichen Praegung': Nesselrath, *Kaiser Julian*, 135.

³³ Julian, *ep.* lxxxix.a.453a; cf. 1 Timothy iii.

³⁴ Julian, *ep.* lxxxix.a.453b; Robert Browning, *The Emperor Julian*, London 1975, 177.

³⁵ Julian, *ep.* lxxxix.b.293a, 296b, 300c.

³⁶ Idem, *ep.* lxxxix.b.293d.

³⁷ Tertullian, *De oratione* xxv; cf. Acts ii.25; x.9; iii.1.

³⁸ Hippolytus, *Traditio apostolica* xxxvi.2–6; cf. Mark xv.25; Luke xxiii.44; John xix.34.

Walter Koch termed certain of Julian's epistles his 'lettres pastorales', including *epp.* xx, xxii, lxxxiva, lxxxixa and lxxxixb.³⁹ A brief comparison with the Pastoral Epistles demonstrates the conceptual parallels. As the author of the Pastoral Epistles exhorted Timothy to εὐσέβεια or 'piety', Julian demanded the same and warned against exhibiting ἀσέβεια.⁴⁰ As Christian clergy were to engage in παράκλησις or 'exhortation', so Julian's priests were to παραινέω or 'exhort', a kind of religious exhortation clearly imported from Christianity.⁴¹ As Timothy was instructed to select those who were δίκαιος or 'righteous' and practised δικαιοσύνη, 'righteousness', so Julian warned that his clergy must not ἀδικέω, 'act unrighteously'.⁴² Both types of clergy were to engage in philanthropy, with Timothy and Titus told to select those who were so to strangers or φιλόξενος, while Julian desired φιλανθρωπία, and specified in another passage that it be applied to strangers as they served Ξένιον Δία, 'Zeus of strangers'.⁴³ While some might think this is only valuable evidence if it can be shown to be exclusive to Christianity, I would argue that this is an unreasonable standard, particularly when there are multiple parallels within one epistle, supported by others. Koch assessed Julian's programme as 'une simple imitation de la tradition chrétienne'.⁴⁴

When Julian reintroduced paganism as the sole state religion, he provided new theological content, from Christianity, for the deities Heracles and Asclepius, and sometimes from identifiable texts. David Hunt notes that modern interpretation of *Against the Galileans* has not paid adequate attention to Julian's attack on Christ's divinity and his engagement with Christian incarnational theology.⁴⁵ Suffice to say that in his 362 oration, Julian recrafted Heracles into a water-walking saviour of the world, born of Zeus and the virgin goddess Athena.⁴⁶ In his *Hymn to King Helios* and

³⁹ Koch, 'Comment l'empereur', 49.

⁴⁰ 1 Tim. vi.11; Julian, *epp.* lxxxixb.299b, 300c; lxxxiva.

⁴¹ 1 Tim. iv.13; 2 Tim. iv.2; Titus i.9; Julian, *ep.* lxxxixb.289a.

⁴² Titus i.8; 1 Tim. vi.11; Julian, *ep.* lxxxixa.

⁴³ 1 Tim. iii.2; Titus i.8; Julian, *epp.* xxii; xx; lxxxixb.289b; lxxxiva.430bc; lxxxixb.291bc.

⁴⁴ Koch, 'Comment l'empereur', 81; cf. Klaus Bringmann, *Kaiser Julian: der letzte heidnische Herrscher*, Darmstadt 2004, 130; Benedikt Simons, 'Kaiser Julian, Stellvertreter des Helios auf Erden', *Gymnasium* cxviii (2011), 501–2.

⁴⁵ E. David Hunt, 'The Christian context of Julian's *Against the Galileans*', in Nicholas Baker-Brian and Shaun Tougher (eds), *Emperor and author: the writings of Julian the Apostate*, Swansea 2012, 254, 259.

⁴⁶ Julian, *Oratio* vii.219d–220a; cf. D. N. Greenwood, 'Crafting divine personae in Julian's *Oratio* 7', *Classical Philology* cix/2 (2014), 140–9. These parallels are also recognised by others, for example Rochefort, *L'Empereur Julien*, ii/1, 63; *L'Empereur Julien: oeuvres complètes*, ed. and trans. Christian Lacombrade, ii/2, Paris 1964, 131; and Heinz-Günther Nesselrath, 'Mit "Waffen" Platons gegen ein christliches Imperium: der Mythos in Julians Schrift *Gegen den Kyniker Herakleios*', in Christian Schafer (ed.),

Against the Galileans, Julian performed a similar alteration to Asclepius, whom he recast as the pre-existent son of Helios, begotten in the form of a man to be the saviour of the whole world and to restore sinful souls.⁴⁷ These parallels, co-opting an incarnational and soteriological figure, are clearly drawn from Christianity.

Leadership

Julian posited a new role for himself at the head of his reimagined paganism, at the same time as he copied the ecclesiastical structure and clerical instructions of the Christian faith. Oliver Nicholson has argued that the structure of Julian's paganism drew upon the Christian Church rather than the paganism of Maximinus Daia.⁴⁸ Theresa Nesselrath, in turn, cautions against taking surface parallels too much at face value, and argues that Julian only took from Christianity the creation of a diverse infrastructure as he networked the various traditional pagan cults.⁴⁹ Nesselrath may be correct to point out alternative source material for the provincial structure of Julian's paganism. However, Julian seems very specifically to emulate Constantine in his idea of imperial leadership of the endorsed Church. While correlating with the general imitation of the divine in late antique kingship, the parallels between Constantine and Julian are very specific, and seem driven by Julian's perceptions in *Oration 7, To the Cynic Heracleios*, of Constantine as the one who had led the empire astray by his assumption of such a role. Constantine was presented, largely by Eusebius, as the unique head of the Christian empire, and also as a ruler who mimetically reflected divinity and was specifically tied to the Christian Son of God. Julian, in turn, presented himself as the pagan parallel to this role.

