

Reading Councils Backwards:
Challenging Teleological Perspectives of Constantinople's
Ecclesiastical Development from 381 to 451

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Abstract:

The period from the First Council of Constantinople (381) to the Council of Chalcedon (451) is considered to be a formative one in the development of Constantinople's self-identity and confidence as an ecclesiastical authority. Traditional representations of Constantinople during this era portray a see that was experiencing meteoric growth in episcopal authority and was increasingly attempting to assert supremacy over the churches of the east as well as challenge Rome's authority in the west. However, it is the contention of this thesis that such a view is informed by a highly teleological perspective of Constantinople's earliest history. Constantinople's future significance as the centre of eastern Christianity and foil to Rome have seen perceptions of the Constantinopolitan see of the late fourth and early fifth centuries subsumed into the broad and far-reaching narratives that are synonymous with the city and its Byzantine legacy.

By re-examining this seventy-year period through a close consideration of the unique theological, political, and demographic characteristics specific to the Constantinople of the time, this thesis will argue that the city's political importance and imperial symbolism significantly preceded the development of a bishopric with the necessary institutional strengths to cope with the city's meteoric growth. The intermingling of imperial and episcopal politics, the city's lack of theological heritage, and the diversity of the city's mushrooming population would cause the Constantinopolitan bishops of this period immeasurable difficulties. Eschewing the supra-narrative of Constantinople's rise to global prominence, and repositioning the councils of 381 and 451 and the decades between them within a local Constantinopolitan context, I argue that the pronouncements of both canon 3 of Constantinople I and canon 28 of Chalcedon are not indicative of a see growing in geo-ecclesiastical confidence but were in fact responses to systemic weaknesses internal to a struggling episcopate.

Statement of Sources

This thesis contains no material that has been extracted in whole or in part from a thesis that I have submitted towards the award of any other degree or diploma in any other tertiary institution.

No other person's work has been used without due acknowledgment in the main text of the thesis.

All research procedures reported in the thesis received the approval of the relevant Ethics/Safety Committees (where required).

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Justin Pigott', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Justin Matthew Pigott, June 2017

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Before commencing my doctoral journey, I assumed that the most challenging part of doing a PhD would be the high standard of work demanded of a doctoral student. However, after beginning, I very quickly realised that it is not the research itself that presents the greatest challenge but rather the difficulties of trying to juggle it alongside all the other aspects of one's life and career. It is for this reason that it is the support that a doctoral student receives from those around them that often proves to be the lynchpin behind them successfully completing. This is certainly true in my case and I am indebted to a great many people, without whom this thesis would not have been possible.

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Abbreviations

AASS	<i>Acta Sanctorum Bollandiana</i>
ACO	<i>Acta Conciliorum Oecumenicorum</i>
CCCOGD	<i>Conciliorum Oecumenicorum Generaliumque Decreta</i>
CPG	<i>Clavis Patrum Graecorum</i>
CSEL	<i>Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum</i>
<i>CTh</i>	<i>Codex Theodosianus</i>
CUA	Catholic University of America
<i>HE</i>	<i>Historia ecclesiastica.</i>
CUP	Cambridge University Press
<i>JETS</i>	<i>Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society</i>
<i>JLA</i>	<i>Journal of Late Antiquity</i>
<i>JRS</i>	<i>Journal of Roman Studies</i>
<i>JTS</i>	<i>Journal of Theological Studies</i>
OUP	Oxford University Press
PG	<i>Patrologia Cursus Completus, Series Graeca</i>
<i>PLRE</i>	<i>Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire</i>
<i>RHE</i>	<i>Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique</i>
<i>ROC</i>	<i>Revue de l'Orient chrétien</i>
<i>SCh</i>	<i>Sources chrétiennes</i>

Reading Councils Backwards

Introduction

“One imposing requirement for interpreting the past is to forget the future. In hindsight the actual course of events may seem to have been a natural, almost inevitable, outcome...this sort of retrospective teleology thoroughly obscures the underlying contingency of past events and the fundamental uncertainty of our modern interpretations.”¹

Despite the city’s conquest by the army of Mehmed II and the disintegration of the empire that it had governed, Constantinople’s spectre continues to loom large over the cultural and religious history of the western world and beyond. The city holds the rare honour of having become synonymous with the cultural and ideological ideals of an entire civilisation – emblematic of all things of Byzantine heritage.² Constantinople’s preminent place within cultural memory rests upon dual pillars. Firstly, with the city having so evocatively borne the stamp of its founder, Constantinople became closely associated with the religious changes Constantine’s reign instigated. Being the first emperor to profess loyalty to the Christian faith and embedding it within the official mechanisms of the Roman state, Constantine’s reign set in motion a process that would eventually see Christianity forming the foundation of western thought, politics, and culture for centuries to come. The association between Constantinople’s founding and the rise to prominence of Christianity was further accentuated by Byzantium’s subsequent historical position as a location where Christian civilisation came into contact with other world religions. The second cultural significance associated with Constantinople relates to the city’s place within this newly developing Christian world. As Constantinople gradually emerged as the preminent centre of orthodox Christianity in the east, and Rome cemented its ideology of

¹ Raymond Van Dam, *The Roman Revolution of Constantine* (Cambridge: CUP, 2007), 9.

² An attribute it holds in common with its partner and oft quoted rival in the west. However, it should be noted that this view of the essentiality of Constantinople to the ideology of the Byzantine Empire has recently come under attack, see Anthony Kaldellis, “From Rome to New Rome, from Empire to Nation-State: Reopening the Question of Byzantium’s Roman Identity,” in *Two Romes: Rome and Constantinople in Late Antiquity*, ed. Lucy Grig and Gavin Kelly (Oxford: OUP, 2012), 387–404. In a similar vein to the themes of this thesis, it is Constantinople’s later political and cultural symbolism that Kaldellis argues has obscured traditional assumptions of Constantinople’s past.

primacy in the west, the bishops of these two religious centres became the foci for tensions between the divergent theological strains of the east and west, as well as for clashes over ecclesiastical jurisdiction. Such tensions would lead to a series of schisms that would permanently divide the Christian world.

The cultural symbolism linked to Constantinople has not been consigned to the past but continues to resonate today. Constantinople's place at the heart of eastern Christianity remains a topic of contemporary relevance, with Pope Francis and Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew recently reigniting hopes of reconciliation between the Catholic and Orthodox churches. Modern Istanbul also continues to be marked out by its importance as a cultural crossroads between the east and west, and despite its Islamic status, the city is for some still an evocative symbol of Christianity's place in history.³

This long-lasting cultural legacy has inevitably shaped modern perspectives of Constantinople's past. The city's symbolism as both the flagship of the Constantinian revolution and a focal point for the divergence between eastern and western Christianity is a prominent theme that weaves its way throughout the city's historiography. In particular, histories of Byzantium place concerted emphasis on events that would prove key turning-points in Constantinople's ecclesiastical development and the long divergence between eastern and western Christians.⁴ It is the weight given to such themes in Byzantine historiography that has not only seen the ecumenical councils of 381 and 451 take prominent place in Constantinople's early development but has significantly influenced our view of them. Through a reappraisal of these two councils and the decades between them, this thesis seeks to peel back such post factum perspectives, arguing that Constantinople in the fourth and early fifth centuries has been all too easily subsumed into the broad and far-reaching narratives that are synonymous with the city's later Byzantine legacy.

³ Recently, the city's symbolic associations with Rome and the Christian empire of the west have seen it loom large in the apocalyptic ideology and military stratagem of Islamic State militants, "What ISIS Really Wants," *The Atlantic*, accessed April 21, 2016, <http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2015/03/whatisisreallywants/384980/>

⁴ Such as the Acacian schism of 484 to 519, the Great Schism of 1154, and the sacking of Constantinople by the western forces of the Fourth Crusade.

1. 381–451: Prelude to Primacy or Period of Crisis?

Constantinople I and Chalcedon: Stepping Stones to Constantinople's Pre-eminence

With Constantinople occupying such a prominent place within the cultural, political, and religious landscape of world history, it is unsurprising that so many scholars have sought to chart the city's development as both a Christian capital and a rival to Rome. In particular, great effort has been expended in pinpointing the origin of Constantinople's later significance.⁵ Generations of scholars have looked back to Constantinople's earliest history to discern the nature of its Christian identity and uncover the seeds of divergence from the west.⁶

Many of these scholars conflate the dual symbolisms of Constantinople, arguing that Constantinople was from its inception intended to be a new Christian capital of the empire and successor to Rome.⁷ Within this perspective, the very act of Constantinople's foundation set the city on a course of inevitable divergence from Rome. In more recent times, this image of clear continuity between the city's earliest sense of mission and its later status has become decidedly more muddled, with scholars bringing Constantinople's earliest decades into line with a more nuanced understanding of Constantine's Christianity.⁸ According to this approach, Constantinople's Christian identity was not so clear-cut, but rather evolved alongside broader changes surrounding Christianity's place in the empire and the city's role as a symbol of imperial power. However, what is largely undisputed by both these schools of thought is that the period from 381 to 451 was a crucial one for Constantinople's ecclesiastical development. The significance attached to this 70-year period is due to the two ecumenical councils that straddle it, with the First Council of Constantinople and the Council of Chalcedon both issuing canons that are hailed as pivotal moments in Constantinople's episcopal ascendancy.

The First Council of Constantinople in 381 marked an important moment in the history of both the city and the empire. Theodosius' decision to convene the council at

⁵ See Henry Chadwick, *East and West: The Making of a Rift in the Church* (Oxford: OUP, 2003).

⁶ A slew of scholarship on the topic originates from the 1960's when the Second Vatican Council brought the topic of reconciliation to the fore: Donald Nicol, *Byzantium: Its Ecclesiastical History and Relations with the Western World, Collected Studies* (London: Variorum, 1972); Steven Runciman, *The Eastern Schism: A Study of the Papacy and the Eastern Churches during the XIth and XIIth Centuries* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1955); Francis Dvornik, *Byzantium and the Roman Primacy* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1966); O. Rousseau et al., *Le concile et les conciles: contribution a l'histoire de la vie conciliaire de l'eglise* (Paris: De Chevetogne, 1960).

⁷ See Chapter 2, section 1.

⁸ See Chapter 2, section 2.

Constantinople came as a result of his decision to make the city his base of operations. This marked a key turning-point for the city. The emperors who followed Constantine had chosen not to reside at Constantinople, relegating the city's role to more of an imperial staging-post rather than a capital; however, under the Theodosian dynasty, the status of Constantinople as an imperial residence was cemented, marking its transition from the city of Constantine to the capital of the eastern empire.⁹ The council of 381 is also significant in signalling the end of the eastern imperial association with Arian theologies, through its establishment of the Nicene Creed as the defining statement of imperial Christianity. Situated neatly between these two significant developments is the council's issuing of canon 3 which endowed Constantinople with the prerogative of honour after Rome. This canon, the first official document to bestow Constantinople with the epithet of "New Rome", is traditionally seen as bearing witness to the see's patriarchal pretensions.¹⁰ Despite ongoing debate over whether this canon bestowed any tangible advantages or was merely an honorific, canon 3 is conventionally considered as representing the opening volley in Constantinople's campaign to assert its ecclesiastical dominance over the east.¹¹

The Council of Chalcedon, convened seven decades later, also presents an important historical turning point. Called in response to a period of pronounced theological and ecclesiastical conflict, Chalcedon represented an attempt to forge a new unity by establishing a theological statement of faith that was intended to unify the warring factions of the Nicene east. Canon 28 of the council made a clear statement that the bishop of Constantinople was to play a significant part in the new order envisioned at Chalcedon. Drawing on the precedent set at the council of 381, canon 28 further bolstered Constantinople's status as New Rome by elaborating on the city's links with Rome in order to justify expanded geo-ecclesiastical jurisdiction over the metropolitans of Pontus, Asia, and Thrace. It is this canon that saw Constantinople definitively established as one of the most influential episcopal centres, with rights and scope comparable to the likes of Antioch or Alexandria.

The significance attached to these two ecumenical canons has seen them consistently paired as pivotal events in Constantinople's ecclesiastical development.¹²

⁹ As will be shown in the next chapter, previous to Theodosius' arrival, Constantinople can be perceived as a dynastic city rather than imperial capital.

¹⁰ Previously the term had only been employed in works of poetry, John R. Melville-Jones, "Constantinople as 'New Rome'," *BYZANTINA SYMMEIKTA* 24 (2014): 247–62.

¹¹ See Chapter 3, section 1.

¹² Although 381 and 451 have always loomed large in the histories of Constantinople's rise, some earlier scholarship differ on which councils present a definitive statement of Constantinople's maturation as a

They are viewed as sitting at either ends of a trajectory along which Constantinople's episcopal authority increased exponentially.¹³ The council of 381 is positioned as the moment that marked the beginning of Constantinople's "struggle for ecclesiastical primacy in the East", while Chalcedon is situated as representing the final realisation of this vision: "[In 451] Anatolius completed the work begun at Constantinople in the council of 381, elevating the see of the dynastic city to the first rank of the episcopacy."¹⁴ Much of modern scholarship adheres to the assumption that by the time we reach 451, canon 28's pronouncement of Constantinople's patriarchal status was a mere formality. In the words of Cyril Mango: "the Council of Chalcedon was merely confirming a fait accompli by granting to the patriarch of Constantinople parity with the Pope of Rome."¹⁵ Touted in such a way, canon 28 is presented as a culmination of decades of Constantinople's steadily increasing episcopal power. In fact, one adjective frequently used to describe Constantinople's rise up the episcopal ranks during this period is "meteoric".¹⁶

patriarchate. Several works traced the development to Justinian's reign: J. Pargoire, *L'Eglise byzantine de 526 à 847* (Paris, 1905); Philip Sharrard, *The Greek East and Latin West* (London: Denise Harvey, 1959).

¹³ See Neil McLynn, "Two Romes, Beacons of the World": Canonizing Constantinople," in *Two Romes: Rome and Constantinople in Late Antiquity*, ed. Lucy Grig and Gavin Kelly (Oxford: OUP, 2012), 345–63. Some of the foundational works to have championed this view include: Ernest Stein, "Le développement du pouvoir patriarcal du siège de Constantinople jusqu'au concile Chalcedoine," *Le monde slave* 3 (1926): 80–108; Thomas A. Kane, *The Jurisdiction of the Patriarchs of the Major Sees in Antiquity and in the Middle Ages* (Washington: CUA Press, 1949); John Bagnell Bury, *History of the Later Roman Empire from the Death of Theodosius I to the Death of Justinian*, Vol. 1 (New York: Dover, 1958), 358; Joseph Hajjar, *Le synode permanent (Synodos endemousa) de l'Eglise byzantine des origines jusqu'au XI^e siècle* (Rome: Orientalia christiana Analecta 164, 1962); Adolf Martin Ritter, *Das Konzil von Konstantinopel und sein Symbol* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1965).

¹⁴ Norman Russell, *Theophilus of Alexandria* (London: Routledge, 2007), 12; Kenneth G. Holum, *Theodosian Empresses: Women and Imperial Dominion in Late Antiquity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 214.

¹⁵ Cyril Mango, "Review: Naissance d'Une Capitale. Constantinople et ses Institutions de 330 à 451 by G. Dagron," *JRS* 66 (1976): 255–56, 255.

¹⁶ Many works have considered Constantinople's rise up the ecclesiastical ranks to have begun long before 381: R. Janin, "Formation du patriarcat œcuménique de Constantinople," *Échos d'Orient Année*, vol. 13, 83 (1910): 213–18; Hermes Donald Kreilkamp, "The Origin of the Patriarchate of Constantinople and the First Roman Recognition of its Patriarchal Jurisdiction" (PhD diss., Catholic University of America, 1964); Patricia Karlin-Hayter, "Activity of the Bishop of Constantinople Outside his Paroikia between 381 and 451," in *Kathegetria: Essays Presented to Joan Hussey*, ed. J. Chrysostomides (Camberley: Porphyrogenitus, 1988), 179–210. Many others have gone as far as to consider 381 as the definitive moment that marked "the emergence of the see of Constantinople to pre-eminence over the eastern sees of Christendom": Deno John Geanakoplos, "The 2nd Ecumenical Council at Constantinople (381): Proceedings and Theology of the Holy Spirit," in *Constantinople and the West: Essays on the Late Byzantine (Palaeologan) and Italian Renaissances and the Byzantine and Roman Churches* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1989), 152–72, 152; Christopher A. Beeley, *Gregory of Nazianzus on the Trinity and the Knowledge of God In Your Light We Shall See Light*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 52. However, most modern scholarship subscribes to the view that it is the granting of the title of Patriarch in 451 that represents the true culmination of this process whereby Constantinople had "gradually claimed for its bishop the status that seemed appropriate to a seat of government", Philip Rousseau, *The Early Christian Centuries* (Michigan: Taylor & Francis Ltd., 2002), 190.

Despite the entrenched assumption that a linear trajectory can be charted between 381 and 451 in which Constantinople's ecclesiastical star steadily rose, a cursory survey of the period in between these two conciliar bookends uncovers several challenges to this perspective.

If 451 represented a culmination of seven decades in which the Constantinopolitan episcopate had rapidly moved towards eastern primacy, we would expect to see the bishopric increasingly growing in authority and influence in several key areas. Firstly, on a geo-ecclesiastical level, we would anticipate that the bishop was increasingly able to exert his influence over sees beyond the Theodosian Walls. Secondly, on a local institutional level, we would presume to find the bishop firmly ensconced at the head of a largely unified and loyal episcopal hierarchy, with the bishop being the foremost spiritual authority within the city. Finally, for the Constantinopolitan church to be moving towards a position of clear leadership, we should expect that the bishop was increasingly looked to as a theological authority and the see considered a centre of orthodoxy within the Nicene world. However, a brief glance at these three indicators suggests that, far from increasing in standing, 381–451 was in actuality a particularly turbulent time for the Constantinopolitan bishopric, one punctuated by depositions, external interference, and internal schisms.

In terms of broad ecclesiastical sway, the Constantinopolitan bishops of this period did exert influence over other sees; however, such instances were confined largely to neighbouring sees and were instigated by request.¹⁷ Attempts by Constantinopolitan bishops to influence ecclesiastical politics on a broader scale were not only very few during this period but met with a high level of failure.¹⁸ The bishopric up to 451 certainly never managed to achieve the same level of influence over the wider east that it had exerted in its pre-381 Arian incarnation.¹⁹ Far from the Constantinopolitan bishops gradually imposing their prerogatives elsewhere, this period in fact witnessed Alexandrian bishops increasingly, and with ruthless efficiency, interfering in the ecclesiastical life of

¹⁷ See Chapter 3, section 4.

¹⁸ As will be discussed below. Jurisdictional tensions with Rome, such as the brief dispute between Boniface and Atticus over dominion of Illyricum Orientale, were rare and invariably saw the bishop of Constantinople back down from pressing claims of authority (as in the Illyrian case). John Chrysostom's and Nestorius' extra-jurisdictional activities served to increase opposition that would see them lose office.

¹⁹ Constantinople's Arian bishops, such as Eusebius of Nicomedia and Eudoxius, were able to exert considerable influence over the ecclesiastical politics of the eastern empire. See Chapter 3, section 4.

the capital. The machinations of Peter, Theophilus, Cyril, and Dioscorus are considered largely responsible for the deposition of four prominent Constantinopolitan bishops in this period: Gregory of Nazianzus, John Chrysostom, Nestorius, and Flavian.²⁰ We even find incidents of Alexandrian influence over ecclesiastical politics at Constantinople steadily increasing during this period.²¹ The seeming ease with which Alexandrian bishops were able to control the ecclesiastical politics of the capital cannot be put down to the Egyptians' adroit politicking alone, but reveals significant internal instabilities within Constantinople's episcopal institution. In all four instances, the Alexandrians worked in close association with elements within the city, both ecclesiastical and imperial, to undermine the Constantinopolitan bishop's authority.