Constantine modified the structure of the Christian Church by introducing a definite role for the state. Development in this direction was probably inevitable, as this was the first generation of the Church to have such favoured status and to receive state beneficence. While Constantine's actions and intentions will continue to be disputed, it is Eusebius' overtly Christian Constantine to whom Julian apparently reacted. There were, of course, limits to Eusebius' influence over the

Kaiser Julian 'Apostata' und die philosophische Reaktion gegen das Christentum, Berlin 2008, 213–14.

⁴⁷ Julian, *Oratio* xi.144b; *Contra Galilaeos* 200ab. This is also briefly noted by Lacombrade. *L'Empereur Julien*, ii/2, 131, and Jean Bouffartigue, *L'Empereur Julien et la culture de son temps*, Paris 1995, 649. See now D.N. Greenwood, 'Julian's use of Asclepius against the Christians', *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* cix (2017), forthcoming.

⁴⁸ Nicholson, 'Pagan churches', 1–10.

⁴⁹ Nesselrath, *Kaiser Julian*, 101.

emperor, as he had only four documented meetings with him.⁵⁰ Nevertheless, Constantine's behaviour did parallel Eusebius' framework, even beyond the emperor's actions as interpreted in the *Life of Constantine*. Eusebius' description aligns with Constantine's portrayal of himself in both his *Letter to the provincials of the East* and the *Letter to Arius and Alexander*. Much of the evidence cited here comes from Eusebius, so it is important to acknowledge that he was of course not crafting a dispassionate history, but appropriating Constantine's actions for a triumphal narrative of Christianity's eschatological fulfillment. Despite this bias, Eusebius can be used, carefully, as a source for Constantine's actions, if not necessarily for Constantine's own vision of empire. Under Constantine, for the first time, the state was wielding definite influence within the Church: the emperor ordered churches built and temples abandoned, exempted Christian clergy from expensive public service, and gave theological advice at the Council of Nicaea, which framed theological debate through the rest of the century.

Constantine crafted a particular role for himself as something more than the champion of his faith. Prior to this shift, he had accepted praise in panegyric as a divine emperor.⁵¹ In the autumn of 324 Constantine composed his *Letter to Alexander and Arius*, urging the two to resolve their Christological differences, and claiming that he was divinely called by God as his helper to restore the state.⁵² In his *Letter to the provincials of the East*, the emperor asked God to offer healing to the state through him, to 'restore again your most holy house'.⁵³ These public statements demonstrate Constantine's successful integration of his imperial role within his new religion, portraying himself as not only the champion of Christianity, but in a sense the earthly mirror of the Christian God, the two working in harmony to fulfill the divine plan on earth. The building of what would after many travails become the Church of the Holy Apostles began in 326.⁵⁴ The most likely reconstruction of events entails Constantine initially building a mausoleum, in which he would be buried together with the twelve Apostles. Constantius II transported the remains of Apostles there in 356–7, but actually placed them next door in a church dedicated in 370.⁵⁵ The mausoleum signified Constantine's

⁵⁰ Barnes, *Constantine*, 10.

⁵¹ *Panegyrici Latini* vi.1.5–2.5.

⁵² *Vita Constantini* ii.64–5; Eusebius, *Life of Constantine*, trans. Averil Cameron and Stuart Hall, Oxford–New York 1999. Unless otherwise stated all citations are to this edition. For dating see Timothy D. Barnes, *Constantine: dynasty, religion and power in the later Roman Empire*, Oxford 2011, 120.

⁵³ Eusebius, *Vita Constantini* ii.55.1–2.

⁵⁴ Cyril Mango, 'Constantine's mausoleum and the translation of relics', *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* lxxxiii (1990), 58–9.

⁵⁵ Eusebius, *Vita Constantini* iv.60; Jerome, *Chronicon* 322d, s.a. 356; Philostratus ii.2; *Chronicon Paschale* 542; Gilbert Dagron, *Naissance d'une capitale: Constantinople et ses institutions de 330 à 451*, 2nd edn, Paris 1984, 405.

apostolic status, associating the future tomb of the emperor with twelve others intended for the Apostles.⁵⁶ Cyril Mango sees this as a plan that ‘verged on the blasphemous. By placing his own tomb at the centre, with those of the twelve Apostles on either side of him, he was proclaiming in the language of iconography that he was the equal of Christ, just as earlier in life he had been the double of Sol Invictus’.⁵⁷ While it seems more likely that Constantine was proclaiming himself as an Apostle, both his contemporaries and Julian may have interpreted his actions as signifying equality with Christ. Eusebius adopted and expanded on this theme in his *De laudibus Constantini*, written for Constantine’s *Tricennalia* in Constantinople on 25 July 336, in which he lauded the emperor and his relationship with his God.⁵⁸

Constantine’s crafting of his own public *persona* was reinforced by Eusebius’ theological portrayal of him as a deliverer of the faithful from tyranny, very much in the style of Moses in Exodus.⁵⁹ In the hands of Eusebius, the emperor was specially chosen by God for his role as ‘a friend of the all-sovereign God, and was established as a clear example to all mankind of the life of godliness’.⁶⁰ Indeed the Mosaic motif was applied to all stages of his life, as he grew up in the imperial court under tyrants, received a vision from heaven much like Moses’s burning bush, and was described as a divine prophet.⁶¹ The numerous Mosaic parallels also took on a Messianic aspect when Eusebius compared Moses and Jesus in his *Demonstratio evangelica*.⁶² Eusebius’ *Life of Constantine* opened with a declaration that Constantine was the exemplar for the human race and the earthly reflection of his heavenly rule.⁶³ According to Eusebius, Constantine viewed his divine mission as including the healing

⁵⁶ Otto Seeck, *Regesten der Kaiser und Päpste für die Jahre 311 bis 476 n. Chr.*, Stuttgart 1919, 202–3. Timothy’s remains were transported to the mausoleum on 1 June 356 and those of Andrew and Luke on 3 March 357.

⁵⁷ Mango, ‘Constantine’s mausoleum’, 58. According to a tradition preserved by the fourteenth-century historian Nicephorus Callistus the structure was built over the site of an altar of twelve gods of the pagan pantheon: *Historia ecclesiastica* viii.55, PG cxxvi.220.

⁵⁸ It is important to note that those supervising Julian’s education, Eusebius of Nicomedia and George of Cappadocia, were both associated closely with Eusebius, and that Julian knew Eusebius’ writings well enough to cite him as ‘the wretched Eusebius’: *Contra Galileos* 222a, citing Eusebius, *Preparatio evangelica* xi.5.5. Bouffartigue has demonstrated the extent of Julian’s ‘direct consultation’ of the *Præparatio Evangelica* in his own *Contra Galilaeos: L’Empereur Julien*, 385–6.

⁵⁹ Eusebius, *Vita Constantini*. i.12.1, 39.1; cf. Averil Cameron, *Christianity and the rhetoric of empire: the development of Christian discourse*, Berkeley 1991, 55; and ‘Eusebius’ *Vita Constantini* and the construction of Constantine’, in Mark Edwards and Scott Swain (eds), *Portraits: biographical representation in the Greek and Latin literature of the Roman Empire*, Oxford 1997, 158–63; Eusebius, *Life of Constantine*, 42.

⁶⁰ Eusebius, *Vita Constantini* i.3.17.

⁶¹ *Ibid.* i.12.1, 20.2; ii.12.1; cf. Cameron, ‘Eusebius’ *Vita Constantini*’, 158.

⁶² Eusebius, *Demonstratio evangelica* iii.2.6–7. ⁶³ *Idem, Vita Constantini* i.3.4, 5.1.

of the empire, the rescue of its citizens from tyranny, particularly the people of his faith, and the bringing to them of knowledge of his God.⁶⁴ Constantine apparently believed that God confirmed his power and mission through 'many tokens'.⁶⁵ Eusebius wrote of Constantine as being like an interpreter of his God, and accepted that there was direct communication between the two.⁶⁶ Constantine 'exercised a bishop's supervision over all his subjects, and exhorted them all, as far as lay in his power, to lead the godly life'.⁶⁷ Kenneth Setton notes the numerous imperial epithets attributed to God by Eusebius in conjunction with his praise of the emperor, and concludes that 'Truly God had been cast in the image of the Roman emperor'.⁶⁸

Eusebius had praised Constantine as a mimetic Christ-figure in a public oration in Constantinople in July 336.⁶⁹ In the *De laudibus Constantini* Eusebius made significant and public use of the concept of μίμησις, with Constantine in his kingdom mirroring God in heaven, explicitly stating that 'looking upwards, he makes straight below, steering by the archetypal form'.⁷⁰ Eusebius drew a clear parallel between Constantine and Christ, portraying the emperor even more explicitly as a mimetic Messiah.⁷¹ The Christian Christ and the first Christian emperor shared important functions. As the Λόγος prepared the cosmos for God's kingdom, Constantine prepared his subjects for the kingdom.⁷² As the Λόγος opposed demons, Constantine opposed the earthly 'opponents of truth'.⁷³ As the Λόγος implanted seeds in men allowing them the knowledge of God, Constantine was the interpreter and proclaimer calling men to that knowledge.⁷⁴ As the Λόγος opened the gates of God's kingdom, Constantine opened the imperial court to holy men.⁷⁵ Like the Λόγος, Eusebius described Constantine as a ποιμήν ἀγαθός, 'good shepherd', a charioteer and οἶα μεγάλου βασιλέως ὑπαρχος ('a prefect of the

⁶⁴ Ibid. ii.64–5, 55.1; cf. *De laudibus* vi.21.

⁶⁵ Idem, *Vita Constantini* ii.55.2.

⁶⁶ Idem, *De laudibus* x, xviii.

⁶⁷ Idem, *Vita Constantini* iv.24. Constantine declared himself the ἐπίσκοπος, 'bishop' or 'overseer', of those outside the Church, although both the sense and the off-hand context indicate that he was not establishing himself as its functional head, and may have been reassuring bishops that he would not encroach upon their jurisdiction.

⁶⁸ Kenneth Setton, *Christian attitude towards the emperor in the fourth century, especially as shown in addresses to the emperor*, New York 1941, 47–8.

⁶⁹ Eusebius, *De laudibus* ii.2–5; cf. H. A. Drake, 'When was the "De laudibus Constantini" delivered?', *Historia* xxiv (1975), 345–56; Eusebius, *In praise of Constantine: a historical study and new translation of Eusebius' Tricennial orations*, trans. H. A. Drake, Berkeley 1976, 31–8, 81; Timothy D. Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius*, Cambridge, MA 1981, 253–5.

⁷⁰ ἄνω βλέπων κατὰ τὴν ἀρχέτυπον ἰδέαν τοῦς κάτω διακυβερνῶν ἰθύνει: Eusebius, *De laudibus* iii.5.

⁷¹ Eusebius, *In praise of Constantine*, 75; Cameron, *Christianity and the rhetoric of empire*, 56.

⁷² Eusebius, *De laudibus* ii.2.

⁷³ Ibid. ii.3.

⁷⁴ Ibid. ii.4.

⁷⁵ Ibid. ii.5.

great king').⁷⁶ While heaping praise upon emperors was nothing new, Eusebius' intense and sustained Christological focus was different from both conventional emperor-worship and panegyric. This cemented the relationship between Constantine and the God whom he mirrored, and reinforced his role as the earthly example for mankind to follow.