The Constantinopolitan bishops of this period consistently faced stern opposition from within their own see.²² The clergy and monks of Constantinople proved to be only intermittent bed-fellows with the local bishop, willing and uniquely positioned to oppose him when it suited their interests. Members within the Constantinopolitan clergy such as Maximus the Cynic, Severian of Gabala, and Proclus played a central role in destabilising the leadership of their respective bishops. So too, Constantinople's powerful monastic archimandrites, Isaac, Dalmatius, and Eutyches, by utilising their unique autonomy and political involvement, also played a central role in seeing three Constantinopolitan bishops deposed.²³ In addition to such rebellious ecclesiastical elements, the city's powerful political elite did not necessarily provide the boon to local episcopal authority that has often been supposed. Instead, they often had a highly disruptive influence on the local church. On several occasions we find opponents of the bishop leaning on powerful patrons at court in order to usurp local episcopal authority – such as Eutyches using his influence with the powerful Chamberlain Chrysaphius to ensure Flavian's fall, or Severian of Gabala being protected from episcopal censure by the intervention of the empress Eudoxia. Even

²⁰ Maximus the Cynic's attempt to wrest the city's episcopate away from Gregory was sanctioned by Peter, bishop of Alexandria, and supported by Alexandrians in the city. The Synod of the Oak which led to Chrysostom's first loss of the bishopric was spearheaded by Theophilus. Cyril was central to rallying resistance to Nestorius' teachings and oversaw his fall from grace at Ephesus. Similarly, it was Dioscorus who presided over Flavian's deposition at Ephesus II.

²¹ From Nestorius' tenure onwards the Egyptian bishops were consistently able to bring their influence to bear at Constantinople, see Karlin-Hayter, "Activity," 195–98. The influence that the Alexandrians managed to achieve over the Constantinopolitan church by the eve of 451 is demonstrated by the fact that the city's bishop Anatolius, who presided over the Council of Chalcedon, was essentially an Alexandrian agent, put in the role through Dioscorus' influence over the capital, see Henry Chadwick, "The Exile and Death of Flavian of Constantinople: A Prologue to the Council of Chalcedon," *JTS* 6 (1955): 23–24.

²² All the incidents mentioned here will be examined in the following chapters.

²³ Gilbert Dagron, "Les moines et la ville. Le monachisme à Constantinople jusqu'au concile de Chalcédoine (451)," *Travaux et Mémoires du Centre de Recherche d'Histoire et Civilisation Byzantines* 4 (1970): 489–568.

the imperial presence itself, so often assumed to be advantageous to the bishop, often had a destabilising effect on the episcopate during this period. Chrysostom and Nestorius, whose failed episcopates left deep divisions at Constantinople, were both appointed through imperial initiatives. Particularly destructive for the episcopate was the development of rifts in imperial support for the incumbent bishop, such as Pulcheria's active opposition to Nestorius, despite the bishop receiving continued support from the emperor.

In the theological arena also, Constantinople of 381 to 451 presents a divided and far from complimentary picture. When Theodosius' reign instigated a new pro-Nicene climate, Constantinople was at a distinct disadvantage. While the majority of Nicene churches across the east had survived the machinations of Arian-leaning emperors, at Constantinople decades of Homoian dominance had eradicated almost all trace of a Nicene community there, with the few that persisted lacking both a church to worship in or a bishop to minister to them. This shortcoming was not overturned quickly. Despite the efforts of the Nicene bishops who followed Gregory of Nazianzus in 381, Constantinople remained a hub of Arian activity throughout this period.²⁴ In fact, in contrast to the developing patriarchates elsewhere, early Constantinople remained the preeminent eastern stronghold for many groups that stood outside of the Nicene fold, such as the Apollinarians, Macedonians, Novatians, Messalians, and Eunomians.²⁵

Not only was Constantinople's Christian community exceptionally diverse but the Nicenes of Constantinople themselves lacked clear unity. While as we move closer to Chalcedon we begin to perceive the seeds of a later Constantinopolitan brand of Marian theology, in the first half of the fifth century the Nicenes of the city went through something of a theological identity crisis. Lacking the spiritual heritage of ancient sees of apostolic origin, Constantinople's expanding and geo-culturally-diverse population vacillated between Alexandrian and Antiochene theological perspectives.²⁶ Far from being

²⁴ See Chapter 3, section 2 and Chapter 4, section 2.3. It is of course disingenuous to the many diverse beliefs represented at Constantinople to apply the blanket label 'Arian'. For example, the Homoians and Eunomians belonged to two distinctly different theological categories. The employment of the term 'Arian' was as a construct of Nicenes who wished to tar several non-Nicene communities with the 'heresy' of Arius. For this reason, the use of the term has fallen out of favour in modern scholarship. However, the heavy employment of the term in the primary sources surrounding those at Constantinople makes it difficult to employ an accurate alternate, for this reason, throughout this thesis I will use the term Arians in cases where it is not clearly discernible from the primary sources what non-Nicene community is being discussed. See David M. Gwynn, *The Eusebians: The Polemic of Athanasius of Alexandria and the Construction of the Arian Controversy* (Oxford: OUP, 2007); Mark Weedman, "Hilary and the Homoiousians: Using New Categories to Map the Trinitarian Controversy," *Church History* 76/3 (2007): 491– 510.

²⁵ The Novatians were officially Nicene; however, they remained independent from the state-sanctioned Nicene church (see Chapter 4, section 2.3).

²⁶ See Chapter 5.

increasingly looked to as a centre of Nicene orthodoxy, as were Alexandria and Rome, Constantinople made less of an impact as a bastion of orthodoxy than it did as the residence of some of the period's more maligned heresiarchs. The form of dyophysitism preached by Nestorius, Eutyches' brand of monophysite Christology, and Eunomius' extreme Arianism – theologies that each sat decidedly outside imperial Christianity by the time we reach Chalcedon – all found their primary expression at Constantinople. Neither could Constantinople of 381 to 451 lay claim to vigorous defenders of Nicene orthodoxy of the same calibre as a Cyril, Damasus, or Basil.²⁷ While Proclus provides a notable exception, the longest serving and most successful bishops at Constantinople during this time were not known for their theological sophistication.²⁸

As this brief survey shows, many characteristics of early Constantinople appear incongruent with the image of a see on a fast track to eastern primacy. It is difficult to reconcile the crises experienced at Constantinople in 381 to 451 with the image of a see that was experiencing meteoric growth in standing. Over the course of seven decades, Constantinople was a see experiencing a prolonged crisis in authority. Four of its bishops had been deposed amid schisms that continued to rankle up to the eve of 451. In fact, the two decades before Chalcedon show a marked increase in the city's religious upheavals, with theological tensions, Alexandrian interference, monastic dissidence, and a breakdown in relations between emperor and bishop reaching a crisis point that made Chalcedon necessary.²⁹ The many internal and external challenges to the bishop of Constantinople's authority point to an episcopate experiencing pressures far beyond the teething pains of an awakening episcopal giant. Rather than riding a triumphant wave of increasing influence, the church of Constantinople arrived at 451 battered and bruised.

Despite the upheavals experienced at Constantinople between the councils of Constantinople I and Chalcedon, conventional scholarship continues to adhere to the assumption that 381 and 451 sit at either end of a period in which Constantinople's episcopal development increasingly foreshadowed its later significance. In order to reappraise this period, it is essential to understand why scholars have so consistently overlooked the shortcomings of Constantinople's episcopal authority during this time in favour of an image of a see on the rise.

²⁷ Despite his failure as bishop we cannot of course overlook Gregory's contribution to Trinitarian theology, although it was not until Proclus' time that we find a uniquely Constantinopolitan voice.

²⁸ As will be explored in Chapter 4, section 3.

²⁹ The council of 451 was in fact just the most recent in a series of councils (Ephesus I and II) that attempted to heal theological and ecclesiastical conflicts, the destructive effects of which the Constantinopolitan bishopric had suffered the most.

2. Teleological Perspectives of Constantinople's Rise

That Constantinople's ecclesiastical institution experienced significant upheavals during this early period should not be surprising. Despite the city's later predominance, early Constantinople's unique development meant that it faced many challenges in defining its place within the wider *oikoumene*. Due to the scale of the city's reinvention, early Constantinople did not fit in easily amongst the other cities of the east. Byzantium's transformation into Constantinople was so thorough that it disrupted cultural continuity with the old city's heritage.³⁰ It was essentially a new city and such novelty saw it stand out as "somewhat out of place, an artificial capital, an adolescent interloper among the great cities of the East".³¹ This novelty put the developing church at Constantinople on the back foot. On a practical level, the tide of diverse newcomers to the city witnessed a pronounced lack of religious homogeneity amongst the city's early populace.³² The city was also at a distinct disadvantage on an ideological level, with its lack of notable Christian heritage problematic in a world that prized ancient ancestry and shunned novelty. Compounding such difficulties was the fact that the period in which Constantinople came to the fore was one of social and ecclesiastical flux as the empire and church struggled to define the parameters of the new Christian empire. Questions over the definition of faith, the principles of ecclesiastical organisation, and the role of the emperor in the church all came to fore in the late fourth and early fifth centuries.³³

³⁰ Gilbert Dagron, *Naissance d'une Capitale: Constantinople et ses institutions de 330 à 451* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1974), 521–22. The effects of the city's unique demography will be explored in the subsequent chapters.

³¹ Raymond Van Dam, *Rome and Constantinople: Rewriting Roman History During Late Antiquity* (Cambridge: CUP, 2010), 65.

The city's status as a new-comer and outsider to both the east and west led to some outspoken criticism of the city. Such opinions were not helped by the drain on resources the construction of Constantinople placed on the rest of the empire. Contemporary reactions encompassed both open scorn, such as that of Libanius of Antioch or studiously ignoring the city altogether, as was the tactic of Ammianus Marcellinus: Gavin Kelly, "The New Rome and the Old: Ammianus Marcellinus' Silences on Constantinople," *The Classical Quarterly* 53, 2 (2003): 588–607; Lucy Grig and Gavin Kelly, "Introduction: From Rome to Constantinople," in *Two Romes: Rome and Constantinople in Late Antiquity*, ed. Lucy Grig and Gavin Kelly (Oxford: OUP, 2012), 18–19.

³² Religious diversity was certainly a characteristic of all cities of the period. However, as we will see, the sectarian spiritual environment of Constantinople was more pronounced than elsewhere.

³³ This period witnessed numerous disputes over the jurisdictional authority of individual sees and shifting ecclesiastical boundaries (such as with Cyprus, Palestine, Illyricum, Sasima, and Jerusalem). There were many exceptions to the rule. Moreover, the underlying nature of a see's power was yet to establish a clear ideological anchor. The importance of a see's apostolicity was not, in the fourth and fifth centuries, the overriding consideration that it would later become. Adaptation to the secular political hierarchy drew much credence in the east: Dvornik, *Byzantium and the Roman Primacy*; Francis Dvornik, *The Idea of Apostolicity in Byzantium and the Legend of the Apostle Andrew* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1958).

Yet despite the ambiguities of Constantinople's early identity and the changing shape of Christendom in the early fifth century, modern perspectives tend to treat the bishopric of early Constantinople as a coherent institution that, across a large span of time, projected a clear sense of purpose and an intention to rise to patriarchal supremacy. How has this happened? The answer is revealed by considering 381's and 451's perceived place within the wider trajectory of Constantinople's evolution. W.H.C. Frend, in considering the council of 381, remarked that "the seeds had been sown for controversy between Rome and Constantinople that would stretch down to our day".³⁴ Such assertions of significance through pre-emption of future events are commonplace when dealing with the councils of 381 and 451, and provide the key to understanding traditional perspectives of Constantinople's development. Such pre-emption of later outcomes is of course a natural component of historical analysis. Philip Rousseau's assertion, "that events can be made sense of as much by looking at their future as by looking at their past" makes perfect methodological sense, as it allows us to uncover causality and continuity by revealing "what components of that earlier period most obviously lean forward".³⁵ However, the danger of such an approach is when it is applied to a subject in which the historical outcomes are seen as so overwhelmingly inevitable that they stifle dynamic engagement with the past. The *longue durée* perspective of Constantinople's rise to dominance and rift with Rome presents just such a danger.

New Rome and Old

Teleological readings of Constantinople's development are not a modern phenomenon but a long-standing feature of the city's history. A central and persistent element of the city's reimagining over the centuries has been its association with Rome.

Comparisons between Constantinople and Rome have deep roots. When Constantine founded his city he appropriated many features of Rome, repositioning them in a Constantinopolitan context.³⁶ By doing this, Constantine sought to imbue his new city

³⁴ W.H.C. Frend, *The Rise of Christianity* (London: Longman & Todd, 1984), 629.

³⁵ Philip Rousseau, "Inheriting the Fifth Century: Who Bequeathed What?" in *The Sixth Century: End or Beginning?*, Byzantina Australiensia 10, ed. Pauline Allen and Elizabeth Jeffreys (Brisbane: Australian Association for Byzantine Studies, 1996), 1–19, 1.

³⁶ Whether or not this signals Constantine's desire for Constantinople to supersede Rome is unclear. It will be argued in Chapter 3 (esp. section 4) that Constantinople's association with Rome during its first century can be aligned much more closely with attempts at imperial and dynastic legitimisation than competitive statements of civic ambition.

with a cultural and imperial lineage that stretched back to the foundation of the Roman Empire and beyond.³⁷ Thanks to a quirk of history that would see the two cities take opposing trajectories, this early pairing of Constantinople and Rome would have a significant impact on the way in which Constantinople's rise would be conceptualised by later commentators.

Constantinople grew in prominence during the same period in which Rome and the wider western empire began its long decline. This contrast in the fortunes of the two cities, combined with Constantinople's symbolism as New Rome, ensured that their respective fates would become conceptualised as causally linked. As Constantinople gradually took up the mantle of the preeminent city of the early medieval world, its inhabitants looked back to its earliest history in order to verify that such a destiny had been innate from its inception. Naturally, the contraction and disintegration of the western empire served to strengthen Byzantine traditions that highlighted the city's rightful place as the political successor to Rome.³⁸ Linking Constantinople's foundation to the decline of Rome proved an evocative historical narrative, long outliving the Byzantine Empire itself. In the west, Voltaire, Guicciardini, Bruni, and Machiavelli all contributed to the pervasive narrative that the downward spiral of Roman power was intimately linked to Constantine's decision to found a new Rome in the east.³⁹ The legitimacy of viewing Constantinople's founding as contributing to Rome's demise has long been rejected. However, the relationship between Rome and Constantinople has continued to play a central role in the historiography of early Constantinople, thanks to the religious schisms between them.

The re-writing of Constantinople's history to serve a specifically Christian context also has a long lineage. As we will see in the next chapter, by the first half of the fifth century, Christian narratives began to compete with and eventually crowd out pagan accounts of the city's early identity.⁴⁰ Constantinopolitan voices, such as Socrates', leaned on earlier Christian accounts of Constantine's rule to reposition the city's foundation

³⁷ See discussion of Van Dam's works in Chapter 2, section 2.

³⁸ Much of the view of Byzantium that has come down to us is informed by medieval Byzantine perspectives, see Paul Lemerle, *Le premier humanisme byzantin: notes et remarques sur enseignement et culture à Byzance des origines au X^e siècle* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1971); Peter Schreiner, *Konstantinopel: Geschichte und Archäologie* (München: C. H. Beck, 2007), 8.

³⁹ Unsurprisingly, the western view was not complimentary to the Byzantine perspective: Patricia Osmond de Martino, "The Idea of Constantinople: A Prolegomenon to Further Study," *Réflexions Historiques*, vol. 15, 2 (1988): 323–36.

⁴⁰ Competing pagan traditions of Constantine's decision to build at Byzantium can still be discerned in historical accounts from as late as the early sixth century (see Chapter 2, section 1). Dagron's work has been instrumental in challenging the impact of Byzantine tradition on the view of Constantinople's earliest development: Dagron, *Naissance*.

within a firmly Christian tradition. Such revision of the city's early Christian heritage in reaction to changing religious climates continued to be a feature of Constantinople's story in subsequent centuries. For example, by the seventh century, Constantinopolitans could boast that the city's religious predestination far predated Constantine, thanks to the developing legend of their church's apostolic origins.⁴¹ Again, it was association with Rome that was central to this gradual re-reading of the city's past.

The contours of Constantinople's Christian past changed in reaction to wider geo-ecclesiastical developments. As the bishops at Constantinople gradually accumulated more influence and the Muslim conquests of the seventh century removed their episcopal rivals in the east, ecclesiastical influence across medieval Christendom crystallised around Rome and Constantinople. In this climate of growing competition with Rome, Constantinople's earlier associations with its western counterpart took on increasing significance. Later Byzantine perspectives were read back into the city's earliest history, such as when the twelfth-century Constantinopolitan canonist Theodore Balsamon used the councils of 381 and 451 to argue against Roman primacy, stating that the councils proved that primacy had passed from Rome to Constantinople.⁴² It is this incorporation of Constantinople's early political comparisons with Rome into later claims of ecclesiastical leadership that established a clear narrative of continuity that could be traced from the city's earliest decades to its later ecclesiastical position. It is a theme that persists today.

With the rivalry between Constantinople and Rome eventually becoming a permanent rift that has left such a lingering mark on the Christian world, the relationship between Constantinople and Rome has continued to be a central theme in studies of Constantinople. Andrew Louth's assertion that the moment the Church split, "Christians looked back to justify their position in that tragedy", can be extended down to the present day as successive generations of scholars, both religious and secular, have attempted to explicate the processes that led to the division.⁴³ As Deno John Geanakoplos put it: "the

⁴¹ Dvornik, *Apostolicity in Byzantium*; Milton V. Anastos, *Aspects of the Mind of Byzantium: Political Theory, Theology, and Ecclesiastical Relations with the See of Rome*, ed. Speros Vryonis and Nicholas Goodhue (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001), 7–9. Such rewriting of the past was of course not limited to the east; at around the same time as Andrew was being positioned as founder of the church at Byzantium, in the west Constantine's memory was subsumed into narratives that asserted the bishop of Rome's privileged position as with the *Donatio Constantini*. For the developing narratives in the west, see George E. Demacopoulos, *The Invention of Peter: Apostolic Discourse and Papal Authority in Late Antiquity* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013).

⁴² Clarence Gallagher, *Church Law and Church Order in Rome and Byzantium: A Comparative Study* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002), 166–74.

⁴³ Andrew Louth, "Unity and Diversity in the Church of the Fourth Century," in *Unity and Diversity in the Church*, Studies in Church History 32, ed. R. N. Swanson (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996), 4–16.

schism is an underlying theme running through the political, social, and cultural as well as religious development of Byzantine history”.⁴⁴ It is this pervasiveness of the topic that has seen the city’s earliest decades viewed through a teleological lens.

The Distortions of Destiny

Anticipation of Constantinople’s later destiny is such an ever-present theme in studies of Constantinople that it not only places undue emphasis on moments that lean forward but distorts the underlying contingency of such moments by situating them along a road that invariably leads to primacy and schism. It is this tendency that has seen the councils of 381 and 451 effortlessly incorporated into a narrative spanning a thousand years, and interpreted with reference to their position within this wider arc. Central to this thesis is the contention that teleological perspectives of Constantinople’s development have had a two-fold impact on the traditional outlook of the period 381–451.

Firstly, retrospective consideration of Constantinople’s rise has led to the see’s ascendance being situated too early. Foreknowledge of the later tensions between Constantinople and Rome has seen attempts to pinpoint the genesis of divergence form a common theme in studies of Constantinople. Edward Gibbon dated the development of the schism back to the Iconoclast conflict of the eighth century; however, subsequent centuries of study have seen that date pushed significantly further backwards, with the Constantinopolitan church’s ambitions of ecclesiastical supremacy often considered to begin almost at the moment of Constantinople’s foundation.⁴⁵

This is problematic as it encourages a tendency to inject the city’s later symbolism into its early history, ignoring the significant ideological differences underpinning the Christianity of Constantine and the conceptual world of his successors. Discussing Constantine’s re-founding of Byzantium, Henry Chadwick stated that “the erection of a parallel church authority in the Greek east imported into the political tension a difference in ecclesiology, with the Latin West thinking of the Church as a sphere or circle with Rome at its centre, the East understanding the Church of the empire as an ellipse with two

⁴⁴ Deno John Geanakoplos, “Edward Gibbon and Byzantine Ecclesiastical History,” in *Constantinople and the West: Essays on the Late Byzantine (Palaeologan) and Italian Renaissances and the Byzantine and Roman Churches* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1989), 133–51, 134.

⁴⁵ Some have gone as far as to trace the roots of divergence as far back as the Apostolic Age: Chadwick, *East and West*, 7. Gibbon sees the religious schism as a product of a much older ingrained enmity that the Greeks felt towards the Latins: Edward Gibbon, *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, vol. 6 (New York: AMS Press, 1974), 381–2.

foci, virtually equal in jurisdictional power”.⁴⁶ While Professor Chadwick’s observation was made in relation to Constantine’s long legacy, the persistence of such close association of Constantinople’s founding with its future implications encourages a distorted reading of the city’s early development. His image of two conceptions of the church pre-empts not only the refinement of the ideology underpinning Constantinople’s authority by more than a century but overlooks the fact that, at the time of Constantinople’s foundation Rome itself was far from developing a clear theory of geo-ecclesiastical papal authority.