Like Constantine, Julian took on the role of (re)founder and defender of the faith of his personal religion, presented his own personal paganism as the preferred religion, and provided state funding to support it. Despite his hatred of Christianity, he saw advantages in Christian organisation and its engagement with society. In addition, Julian's restructuring involved a unique new role for himself, although this was more formalised than Constantine's. While it is true that both emperors were already titled *pontifex maximus*, it is also clear that both saw their role as involving an unprecedentedly aggressive engagement of their society on behalf of their personal religion.⁷⁷ Julian wrote that he would not only be the high priest (ἀρχιερέα μέγιστον, the usual translation of 'pontifex maximus'),⁷⁸ but the architect of the new paganism: 'not of your own self do you alone devise these precepts and practise them, but you have me also to give you support, who by the grace of the gods am known as sovereign pontiff'.⁷⁹ In addition to this, Julian seemed to pattern his role as *pontifex maximus* after Constantine, much as Eusebius mimetically portrayed him. Contributing to the uniqueness of his role, Julian wrote that sacrifices on his behalf were efficacious for all Hellenes.⁸⁰ For such reasons, Benedikt Simons recognises the parallels between Constantine as mimetic ruler for God and Julian for Helios.⁸¹ Julian did, however, differ from Constantine in his focus on his own personal priestly role, particularly as it pertained to sacrifice. This emphasis, reflected so clearly in his private writings, did not escape the notice of his contemporaries, who wrote that his sacrifices were excessive and neglected none of the gods' altars.⁸²

In addition, as Eusebius portrayed Constantine as a mimetic Christ, Julian portrayed himself as an inverse parallel to Christ in his *Oratio* 7. This is not to claim a causal relationship between Eusebius and Julian, in which the emperor must have read the bishop's works, but merely that Eusebius'

⁷⁶ Shepherd: Eusebius, *De laudibus* ii.3; cf. ii.5; John x; charioteer: *De laudibus* iii.4; vi.9; prefect: *De laudibus* vii.13. Note the parallel to Julian as the new ἐπίτροπον or 'steward' of the gods from *Oratio* vii.232c.

⁷⁷ Alan Cameron argues convincingly that Constantine retained the title: 'The imperial pontifex', *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* xiii (2007), 341–3.

⁷⁸ H. Liddell, R. Scott, H. Jones and R. McKenzie, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 9th edition, with a revised supplement, New York 1995, 252, s.v. ἀρχιερόμα.

⁷⁹ Julian, *ep.* lxxxixb.298c (Wright edn); cf. *ep.* xvii, lvii.

⁸⁰ Julian, *ep.* x.

⁸¹ Browning, *Emperor Julian*, 178; Simons, 'Kaiser Julian', 501.

⁸² Julian, *ep.* xxvi.415cd; xxviii.382c; Libanius, *Oratio* xii. 87; Ammianus xv.4.17; Gregory Nazianzen, *Oratio* iv.77.

view reflected a view in their society to which Julian was responding. In his public oration of Spring 362 in Constantinople, Julian revisited the Temptation of Christ, recasting himself in the role of Christ and Helios in the role of Satan offering him rule of the world below which, needless to say, Julian accepted.⁸³ Julian also took advantage of the theological restructuring of the gods to then associate himself with the new soteriological Heracles, asserting that, like Heracles, he too was born of Athena and Helios (equated by Julian with Zeus), and played the role of Heracles at the Crossroads.⁸⁴ Julian's associates in the restoration of paganism reflected this understanding back as they described the emperor as Heracles, as Asclepius, and as the Son of Helios.⁸⁵ Julian certainly had other imperial precedents for rulers assimilating themselves to the divine, but none other than Constantine were assimilated in literature to Jesus Christ, the salvific son of God.

Symbols

The symbolism of Julian's 'pagan chapel' in the palace at Constantinople, and the rebuilding of the Jewish Temple in Jerusalem, must also be borne in mind. Both were responses to consecratory actions by Constantine on behalf of the Christian Church. In material terms both Constantine and Julian understood the value of funding symbolic construction for their reorganised religions. Constantine placed Christian imagery in his palace, at the centre of his power, and Julian in turn built a pagan chapel at the palace. Eusebius staked much on Constantine's construction of the Church of the Resurrection in Jerusalem, the theocratic centre of the world, symbolising the triumph of Christianity; Julian's attempt to rebuild the Jewish Temple in Jerusalem was a symbolic response to Constantine's construction of his Church of the Resurrection opposite its ruins. Constantine made particular use of space in Constantinople and Jerusalem to claim these sites as part of the Christian narrative, and Julian followed suit.

⁸³ Julian, *Oratio* vii.229c–233d; cf. Matt. iv.1–10; D. N. Greenwood, 'A pagan emperor's appropriation of Matthew's Gospel', *Expository Times* cxxv (Sept. 2014), 593–8.

⁸⁴ Julian, *Oratio* vii.229c–230a, 230cd; cf. Greenwood, 'Crafting divine personae', 142–5.

⁸⁵ Heracles: Libanius, *Oratio* xii.28; xv.36; Asclepius: Libanius, *Oratio* xiii.42, 47; xv.69; xvii.36; Son of Helios: Himerius, *Orationes* xli.8; Libanius, *Oratio* xiii.47; Eunapius, *Fragments* 28.4; 28.5; 28.6, in R. C. Blockley, *The fragmentary classicising historians of the later Roman Empire*, ii, Liverpool 1983. Athanassiadi-Fowden notes that 'his panegyricists had not ceased to proclaim in him Asclepius incarnate, greeting him as the superhuman healer who had come to resurrect not just one man, but the whole *oikoumenē*': *Julian and Hellenism*, 168.