Such retrojection of later tensions onto the see’s early development also encourages overenthusiastic evaluations of the Constantinopolitan bishop’s standing. The assertion that, from the moment Constantine founded his capital, its church began “its sudden rise in the ecclesiastical hierarchy”, establishes a presumption that Constantinople’s episcopal ambition was bubbling away under the surface of the city’s earliest episcopal development even when not represented in extant sources.⁴⁷ Some historians even consider that by the early fifth century, contemporaries already implicitly understood that the Constantinopolitan bishop was the equivalent of the bishop of Rome.⁴⁸ Giusto Traina (on the appointment of Nestorius in 428) says that, “theoretically, he was just a bishop...yet everyone knew that this episcopal throne had the same importance as Saint Peter’s in the West”.⁴⁹

This thesis will question the validity of such over-enthusiastic evaluations of the bishop’s standing prior to 451, not only by highlighting many examples that suggest the see was lacking in the authority and stability required to challenge the more established sees of the east, but also by revealing instances in which evidence traditionally used to demonstrate Constantinople’s growing status has been taken out of context. Such reassessment is important, considering the second impact of teleological perspectives of Constantinople’s rise.

Reading Constantinople’s later position into its earliest history and endowing its bishops with a concerted desire to challenge the ecclesiastical hierarchy from the outset

⁴⁶ Henry Chadwick, *The Church in Ancient Society: From Galilee to Gregory the Great* (Oxford: OUP, 2001), 189.

⁴⁷ Van Dam, *Rome and Constantinople*, 65.

⁴⁸ Kelly hints that such a status was all but officially established by John Chrysostom’s time; J.N.D. Kelly, *Golden Mouth: The Story of John Chrysostom, Ascetic, Preacher, Bishop* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1995), 106–109. It is this assumption that also underpins assumptions of Alexandrian jealousy, see Chapter 5, section 2.

⁴⁹ Giusto Traina, *428 AD: An Ordinary Year at the End of the Roman Empire* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), 27.

has led to the formation of a narrative that highlights continuity over contingency. The focus on Constantinople's later predominance encourages a sense of inevitability – that the moment Byzantium was transformed into an imperial residence, its bishop “was certain to become the leading bishop in the east, threatening the independence of sees”.⁵⁰ This certainty about Constantinople's future engenders a historiographical perspective in which the see is seen as in constant forward motion, always moving towards inevitable dominance in the east and schism with the west. Constantinople's medieval primacy provides a supra-narrative that inhibits active engagement with the past by overlooking the unique context of individual events in the city's development, in favour of conforming to a broader geo-ecclesiastical narrative, a narrative that plucks out common threads from a millennium of political, geographical, philosophical and theological changes.⁵¹ It is this tendency in particular that has served to misread the city's episcopal status between 381 and 451.

Despite being divided by seventy years, canon 3 of 381 and canon 28 of 451 have become intimately associated. This is unsurprising. Chalcedon's use of Constantinople I in justifying endowing Constantinople with patriarchal status ensured that the councils would be forever linked as important milestones in the see's development. However, the inclination to view such instances as part of a cohesive institutional lineage has obscured the individual circumstance and contingency underlying these two very different councils. It is assumed that the councils are joined not only by mutual significance but linked by a linear progression in the see's status. The two assemblies are considered as forming a neat arc of New Rome's episcopal coming of age: “The struggle for ecclesiastical primacy in the East between Constantinople and Alexandria that was to end in catastrophe for the Egyptians seventy years later at Chalcedon began in 381.”⁵² So pervasive is this perspective that it obscures the true nature of both councils. While the circumstances and intention behind the formulation of canons 3 and 28 were very different, the tendency to

⁵⁰ J. H. W. G. Liebeschuetz, *Barbarians and Bishops: Army, Church, and State in the Age of Arcadius and Chrysostom* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1990), 161–62.

⁵¹ This process not only marginalises specific and localised context but places undue emphasis on aspects that relate to the later schism. A clear example of such overemphasis has recently been noted in the history of the Acacian Schism. The emphasis on relations between Constantinople and Rome during the affair has led to it being regarded as a disaster for the Byzantine church. But as W. H. C. Frend and Philippe Blaudeau have demonstrated, this ignores the fact that papal attitudes were of little interest to the Byzantines during the schism, W. H. C. Frend, “Eastern Attitudes to Rome during the Acacian Schism,” in *The Orthodox Churches and the West*, Studies in Church History 13 (Oxford: Blackwell, 1976), 69–81, 79; Philippe Blaudeau, “Between Petrine Ideology and Realpolitik: The See of Constantinople in Roman Geo-Ecclesiology (449–536),” in *Two Romes: Rome and Constantinople in Late Antiquity*, ed. Lucy Grig and Gavin Kelly (Oxford: OUP, 2012), 364–85.

⁵² Russell, *Theophilus*, 12.

connect them within the broader narrative of the rise of Constantinople has led to the impetus behind them being portrayed as one and the same – an attempt to assert Constantinople’s authority within the wider ecclesiastical world.⁵³

This perceived uniformity in Constantinople’s episcopal rise not only distorts events surrounding the councils themselves but informs our view of the decades that connect them. The notion that the councils were linked by a linear upswing in Constantinople’s standing establishes an interpretive basis for viewing the episcopate in the intervening decades. The processes underlying the proclamation of the canons are considered to be so homogeneous that they are used in some starkly teleological historical analysis to evaluate the authority wielded by the Constantinopolitan bishops.⁵⁴ For example, J. N. D. Kelly justifies his statement that, as bishop of Constantinople, John Chrysostom’s influence reached far beyond the capital, by giving an account of how such rights were bequeathed to the bishop at Chalcedon in 451, almost half a century after Chrysostom was deposed.⁵⁵ Throughout the historiography of the period, we find the position of the Constantinopolitan bishop and the see’s relationships with other major centres constantly contextualised by reference to the see’s future status.

Such an anticipatory historical perspective not only exaggerates the bishop’s importance but deeply colours assessment of events surrounding the episcopate and its bishops. The danger is not only of pulling such threads into the wider tapestry of a schism in the making but also of minimalizing uncooperative evidence. The assumption that the two statements of Constantinople’s standing were intimately linked as part of a coherent process has fostered an approach to Constantinople between 381 and 451 in which any contextual details that sits obstinately outside such expansive and forward-looking ecclesiastical perspectives is treated as anomalous. It is this tendency that has seen 381–451 universally regarded as a period of exponential growth for the Constantinopolitan episcopate, in spite of evidence to the contrary. Moments that conform to the assumption that Constantinople was undergoing a dramatic increase in episcopal authority are

⁵³ See Chapters 3 and 5.

⁵⁴ So intimately linked are these canons that they are not only viewed in terms of a clear continuity but are treated as virtually contextually interchangeable: Brian E. Daley’s analysis of canon 3 of 381 uses a close reading of the acts of the Council of Chalcedon, seven decades *after* the council of 381, to “form the broader context” for understanding the canon: Brian E. Daley, “Position and Patronage in the Early Church: The Original Meaning of ‘Primacy of Honour’,” *JTS* 44, 2 (1993): 529–53. Inevitably, such an approach diminishes the significant differences that divides the councils and their context.

⁵⁵ Kelly further dilutes the logic by stating that there is no way of knowing how this developed, but that Chrysostom clearly played a prominent part: Kelly, *Golden Mouth*, 129.

ensconced within the narrative of Constantinople's rise, while instances that do not fit this narrative are marginalised as unique one-off moments, accidents of circumstance.

In an examination of this crucial period in Constantinople's ecclesiastical development, this thesis seeks to reinstate the importance of such marginalised context. It attempts to remove the pervasive presence of future consequences by fixing its gaze on the local Constantinopolitan context of the events of 381–451 and what it tells us of the city's episcopate on the ground.

3. Approach and Methodology

Councils

With the history of early Constantinople ensconced so firmly within a wider narrative of the city's rise to prominence, this thesis takes a deconstructionist and Foucauldian-inspired discourse analysis approach to identify and remove the underlying assumptions that drive teleological perspectives of the see's development from 381–451.⁵⁶ Using the ecumenical councils as a framework for identifying distortive assumptions is particularly appropriate in this endeavour as not only are the councils of 381 and 451 traditionally considered pivotal indicators of Constantinople's growing ecclesiastical standing, but ecumenical councils themselves encourage a uniquely teleological historical perspective.

It is unsurprising to find ecumenical councils at the forefront of investigations into Constantinople's ecclesiastical status. The councils present us with key moments in the development of the early church and late Roman politics. It was the forum in which church leaders grappled with divisive theological questions and where crucial moments in inter-church politics were played out. As Hubert Jedin asserted, these synods represent “the throbbing pulse of the early Church”.⁵⁷ It is the distinguishing quality of these councils to mark significant turning-points in the history of the Church that has seen them utilised by modern commentators as a way to chart the long-term developments of the ecclesiastical landscape. This is particularly true for histories of the early Christian period in which the frequency and seemingly neatly interconnected nature of the ecumenical councils has seen

⁵⁶ George E. Demacopoulos recently used a Foucauldian-inspired discourse analysis to challenge similar narratives surrounding the inevitability and continuity of a rise in papal power during this same period, see Demacopoulos, *Invention of Peter*.

⁵⁷ Hubert Jedin, *Ecumenical councils of the Catholic Church: An Historical Outline*, trans. Ernest Graf, (Freiburg: Herder, 1960), 8.

them used as vehicles to navigate the complex religious conflicts of this tumultuous period.⁵⁸

However, the use of councils to provide “an essential lifeline in church history” presents dangers.⁵⁹ The risk of relying on ecumenical councils to chart long term historical developments is that it can imbue such phenomena with an undue sense of continuity or cohesion. By connecting councils across centuries-spanning developments, it is easy to overlook their individual context, privileging unifying threads of long-term history over specific circumstances and accidents of history. As Phillip Hughes noted, it is impossible to treat councils “as though they were sections hewn from the one same log”.⁶⁰ Each was vastly different from the last, a unique product of the interaction of distinct crises and personalities. Despite the designation “ecumenical”, suggesting a degree of uniformity across the councils, these assemblies lacked cohesion even on an organisational level. The regularity of their convocation, their size, the extent of their geographical representation, and the authority that presided over them all differed greatly.⁶¹ Even more misleading is the status of being “ecumenical”. The title offers little surrounding contemporary opinions of the councils as the sobriquet could be posthumously removed from a council or, conversely, attached to councils that were never intended as such.⁶²

The fluid nature of the title “ecumenical” points to yet a further danger of aligning councils within broad processes – it is easy to overlook that their appearance of continuity was a carefully managed construct. By relying on councils labelled as ecumenical to chart a linear progression, such as the rise of Constantinople, we risk falling into the trap of validating meticulously constructed ancient narratives. Dealing with theological or episcopal crises entailed a difficult balancing act for church leaders. In the classical and

⁵⁸ “The first six – Nicaea I to Constantinople III (680-81) – cannot be separated from one another...the challenges each of these six general councils faced flowed out of one and into the next”, Christopher M. Bellitto, *The General Councils: A History of the Twenty-One General Councils from Nicaea to Vatican II* (New York: Paulist Press, 2002), 15.

⁵⁹ Bellitto, *The General Councils*, 1.

⁶⁰ Philip Hughes, *The Church in Crisis: A History of the Twenty Great Councils* (London: Burns and Oates, 1961), 1.

⁶¹ Joseph Francis Kelly, *The Ecumenical Councils of the Catholic Church: A History* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2009), 1–8; Jedin, *Ecumenical councils*, 3–4.

A survey of the participants reveals the extent of this diversity (Tanner, *Decrees*, 16):

Nicaea – 318 Pope’s legates, Spain, Egypt and rest from Greek speaking East.

Constantinople 1 – 150 all from the eastern church

Ephesus – Eastern and African church plus two papal legates

Chalcedon – 500–600 easterners except 2 Africans and 2 papal legates

⁶² Such as the failure of the councils of Sardica (343) and Seleucia and Rimini (359-360) to achieve the status of ecumenical that was clearly their intention. Conversely, the First Council of Constantinople, originally intended to pertain to the eastern empire only (although I argue in Chapter 3 that its scope was significantly smaller) was later accorded the rank of ecumenical.

ancient Christian world, authority was deeply entwined with notions of ancestry and continuity with the past. Innovation was an evil that was to be vigorously avoided. This held especially true for councils considering their role as forums in which Christian tradition was safeguarded. Participants therefore faced the challenge of dealing with novel theological questions and changes to the geo-ecclesiastical landscape without being seen to deviate from established tradition.⁶³ Subsequently, any contemporary statements of a clear relationship between different councils must be treated with extreme suspicion as the sources surrounding them were careful to construct a sense of continuity with the past.⁶⁴

The need to establish continuity did not just influence current councils but also meant reconceptualising past ones as the councils that came before were revised in response to the requirements of the present. As Giuseppe Alberigo makes clear in his introduction to *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, the convocation of a new ecumenical council automatically recasts and reprioritises the findings of previous ones.⁶⁵ Such retrojective repositioning was rife in the conflicted environment of the early church, as preceding councils were consistently re-imagined and re-written to conform to the present. It is this re-ordering of the past that not only dictated which councils would become ensconced within a trajectory of significant moments in church history and which would fall to the wayside, but lay at the heart of the emerging concept of the ecumenical council in the mid-fifth century. This process would have a direct impact on the conventional view of Constantinople's early development.

Despite the prevailing sense that the councils of 381 and 451 represent moments of equally universal significance, 381's ecumenical status came as a direct result of the reconceptualization of ecclesiastical history in 451. Prior to 451, the Council of Constantinople was just one of many synods of the early church. Its size and make-up does not suggest anything particularly unusual.⁶⁶ Even the term ecumenical itself does not

⁶³ Richard Price, "The Second Council of Constantinople (553) and the Malleable Past," in *Chalcedon in Context*, ed. R. Price and M. Whitby (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2009), 117–32.

⁶⁴ Norman P. Tanner, *The Councils of the Church: A Short History* (New York: Crossroad, 2001), 18. Not only did competing factions at the councils express their views in ways that aligned them with past traditions and accuse enemies of invention, but the surviving conciliar records bear the mark of the victor's heavy editing in terms of espousing unanimity and the triumph of continuity, see David M. Gwynn, "Truth, Omission, and Fiction in the Acts of Chalcedon," in *Chalcedon in Context*, ed. R. Price and M. Whitby (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2009), 92–106. It is difficult to perceive the extent to which continuity was carefully manipulated because the available records lack insight into process. In Ramsey MacMullen's words, "outcome counted, not process": Ramsey MacMullen, *Voting about God in Early Church Councils* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), 8.

⁶⁵ Giuseppe Alberigo, "Introduction" to Tanner, *Decrees*, xiii.

⁶⁶ Neither did its proximity to imperial authority. Several synods were attended by the emperor without that endowing them with any privileged status. Bishops had been meeting to rule on various issues of church

suggest anything about a council's contemporary importance during this period. While the term had been applied to some councils in the early fifth century (Nicaea was not originally termed ecumenical), the moniker was yet to carry any technical implication.⁶⁷ Councils such as Nicaea and Ephesus were not originally set apart by any special endowment of extra-ecclesiastical authority. Neither was Constantinople 381, which was evidently largely forgotten in the seven decades after convocation.⁶⁸ Rather, a council's importance was determined by the importance and longevity of its pronouncements alone. This, however, was to change at Chalcedon which for the first time singled out and numbered the councils that were deemed as having had special ecumenical status.

The make-up of the list of ecumenical councils that was formulated in 451 was specifically attuned to the new history being written at Chalcedon. Erased was the stain of the Arian-contaminated councils of the late fourth century, as was the pro-Eutychian synod of recent memory. In their place the councils that established Nicene ideals and condemned the views of Nestorius were imbued with special status.⁶⁹ The marginalised synod of 381 was amongst those privileged councils. The council was elevated and set alongside the most significant moments in church history, providing a bridge between the holy councils of Nicaea and Ephesus I. With the then current council of 451 concluding the list, the councils of 381 and 451 were directly linked as important milestones in church history, a connection strengthened by Chalcedon's reference to the third canon of Constantinople in its pronouncement of the primacy of the bishop of Constantinople.

With the traditional tracking of Constantinople's ecclesiastical growth closely associated with the pronouncements of major councils, and the status of 381 so dependent on the retrospective vision of 451, it is understandable that the notion that both councils provide a neat trajectory of Constantinople's rise has remained so firmly entrenched. In order to undo that carefully manicured view of ecumenical history, this thesis seeks to re-align these councils with a perspective from within Constantinople. Rather than highlighting elements of the councils that lean forward, it places concerted emphasis on the contemporary pressures that were at play within the city in the years leading up to the councils. Such an approach will bring the councils into line with the many tensions experienced at Constantinople during this period. In re-evaluating the tumultuous events

practice from the moment that there was a Church to speak of, with the Council of Jerusalem (50 C.E.) providing the prototype.

⁶⁷ Tanner, *Councils of the Church*, 14.

⁶⁸ Tanner, *Councils of the Church*, 14.

⁶⁹ The Second Council of Ephesus, held three years previously, had affirmed a miaphysite Christological outlook that was condemned at Chalcedon.

between the two councils, I highlight features of Constantinople's development that Chalcedon's ordering of the ecumenical councils sought to side-line. I argue that the decades of Arian, Nestorian, and miaphysite influences at Constantinople, so decisively shunned in 451, are just as integral to the story of Constantinople's ecclesiastical development as the councils of 381 and 451, and that such context casts the pronouncements of these councils in a light that is far less indicative of a see growing in standing. To achieve this, we must attend closely to what was happening on the ground at Constantinople.

Local Perspectives

Because the analysis of early Constantinople has been driven by long-term global perspectives, investigation into the city's ecclesiastical standing has largely focussed on evidence of a broad conceptual and ideological nature. Previous works, whether they confirm the idea of a steep ecclesiastical rise or present a picture of a patchier development, place great emphasis on conciliar pronouncements of ecclesiastical rank, the city's symbolic representation as New Rome, or instances where the bishop intervened outside of his jurisdiction.⁷⁰ While these are all important historical endeavours, it is the intention of this thesis to eschew such a concerted focus on broad symbolism or the fastidious collation of instances of Constantinople's external episcopal intervention. Such an emphasis on Constantinople's activity on the world-stage is a product of teleological perspectives and can be misleading for two reasons. Firstly, with such a broad outlook there is a danger of stringing together failures or successes of the bishopric that fit the presupposed contention of the see's development. This is an especially relevant problem given the perceived inevitability of Constantinople's rise and the subjective nature of the sources. Secondly, and more importantly, such a broad perspective approach ultimately detracts from the consideration of the institution at the ground level, a deficiency this thesis seeks to rectify.

While surveys of Constantinople's geo-ecclesiastical reputation and relationship with sees beyond the city's environs will be present in the background of this study, this

⁷⁰ The assumption of Constantinople's episcopal mission has been deeply influenced by analyses of the city that emphasise civic symbolism, such as that of: Jocelyn M. C. Toynbee, "Roma and Constantinopolis in Late-Antique Art from 312 to 365," *JRS* 37 (1947): 135–44; Clifford Ando, "The Palladium and the Pentateuch: Towards a Sacred Topography of the Later Roman Empire," *Phoenix*, vol. 55, 3/4 (2001): 369–410.

thesis seeks to approach the topic by looking at the events and culture of the episcopate with a concerted focus on their local Constantinopolitan context. Rather than focussing on external politics and ideological representations, I ask what were the fundamental institutional strengths and weaknesses of the Constantinopolitan episcopate and what can this tell us of the church's standing? Re-injecting into the evaluation of the Constantinopolitan episcopate important evidence that has been sidelined by teleological perspectives, central to this endeavour will be an examination of the tenures of the failed Constantinopolitan bishops.