Constantine's new city displayed his religion in a number of ways. Eusebius wrote of an image on the city walls that portrayed the Emperor Constantine with the *Chi-Rho* emblem on his helmet, his foot on a serpent, holding the spear with which he had pierced it, representing Constantine's victory over Satan.⁸⁶ He began construction of what would eventually become the Church of the Holy Apostles.⁸⁷ However, the high point is his consecration of the palace in Constantinople, where he placed the Saviour's sign (likely the cross or labarum) over the palace gate.⁸⁸ In a move less obvious to the population, but revealing as to Constantine's perspective, he symbolically placed a cross at the seat of his power. For these reasons, Eusebius wrote that the emperor 'consecrated the city to the martyrs' God'.⁸⁹ In the royal quarters of the palace 'had been fixed the emblem of the saving Passion made up of a variety of precious stones and set in much gold. This appears to have been made by the Godbeloved as a protection for his Empire'.⁹⁰ Averil Cameron and Stuart Hall note that this construction was 'explicitly presented as a talisman'.⁹¹

Shortly after entering Constantinople in 361, Julian not only made his paganism public, but built a temple in the palace.⁹² Thus, in his own somewhat opaque words on the subject from his *Hymn to King Helios*, 'Indeed I am a devotee of King Helios; the most clear evidence I can produce for this is at home.'⁹³ Libanius clarified matters when he wrote years later that because of the logistics of daily travel to temples, 'a temple to the god who governs the day was built in the middle of the palace, and he took

⁸⁶ Eusebius, *Vita Constantini* iii.3.1–3; cf. Cyril Mango, *The brazen house: a study of the vestibule of the imperial palace of Constantinople*, Copenhagen 1959, 22–4. There was coinage with the same imagery: Patrick M. Bruun, *The Roman imperial coinage*, VII: *Constantine and Licinius*, A. D. 313–337, London 1966. Constantinople, no. 19.

⁸⁷ The interpretation of Constantine's tomb surrounded by twelve apostolic tombs that equated Constantine with Christ may have occurred to Julian, although I agree with Barnes (*Constantine*, 129) that it was more likely to have been Constantine's iconographic claim to apostolic status.

⁸⁸ Eusebius, *Vita Constantini* iii.2–3; cf. Jonathan Bardill, *Constantine, divine emperor of the Christian Golden Age*, Cambridge 2011, 338–96. Bardill argues, from Constantine's building programme, that the emperor was equating himself with Christ, particularly referencing the Church of the Holy Apostles and the palace tableau with Constantine piercing the serpent with the labarum.

⁸⁹ Eusebius, *Vita Constantini* iii.48.1.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.* iii.49.

⁹¹ Eusebius, *Life of Constantine*, 299.

⁹² E. David Hunt, 'Julian', in A. Cameron and P. Garnsey (eds), *The Cambridge ancient history*, XIII: *The late Empire A. D. 337–425*, Cambridge 1998, 62.

⁹³ Julian, *Oratio* xi.130c, 94; Polymnia Athanassiadi-Fowden, 'A contribution to Mithraic theology: the Emperor Julian's hymn to King Helios', *JTS* xviii (1977), 362.

part in his mysteries, initiated and in turn initiating'.⁹⁴ This sort of 'pagan chapel' was unusual enough to prompt comment from Libanius. While Libanius was not in Constantinople and may have only speculated as to Julian's intent, it is important to recognise the legitimacy of his confirmation of the event. Placing such a chapel in the palace could be interpreted as simple tact, but Julian was not sensitive to the feelings of others elsewhere in his public career. In his *Oration 7 To the Cynic Heracleios*, Julian wrote that among his other instructions he was tasked by the gods with cleansing the impiety of Christianity.⁹⁵ In this case, he started at home with a temple that may well have been the one where Himerius and Julian engaged in Mithraic worship.

To understand how Julian restored pagan worship in the former city of Byzantium, the evidence of a close contemporary who wrote in 361 or 362 concerning Julian's revival is crucial. Julian invited the Athenian Himerius to speak at Constantinople; *en route* he delivered orations in Thessalonica and Philippi.⁹⁶ His oration of December 361 or January 362 can be seen as the opening salvo in Julian's campaign, much as he had Libanius delivering orations of support when he moved into a new phase in the restoration of paganism in Antioch.⁹⁷ Himerius delivered his oration while Julian was in the city, but he was not present, for Himerius closes by stating that he needed to go and 'set eyes upon the emperor'.⁹⁸ He wrote that he had cleansed his soul through Mithraic ritual and had spent time worshipping with Julian. This has been claimed as evidence that Julian initiated Himerius, but there is insufficient evidence to justify this conclusion.⁹⁹ Himerius detailed the initial progress made in Julian's Hellenic revival: he 'has raised up temples to the gods, has established religious rites foreign to the city, and has made sacred the mysteries of the heavenly gods introduced into the city'.¹⁰⁰ Himerius' description of 'foreign' rites could refer to Mithraism, or perhaps any pagan rites, as Constantinople was generally perceived as Constantine's 'Christian' city. While it should

⁹⁴ Libanius, *Oratio* xviii.127, cf. *Oratio* xii.80–1 (Norman edn). Bidez (*Vie*, 219) describes Julian as 'le grand maître des conventicules mithraïques', although Robert Turcan holds that Julian's thoroughgoing Mithraism is only 'une extrapolation des historiens modernes': *Mithras Platonius: recherches sur l'hellénisation philosophique de Mithra*, Leiden 1975, 128.

⁹⁵ Julian, *Oratio* vii.231d.

⁹⁶ Timothy D. Barnes, 'Himerius and the fourth century', *Classical Philology* lxxxii (1987), 221.

⁹⁷ Barnes dates Himerius' *Oratio* xli to December 361: *ibid.* 224.

⁹⁸ *Himerius, man and the word: the Orations of Himerius*, trans. Robert J. Penella, Berkeley 2007, 35.

⁹⁹ Himerius, *Oratio* xli.1, *ibid.* = *Oratio* xli.2–8, in *Himerii declamationes et orationes cum deperditarum fragmentis*, ed. Aristides Colonna, Rome 1951; cf. Athanassiadi, 'A contribution to Mithraic theology', 362.

¹⁰⁰ Himerius, *Oratio* xli.8 (Penella edn) = Himerius, *Oratio* xli.84–9 (Colonna edn).

not be taken as evidence for an exclusive commitment on Julian's part to the mystery religions, Gregory Nazianzen did write somewhat obliquely in 363–5 of Julian's apparent participation in the Mithraic rite of the *taurobolium*, according to an alleged source with knowledge of the emperor's private actions: 'with unhallowed blood he rids himself of his baptism, setting up the initiation of abomination against the initiation according to our rite'.¹⁰¹

Returning to Constantine: after passing through Palestine in about AD 300 with the court of Diocletian, he returned to the eastern empire as a magnanimous supporter of the religion that Diocletian had attempted to eliminate.¹⁰² Yet this triumph as the deliverer of God's people and the victor over Licinius could be outstripped by another project, the reclamation and purification of Jerusalem as a Christian site. Constantine reclaimed Jerusalem from the pagan Aelia¹⁰³ with his construction of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre on the site described as the 'very centre of the world'.¹⁰⁴ This had been the site of Hadrian's Temple of Venus, which had in turn been built over the site of the holy sepulchre.¹⁰⁵ Eusebius, who claimed that Constantine undertook the construction as directed by God, described Constantine's view of the religious pollution of the site.¹⁰⁶ The emperor ordered the removal of the temple and its remnants of 'detestable oblations', and further demanded the excavation of the polluted soil.¹⁰⁷ In place of this temple, work began in 328 on a basilica that Constantine instructed Bishop Macarius to build. His Church of the Holy Sepulchre was formally dedicated in September 335 for his *Tricennalia* celebration.¹⁰⁸ The complex included a five-aisled basilica and the Anastasis Rotunda, and enclosed the Holy Sepulchre and the Rock of Calvary.¹⁰⁹ Eusebius described the resultant basilica over the

¹⁰¹ Gregory Nazianzen, *Oratio* iv.52, in *Julian the emperor: containing Gregory Nazianzen's two invectives and Libanius' Monody with Julian's extant theosophical works*, trans C. W. King, London, 1888. This reference to inside knowledge might seem hyperbolic, were it not for Gregory Nazianzen's younger brother Caesarius being Julian's ἀρχίατρος or senior court physician: Gregory Nazianzen, *Oratio* vii.9.

¹⁰² Eusebius, *Vita Constantini* i.19; cf. Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius*, 41–2, 55.

¹⁰³ Averil Cameron, 'The reign of Constantine, AD 306–337', in Cameron and Garnsey, *Cambridge ancient history*, xiii. 100.

¹⁰⁴ Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catechesis* xiii.28; cf. Peter Walker, *Holy city, holy places? Christian attitudes to Jerusalem and the Holy Land in the fourth century*, Oxford 1990, 236. The significance is recognised by Bardill, who writes that there is 'little doubt that this project held great symbolic power for the emperor': *Constantine, divine emperor*, 256.

¹⁰⁵ Eusebius, *Vita Constantini* iii.26. ¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.* iii.25, 29. ¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.* iii.25, 27.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.* iv.43; Eusebius, *In praise of Constantine* (Drake edn), 42–3. The actual date for the *Tricennalia* should have been July 335, but the celebration was possibly delayed in order to get bishops there as participants.

¹⁰⁹ Richard Krautheimer and Slobodan Ćurčić, *Early Christian and Byzantine architecture*, 4th edn, New Haven 1986, 63.

supposed tomb of Jesus as 'a manifest testimony of the Saviour's resurrection'.¹¹⁰ This church was not only a theological testimony, but also spoke to Constantine's building aspirations and Christianising narrative. Indeed, Gilbert Dagron notes that in a sense Constantine's building programme centred more on Jerusalem as the Christian capital than on Constantinople.¹¹¹ Eusebius cited Constantine's new construction in Jerusalem as evidence of Christian victory.¹¹² He wrote that Constantine's construction constituted a new holy city contrasting with the old, a monument to Christian victory that was perhaps the fulfilment of eschatological prophecies in John's Apocalypse regarding the New Jerusalem.¹¹³ As Cameron and Hall point out, the striking contrast that Eusebius draws explains why Constantine and subsequent Christian emperors did not build over the Temple site, but left it to add its testimony.¹¹⁴ The suggestion that God's plan was finding fulfilment in Constantine's construction was a powerful one, in which Eusebius changed the tenor of the narrative, as his presentation of this prophetic fulfilment was neither apocalyptic nor anti-Roman. Constantine's earthly act was the New Jerusalem.

Sozomen wrote that when Julian exhorted the Jews to resume sacrifices, they objected that they could not do so without the restoration of their Temple. Julian then made funds available and directed them to rebuild it.¹¹⁵ This can, of course, be seen as related to Julian's general campaign to rebuild temples throughout the empire, alluded to in public and private statements of intent, made explicit in his laws of 362, and evidenced in a number of locations.¹¹⁶ However, the response that Julian made suggests a great deal more regarding his intentions. The obvious and easy route would have been to follow in Hadrian's Hellenophile footsteps and rebuild the pagan city that had existed between that emperor and Constantine. Reconstructing the city as Hadrian's Aelia Capitolina would have had some pagan aesthetic value, but not nearly the symbolic value of using his understanding as a Christian insider to refashion the Jewish city. This understanding of Christianity's vulnerability to any potential Jewish revival is highlighted by his statement in *Against the Galileans* regarding Christian supersession as it related to the matter of sacrifice. After reviewing the deprivation of the Temple of Jerusalem, he asks, 'But having devised the new sacrifice, and not needing Jerusalem, why do you

¹¹⁰ Eusebius, *Vita Constantini* iii.40.