As noted above, the teleological approach to Constantinople's ecclesiastical development has served to sideline consideration of evidence that is contrary to the narrative of a see growing in authority. The decades between the councils of 381 and 451 were eventful ones in Constantinople's episcopal life. The crises surrounding the deposition of several bishops during this period were not isolated incidents but encompassed tensions that were a persistent feature of the city's early ecclesiastical landscape. Significant heterodox congregations, theological tensions amongst the city's Nicenes, and rifts within the ecclesiastical ranks pervaded Constantinople's spiritual life. However, due to the enduring theme of Constantinople's rise, these internal tensions have not impacted on the view that this was a period of exponential growth in confidence for the Constantinopolitan see. The teleological approach to the period has ensured that such instances that are incongruent with the image of a see increasing in power are perceived as isolated incidents. This has led to the traditional historiography of Constantinople during 381–451 as having two separate components that do not tend to mingle. Investigation into divergence with Rome's and Constantinople's rise through the ecclesiastical ranks sits at one end, while historical investigation into the events and controversies surrounding bishops such as Chrysostom sits at the other: the former often provides a cursory backdrop to the latter, but they do not interconnect in any meaningful way. The discrepancy between the customary view of Constantinople's growing episcopal confidence and the many internal conflicts and depositions that punctuated Constantinople's early ecclesiastical history is covered over by the tendency to focus on the conflicts at Constantinople at an individual rather than institutional level.

In particular, historiographical approaches to the troubled tenures of Gregory of Nazianzus and Chrysostom, the Nestorian controversy, the hostility of the Alexandrians, and the deposition of Flavian tend to emphasise the agency of the personalities involved rather than a broader consideration of the contributing role of Constantinople's

institutional architecture. Personal peculiarities take centre stage in the controversies. Failed bishops are characterised as being politically naïve simple ascetics, such as Gregory, or over-zealous and fiery, such as Chrysostom (or both, as in the case of Nestorius). Likewise, it is the unscrupulous and conniving nature of Alexandrian bishops, such as Theophilus, that has often been front and centre in explaining the escalation of conflicts between the bishops of both sees.⁷¹ So too the involvement of imperial authorities in the many crises at the capital is often concentrated on unique personality traits, such as the Machiavellian qualities of empresses such as Eudoxia and the weak-willed or easily influenced natures of emperors such as Theodosius II. So much focus on individuals to explicate the conflicts at Constantinople mitigates investigation into the conflicts at a broader institutional level. The upheavals surrounding the tenures of those such as Chrysostom are positioned as driven by unique circumstances, leaving the broader assumption that Constantinople was an episcopate growing in standing largely untroubled. It is the intention of this thesis to bridge this gap.

When we examine these events with a concerted focus on the way in which Constantinople's internal episcopal structure contributed to the conflicts highlights several commonalities in the failed bishops' tenures. These patterns reveal institutional characteristics of Constantinople that raise questions about the strength and stability of the Constantinopolitan episcopate. If Constantinople was a developing force of Nicene authority, why did it remain a stronghold for so many non-Nicene views? If the presence of the emperor strengthened the authority of the city's bishop, why do we find imperially-managed appointments and depositions at the heart of several controversies within the city? If the bishop was growing in his authority over the sees of the east, why were so many of Constantinople's bishops deposed at the hands of those from beyond the city? Such questions pose blatant contradictions to several themes intrinsic to the traditional assumptions of Constantinople's episcopal strength.

Chapter 2 will flesh out three themes that pervade modern literature on Constantinople's ecclesiastical rise to predominance.⁷² The first theme is a highlighting of Constantinople's identity as a new Rome, which is seen as a driving influence in the see's rise. Closely aligned to this is the second theme common in the literature surrounding Constantinople's rise – that the city's status as the residence of the emperor was of

⁷¹ Even on a broader geo-ecclesiastical level the Alexandrian see's relationship with Constantinople is infused with emotive terminology, with the Alexandrian bishops often described as jealous, see Chapter 5, section 1.

⁷² These three themes will be examined in more detail in the following chapter.

fundamental advantage to the growth of the bishop's authority. These two themes feed directly into the third common thread. It is frequently considered that from 381 to 451, Constantinople's ecclesiastical policies were motivated by a desire for its bishops to take up a position of dominance over the other sees of the east. In particular, the Constantinopolitan church's long-standing rivalry with Alexandria is seen as by-product of the see's meteoric growth and indicative of its intention to head the churches of the eastern empire. So prevalent are these themes in the traditional view of Constantinople's rise, they provide an ideal hermeneutical framework for the following revisionist approach to the period of 381–451. Aside from identifying these themes, Chapter 2 will also place particular emphasis on charting the scholarship on Constantinople's pre-381 development. Despite being outside 381–451, the reason for this focus is that perspectives on Constantine's re-invention of Byzantium cast a long shadow over the decades under consideration in this thesis. Many of the traditions surrounding the city's special status and episcopal mission have their origin in this scholarship and, as the chapter will show, more recent challenges to the traditional reading of Constantinople's earliest decades have yet to carry over to scholarship concerning 381–451.

Chapter 2's examination of debates over Constantinople's earliest history will provide a pertinent jumping-off point for Chapter 3's examination of the First Council of Constantinople; much of the literature on this council adheres to the assumption that by 381 a coherent process underpinning Constantinople's ecclesiastical ascent was already well under way. The council fits neatly into the accepted historiographical trajectory of the Constantinopolitan see gaining in confidence and attracting the jealousy of the more established ecclesiastical centres. However, this chapter argues that over-emphasis on such wide-ranging geo-ecclesiastical politics misrepresents Constantinople's episcopal development by ignoring the localised context of the council. Through analysis of Gregory of Nazianzus' failed mission at Constantinople, this chapter seeks to reconstruct the context of the council of 381 by realigning it with the preceding decades rather than with those to come. It will be argued that reliance on geo-political explanations for the council has not only led to a misinterpretation of the nature of Alexandrian activity at the council but has masked the fact that the church at Constantinople was not poised to assert its authority, but was in fact fragile, deeply divided, and the weakest amongst the major sees of the east. Rather than an announcement of the city's international credentials, this chapter argues that the council's convocation was an attempt to address its episcopal

shortcomings, and canon 3's pronouncement of the city's status as New Rome needs to be contextualised with Theodosius' attempts to rehabilitate his own imperial authority.

Having considered in Chapter 3 the impact that imperial politics had on the shape of the council of 381, Chapter 4 will take a close look at the role of the emperors in the see's broader development by examining the tumultuous religious conflicts at Constantinople during the decades between 381 and 451, with particular focus on the interaction between *sacerdotium* and *regnum* at the city. Despite being one of the most widely cited and unquestioned explanations for the bishop of Constantinople's increase in authority, this chapter questions the assumption that the bishop's proximity to the emperor was advantageous for the bishop during this period. While the challenge of how ecclesiastical and imperial power structures would interact in the post-Constantinian world were experienced throughout the empire, it was at Constantinople that such difficulties had their most direct and disruptive expression. Not only did the city's episcopate bear the brunt of ill-advised imperial machinations into religious affairs more than any other, but the emperor's need to negotiate his image as a pious Christian with the wider needs of state saw the preferences of the bishop constantly take a backseat to those of the ruling dynasty. This chapter will highlight both the extent to which the controversies during the tenures of Chrysostom, Nestorius, and Flavian were driven by politics of a very imperial nature, and argue that the location of the court at Constantinople had a persistent influence on the broad nature of the episcopate. The high politics of the capital disrupted the lines of patronage and authority that were the bedrock of a bishop's authority at sees elsewhere. It will be argued that a direct line can be drawn between the power struggles at the court and the high incidence of internal and external challenges to the bishop's authority, as well as to the continuing strength of Constantinople's non-Nicene communities. Finally, the chapter will conclude that the interaction between government and episcopacy, far from guaranteeing that the Constantinopolitan bishop's authority was increased, instead ensured that Constantinople was an environment in which only mild bishops prospered.

Having outlined in Chapter 4 many of the institutional weaknesses that plagued the Constantinopolitan bishopric, Chapter 5 turns its attention to Chalcedon. The conflicts at Constantinople that led to the depositions of Chrysostom, Nestorius, and Flavian are traditionally seen as driven, in large part, by the interferences of Alexandrian bishops jealous of Constantinople's meteoric rise. Within this interpretation, canon 28 of the Council of Chalcedon, which established Constantinople as the pre-eminent see of the East, is seen as clear justification of the threat felt by the Egyptians. However, this chapter

argues that the focus on such broad geo-ecclesiastical conflict has again diverted attention from the many tensions that existed primarily within the city itself. Once we consider the abnormal episcopal setting of Constantinople, and the uniquely fragile position of its bishops, we find that it is impossible to view the conflicts in terms of a dichotomy between Alexandrian and Constantinopolitan interests. With particular focus on the role of Constantinople's monks as agents of episcopal disruption, this chapter argues that, rather than Constantinople's strength attracting interference from outside forces, it was in fact the fragility of the bishopric and the presence of local tensions that invited external interference and, in the process, made the see a battle-ground for Alexandrian and Antiochene interests. In this light, canon 28's statement of Constantinople's prestige, alongside many other of the council's canons, can be perceived not as a declaration of the see's growth in power, but rather an attempt to invest the city's bishop with an authority that until that time had been lacking.

In the seven-decade period of 381–451 it is impossible to deny that Constantinople's ecclesiastical institution grew in importance. The city was a focus for imperial and ecclesiastical petition, it sat at the nexus of the political mechanisms of the eastern empire, and its bishops had access to a vast wealth of resources. It is such importance that led to the theological views and political alignment of those who sat on the episcopal chair at Constantinople being of significant interest to bishops across the Christian world. However, it would be a mistake to assume that behind such increase in the see's importance lay an episcopate growing in strength and authority at an even pace. Importance and power do not always develop concurrently and, as this thesis will show, Constantinople's political importance and imperial symbolism preceded the development of a bishopric with the necessary institutional strengths to cope with the city's meteoric growth. Many of the features of the city's unique episcopal landscape that would later be essential to the bishop's pre-eminence were in this period a source of great disruption. The intermingling of imperial and episcopal politics, the city's lack of theological heritage, and the diversity of the city's mushrooming population caused the bishops of this period immeasurable difficulty. It is in response to such systemic shortcomings that we should approach announcements of New Rome's enhanced status, rather than subsume them into broad and far-reaching narratives synonymous with the city's Byzantine legacy.

*New Rome Wasn't Built in a Day*Literature Review:
Constantinople 330–381

While Constantinople occupies a position of majesty and rich symbolism in the cultural imagination of the west, the city's earliest form and function remains tantalisingly elusive to modern viewers. The greatness of the city's founder and the uniqueness of its features seem to suggest that its future status as a prominent Christian centre and beacon of Byzantine culture was written into its very foundation, yet the surviving sources are ambiguous as to its originally intended function. Its unique position on the road between the east and west and its highly defensible geography provide many commentators with reason enough for the city's creation. The city possessed all the hallmarks of the imperial residencies of the Tetrarchic era, right down to imitation of Rome in its close proximity of the palace to the circus, but the city's size, senate, and corn dole suggest it was intended as something more.¹ Debate about what this something more might be is complex and multifaceted, with characterisations of the city ranging from its creation as a Christian capital for Constantine's new Christian empire to a hastily thrown together imperial staging post. This chapter will survey the scholarly debate over the form and function of early Constantinople with a focus on its perceived symbolic importance as a Christian city.

Canon 3 of 381 is typically treated as marking a coming of age for Constantinople. The canon is commonly conceptualised as the opening act in Constantinople's international episcopal career. The staking out of the city's status as second only to Rome is often presented as the result of a process already well underway: "The ecumenical council that met at Constantinople in 381 *finally* acknowledged the city's eminence as 'New Rome', and it defined a 'seniority of honour' for the bishop of the capital."² Canon 3 is thought to reveal an intention for Constantinople to rival the ecclesiastical authority of Rome, an intention that is assumed to have been bubbling away under the surface from the beginning: "[Constantinople's] status as New Rome, largely implicit for the first 50 years

¹ Van Dam, *Roman Revolution*, 58.

² Raymond Van Dam, "Bishops and Society," in *The Cambridge History of Christianity: Vol. 2 Constantine to c. 600*, ed. Augustine Casiday and Frederick W. Norris (Cambridge: CUP, 2007), 343–66, 354, emphasis mine.

of its existence, was made explicit at the church Council of Constantinople (381)”.³ However, despite this confidence that 381 marks the fulfilment of a preconceived role for Constantinople, modern works that deal with Constantinople from Constantine’s reign to the arrival of Theodosius in 379 do not present us with any reliable picture of the city’s development as a Christian city.

Scholarly work on early Constantinople presents an odd state of affairs. While a copious amount has been written about the city, there have been very few attempts to construct a political history of the city in its own right.⁴ Rather, the story of Constantinople in its earliest phase has been told mainly through two particular types of studies. The first are institutional monographs that focus on the city itself, sketching civic development and character. Works by scholars such as Cyril Mango have proved highly valuable in mapping out the physical development of the city through analysis of monumental, archaeological, numismatic and literary evidence.⁵ The second type of inquiry is through works on prominent personalities, such as studies of Constantine, Athanasius, or Themistius. These latter works obviously do not consider Constantinople in itself but deal with the city within the scope of their topic. Recent years have seen this deficit rectified with two excellent studies on Constantinople and Rome that touch on Constantinople’s earliest years.⁶ Still, works that focus on the role of the city during this period remain surprisingly scant and, in order to reconstruct from modern sources a picture of the city’s evolution, we must read widely on topics that intersect with the city.

The picture of Constantinople that emerges from such studies is very much dictated by the availability and nature of the sources. Discussion of the city’s significance and the trajectory of its development has crystallised into two particular phases: Constantine’s foundation of the city (324–330) and the promotion of the eastern senate under Constantius II (337–361). There is a relatively rich amount of sources available on Constantine’s life. The emperor’s Christianity is a central theme in these sources, and the modern discussion of the city’s foundation, in line with discussion of the emperor himself, has largely centred

³ Paul Magdalino, “Byzantium = Constantinople,” in *A Companion to Byzantium*, ed. Liz James (Oxford: OUP, 2010), 43–54, 51.

⁴ Dagron’s *Naissance d’une Capitale* stands virtually alone; however, many works on diffuse topics incorporate substantial discussion of Constantinople, such as, Malcolm Errington, *Roman Imperial Policy from Julian to Theodosius* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006).

⁵ See in particular, Cyril Mango, *Le développement urbain de Constantinople (IVe–VIIe siècles)*, 3rd ed. (Paris: De Boccard, 1985).

⁶ Lucy Grig and Gavin Kelly (eds), *Two Romes: Rome and Constantinople in Late Antiquity* (Oxford: OUP, 2012) and Van Dam, *Rome and Constantinople*.

on the extent to which Constantinople was or was not conceived of as a Christian city.⁷ After the reign of Constantine ended in 337, the city comes into focus very rarely in the sources. This is perhaps due to the fact that the city fell out of geo-political prominence, with emperors using the city in most part as a convenient temporary residence. The few literary sources we do have are highly hostile towards the city, sometimes even to the extent of actively ignoring its existence.⁸ It is only with the arrival of Theodosius in 379 that a clear narrative of events in the city can again be picked up.

However, we are not entirely without a Constantinopolitan perspective for this period thanks to the works of Themistius. Unsurprisingly, being a pagan orator and operating in the sphere of imperial bureaucracy, Themistius does not shed light on Constantinople's role as a Christian city but rather has provided a rich source of information on the development of Constantinople as an administrative centre. In particular, Themistius' works provide an insight into the evolution of an eastern senate at Constantinople. Thanks to several recent studies on Themistius, the expansion of the senate under Constantius in the 350s has been increasingly marked as a key moment in the city's evolution into a centre of government for the east. However, just as with his father Constantine, the extent to which Constantius' reign marked a turning-point in the city's function is contentious.

Due to Constantine's legacy as the first Christian emperor and the city's later claims to ecclesiastical pre-eminence, Constantinople's status as a predominant Christian city is easily taken for granted in the period between Constantine and Theodosius I. However, by surveying the modern literature on Constantinople's early development, this chapter will show that, despite the assumption that 381 marked a milestone in a process that had prior momentum, there is in fact very little consensus amongst scholars on the role of Constantinople in general during its earliest period, and even less for any specific Christian role for the city. Yet despite the disparity in views about Constantinople's pre-Theodosian character, the historiography of the city from 381 onward adheres to an assumption that the city's episcopal development was the fulfilment of a vision that was implicit from its foundation.

⁷ For discussion of the sources, see Bruno Bleckmann, "Sources for the History of Constantine," trans. Noel Lenski, in *The Cambridge Companion to the Age of Constantine*, ed. Noel Lenski (Cambridge: CUP, 2005): 14–32.

⁸ The city's status as a newcomer and outsider in both the east and west led to some outspoken criticism of Constantinople, see Chapter 1, section 2, n.31.

1. *Constantine's City: Christian Novelty or Imperial Continuity?*

Given the revolutionary changes of Constantine's reign and the future status of Constantinople, it is no surprise that for many scholars the city's foundation represents a clear break with the past and the birth of a new Christian Empire. D. A. Miller evocatively sums up the traditional view of the historical significance of Constantinople's foundation: "...created in the 4th century A.D. as a Christian-Imperial city...[Constantinople] shook free almost immediately from the skein of history, even Christian history".⁹ While the view that Constantinople instantly shifted the ideological contours of the Roman world has fallen out of favour in recent decades, modern literature on early Constantinople remains roughly divided into two camps: those who see the foundation of the city as representing a clear break in the pre-existing historical tradition, and those who see the city as just one in a long line of regional capitals, rising to prominence gradually due to a variety of pressures and processes. The central sticking point between these two views is the extent to which Constantinople was conceived from the outset as a Christian capital. Those who consider Constantinople's foundation as representing a clear break with the past tend to promote the uniquely Christian nature of the city and its intended role in providing a capital for Constantine's revolutionary vision of a new Christian empire.

The disagreement over whether Constantinople was founded as a Christian city is closely intertwined with the debate surrounding the Christianity of Constantine. Given that the city not only bears his name but also his architectural stamp, it is understandable that the story of Constantinople is wrapped up with that of its founder. However, the city and the reign of Constantine became linked in a much deeper sense. The monumental nature of Constantine's reign rests on two innovations: his adoption of Christianity and the foundation of Constantinople. These two innovations became irreversibly linked in the decades after his death as the watershed nature of Constantine's religious change became increasingly apparent, as the Christian religion moved ever closer to the centre of the imperial world-view. It did not take long for the memory of Constantine to be shaped to encapsulate more fully his perceived role in ushering in this new era of Christian rule and, through this process, the story of Constantinople became entrenched in narratives of destiny and divine providence. By the time of the accounts of Socrates and Sozomen, the foundation of the city is presented as unquestionably the manifestation of God's will, its

⁹ D. A. Miller, *Imperial Constantinople* (New York: Wiley, 1969), 9.

spectacular growth a direct result of the piety of the builder and its inhabitants.¹⁰ The memory of Constantine became so intrinsically linked to his promotion of Christianity that even pagan authors represented the foundation of the city as motivated by the emperor's adoption of Christianity (albeit with negative connotations).¹¹ As Constantine's reign became increasingly obscured by the passing of time, legends surrounding the Christian foundation of Constantinople continued to be elaborated and reinvented. While these stories outgrew Constantine's period, reaching further back to claim apostolic foundation, Constantine's role in establishing the Christian city remained so central that by the eleventh century a historian at the furthest edge of the former Roman empire recounted how Constantine was urged to found Constantinople in successive dreams: first by a personification of Rome and then by Pope Sylvester.¹²

Modern commentators take into account the factors that led to Constantinople's foundation that are well outside of the sphere of the emperor's spirituality, such as the city's proximity to two of the empire's most threatened frontiers and the natural advantages of the site. Even so, the idea that the city was to some extent a result of the emperor's Christianity has continued to be a central theme. Where the debate lies rather is with questions over the precise character of Constantine's Christianity. This has been a topic much discussed by scholars with debate surrounding the extent to which Constantine supported Christianity and whether this endorsement was borne out of genuine piety, mere political pragmatism, or even acute megalomania. While it is generally accepted that Constantine indeed deserves the label of Christian, questions over the extent to which his beliefs influenced imperial policy and in what way, have had an impact on the historical debate over Constantinople's foundation. Responses to the question of whether the city was expressly created as a Christ-loving city or New Jerusalem hinge on a scholar's reading of the extant primary sources, which show the emperor's Christianity as the driving force behind the transformation of Byzantium.