¹¹¹ Dagron, *Naissance d'une capitale*, 389.

¹¹² Eusebius, *De laudibus* ix.16.

¹¹³ Idem, *Vita Constantini* iii.33.1–2; cf. Revelation xxi.1–3.

¹¹⁴ Eusebius, *Life of Constantine*, 285.

¹¹⁵ Sozomen, *Historia ecclesiastica* v.12.

¹¹⁶ Intent: Julian, *Oratio* vii.228bc, 234c; *ep.* ix.415cd; Laws: *Historia acephala* ix (4 Feb. 362); *Codex Theodosianus* xv.1.3 (29 June 362); cf. Libanius, *Oratio* xviii.126; Greenwood, 'Pollution wars', 289–96.

not sacrifice instead?’¹¹⁷ Here, Julian both contrasted Christianity’s ‘new sacrifice’, probably the eucharistic service, with the traditional Jewish forms of sacrifice, but also then demanded to know why, since they were neither tied to Jerusalem nor allowing the Jews to make use of Jerusalem, they were not conducting this traditional animal sacrifice. In using both senses of the term ‘sacrifice’, he placed Christianity on the horns of a dilemma. He went on to taunt Christians in the same work, again framing the conflict in his own terms by defining the only excuse available for Christianity’s lack of traditional blood sacrifice as their location outside Jerusalem.¹¹⁸

Ephrem reported that Jewish leaders made an alliance with Julian in winter 362/3, and met further with the emperor in February or March.¹¹⁹ Ammianus 23.1.2 placed Julian’s entrusting of Alypius to oversee the work to its completion in early January 363, although Timothy Barnes points out that Ammianus never specifies how long the preparation had been underway.¹²⁰ While there is no literary evidence from the Jewish community supporting the restoration of the Temple, inscriptional evidence indicates that Julian did attempt in late 362 or possibly early 363 to have the Jewish temple at Jerusalem rebuilt. A Hebrew inscription citing Isaiah lxvi.14, carved onto one of the ashlar of the Western Wall, has been identified as fourth century and associated with Julian’s efforts at rebuilding.¹²¹ A nearby building, also buried in debris and ashes, was in use in the fourth century, and provided coinage from the reigns of Constantine, Constantius II and terminating with Julian’s reign.¹²² These hopes were ultimately dashed, as both Julian’s campaign against the Church and the programme to rebuild the Jewish Temple were abandoned. Ammianus was with Julian in the East when an earthquake ended attempts at restoration, and later wrote of the initiation and failure of the rebuilding plan.¹²³ The setting of this interlude within Ammianus’ section on Antioch may mean that Ammianus thought that the project ended while Julian was in Antioch – between July 362 and 5 March 363 – or that his reference to the plan’s collapse was retrospective and he then returned to his historical narrative in sequence.¹²⁴

¹¹⁷ ὑμεῖς δὲ οἱ τὴν καινὴν θυσίαν εὐρόντες, οὐδὲν δεόμενοι τῆς Ἱερουσαλήμ, ἀντὶ τίνος οὐ θύετε: Julian, *Contra Galilaeos* 306a (translation mine).

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.* 351d, 324cd.

¹¹⁹ Ephrem, i.5.3; vii.3; x.1.

¹²⁰ Timothy D. Barnes, ‘New Year 363 in Ammianus Marcellinus: annalistic technique and historical apologetics’, in J. den Boeft, D. den Hengst and H. C. Teitler (eds), *Cognitio gestorum: the historiographic art of Ammianus Marcellinus*, Amsterdam 1992, 4.

¹²¹ Benjamin Mazar, *The excavations in the Old City of Jerusalem near the Temple Mount: preliminary report of the second and third sessions, 1969–1970*, Jerusalem 1971, 23, 94.

¹²² *Ibid.* 22.

¹²³ Ammianus xxiii.1.2–3, 2.6; cf. Zosimus iii.1.2.1; Bowersock, *Julian the Apostate*, 6.

¹²⁴ Ammianus xxii.9.14; xxiii.2.6.

Julian's motivations here can be understood as a thrust directed at Constantine, but benefiting Julian's campaign in several ways. In the first place, rebuilding the Jewish Temple would replace and invalidate Constantine's actions. Julian's restoration of the Temple at Jerusalem would undo Constantine's use of space which had declared Jerusalem to be a Christian city. The proclamation of the 'New Jerusalem' by the presence of the church overlooking the city would thus be rendered impotent. This is not to claim that this was Julian imitating Christianity, but rather that he was responding to it. As Drijvers terms it: it was Julian's 'wish to counter Constantine's policy of the Christianisation of Jerusalem'.¹²⁵

Rebuilding the Temple would benefit Julian by restoring non-Christian sacrifice, validating the Old Covenant, and invalidating Christian prophecy. Michael Simmons has argued that the role of pagan prophecy should be considered as well, namely that Christianity would end after a set period of time, which Julian sought to fulfill.¹²⁶ Rebuilding the Temple at Jerusalem and restoring sacrifice would have validated the Old Covenant and suggest that Christ's sacrifice of himself 'once-for-all', as claimed by the author of Hebrews vi.27, was a sham. Christ had been reported as stating that the Temple would be reduced, leaving not one stone standing upon another.¹²⁷ This was taken as prophesying the impossibility of restoring the Jerusalem Temple by several influential authors prior to Julian. Justin Martyr tied the barring of the Jews from Jerusalem following the Bar Kokhba revolt to biblical prophecy, and held that the Temple would never be rebuilt by man, but only in the restoration of all things at the Millenium.¹²⁸ Eusebius offered a vivid description that captured the finality of the Christian view in the fourth century, writing that the old Jerusalem 'had been overthrown in utter devastation, and paid the penalty of its wicked inhabitants'.¹²⁹ In the early fourth century, Athanasius wrote that the end of the period of Jewish kings, prophets and Temple was proof of the coming of the Christ and the validation of his teachings,¹³⁰ and in 402–3 Rufinus confirmed that this theology was held in the 360s as well, writing that Bishop Cyril of Jerusalem had insisted the Jews could not rebuild the Temple, based on these interpretations of the prophecies in Daniel and Matthew.¹³¹ Fourth-century Christian authors had suggested that the destruction of the Temple was a fulfilment

¹²⁵ Jan Drijvers, *Cyril of Jerusalem: bishop and city*, Leiden 2004, 133.