Despite criticism over the reliability of the Eusebian portrayal of Constantine as a devout Christian, many scholars have perceived a deep sense of Christian mission in Constantine's actions.¹³ Scholars such as Andrew Alföldi, Harold Mattingly and Norman

¹⁰ Socrates, *HE* 1.17 (*SCh* 270.164-69); Sozomen, *HE* 2.3 (*SCh* 306.236-44).

¹¹ As will be seen below in relation to Zosimus' account.

¹² William of Malmesbury, *Chronicle* 5.

¹³ Such scepticism has a long lineage. Jacob Burckhardt, writing in the mid-nineteenth century made a scathing attack on Eusebius' reliability, and cast Constantine's Christianity as driven by political pragmatism alone, a position later taken up vigorously by Henri Grégoire. Jacob Burckhardt, *Die Zeit Constantins des*

Baynes have claimed that Constantine's religious convictions were at the forefront of his actions, arguing that accounts of the emperor's conversion and Christian governance contain essential insights into his genuine spiritual convictions.¹⁴ Such views of Constantine's driving motivation continue to pervade scholarship on the topic.¹⁵ One recent study by Thomas Elliott even goes as far as doing away with the need for the emperor's conversion, suggesting that Constantine's parents were closet Christians who brought up their son in the faith.¹⁶ Once Constantine's dedication to the Christian religion is assumed to be genuine, it is easy to draw a line from Constantine's Christianity to his vision for Constantinople.¹⁷

For Charles Odahl, the nature of Constantinople's foundation leads directly on from his view of Constantine's sense of providence. Odahl, taking the appraisals of Eusebius more or less at face value, interprets the emperor's actions as motivated by a belief that God had entrusted him with a divine mission. Odahl suggests that Constantine's spiritual convictions were so fervent that only impracticality dissuaded him from actively persecuting the empire's pagans.¹⁸ For Odahl, Constantinople was central to Constantine's God-given mission "to transform a pagan state into a Christian empire".¹⁹ The city was constructed with the express purpose of being "a centrepiece of [Constantine's] religious program", not just as a symbolic gesture, but as "a Christian capital city in the east which would...mark the triumph of his faith and the Christian future."²⁰ Here we find Constantinople's future status as the capital of the eastern Christian empire foretold in its earliest origins.

The contention that the foundation of the city contained the seed of the Christian empire to come is also held by one of the foremost authorities on Constantine. Timothy D. Barnes presents the city as instantly achieving prominence: "By the mere fact of its

Grossen (Basel: E.A. Seemann, 1853); Henri Grégoire, *La "conversion" de Constantin* (Bruxelles: Secretariat de la Revue de l'Université, 1931).

¹⁴ Andrew Alföldi, *The Conversion of Constantine and Pagan Rome*, trans. Harold Mattingly (Oxford: Clarendon, 1948), 32–33; Norman H. Baynes, *Constantine the Great and the Christian Church* (London: H. Milford, 1931), 27–28.

¹⁵ See below.

¹⁶ Thomas Elliott, *The Christianity of Constantine the Great* (Scranton: Fordham University Press, 1996), 327.

¹⁷ Discerning Constantine's intentions in his founding of Constantinople is made even more challenging when considering the question of at what point in the city's development to situate such intention: his attitude in the six years between the city's foundation and dedication may well have changed significantly: Salvatore Calderone, "Costantinopoli: la 'seconda Roma,'" in *Storia di Roma*, ed. A. Momigliano and A. Schiavone (Turin: Giulio Einaudi, 1993), 723–48, 723–33.

¹⁸ Charles Odahl, *Constantine and the Christian Empire* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 231–2.

¹⁹ Odahl, *Constantine*, 232.

²⁰ Odahl, *Constantine*, 232.

existence, Constantinople immediately became the capital of the Eastern Empire and one of the main cultural centres of the Greek world”.²¹ Following the Eusebian line, Barnes describes the vision at the heart of this prominent new capital as an exclusively Christian one, offering a clear break with the past and a stark statement for the future: “The new capital was to be a Christian city in which Christian emperors could hold court in an ambience untainted by the buildings, rites, and practices of other religions”.²² Barnes’ Constantinople asserts an “aggressively Christian ethos”, with Constantine refusing to begin construction until every remnant of pagan Byzantium was removed.²³

What is striking in the works of Barnes and Odahl is the degree of foresight and agency attributed to Constantine in positioning his new city as the centre of a new Christian empire. Constantine in such works is presented as a conscious architect of the long-term changes he was instigating, adroitly aware of “the new Christian Empire that he was so carefully shaping”.²⁴ In some older accounts of Constantine’s foundation of the city, such as that of A. H. M. Jones, the emperor is portrayed as taking on a more passive role in the Christianisation of his city. Taking his lead from the *origo constantini*, rather than Eusebius, Jones restricts the Christian vision of the city’s foundation to its function as a memorial to the emperor’s military success and the God who handed him victory.²⁵ Jones contends that the city at this early juncture was nothing more than an imperial residence reminiscent of the Tetrarchic-style capitals of Diocletian’s era.²⁶ While he does see the city as specifically dedicated to the new faith and sees no reason to doubt the claims of Eusebius that “the city was provided with a galaxy of magnificent churches”, Jones contends that this was just a natural consequence of the emperor’s Christian leanings and not the result of a specific spiritual vision for the city.²⁷

In recent years, scholars have increasingly argued that Constantine was very active in moulding the form of Christianity he promoted. It has even been suggested that the

²¹ Timothy D. Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1981), 222.

²² Barnes follows the Eusebian view that only when Byzantium was entirely swept clean of all traces of pagan worship did Constantine proceed to construct his Christian capital: Timothy D. Barnes, *Constantine: Dynasty, Religion and Power in the Later Roman Empire* (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), 111; Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius*, 212.

²³ Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius*, 222. Barnes’ depiction of Constantine pursuing an aggressive policy of Christianisation is in tension with more recent readings of the emperor’s religious policies which perceive in them a more inclusive and tolerant political ethos; H.A. Drake, *Constantine and the Bishops: The Politics of Intolerance* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 192–308; H.A. Drake, “Constantine and Consensus,” *Church History* 64, 1 (1995): 1–15.

²⁴ John Julius Norwich, *Byzantium: The Early Centuries* (London: Folio Society, 2003), 326.

²⁵ A. H. M. Jones, *The Later Roman Empire: 284-602* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1973), 83.

²⁶ Jones, *Later Roman Empire*, 688.

²⁷ Jones, *Later Roman Empire*, 83.

decision to build his capital at Byzantium was specifically dictated, not by its strategic location or its commemoration of military victories, but by the spiritual malleability of its inhabitants. This theory is usually linked to a wider argument that Constantine set up Constantinople in retaliation against a Rome that had exhibited only lukewarm enthusiasm toward him.²⁸ Henry Chadwick and Vasiliki Limberis both argue that the site of Byzantium was chosen for its potential as a blank spiritual canvas.²⁹ Rome was dominated by its pagan heritage, and the Christian church there was already established enough to assert an authority independent of imperial interference. Byzantium, on the other hand, “offered scope and space for a new and Christian foundation”, a place where Constantine could “easily mould his own religion”.³⁰

However, not all those who attribute to the emperor a sincere sense of Christian mission allow that this spiritual vision was central to the construction of his city. For Elizabeth Key Fowden, Constantine’s actions after becoming sole emperor were very much driven by his religious convictions as he actively and with increasing intent sought to establish a universal Christian empire.³¹ So all-encompassing were Constantine’s convictions that, Fowden argues, it is essential to approach analysis of his imperial policy through the lens of his universalist theological beliefs.³² Yet despite this emphasis on Constantine’s Christian mission, Fowden does not assume any particular Christian inspiration in founding Constantinople. Rather, she sees the city as part of the Tetrarchic trend in palace building, constructed due to its strategic position between east and west.³³ Instead of Constantinople, Fowden argues that it was Jerusalem that Constantine made “the epicenter of his own universal Christian empire”.³⁴ The difference of opinion between scholars such as Chadwick and Fowden is so wide that, before moving on to survey other accounts of Constantinople’s foundation, we must first ask how such starkly opposing views can exist.

Sketching the historical figure of Constantine is a difficult endeavour due not only to the emperor’s status as a saint of the Orthodox Church but because of three particular

²⁸ This argument is linked to debate over the extent to which Constantinople was conceived as a replacement for Rome. This is a complex debate that will be discussed below..

²⁹ Vasiliki Limberis, *Divine Heiress: The Virgin Mary and the Creation of Christian Constantinople* (New York: Routledge, 1994); Chadwick, *Church in Ancient Society*.

³⁰ Limberis, *Divine Heiress*, 21; Chadwick, *Church in Ancient Society*, 189.

³¹ Elizabeth Key Fowden, “Constantine and the Peoples of the Eastern Frontier,” in *The Cambridge Companion to the Age of Constantine*, ed. Noel Lenski (Cambridge: CUP, 2005), 377–98, 378.

³² Fowden, “Constantine,” 378–9.

³³ Fowden, “Constantine,” 381.

³⁴ Fowden, “Constantine,” 382.

difficulties inherent in the available sources. Firstly, surviving contemporary accounts of Constantine's reign give a severely partisan perspective of the emperor's Christianity. Our main contemporary account of Constantine's reign comes from Eusebius of Caesarea who, as we would expect of a bishop with close links to the imperial regime, puts a premium on the glorification of not just the emperor but the church.³⁵ The other main surviving contemporary account, that of Lactantius, does little to correct the propagandist perspective of Eusebius because his Christian sensibilities also led him to glorify Constantine through emphasis on his Christian virtue – in particular, by comparing his favourable rule to that of the wicked Diocletian.³⁶ Both of these authors, therefore, not only want to put the emperor in the best Christian light but also emphasised on the revolutionary break that Constantine's rule represented. Reading these accounts it is easy to forget that, as Garth Fowden points out, for many people (especially those outside the ecclesiastical sphere from which these sources originate) the changes instigated by Constantine's policies were not likely to have even been immediately noticeable.³⁷ Relying on such sources it is therefore very difficult to gauge the extent to which the monumental changes of Constantine's reign were perceived and played out against the wider Roman mindset of the time. For Eusebius, Constantinople was constructed as a clear expression of the new order of the world; however, the extent to which this message was apparent to the vast majority of the empire's inhabitants, or even the inhabitants of Constantinople, remains speculative.

Surviving accounts outside of the overtly Christian accounts of Lactantius and Eusebius are of a much later date. The fact that these sources are written at a later stage in Constantinople's history presents the second major set of interpretative problems. The distance between the authors and the period on which they were writing naturally raises serious questions over reliability. As mentioned in the previous chapter, many of our

³⁵ A pertinent example of how this relates to views of Constantinople's origin is the interpretation of Eusebius' comments about the many pagan works of art that were stripped from the cities of the east for the adornment of the new city (an operation corroborated by Jerome in his *Chronicon*). Eusebius claims that pagan art was brought to Constantinople with the express purpose of it being publically ridiculed and denounced as nothing more than representations of fake deities; Eusebius, *Vita Constantini* 3.54 (*SCh* 559.422–24). Eusebius' explanation for the influx of pagan works has been taken up wholeheartedly by historians such as Henry Chadwick who see in Constantine's founding of Constantinople a deeply Christian mission. However, many other historians have noted that Eusebius' explanation is an attempt to conceal his unease at Constantine's less than perfect dedication to the Christian god. See Van Dam's more nuanced view below.

³⁶ Lactantius, *De Mortibus Persecutorum*, see Bleckmann, "Sources for the History of Constantine," 24

³⁷ Garth Fowden, *Empire to Commonwealth: Consequences of Monotheism in Late Antiquity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 85; Ramsay MacMullen also points out that the effect of Constantine's conversion on the vast majority of his subjects would have been nil; Ramsay MacMullen, *Christianizing the Roman Empire A. D.* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984), 44.

sources for this period originate from the medieval period and, as such, are obscured by later Byzantine perspectives. Much of the information on early Constantinople contained in works such as the *Parastaseis Syntomoi Chronikai* and *Scriptores originum Constantinopolarum*, from the eighth and ninth centuries is anecdotal, attributing to Constantine a far greater number of building projects than are accurate.³⁸

However, it is not just time that distorts the post-Constantinian sources. A much bigger issue than historicity exists within works that originate from after the fourth century. As already mentioned, in the decades after his rule, the memory of Constantine took on new resonance. With the growth of Christianity, Constantine's legacy became a battleground for the competing religious perspectives of Christians and pagans. Written within this milieu of competing dialogues, later accounts of the foundation of Constantinople were strongly influenced by contemporary issues. The Christian perspective of historians such as Socrates and Sozomen led them to locate Constantinople's Christian heritage at the centre of the city's virtues. In these accounts it is divine inspiration that is at the forefront of the emperor's decision to found Constantinople and such virtuous beginnings are used to explain its continued prosperity.³⁹ On the other hand, pagan historians such as Zosimus used accounts of Constantinople's foundation as an opportunity to attack the moral integrity of Constantine and his chosen religion.⁴⁰ Zosimus recounts that Constantine decided to reside in Constantinople to escape the curses of the pagans at Rome who were angered at Constantine's adoption of Christianity in order to escape the guilt he felt over the murder of his wife and son.⁴¹ A pertinent example of how misleading these competing traditions can be are the differing accounts of what relics Constantine had placed within his column at Constantinople. Socrates states that it contained a fragment of the True Cross,⁴² while Malalas claims that it was the Trojan

³⁸ The speed with which the origin of buildings in the city was obscured by legend is made clear by Sozomen's statement that the Church of St Paul, which was named in 381 after Theodosius I translated there the relics of the city's Nicene bishop Paul, was in the 440s assumed to hold the relics of the apostle Paul. Sozomen, *HE* 7.10 (*SCh* 516.110).

³⁹ Socrates, *HE* 1.17 (*SCh* 477.178–80).

⁴⁰ Zosimus, who was writing in the early sixth century, relied heavily on a lost history by the pagan historian Eunapius of Sardis for the period of Constantine; as such Zosimus' account may well preserve traditions that pre-date the church histories of Socrates and Sozomen; Alan Cameron, *The Last Pagans of Rome* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011); Daniel C. Scavone, "Zosimus and His Historical Models," *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies* 11 (1970): 57–67.

⁴¹ Zosimus, *Historia nova* 2.29–30 (ed. Mendelssohn, 85–88). English translation in, Ronald T. Ridley (translation and commentary), *Zosimus: New History*, *Byzantina Australiensia* 2 (Canberra: Australian Association for Byzantine Studies, 1982), 36–37.

⁴² Socrates, *HE* 1.17 (*SCh* 477.178–80).

Palladium that lay buried beneath it.⁴³ As Jonathan Bardill points out, these traditions were not concerned with historicity but rather reflect contemporary tensions between Christians and pagans over the city's heritage.⁴⁴

Many of the deficiencies in the textual evidence could perhaps be highlighted and corrected by archaeological evidence but, unfortunately, the lack of physical evidence is the third problem that is faced by historians of early Constantinople. Due to a paucity of surviving buildings, as well as a limited opportunity for excavation work, we are left with little physical evidence of Constantinople.⁴⁵ Evidence of Constantine's foundation is almost non-existent; the (Great) church that preceded St Sophia, Constantine's mausoleum and the Church of the Holy Apostles have not survived. Some sparse remnants of Constantine's palace and column do survive, along with the Hippodrome; however, their condition makes interpretation limited.⁴⁶ Paul Magdalino adds that not only is there a lack of evidence but the topographical study of the city as a whole is only a very recent endeavour.⁴⁷ With the lack of surviving material we are again forced to depend on textual evidence. Topographical descriptions of the city are very rare and often unhelpful, with the earliest reliable source not appearing until the fifth century.⁴⁸

The lack of such key evidence and dependence on unverifiable material has allowed much incongruity in the works devoted to the topic of Constantinople's foundation. Of course disagreements and a multiplicity of interpretations are part of scholarly endeavour but the importance of Constantine's reign and the nature of the sources have made it a particularly thorny topic, giving rise to a myriad of competing

⁴³ Malalas, *Chronicle* 13.7; cited in English translation by, Elizabeth Jeffreys, Michael Jeffreys and Roger Scott *The Chronicle of John Malalas: A Translation*, Byzantina Australiensia 4 (Melbourne: Australian Association for Byzantine Studies, 1986), 174.

⁴⁴ Jonathan Bardill, *Constantine, Divine Emperor of the Christian Golden Age* (New York: CUP, 2012), 252.

⁴⁵ Schreiner, *Konstantinopel*, 9–16; Grig and Kelly, "From Rome to Constantinople," 5–6.

⁴⁶ The period after Constantine fares little better – the base of a column from the reign of Arcadius and remnants of the Great Church from the Theodosian-era are the period's primary remains at Constantinople. Richard Krautheimer, *Three Christian Capitals: Topography and Politics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), 50–61. However, for an analysis of previously understudied floor mosaics dating from second to sixth century Constantinople, see Örgü Dalgıç, "Late Antique floor mosaics of Constantinople prior to the Great Palace" (PhD diss., New York University, 2008).

⁴⁷ Magdalino does admit, however, that individual buildings have come under close scrutiny; Magdalino, *Byzantium*, 44; Some important studies include: Averil Cameron and Judith Herrin, *Constantinople in the Early Eighth Century: The Parastaseis Syntomoi Chronikai* (Leiden: Brill, 1984); Paul Magdalino, *Studies on the History and Topography of Byzantine Constantinople* (Aldershot: Variorum Ashgate, 2007); Cyril Mango, *Studies on Constantinople* (Aldershot: Variorum Ashgate, 1993).

⁴⁸ This being the *Notitia Urbis Constantinopolitanae*. For a recent appraisal, see John Matthews, "Notitia Urbis Constantinopolitanae," in *Two Romes: Rome and Constantinople in Late Antiquity*, ed. Lucy Grig and Gavin Kelly (Oxford: OUP, 2012). For discussion of visual representations of Constantinople in comparison with those of Rome, see Lucy Grig, "Competing Capitals, Competing Representations," in *Two Romes: Rome and Constantinople in Late Antiquity*, ed. Lucy Grig and Gavin Kelly (Oxford: OUP, 2012) 31–52.

interpretations. With little evidence of the Christian character of early Constantinople, arguments over the city's status rely on marginal slivers of evidence.⁴⁹ Barnes' contention that Constantinople was indeed established as an exclusively Christian city makes much of little evidence, such as the statement by Himerius that the pagan emperor Julian established alien rites in the city, which Barnes interprets as proof that until that point only Christian rites had taken place.⁵⁰

The lack of evidence pointing to a strictly Christian ethos at the heart of Constantinople's creation, combined with debate over the extent of Constantine's Christianity, is further complicated by evidence that indicates the city was centred on the glorification of Constantine himself. The imperial palace and Hippodrome appear to have been priorities in the city's construction and, in addition, in the middle of Constantine's Forum – arguably the symbolic centre of the city – the emperor erected a column topped with a statue of himself.⁵¹ Even Constantine's naming of the city after himself points to a very traditional expression of imperial vanity. It is such evidence that has led many to consider the role of early Constantinople outside of it having any particular Christian significance.

Gilbert Dagron in his monumental work *Naissance d'une Capitale* was the first modern scholar to question seriously and systematically the centrality of Christianity in Constantinople's foundation. Rather than any form of Christian capital or memorial, Dagron sees the city's foundation in purely utilitarian terms. For Dagron, the location of the city can be attributed to its strategic military value in protecting the Bosphorus.⁵² Once strategic considerations had established the location of the new city, Dagron contends, Constantine set about constructing a city to serve his political ends. The city was constructed so as to glorify his imperial person and establish him at the head of a new dynasty. Founded as a dynastic capital, the character of early Constantinople was fundamentally linked with that of its founder. For Dagron, the city only took on prominence in its own right – divorced from that of the person of Constantine – very

⁴⁹ An interesting recent article postulates that Constantinople could be considered the setting for some of the epigrammatist Palladas of Alexandria's works and that, as such, they point to the fact that Constantinople was from its inception considered a Christian city; Kevin W. Wilkinson, "Palladas and the Foundation of Constantinople," *JRS* 100 (2010): 179–94.

⁵⁰ Timothy Barnes, "From Toleration to Repression: The Evolution of Constantine's Religious Policies," *Scripta Classica Israelica* 21 (2002): 189–207, 115.

⁵¹ The religious symbolism of Constantine's column has been a point of contention, but Bardill's recent study provides a compelling argument that the statue had no particular religious affiliation; Bardill, *Constantine*, 253.