¹²⁶ Michael Bland Simmons, 'The emperor Julian's order to rebuild the Temple in Jerusalem: a connection with oracles?', *Ancient Near Eastern Studies* xliii (2006), 68–117.

¹²⁷ Mark xiii.2.

¹²⁸ Justin, *1 Apology* xlvii.5–6; *Dialogue with Trypho* lxxx.

¹²⁹ Eusebius, *Vita Constantini* iii.33.1.

¹³⁰ Athanasius, *De incarnatione* xl.12–24, 49–55. Scholars agree that *Contra gentes/De incarnatione* is Athanasius' first work, but it may plausibly date from between the Arian controversy in 323 and 335: Athanasius, *Contra gentes and De incarnatione*, ed. Robert Thomson, Oxford 1971, p. xxi.

¹³¹ Rufinus x.38.

of Old Testament and New Testament prophecies and that it must remain in ruins.¹³² Such weight was placed upon the impossibility of any reconstruction of the Jerusalem Temple that restoration would have been a severe blow to Christianity.¹³³

With this project, Julian was not merely expressing his paganism in support of the highest god, but was engaging in a deliberate counter to Christianity. In other words, he was not overwriting Christianity with paganism, but was wielding the tool of Judaism, which was more capable of truly unpicking one of Christianity's most compelling narratives and truth claims. There is no need to assume that Julian must have acted from only one motivation or the other: the theological and spatial overwritings would be complementary and united by their employment against Constantine's campaign. This very flexible and Christian-minded manoeuvre highlights Julian's understanding of and engagement with his opponents.

The establishment of a pagan Church overwriting the Christian Church was a key feature of Julian's response to Constantine, and in some instances there could have been no other inspiration for his ideas than the Church. Julian inherited a narrative in which Constantine, the 'friend of Christ' and first Christian emperor, led his people to salvation like Moses, and inaugurated a new age. Julian responded in kind, crafting a narrative in which he, the special devotee of Helios, would be the first emperor to return to a revived paganism, inaugurating a new age. Both emperors viewed themselves in something of an apostolic role. As Eusebius claimed a special relationship for Constantine with his God, so Julian claimed to be the devotee and son of Helios.¹³⁴ Both emperors received a visionary experience from the divine.¹³⁵ As Constantine claimed to have been chosen to restore the empire and save his people from pagan tyrants, so Julian claimed to have been chosen to restore the empire and save his people from apostate tyrants.¹³⁶ As Constantine received direct revelation from God, Julian named himself the prophet of Apollo.¹³⁷ Both placed their

¹³² For example, Jerome, *Commentary on Daniel* ix.24; cf. Robert Wilken, *John Chrysostom and the Jews: rhetoric and reality in the late 4th century*, Berkeley 1983, 137.

¹³³ Johannes Hahn holds that Julian's religio-political programme had 'failed miserably in his lifetime' and ascribes the incongruously livid Christian response in part to an awareness that the Jerusalem project struck at a point that could bring the whole enterprise down, a 'death blow' for Christianity: 'Kaiser Julian und ein dritter Tempel? Idee, Wirklichkeit und Wirkung eines gescheiterten Projektes', in J. Hahn (ed.), *Zerstörungen des Jerusalemer Tempels: Geschehen – Wahrnehmung – Bewältigung*, Tübingen 2002, 257–8.

¹³⁴ Eusebius, *Vita Constantini* i.3.17; Julian, *Orationes* vii.232c; x.336c.

¹³⁵ Eusebius, *Vita Constantini* i.12.1; ii.12.1; Julian, *Oratio* vii.232c.

¹³⁶ Eusebius, *Vita Constantini* ii.28.2; 55.1; 64–5; iv.9; *De laudibus* vi.21; Julian, *Orationes* vii.234c, 231d.

¹³⁷ Eusebius, *Vita Constantini* ii.12.1; Julian, *ep.* lxxxviii.451b.

personal stamp upon the faiths that they defended. In Julian's case, his statement that state-supported paganism should do as the state-supported Christians had done is an especially powerful piece of evidence for Julian's reiteration of Constantine.¹³⁸ His clerical instructions bore a remarkable conceptual similarity to those for Christian clergy. Julian attempted to overshadow the Church that was described by Eusebius as the 'New Jerusalem' with a rebuilt Temple of the Old Jerusalem, which would have effectively ended any Christian dominance of the location and obliterated Constantine's Christianising narrative. Further, by renewing Jewish sacrifice under the old covenant and invalidating an assumed prophecy of Christ regarding the Temple, Julian's imitation of Constantine's work would have produced a conclusive result, casting doubt upon the credibility of the entire Christian enterprise.¹³⁹ Had Julian lived to complete its implementation, such a comprehensively integrated 'pagan Church', simultaneously attacking and co-opting Christianity, could have been a potent weapon indeed.

¹³⁸ Julian, *ep.*. lxxxiv.429d–430a.

¹³⁹ Robert Penella, 'Emperor Julian, the temple of Jerusalem and the god of the Jews', *Koinonia* xxiii (1999), 24.