⁵² Dagron, *Naissance*, 27–29.

gradually and as a result of several coalescing political processes.⁵³ Dagron's explanation of the symbolic resonance of early Constantinople as a dynastic capital has remained highly influential.⁵⁴

Following on from Dagron, Malcolm Errington's *Roman Imperial Policy from Julian to Theodosius* offers an assessment of the city's development that very different from that of those that view the city's foundation as representing a break with the past. In Errington's account, the impetus behind the city's early development lies not in its potential to be a capital of the east, spiritual or otherwise, but merely a pawn in dynastic struggles and imperial politics.⁵⁵ In line with Dagron, Errington shows Constantine establishing Constantinople as a means to cement his hold on power and establish a dynastic legacy.⁵⁶ For Errington, not only was the city bereft of any particular Christian character but it was not until Theodosius' reign that it could be said to have taken on the role of a capital.⁵⁷ Previous to Theodosius, the city was merely a temporary imperial residence, of the same ilk as the capitals of the Tetrarchic era. In Errington's account, key instances in the city's development during this period are detached from the context of a deliberate program to promote the status of a capital "on the make" and presented rather as a side-effect of imperial politics and providential circumstance.⁵⁸

2. *New Approaches to Constantine: A Synthesis*

As we have seen, the literature surrounding Constantine's foundation of Constantinople has been traditionally divided between two positions. On the one hand are those who argue that in Constantinople's foundation we can discern a clear template for the shape of the empire to come, while on the other are those who argue that it can be principally considered a Tetrarchic-style capital founded primarily for strategic and/or political gain. Previously the difference between these two positions turned on a scholar's opinion of the extent to which the emperor's Christianity featured in his vision for Constantinople. However, in recent decades a new trend in studies of Constantine has significantly

⁵³ Dagron, *Naissance*, 368–409.

⁵⁴ Averil Cameron, *The Mediterranean World in Late Antiquity* (London: Routledge, 1993), 13–14.

⁵⁵ Errington, *Roman Imperial Policy*, 148–49.

⁵⁶ Errington, *Roman Imperial Policy*, 142.

⁵⁷ Hans-Georg Beck, on the basis that Theodosius only stayed at Constantinople fleetingly, pushes the date of this transformation further forward, to the period of his son Arcadius' ascendancy (around 391–394); Hans-Georg Beck, "The Rise of a New Capital in the East," in *The Age of Spirituality: A Symposium*, ed. K. Weitzmann (New York: Princeton University Press, 1980), 29–38, 31.

⁵⁸ Errington, *Roman Imperial Policy*, 143.

reconfigured the contours of this debate. In line with a broader move within patristics, and thanks to the works of scholars such as H. A. Drake, studies on Constantine have moved away from viewing the emperor's Christianity in a monolithic sense.⁵⁹ Eschewing the assumption that the emperor's Christian vision can be easily aligned with that of later centuries, combined with a growing tendency to view Constantine as a product of the decades preceding him has had an important impact on assessments of the role of Constantinople.

Recent works on Constantine, such as those by Raymond Van Dam and Jonathan Bardill, examine Constantine in the context of the decades and even centuries preceding his reign rather than those that follow.⁶⁰ The result is a more integrated view of the emperor, one in which he is positioned not merely as the founder of a new empire but also as an heir to Diocletian. This approach has enriched our perspective on the uniqueness of Constantine's Christianity. As Ramsay MacMullen points out, what is often too easily forgotten is that Constantine, being the first Christian emperor, did not have a template to follow.⁶¹ The expression of his imperial Christianity was a unique blend of ideas both old and new. With this in mind, the question then becomes not whether Constantine was truly Christian but rather: what kind of Christian was he?⁶² By appreciating the uniqueness of Constantine's reign, the foundation of Constantinople is opened up to a much wider range of interpretations. Constantine's vision for the city can be understood in terms of both a break with the past as well as a continuation, rather than one or the other.

One study that provides an excellent synthesis between the two traditional positions is found in Richard Krautheimer's *Three Christian Capitals* in which Constantine's imprint on Constantinople is assessed in terms of both the novelty of his Christianity as well as the cultural inheritance of past emperors.⁶³ In Krautheimer's opinion, Constantine's capital would have disappointed Eusebius. Church building was minimal, precedence was given over to the construction of the palace and Hippodrome,

⁵⁹ In particular; Drake, *Constantine and the Bishops*; H.A. Drake, *In Praise of Constantine: A Historical Study and New Translation of Eusebius' Tricennial Orations* (Berkeley: University of California Publications, 1976).

⁶⁰ Van Dam, *Roman Revolution*, 144; "Constantine was in fact the scrupulous heir of Diocletian...he continued core policies of the Tetrarchs"; Bardill, *Constantine*, 2; "I have judged it necessary not to just deal with the Constantinian age, but, where necessary, to set Constantine in the much broader context of the kings and emperors of the Hellenistic and Roman periods."

⁶¹ MacMullen, *Christianizing*, 44.

⁶² H. A. Drake, "The Impact of Constantine on Christianity," in *The Cambridge Companion to the Age of Constantine*, ed. Noel Lenski (Cambridge: CUP, 2005), 111–36, 112.

⁶³ Krautheimer, *Capitals*.

pagan shrines were left intact, and ancient pagan statues were set up.⁶⁴ In line with Dagron, Krautheimer asserts that first and foremost the city glorified the person of Constantine. Krautheimer points out that even Christian ritual in the city was centred on veneration of the emperor, with the Mass celebrated at the base of Constantine's column and prayers and supplication offered to Constantine rather than the Christian deity.⁶⁵

However, for Krautheimer this does not point to Constantine's Christianity being insincere or unapparent in the city's construction. In line with writers such as Barnes and Odahl, he assigns a strong sense of Christian mission to Constantine's reign and situates the foundation of Constantinople as central to this Christian vision. Krautheimer asserts that Constantine felt he was "entrusted with the mission of spreading the faith and creating a homogeneous and Christian, and centrally ruled empire".⁶⁶ The foundation of Constantinople, he contends, was a result of Constantine's conviction that, "Such an empire required a permanent and Christian capital."⁶⁷ While the prayers offered to Constantine and the emphasis on imperial rather than ecclesiastical building at first glance suggests a city dedicated to Constantine rather than God, Krautheimer shows that in the religious setting of the early fourth century these two functions were not mutually exclusive. Constantine expressed the dedication of his city to God by presenting himself as a manifestation of Christ.⁶⁸ While this overt glorification of the person of the emperor may appear an act of sacrilege to observers used to the imperial Christianity of later years, in the eyes of Constantine this was the right and traditional expression of an emperor's spirituality. He was following the well-established custom of expressing an emperor's power through espousing a personal relationship with the divine.⁶⁹ Krautheimer's schema of viewing Constantinople's foundation as a unique melding of Christian and imperial ideology presents a way of understanding Constantine's vision for Constantinople that undoes the need for it to be viewed as either a Christian or dynastic capital. Instead, he portrays Constantinople as a city with both Christianity and imperial imagery at its heart; not Christianity as Eusebius understood it but Christian nonetheless.

Van Dam's recent work on Constantine further elaborates on the extent to which Constantine set himself at the centre of his brand of Christianity, showing how he increasingly portrayed himself as a personification of Jesus, even incorporating aspects of

⁶⁴ Krautheimer, *Capitals*, 60–61.

⁶⁵ Krautheimer, *Capitals*, 62.

⁶⁶ Krautheimer, *Capitals*, 41.

⁶⁷ Krautheimer, *Capitals*, 41.

⁶⁸ Krautheimer, *Capitals*, 64–65.

⁶⁹ Krautheimer, *Capitals*, 66.

Christ's story into his own familial traditions.⁷⁰ In line with Krautheimer, Van Dam points out that the novelty of Constantine's rule has often been overemphasised and needs to be placed within the context of the cultural world he inherited. However, he places much more emphasis on situating the emperor specifically within a Tetrarchic paradigm. He asserts that Constantine was "in fact the scrupulous heir of Diocletian."⁷¹ Van Dam even shows how Constantine's religious representations remained within the Tetrarchic model.⁷²

Van Dam's account highlights not just how Constantine was a product of the cultural and political world that preceded him but also how he manipulated it to his political advantage. In taking on sole custodianship of the empire, Constantine brought to an end the Tetrarchic system that had provided much-needed stability for a troubled empire. In a time when there was a very real fear of a return to the great upheavals of the third century, Constantine required a nuanced propaganda campaign to solidify his rule and justify the novelty of his regime. He had to walk a delicate line between establishing continuity with the past and offering the hope of a new era. As Van Dam shows, the emperor did this by portraying himself as an heir and continuer of the Tetrarchic system in some instances, while in others cutting links to his predecessors and showing himself to be something altogether new and unique.⁷³ By viewing Constantine's reign through this lens, Van Dam reveals a very different conception of the symbolism of Constantinople.

Constantine's Christianity had a dual political use. It brought legitimation to his rule in a way that would be understood by those used to the Tetrarchic system, but also glorified his person in a way that differentiated him from his predecessors. The message that Constantine represented something new is clear in his building program at Jerusalem. Jerusalem's links to the life of Jesus gave Constantine a perfect canvas to display his Christian convictions and distance himself from the previous regime. At Jerusalem, Constantine went to great lengths to cut all links to his predecessors and mark himself as patron of the Christian religion. By building churches and destroying pagan shrines, the emperor conveyed a clear physical message of his disconnect from the Tetrarchic emperors who had so violently persecuted Christ's followers.⁷⁴

⁷⁰ Van Dam, *Roman Revolution*, 306–309.

⁷¹ Van Dam, *Roman Revolution*, 143–44.

⁷² Van Dam, *Roman Revolution*, 234–81.

⁷³ Van Dam, *Roman Revolution*, 306.

⁷⁴ Van Dam, *Roman Revolution*, 297–99.

Van Dam suggests that such radical transformation of the ideological symbolism of Jerusalem was acceptable, without loss of the city's significance, as Jerusalem had for many years been part of the Roman world – it needed no justification of its position as an integral component of the empire.⁷⁵ Constantinople, on the other hand, was new and lacked the same degree of Greco-Roman heritage that other capitals could boast. It was out of place.⁷⁶ It is for this reason that Van Dam suggests that at Constantinople Constantine did not promote his reign as one that was different from his predecessors, but rather emphasised his connections with his Tetrarchic predecessors. For Constantinople to be taken seriously as an imperial capital, Constantine needed to import a Greco-Roman cultural heritage. Constantine imbued his city with artefacts that were connected to Rome's Hellenic and pagan past, such as the Serpent Column from Delphi. Far from distancing himself from his Tetrarchic predecessors as he did at Jerusalem, Constantine even set up a statue of Diocletian in the Hippodrome.⁷⁷ This importation of antiquities emphasised Constantine's "imperial pedigree" as well as his Tetrarchic background.⁷⁸ It showed Constantinople to be a centre with a Greco-Roman cultural inheritance and Constantine as one in a long line of emperors that protected such culture.⁷⁹ The central role of Constantinople here is very much the opposite of a new capital for a new empire; rather, it is a symbol of imperial rule legitimised through tradition and continuity with the past.

By comparing the conception of Constantinople in the works of both Krautheimer and Van Dam, we see that, while the recent approach of charting the novelty of Constantine's Christianity as well as placing him in the context of his predecessors certainly enriches interpretations of the city, it still does not offer any more coherent consensus on the city's primary symbolic role. The ambiguity of the sources and the highly subjective nature of the topic make any narrowing of interpretations unlikely. It seems that perhaps the only way forward is through studies geared towards open-ended interpretation. Jonathan Bardill's recent study on Constantine presents just such an approach. Bardill makes good on his introductory promise not to just "present a personal interpretation but also to explore the difficulties of analysing the available evidence, the differing inferences that might be drawn, and the ambiguities present."⁸⁰ In his chapter on Constantine and Christianity, Bardill examines many of the important buildings and artefacts in

⁷⁵ Van Dam, *Roman Revolution*, 305–306.

⁷⁶ Van Dam, *Rome and Constantinople*, 65.

⁷⁷ Sarah Bassett, *The Urban Image of Late Antique Constantinople* (Cambridge: CUP, 2004), 50–77.

⁷⁸ Van Dam, *Roman Revolution*, 305–306.

⁷⁹ Van Dam, *Roman Revolution*, 305.

⁸⁰ Bardill, *Constantine*, 1.

Constantinople but stands back from trying to fit them into a unifying statement of Constantinople's role. Bardill shows the establishment of Constantinople as inspired by a mix of ideas both new and old. The city's creation is shown to have been inspired by the same imperial vanity that had motivated emperors and kings stretching right back to Alexander, and that in glorifying Constantine, the city symbolised the restoration of Rome's ancient glory as well as specifically commemorating the defeat of Licinius.⁸¹ However, Bardill does concede that the city was also established not just to suggest a return to ancient glories but to reconfigure the empire, to establish an eastern capital that was an equal to Rome.⁸²

In response to the question of the extent to which Constantine's Christian faith was evident in his city, Bardill approaches the topic and sources cautiously, outlining that which is unknowable and that which is unlikely. Bardill is wary of Eusebius' claims for Constantinople, without dismissing them entirely. He places much more weight on the pagan Palladas' recognition of Constantinople as "the Christ-loving city".⁸³ In his discussion of such sources, Bardill never strays from consideration of the physical evidence and, while he assigns to Constantine's reign more churches at Constantinople than scholars such as Averil Cameron do, he indicates the likelihood that Constantine's Constantinople was not overtly Christianised.⁸⁴

Bardill's assertions that the evidence does not point to an overwhelmingly Christian symbolism at Constantinople fits well with his overall assessment of Constantine's Christianity. Bardill concludes that Constantine was indeed a devout Christian who expressed a desire that the pagans under his rule convert to his faith.⁸⁵ However, following on from Drake, for Bardill this desire was not matched by aggressive proselytising.⁸⁶ He contends that the emperor was cautious in pushing his faith, opting for persuasion over coercion.⁸⁷ Such a view of Constantine's spiritual ideology allows for a nuanced interpretation of Constantinople's early identity. Bardill concedes that Constantine's Christian prerogatives would have been evident at Constantinople, but that his approach to the spiritual life of his empire meant that the pagan traditions of the city

⁸¹ Bardill, *Constantine*, 251.

⁸² Bardill, *Constantine*, 252.

⁸³ Bardill, *Constantine*, 252.

⁸⁴ Averil Cameron, *The Later Roman Empire* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993), 213.

⁸⁵ Bardill, *Constantine*, 305.

⁸⁶ Drake, *Constantine and the Bishops*.

⁸⁷ Bardill, *Constantine*, 305. Such an approach would have been political suicide considering the large number and prominent standing of pagans in the empire.

would have continued unmolested.⁸⁸ With the transformation of Byzantium, Constantine “was not starting with a fresh canvas and he did not attempt to create one”.⁸⁹

Perhaps what this study demonstrates, in the context of the wider literature surrounding Constantinople, is that there is a propensity to treat the city as if it were a singular artefact that can be interpreted one way or another. Attempts to construct a unifying role for the city as a whole result in portrayals that are inevitably anachronistic and unhelpful. In contrast, Bardill approaches the city as a collection of many buildings, statues, and spaces, with just as many particular functions.

Bardill’s appreciation of the mainly pagan world in which Constantine was operating and Krautheimer’s and Van Dam’s outlining of the novelty of his Christianity work against the notion that any cohesive connection can be drawn between the nature of Constantinople’s foundation and its later rise to ecclesiastical predominance. Even if a specifically Christian vision can be considered to be at the heart of Constantinople’s foundation, and the city was indeed intended as a Christian capital, studies such as Krautheimer’s show that attempting to link the city’s foundation with its destination is a deeply flawed initiative. The Christianity of Constantine was a novel expression of traditional imperial tropes and new Christian ideas operating in a world where the relationship between a monotheistic religion and imperial rule was uncharted territory. In the decades after Constantine, the continued entwining of Christianity and imperial governance saw a swift evolution of the ideology underpinning this relationship. In the space of only a few decades, the expressions of imperial Christianity and the relationship between Church and secular government were already fundamentally different to that of Constantine’s day.⁹⁰ If we are to find a trajectory leading to the claims of canon 3 we must look beyond Constantine’s residency.

⁸⁸ Bardill, *Constantine*, 305.

⁸⁹ Bardill, *Constantine*, 305.

⁹⁰ The relationship between Constantine and the Christian God cannot be viewed in the same vein as that of later emperors. As will be examined in Chapter 4, the pairing of Church and government that would see the emperor considered “the guarantor and often the principle architect of the unity of the church” was a gradual process that spanned the period of this thesis. Gilbert Dagron, *Emperor and Priest: The Imperial Office in Byzantium*, trans. Jean Birrell (Cambridge: Past and Present Publications, 2003), 298.

3. Constantinople after Constantine

Modern consideration of Constantinople's Christian symbolism during the period of four decades between the death of the city's founder and the council of 381 is lacking.⁹¹ The emperors between Constantine and Theodosius were not averse to interfering in the spiritual life of their empire, and there was certainly much cause to do so with the continuing controversy over Christ's relationship to God causing increasing dissension. However, most of the action unfolded outside the sphere of Constantinople, meaning that little about Constantinople's Christian status can be ascertained from the sources. The underlying causes of this lack of visibility of Constantinople's religious function are two-fold.

Firstly, the city moved away from centre stage after Constantine, as its prominence appears to have waned in the minds of subsequent emperors. Once we reach the death of Theodosius in 395, it is undeniable that Constantinople had become essential for the administration of the eastern government as well as playing a central role in the culture and imperial ceremony of the eastern half of the empire.⁹² It had become, in the words of the Spanish historian Orosius "the seat of our most glorious empire and chief city of the entire east".⁹³ To many this would appear to prove a clear continuation of Constantine's original vision for the city. However, recent scholarship has shown that the intervening years were marked by a much more piecemeal and pitted development. In fact, as Bryan Ward-Perkins and Malcolm Errington have stressed, it was not until the fifth century that Constantinople's status as the primary economic and cultural centre of the east began to take shape in earnest.⁹⁴

When Theodosius was made emperor in 379, not only was the cultural function of Constantinople unclear but its role as a residence for the emperors was yet to be established, with the preceding decades having seen Antioch as the favoured residence of the eastern emperors.⁹⁵ The frequency of imperial visits to the city was surprisingly low,

⁹¹ A recent excellent exception can be found in Noel Lenski's study of Valens; Noel Lenski, *Valens and the Roman State in the Fourth Century A.D.* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002).

⁹² Grig and Kelly, "From Rome to Constantinople," 14.

⁹³ Orosius, *Historiae Adversus Paganos*, 3.13; Translation from Orosius, "Seven Books of History Against the Pagans," trans., Roy J. Deferrari *Fathers of the Church*, vol. 50 (Washington: CUA Press, 1964), 96.

⁹⁴ Bryan Ward-Perkins, "Old and New Rome Compared: The Rise of Constantinople," in *Two Romes: Rome and Constantinople in Late Antiquity*, ed. Lucy Grig and Gavin Kelly (Oxford: OUP, 2012), 53–78, 54; Errington, *Imperial Policy*, 145.

⁹⁵ Dagron, *Naissance*, 78–86; Ward-Perkins, "Old and New Rome," 54; Errington, *Imperial Policy*, 142.

with evidence suggesting it was treated primarily as a transit camp.⁹⁶ In fact, in the forty-three year period between the death of Constantine and Theodosius' entry into the city, an emperor wintered there only five or six times.⁹⁷ Constantine's son Constantius resided mainly at Antioch and Milan, only briefly staying at Constantinople. His successors, Julian and Valens, appear to have been even more reluctant to stay there, while Theodosius I, despite initiating many projects at the capital, resided there only marginally longer than his predecessors.⁹⁸ The longest stay of an emperor during this period lasted barely over half a year (and he was a usurper at that).⁹⁹ Valens appears to have actively shunned the city, avoiding staying there even when it would have provided the most convenient location.¹⁰⁰ While the city's civic growth carried on, thanks to imperial munificence, such development was mainly centred on civic amenities, and can be ascribed to infrastructural necessity rather than any specific evolution of Constantinople's symbolic status.¹⁰¹ Given the attitude of the post-Constantine emperors towards Constantine's city, it is not surprising that we find evidence of genuine concern amongst the Constantinopolitan elite that the city would be passed over by the newly-crowned Theodosius.¹⁰² While the evidence for a marked drop in Constantinople's status as a prominent imperial city is not conclusive, it can be said with confidence that the city did not exhibit an obvious evolution towards the status of the permanent imperial capital of the east; for nearly seven decades "the future of the city trembled in the balance".¹⁰³

The second reason for the sparse evidence of Constantinople's ecclesiastical status is due to the character of the city's dominant Christian community during this period. As will be explored in the following chapter, when Theodosius arrived in 379, the Christians of Constantinople were overwhelmingly non-Nicene. Under the reigns of Constantius and

⁹⁶ Brian Croke, "Reinventing Constantinople: Theodosius I's Imprint on the Imperial City," in *From the Tetrarchs to the Theodosians*, ed. Scott McGill et al. (Cambridge: CUP, 2010), 241–64, 241.

⁹⁷ Grig and Kelly, "From Rome to Constantinople," 14.

⁹⁸ Jovian's attitude towards Constantine's city is unclear as his brief reign came to an end before he had a chance to enter the city as emperor; *PLRE* 1.461.

⁹⁹ Procopius (365–366).

¹⁰⁰ See Chapter 3.

¹⁰¹ Although the city did remain an important centre for imperial ceremony; Dagron, *Naissance*, 87–88; 100–101; also see below.

¹⁰² Evidence that the city faced an uncertain status can be discerned from the delegation that the Constantinopolitan senate sent to Theodosius at the conclusion of the hostilities with the Goths in order to convince him not to abandon Constantinople; Themistius, *Or.* 14; Translated in Peter Heather and David Moncur, *Politics, Philosophy and Empire in the Fourth Century Select Orations of Themistius*, Translated Texts for Historians, 36 (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2001), 225–30; Malcolm Errington, "Theodosius and the Goths," *Chiron* 26 (1996): 1–27. There is also a suggestion that Theodosius' predecessor attempted to downgrade the city's status, see Chapter 3, section 4.

¹⁰³ Beck, "Rise of a New Capital," 31.

Valens, the city had become the undisputed centre of the imperially-backed Homoian movement.¹⁰⁴ While the Nicene churches of the rest of the east had been able to resist the advances of the state-sanctioned Homoian church, the Nicene community at Constantinople was reduced to an almost non-existent state, with the few Nicenes who remained, left without church or bishop.¹⁰⁵ The lack of a significant Nicene faction at Constantinople meant that in the new pro-Nicene climate instigated by Theodosius, the city's church faced a marked disconnect from the see's immediate episcopal heritage. The post-381 bishops of Constantinople had little Nicene heritage to propound, and the dominance of the Homoians had ensured that the see had not participated in any broader ecclesiastical or theological dialogue between the Nicene communities of the empire.¹⁰⁶ Having sat so long outside of the Nicene networks that now came to dominate the imperial-ecclesiastical politics of the empire, and having been associated with the episcopates of several prominent Arian bishops, when the Constantinopolitan church assembled at Constantinople in 381 they would have discerned little in the preceding decades worth commemorating without side-lining their relevance in the new Nicene order. It is this break in Nicene continuity at Constantinople that clouds any assessment of the church there under Constantius and Valens, and we must therefore look outside scholarship on the church at Constantinople to pick up on the debate over the city's development.

4. *Constantinople as a Second Rome*

While the religious function of Constantinople between the death of Constantine and the arrival of Theodosius lacks substantial discussion in modern works, the symbolism and function of the city outside the ecclesiastical sphere has continued to receive attention. As is clear from the works cited above, debate over Constantinople's position in the wider empire is by no means limited to Constantine's Christian mission alone but is also deeply entwined with questions over the extent to which his city was intended as a new capital for the empire. As the Christian symbolism of the city drops out of view during this period, discussion about the city's role as a sister, or rival, to Rome comes to the fore. Such debate

¹⁰⁴ John McGuckin, *Saint Gregory of Nazianzus: An Intellectual Biography* (New York: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2001), 235; Timothy D. Barnes, *Athanasius and Constantius: Theology and Politics in the Constantinian Empire* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993), 148.

¹⁰⁵ As will be examined in the following chapter.

¹⁰⁶ See Chapter 3.

over the city's civic function runs along two lines: one focussed on Constantinople's symbolic association with Rome, the other its institutional imitation of the western capital. Although these studies avoid discussion of the religious life of the city, they are still fundamental to conceptions of the city's later ecclesiastical status, because the imperial status of Constantinople and its function as a Rome for the east is seen as instrumental in the development of the city's episcopal institution.

Discussion about Constantinople's symbolism revolves around the implications of the city's ideological associations with Rome. Intentional allusions to Rome permeated the city's physical and symbolic landscape from its inception, so much so that parity or even competition with Rome is argued to have been an implicit component of the city's identity from the beginning.¹⁰⁷ The debate over whether the pairing with Rome was an expression of deference or competition is hampered by the same limited evidence as the debate over Constantine's Christianity, ensuring that scholarly opinions over what the terms "New Rome" or "Second Rome" implied is equally divided.¹⁰⁸ It is to the political development of Constantinople that we must turn to find more reliable evidence for the city's development during this period.

Despite a general paucity of sources for Constantinople in the period after Constantine, we have a significant voice from inside Constantinople, thanks to the philosopher and statesman Themistius who sheds light on one of the most important developments of early Constantinople – the formation of a senate for the east. The establishment of a senate in the city was one of the key features that marked Constantinople out from other imperial residences, suggesting an ambition to rival Rome in more than just physical resemblance. Debate about the development and maturation of the senate has been a central theme in questions of the intended role of Constantinople. For many scholars the development of the senate is a key to the transformation of the city into a true capital. Alexander Skinner recently wrote on the historical significance of the senate: "the establishment of a senate at Constantinople deserves to signal, for the modern

¹⁰⁷ While the tetrarchic capitals before Constantine also mimicked features of Rome, Constantinople did so on a much grander scale, also adding features found only at Rome such as the senate and establishing a grain dole.

¹⁰⁸ Scholarly debate over early Constantinople's status as New Rome is deeply divided. While many such as Clifford Ando and Jocelyn Toynbee have seen early allusions to the city being a second Rome as evidence that Constantinople instantly threatened the centrality of Rome, others such as John R. Melville-Jones point out that such early evidence is marginal, favouring instead canon 3 of 381 as the first reliable statement of an ideological equality with Rome. Gudrun Bühl accepts the evidence for earlier pairings between Constantinople and Rome but situates them as an expression of imperial cohesion and stability rather than competition; Ando, "Palladium and the Pentateuch," 375–77; Melville-Jones, "Constantinople," 247–62; Gudrun Bühl, *Constantinopolis und Roma. Stadtpersonifikationen der Spätantike* (Zürich: Akanthu, 1995).

historian, the beginning of a trajectory of change in which the Roman empire in the East was transformed into the ‘Byzantine’ empire.”¹⁰⁹ However, as with most aspects of early Constantinople, any consensus over the function and chronology of the senate has proved elusive. With a variety of opinions on the stages of development and significance of the senate, there is much contention over what it tells us about the city’s perceived function. While the intricacies of the debate are too complex to delineate here, it is important to sketch out its broad contours in order to understand the challenges in attempting to construct a trajectory for the city’s development into a capital.

Due in large part to the surviving works of Themistius, scholars have marked the 350s as a crucial period in the development of the senate at Constantinople. Around 357, Themistius was tasked by Constantius to recruit a large contingent of senators to Constantinople. Also at this time there appears to have been a transferral of senators from Rome to Constantinople.¹¹⁰ This explosive growth has led scholars such as John Vanderspoel to claim that for Constantinople, “everything changed in 357.”¹¹¹ Vanderspoel sees no reason to suppose that Constantinople was founded for any reason other than its militarily strategic location and accordingly, does not attribute the senate that existed under Constantine with any particular significance.¹¹² On the other hand, he contends that the development of the senate during Constantius’ reign put Constantinople on a par with Rome.¹¹³ Vanderspoel perceives two phases behind the expansion of the senate. Constantius, he argues, enhanced the status of Constantinople from the 340s as a counterweight to his brother and rival Constans’ control of Rome.¹¹⁴ The second phase of the development of the eastern senate came from the pressure of eastern senators. Once Constantius took sole possession of the empire, he resided mainly in the west; however, Vanderspoel believes it was due to persistent lobbying from Themistius and the eastern senators that Constans allowed the city’s increased standing to endure.¹¹⁵

Peter Heather and David Moncur see the development of the senate under Constantius in a different light. In their reading of Themistius, they see the endeavour as entirely orchestrated by Constantius. While Vanderspoel reads Themistius’ oration at

¹⁰⁹ Alexander Skinner, “The Early Development of the Senate of Constantinople,” *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 32, 2 (2008): 128–48, 128.

¹¹⁰ Grig and Kelly, “From Rome to Constantinople,” 12.

¹¹¹ John Vanderspoel, *Themistius and the Imperial Court* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1995), 54.

¹¹² Vanderspoel, *Themistius*, 51; Vanderspoel argues that there was no need for a designated eastern capital.

¹¹³ Vanderspoel, *Themistius*, 51.

¹¹⁴ Vanderspoel, *Themistius*, 61.

¹¹⁵ Vanderspoel, *Themistius*, 65.

Rome on the advantages of Constantinople and its position as a subordinate ally to Rome as a plea to the emperor not to forget Constantinople, Heather and Moncur see Themistius as a mouth-piece for imperial policy, easing the way at Rome for the establishment of an equivalent senate in the east.¹¹⁶ The impetus driving this policy is here assessed as an attempt to woo the rich eastern curial class in order to strengthen Constantius' rule in the east while he was busy in the west.¹¹⁷

While Heather also considers the 350s as key to the development of the senate, he does not assign it the singular importance that Vanderspoel does. Approaching Themistius' claims of the explosive growth of the senate with caution, Heather charts three key phases of the senate's gradual development up until the reign of Valens.¹¹⁸ Unlike Vanderspoel, Heather traces the senate's original development back to Constantine's foundation, and while here too he puts the development down to the emperor's attempt to grow an eastern support base, he does not discount the possibility that Constantine's intentions were also inspired by a grand ideological statement of providing a new Rome for a newly unified empire.¹¹⁹ The view that the establishment and form of the senate can be attributed to Constantine's era – as was argued by Chastagnol¹²⁰ – for a long time fell out of favour, but has recently found a new champion in Skinner. For Skinner, Constantine's vision of Constantinople as a capital led him to establish the essential framework for the growth of an eastern capital, and Constantius expanded his father's original vision.

Running contrary to this line is Errington who argues that there was no senate established by Constantine, merely senators of Rome resident at Constantinople.¹²¹ In line with Vanderspoel, Errington argues that the creation of the senate was a result of Constantius' rivalry with Constans.¹²² This fits well with Errington's broader thesis that Constantinople did not take on the role of a functioning capital until Theodosius' reign and that any development prior to that was a result not so much of the intentions of the Constantianians but of circumstance and accident.¹²³ Errington suggests that during Constantius' reign the city's long-term role was far from clear, and there is little indication

¹¹⁶ Heather and Moncur, *Politics, Philosophy, and Empire*, 123.

¹¹⁷ Heather and Moncur, *Politics, Philosophy, and Empire*, 124.

¹¹⁸ Peter Heather, "New Men for New Constantines? Creating an Imperial Elite in the Eastern Mediterranean," in *New Constantines: The Rhythm of Imperial Renewal in Byzantium*, ed. P. Magdalino (Aldershot: Variorum, 1994), 11–33, 12–20.

¹¹⁹ Heather, "New Men," 14–15.

¹²⁰ A. Chastagnol, "Remarques sur les sénateurs orientaux au IV^e siècle," *Acta Antiqua* 24 (1976): 341–56, 346–47; Skinner, "Early Development of the Senate," 128–48.

¹²¹ Errington, *Imperial Policy*, 148.

¹²² Errington, *Imperial Policy*, 149.

¹²³ Errington, *Imperial Policy*, 148–49.

that Constantius saw it as anything but a capital in the same vein as those of the Tetrarchic model.¹²⁴ Errington does, however, consider another explanation for Constantius' development of the senate, one that offers yet another novel response to questions about the function of Constantinople. Errington proposes that the establishment of the senate may have been part of an intention to use Constantinople not just as a temporary residence but as a centre for imperial ceremony.¹²⁵ This suggests a unique function for Constantinople. The underlying assumption of the argument that Constantinople was established as a new Rome is that the city was intended to function in the same way as the Rome of old – a permanent residence of the emperors and centre of empire. What Errington suggests, however, is that Constantius may have viewed the function of the new Rome in the east to be the same as that of the contemporary Rome of the west – a temporary residence and convenient location for imperial ceremony.

As we see from this brief survey, while we have more evidence of the long-term development of the senate at Constantinople than we do of its Christian function, there is still no consensus amongst scholars as to what these developments tell us of the city's wider role and ideological place within the empire.

5. 381 and Beyond

Despite the loosening of monolithic conceptions of Constantinople's Christian and imperial development during its pre-Theodosian decades, perspectives that encompass a more disjointed and contentious perspective of the city's development have not trickled over to the period following 381. Scholarship surrounding the Constantinopolitan church between 381 and 451 is infused with underlying assumptions that the city arrived at the council of 381 ideologically and functionally fully formed, and that any advancement in the see's development during this time represents the maturation of a preconceived idea of Constantinople that can be traced right back to the city's foundation. This lack of scrutiny of the city's position is perhaps due to the fact that explicit focus on the Constantinopolitan institution, both ecclesiastical and administrative, remains lacking in modern scholarship. Rather, the growth of Constantinople's episcopal prominence sits in the background of other studies that focus instead on prominent individuals such as John Chrysostom, Cyril, and Leo, or chart the many Christological controversies of the period. Within these studies,

¹²⁴ Errington, *Imperial Policy*, 142.

¹²⁵ Errington, *Imperial Policy*, 145.

the Constantinopolitan bishop's growing influence and prominence is often taken for granted. The view that the bishop was growing exponentially in importance is founded on three particular assumptions that weave their way throughout such works.

These three interrelated themes, found throughout the traditional historiography of Constantinople 381–451, are consistently employed as testament to the Constantinopolitan bishop's inevitably increasing authority. Unsurprisingly, foremost amongst them is Constantinople's role as a second Rome. Despite the ambiguity concerning exactly what early Constantinople's associations with Rome represented, as well as the city's status as a capital, the city's symbolic resonance as a new Rome deeply informs accounts of Constantinople's episcopal evolution. The Constantinopolitan bishops' sense of episcopal mission and their drive to assert dominance over the churches of the east is widely seen as intimately associated with the city's wider ideological self-image as a second Rome.

The second, closely related theme to come to the fore is the idea that the presence of the emperor naturally fortified the authority of the bishopric of Constantinople.¹²⁶ It is commonly assumed that the bishop of Constantinople owed his special status almost exclusively to the city's status as the residence of the emperor. Not only is "the wish of the emperor to secure for the bishop of his capital a position superior to that of all other eastern bishops" perceived to be the driving force behind the council canons promoting Constantinople, but the city's status as home to the imperial family is widely considered to imbue the bishop with heightened powers of coercion.¹²⁷ In late antiquity, access to the emperor equalled power and the conventional view is that the Constantinopolitan bishop's close proximity to the imperial court inexorably enhanced his influence.

The third theme in historical accounts of Constantinople between 381 and 451 is the role that ecclesiastical rivalry played in the see's development. The aim to establish the see's international credentials and rise to the top of the eastern ecclesiastical hierarchy is considered to be a driving motivation behind the bishopric's geo-ecclesiastical relations during this period. Evidence of this episcopal mission is heralded by the burgeoning rivalry between Constantinople and Alexandria. Constantinople's desire to supersede the standing of Alexandria, and the Alexandrian bishops' jealousy of the upstart

¹²⁶ Many scholars echo Charles Freeman's contention that the see's high status in the late fourth century was due to the fact that "the bishop of this imperial city had the chance of direct access to the emperor"; Freeman, *AD 381*, 78 (this contention will be explored in more detail in Chapter 5). The position of the church of Constantinople was intrinsically intertwined with the emperor and from early on the secular authorities at the city played a significant role in affairs of the church there: Judith Herrin, *The Formation of Christendom* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1987), 116–17.

¹²⁷ Kelly, *Golden Mouth*, 109 (on the council of 381).

Constantinople's meteoric growth, are perceived as a central context underlying all the major conflicts experienced at Constantinople during this period as well as Constantinople's assertions of authority at the councils of 381 and 451.¹²⁸

With such assumptions underpinning studies that touch on Constantinople's ecclesiastical standing, the evolution of the Constantinopolitan church is effortlessly linked to traditional perspectives that see Constantine's foundation of the city as clearly presaging its later pre-eminence. Thus, as discussed in the previous chapter, a unifying narrative is formed that overlooks the uniqueness of Constantinople's episcopal environment during this pivotal period, connecting 381 and 451 within a long sequence of events that leads from foundation to schism. However, historiographical trends concerning Constantinople and its empire are showing signs of a shift. This thesis' attempt to challenge perspectives of Constantinople's episcopal development takes inspiration from recent trends within Byzantine studies that are increasingly contesting entrenched monolithic views.

While recent reappraisals of the traditional reading of Constantine's foundation have not yet trickled over to perspectives of Constantinople's episcopal development between the councils of 381 and 451, recent studies are beginning to rethink the Constantinopolitan landscape.¹²⁹ Works such as Neil McLynn's chapter in the recent *Two Romes* collection and Claudia Tiersch's re-evaluation of John Chrysostom's tenure as bishop approach their topics with close attention to the peculiarities of the early fifth-century Constantinopolitan environment and the misleading influence of grand narratives.¹³⁰ Such fresh perspectives are not confined to the study of specific individuals and events alone but, thanks to works such as Gilbert Dagron's *Empereur et prêtre*, Fergus Millar's *A Greek Roman Empire*, and Anthony Kaldellis' *The Byzantine Republic: People and Power in New Rome*, the broad age-old conceptual foundations that underpin perceptions of Byzantium are also increasingly being challenged.¹³¹ The time, it appears, is ripe for a reappraisal of the episcopal trajectory between the councils of 381 and 451.¹³²

¹²⁸ In describing the impetus behind Constantinople's assertion of primacy in 381 as a rebuff to Alexandrian interference, John McGuckin considers the episode to represent the opening act in a struggle for dominance in the east between Constantinople and Alexandria. This broad narrative sees McGuckin go on to connect the actions of the Alexandrians in 381 with the deposition of John Chrysostom, the conflict between Cyril and Nestorius, and the deposition of Flavian in 449. As we will see, McGuckin is by no means alone in emphasising this theme. McGuckin, *Saint Gregory*, 314, see Chapter 3, section 1 and Chapter 5, section 1.

¹²⁹ One early precursor must be noted: Timothy E. Gregory, *Vox Populi: Popular Opinion and Violence in the Religious Controversies of the Fifth Century A.D.* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1979).

¹³⁰ Claudia Tiersch, *Johannes Chrysostomus in Konstantinopel (398–404). Weltsicht und Wirken eines Bischofs in der Hauptstadt des Oströmischen Reiches*, STAC, Bd 6 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2002).

¹³¹ Gilbert Dagron, *Empereur et prêtre: Étude sur le "césaropapisme" byzantin* (Paris: Éditions Gallimard 1996); Fergus Millar, *A Greek Roman Empire: Power and Belief under Theodosius II (408-450)* (Berkeley:

Conclusion

As this review of relevant literature has shown, the scholarship which addresses the character and function of early Constantinople is limited by a paucity of reliable evidence as well as by the ever-present discursive influence of the city's later status. So divergent is the nature of the available evidence that two prominent scholars, equally adept at analysing civic developments in late antiquity, can approach the subject from very different perspectives. Clifford Ando, assessing the impact that Constantinople had on Rome's standing, asserts that "Christians almost immediately understood and represented Constantine's foundation as a religious act", while Bryan Ward-Perkins, comparing the urban development of the two cities, can confidently state that "there is no evidence that even Constantine considered his new city as an important Christian center".¹³³

Lack of evidence and the debate over the nature of Constantine's Christianity has seen assertions about the city's early function swing between disparate images of the city's character. Some see in Constantinople's foundation a silhouette of the city's later role as the Christian capital of the empire and Orthodox faith, while others see little more than an expression of imperial vanity. This disparity is not limited to Constantine's era but, as we have seen, ambiguity about the city's perceived function continues right up to, and in some instances beyond, the council of 381. The lack of consensus amongst scholars is highlighted by the disagreement over the point at which Constantinople can be considered as a capital. Three periods spanning over seven decades are variously proposed by scholars as signalling the moment of Constantinople's arrival as a capital: Constantine's foundation: Constantius' city of the 350s, and the early Theodosian era.

However, out of this contested historiography has emerged an approach that sidelines the need for a definitive statement of Constantinople's status in relation to a wider progression. By highlighting the unique characteristics of Constantine's Christianity and the distinct climate in which he operated, the approach of scholars such as Van Dam and Bardill who stress the political and cultural pressures that were specific to the time have contributed to dismantling the monolithic view of Constantinople. Such an approach is also applied in the scholarship that concerns later developments in Constantinople's status.

University of California Press, 2006); Anthony Kaldellis, *The Byzantine Republic: People and Power in New Rome* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2015).

¹³² This new approach is not confined to studies of the bishopric of new Rome alone, but old Rome also; Demacopoulos, *Invention of Peter*.

¹³³ Ando, "Palladium and the Pentateuch," 376; Ward-Perkins, "Old and New Rome Compared," 60.

Constantius' building program and expansion of the senate is no longer easily conceptualised as a realisation of the city's founding destiny but is aligned to political expediency or rivalry with his brother.¹³⁴ What this more nuanced approach to Constantinople's development has shown is that, whatever Christian function may be assigned to the city during its early development, such designs cannot be easily aligned with the city's later manifestation. The city's development must be viewed in terms of a disjointed and piecemeal process, related more often to local considerations and accidents of circumstance rather than to any wider long-term ideology.

Yet despite the gradual abandonment of monolithic perspectives of the city during Constantinople's pre-Theodosian decades, such approaches come to an abrupt end with the scholarship dealing with Constantinople after Theodosius entered the city. As we will see in the following chapter, traditional teleological perceptions of Constantinople's rise continue to have a significant impact on modern perspectives of the council that Theodosius convened shortly after arriving there.

¹³⁴ As we will see in the next chapter, Theodosius' initiatives at Constantinople can be closely aligned to very pressing extant political pressures.

The Rehabilitation of Constantinople in 381

While no representative of Byzantium was present at the great council of Nicaea in 325, the swift overhaul of the city at the hands of Constantine saw the city's bishops take centre stage during the major councils of the following centuries. Constantinople's explosive growth in wealth, political importance, and population ensured that the bishop of the city would inevitably also increase in importance. This growth in significance is traditionally seen as occurring at a very fast pace, with the prestige of the bishop of Constantinople assumed to have grown in tandem with the city's physical expansion. The bishopric, often labelled "upstart", is portrayed as pushing against the established sees of the east almost from the moment of Constantinople's dedication in 330.¹ The Council of Constantinople in 381 holds a special place in this trajectory, widely considered as the moment when the see's claim of being a leading light of the ecclesiastical world was made explicit.²

The importance of the council in Constantinople's episcopal rise rests on the pronouncement of its third canon which presents us with the first official expression of the see's geo-ecclesiastical importance.³ Canon 3 set the bar high, comparing the bishop of Constantinople's status with that of the bishop of Rome, albeit just below. It is this comparison that has provided many commentators with evidence that achieving a position of ecclesiastical authority commensurate with Rome was an inherent component of Constantinople's episcopal growth from early on. As the first section of this chapter will outline, the lofty episcopal ambition revealed by canon 3 has provided the basis for the interpretation of the canons that sat either side of it. Canons 2 and 4, which disavow bishops interfering in episcopates outside of their jurisdiction and reject the Alexandrian Maximus' attempt to install himself as bishop at Constantinople, are considered as intended to strike a blow against Constantinople's main rival in the east – Alexandria. This

¹ For some examples of the application of the label "upstart", see Gregory, *Vox Populi*, 44; Nichols, *Rome and the Eastern Churches*, 58; William L. Portier, *Tradition and Incarnation: Foundations of Christian Theology* (New York: Paulist Press, 1994), 195; Roger E. Olson, *The Story of Christian Theology: Twenty Centuries of Tradition & Reform* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1999), 201. See further discussion in Chapter 5, section 1.

² See Chapter 1.

³ See Appendix III for the canons.

traditional interpretation of the council's broad and expansive scope is commonly justified by viewing it in the context of the subsequent decades. The tensions between Constantinople and Alexandria evident at the council are situated as ushering in a period of intense struggle for ecclesiastical dominance between the two sees, a struggle that is seen to reach its conclusion seventy years later at the Council of Chalcedon, where canon 3 of 381 was central in establishing Constantinople as a patriarchate.

However, by realigning the context of the council of 381 with the preceding decades –rather than relying on foreknowledge of those to come – this chapter argues that over-emphasis on broad geo-ecclesiastical politics at play in 381 misrepresents Constantinople's episcopal development at the expense of the local context underlying the council. By focussing on the situation within Constantinople and its relation to the wider ecclesiastical politics of the east in the decades leading up to 381, the second section of this chapter will argue that, rather than being poised to assert its authority, the Nicene church at Constantinople was in fact fragile, deeply divided, and by far the weakest amongst the major sees of the east. On the basis that the city was an unlikely candidate for ecclesiastical primacy, the third section will examine the intended scope of the council, arguing that it was in fact the city's episcopal shortcomings that were the impetus for its convocation – an attempt to rehabilitate Constantinople's standing within the new Nicene environment. In light of the council's local focus, this section will reposition Gregory of Nazianzus' loss of the bishopric at the council and the formulation of canons 1, 2, and 4 as a reaction to the increasingly conflicted situation within the city rather than a burgeoning rivalry with Alexandria.⁴

Having destabilised the assumption that broad geo-ecclesiastical rivalries underlay the council's proceedings, in the final section I will look at canon 3 in close detail. Mimicking the earlier sections' approach to the council in general, this section will approach the canon by reading it in close relation to the decades leading up to its formulation, rather than via the conventional approach of viewing it through the lens of subsequent centuries. Again, such an approach reveals that the canon's formulation was a product of institutional weaknesses, rather than of Constantinople's growing strength, this time not just a result of Constantinople's uncertain position but, more broadly, the precarious situation of the Theodosian government on the eve of the council.

⁴ Two of the three subsequent canons recognised by the Orthodox Church originated from a follow-up synod held in the city the following year; Peter L'Huillier, *The Church of the Ancient Councils: The Disciplinary Work of the First Four Ecumenical Councils* (New York: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1996), 123–31.

1. Historiography of the Council

Traditional Interpretation of the Events of 381

The First Council of Constantinople holds a position of great significance in Byzantine historiography. The council has resonated for many as the moment that signalled “the emergence of the see of Constantinople to pre-eminence over the eastern sees of Christendom”, as well as “fundamentally important...for defining the terms of Church leadership” across Christendom as a whole.⁵ This importance is predicated on the expansive nature of the canons that emerged from the council and the lasting impact they would have on the shape of the church.

For many commentators, such a broad and expansive scope was intended from the council’s outset. It is commonly agreed that the aims of the assembly were overtly outward-looking in nature, born of an imperial-led initiative to heal simmering theological tensions in the east. After attempting to force the east to orthodox unity through legislative measures, the new emperor and ardent Nicene, Theodosius, is presented as convening the council at his new capital in order to give his Nicene policy more weight.⁶ The fact that the council was headed by the Antiochene bishop Meletius and consecrated Gregory of Nazianzus as bishop of the city – two figures who were influential in the eastern Nicene rapprochement movement – has led some to go so far as to suggest that the council met with the purpose of healing the long-simmering doctrinal schism between east and west.⁷

However, that such grand sentiments were implicit in the convocation of the council has been questioned in recent decades. Commentators such as Lewis Ayres and Malcolm Errington argue that the council was originally intended as a small synod convened to address local issues, only broadening in scope when events took an unexpected turn.⁸ This change in the council’s nature came about as a result of the sudden death of Meletius. The exit of the council’s president saw the council thrown into the quagmire that was the geo-ecclesiastical politics of the day. The task of appointing a

⁵ Geanakoplos, “Second Ecumenical Council,” 152; Daley, “Position and Patronage,” 529–53.

⁶ See for example: Freeman, *AD 381*, 94; Stephen Williams and Gerard Friell, *Theodosius: The Empire at Bay* (London: Routledge, 1998), 54.

⁷ Williams and Friell, *Theodosius*, 54. This view comes from a long tradition of viewing the eastern councils from a Rome-centric perspective; however, recent scholarship locates the council much more firmly as a response to the particularities of the eastern situation.

⁸ Lewis Ayres, *Nicaea and its Legacy: An Approach to Fourth-Century Trinitarian Theology* (Oxford: OUP, 2004), 254; Errington, *Imperial Policy*, 221.

successor to the Antiochene see entailed navigating a volatile ecclesiastical environment. The Nicene church at Antioch was a microcosm of the broader tensions that split the Nicene east, with the see divided between an eastern-leaning neo-Nicene community, headed by Meletius, and a western-backed Nicene congregation headed by Paulinus. When the city's recently consecrated bishop and now council president, Gregory of Nazianzus, suggested that Paulinus be left as the sole bishop of Antioch, he faced fierce criticism from the eastern pro-Meletian majority.⁹ At this point, the recently arrived Alexandrians, traditionally assumed to have sensed an opportunity to strike a blow against the upstart see of Constantinople, contested the legitimacy of Gregory's appointment as bishop.¹⁰ This attack achieved its aim, with Theodosius accepting the resignation of a besieged and exhausted Gregory. It was only under Gregory's replacement, Nectarius, that the council regained its composure, proceeded to elect a successor to Meletius, and promulgated several canons.¹¹

These canons have been interpreted as a direct response to the ecclesiastical interferences that had disrupted the council, with all three canons that follow canon 1's repudiation of non-Nicene theologies seen as aimed squarely at Alexandria.¹² The second canon, which forbade bishops from interfering in the affairs of other sees, has been overwhelmingly interpreted as a reprimand against the interferences of the bishop of Alexandria who were responsible for the deposition of Gregory. The third canon is assumed to expand on this rebuke of Alexandria by effectively elevating Constantinople to

⁹ Greg. Naz. *De vita sua* (hereafter *DVS*) 1572–1689 (ed. Jungck, 131–37).

¹⁰ Gregory's autobiographical work was written after his ejection from Constantinople and, as such, attempts to paint his failure at Constantinople as the result of his staunch Nicene convictions rather than of any inadequacy on his part. For a dissection of Gregory's literary campaign to rehabilitate his reputation, see Bradley K. Storin, "In a Silent Way: Asceticism and Literature in the Rehabilitation of Gregory of Nazianzus," *Journal of Early Christian Studies*, vol. 19, 2 (2011): 225–57.

¹¹ At what stage or stages of the council the canons were formulated is not clear from the available sources.

¹² This anti-Alexandrian interpretation has a long lineage stretching back to the work of Cardinal Joseph Hergenröther writing in the 19th century. See Erich Caspar, *Geschichte des Papsttums Römische Kirche und Imperium Romanum*, Band I (Tübingen: Mohr, 1930), 234; Pericles-Pierre Joannou, *Discipline Générale Antique: Les Canons des Conciles Oecuméniques* Vol. 1. (Grottaferrata: Tipografia Italo-Orientale, 1962), 43; Ritter, *Das Konzil*, 85–96; R. P. C. Hanson, *The Search for the Christian Doctrine of God* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1988), 807–808; Francis Dvornik, *Byzance et la Primauté Romaine* (New York: Fordham University, 1966) 38–39; Frederick W. Norris, "Greek Christianities," in *The Cambridge History of Christianity, Vol 2 Constantine to c. 600*, ed. Augustine Casiday and Frederick W. Norris (Cambridge: CUP, 2007), 85; Nicanor Gómez-Villegas, *Gregorio de Nazianzo en Constantinopla. Ortodoxia, heterodoxia y regimen teodosiano en una capital cristiana* (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 2000), 103–112. All of these works contend that one of the council's central aims was to keep Alexandria's ecclesiastical influence in check.

head of the east.¹³ The fourth canon fits neatly into this narrative by explicitly condemning the activities of Maximus the Cynic, an Alexandrian agent who had recently attempted to usurp Gregory's position as bishop at Constantinople. This reliance on Alexandrian duplicity to explain both Gregory's misfortunes and the formulation of the canons of 381 comes as no surprise. Approaching the council of 381, it is essential to appreciate the way in which the council's place within the wider historiography of the period has been understood through the lens of Alexandrian-Constantinopolitan relations in the early fifth century.

381's Place in the Broader Historiography of the Early Church

The council's reputation as being a pivotal moment in Constantinople's episcopal coming of age is not founded on the interpretation of the events of the council alone but is deeply influenced by the events of the ensuing decades. In particular, it is the council's perceived place in the growing contest between Constantinople and Alexandria in the first half of the fifth century that has informed perceptions of the council's import.

The bishops of Alexandria figure prominently in the historiography of Constantinople's meteoric rise. The ecclesiastical interferences of the Alexandrians are not only seen to be central to the council of 381 but are perceived as the primary drivers behind nearly every significant ecclesiastical development in Constantinople between 381 and 451. The traditional explanation for such Alexandrian activity at Constantinople is deeply embedded in assumptions of Constantinople's rapid ecclesiastical ascent. Modern scholarship still closely echo the sentiments expressed almost a century ago by Norman H. Baynes that the driving motivation behind Alexandrian interferences at Constantinople was not theology but simple power politics, a knee-jerk reaction to Constantinople's sudden predominance.¹⁴ With Constantine's re-branding of Byzantium thought to have instantly posed a "direct challenge to the bishops of Alexandria", Constantinople's continued growth is seen to result in the growing animosity of the Egyptians towards the

¹³ "Behind this ruling we can discern not only the determination of the majority of bishops present to cut Alexandria down to size, but even more the wish of the emperor to secure for the bishop of his capital a position superior to that of all other eastern bishops"; Kelly, *Golden Mouth*, 109.

¹⁴ Norman H. Baynes, "Alexandria and Constantinople: A Study in Ecclesiastical Diplomacy," *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 12, 3 (1926): 145–56, 145–46.

city's bishops and a determination to cut them down to size.¹⁵ The jealousy of the Alexandrians and the competition between the Constantinopolitan and Egyptian bishops has been such an ever present theme in the ecclesiastical history of the fifth century that it has been labelled “un phénomène majeur du cours de l'Église et de l'Empire durant le premier V^e siècle”.¹⁶

The perceived rivalry between the Egyptian and Constantinopolitan bishops has significantly influenced assessments of 381's place within Constantinople's ecclesiastical development. Not only has it driven interpretations of the council's canons but it has depicted the council as imbedded within wider and long term geo-ecclesiastical processes. Gregory's term at Constantinople and the council at which it came to an abrupt end are posited as the opening volley in a period of intense power struggle between the two bishoprics.¹⁷ John McGuckin, in his authoritative study of Gregory of Nazianzus, situates the Theologian's deposition and the anti-Alexandrian canons of 381 as “the first of a tumultuous series of events marking the slow decline of Alexandria”, as its role in the ecclesiastical life of the east was “inexorably passing over to the imperial city.”¹⁸ This broad narrative leads McGuckin and many others to link the events of 381 with a seven decade long Alexandrian campaign to undermine the upstart bishopric of Constantinople. This struggle for dominance, that would see John Chrysostom, Nestorius, and Flavian all ousted from office, is seen to reach its conclusion 70 years later in 451, with Constantinople emerging triumphant over the Egyptians at the Council of Chalcedon.

That a neat trajectory of conflict between Alexandria and Constantinople can be traced between 381 and 451 is further cemented by Chalcedon's explicit reference to canon 3 of 381 in justifying Constantinople's promotion.¹⁹ This pairing of canon 3 of 381 and canon 28 of 451 has not only seen 381 as a key point of departure for the Constantinopolitan church in its relationship with the eastern sees, but has also seen it treated as a significant moment in the long divergence between Constantinople and

¹⁵ Van Dam, “Bishops and Society,” 354; Gregory, *Vox Populi*, 44. The influence that such assumptions over Alexandrian attitudes towards Constantinople has had on the historiography of the period, and its inadequacies, will be examined in closer detail in Chapter 5.

¹⁶ Philippe Blaudeau, *Alexandrie et Constantinople (451-491): de l'histoire à la géo-ecclésiologie* (Rome: École Française de Rome, 2006), 1.

¹⁷ Many scholars, following Baynes, argue that the origins of the rivalry can be traced right back to the tensions between Athanasius and Eusebius of Nicomedia; Baynes, “Alexandria and Constantinople,” 147–48. The 70-year period between 381 and 451 is widely characterised as one of fierce jockeying for power between the two sees.

¹⁸ McGuckin, *Saint Gregory*, 314.

¹⁹ See Chapter 1.

Rome.²⁰ While canon 3's comparison of Constantinople with Rome was careful not to diminish Rome's standing, the canon's re-emergence in 451 has led several scholars to interpret canon 3 not just as a retaliatory shot against the ecclesiastical interference of Alexandria but also as being adversarial towards Rome.²¹

It is this entrenchment of the council of 381 within such broad and long-term geo-ecclesiastical developments that has informed the way in which the council has been perceived. Foreknowledge of 381's later significance sits at the heart of the contention that the explicit intention of 381 was to challenge the global ecclesiastical power structure. This "tendency towards teleological interpretation" is troubling.²² With the interpretation of the council of 381 so closely predicated on implications that come to the fore in the decades and centuries following the council, less attention has been given to situating the council strictly within its more immediate and local context. This is problematic as it conceals inconsistencies between the council's immediate setting and its traditional interpretation. Canon 3's significance within the ecclesiastical developments of the following centuries has seen it elevated to be "without doubt the most important decree of the council".²³ The canon is set front and centre in understanding the council as a whole. It is perceived as providing the key to understanding the impetus behind the other canons. However, the centrality of canon 3 in modern interpretations of the council is problematic. As Neil McLynn has recently pointed out, the canon appears to be an awkward interloper amongst the council's proceedings, one that the ancient commentators found difficult to contextualise.²⁴ Furthermore, the conviction that canon 3 was an embodiment of the council's underlying geo-ecclesiastical ambitions falls flat when we consider the fact that the canon was barely referred to until 451, let alone deployed in the many episcopal struggles that Constantinople faced in the coming decades.²⁵ In fact, the council of 381, heralded by many modern scholars as playing such a significant role in dictating the

²⁰ Daley, "Position and Patronage," 529–53. The reaction of the bishop of Rome to canon 3 of 381 has been a topic of much debate. While the majority of scholars have presented Damasus' attitude as largely hostile to the promotion of Constantinople in 381, others have offered a more conciliatory interpretation of Damasus' response. For the former opinion see Aidan Nichols, *Rome and the Eastern Churches: A Study in Schism* (Collegeville, Minn: Liturgical Press, 1992), 202–203; for the latter see Dvornik, *Byzantium*, 47.

²¹ Ritter is the most notable example of this line of thinking; Ritter, *Das Konzil*, 85–96. Such contentions are echoed in many other works, such as; Liebeschuetz, *Barbarians*, 160–63; McGuckin, *Saint Gregory*, 314.

²² Grig and Kelly, "From Rome to Constantinople," 4.

²³ Geanakoplos, "2nd Ecumenical Council," 167.

²⁴ McLynn argues that Socrates and Sozomen's puzzlement over the nature of the canon is revealed by their respective treatments of it. Socrates avoids attempting to explain the canon, opting simply to quote it verbatim whilst also positioning it as the first canon. Sozomen on the other hand keeps the original order but provides an overly exhaustive explanation; McLynn, "Canonizing Constantinople," 348.

²⁵ McLynn, "Canonizing Constantinople," 363.

contours of geo-ecclesiastical relations between 381 and 451, appears to have been virtually unknown to the western delegates at Chalcedon.²⁶

Such problems with using canon 3 as an interpretational key to the council as a whole suggest that the aims of the council of 381 need reconsideration. To do this, the council must be set firmly in the context in which it took place. The view that the council provides a significant signpost of Constantinople's growing authority is predicated not only on foreknowledge of the see's future but is also influenced by long-standing assumptions that, by the time we reach 381, the see had long been rising in status. By realigning the council within the decades preceding 381, rather than the centuries after, we will find that traditional views of the council that interpret it as indicating Constantinople's desire to shrug off the attacks of Alexandria and cement its position as a leading light in the east ignore the glaring inconsistency that the church at Constantinople at that time was, in fact, one of the least likely candidates to assert such authority.

2. An Unlikely Candidate for Nicene Primacy

The logical place to start an investigation into the significance of the council's pronouncements is to ask what was the standing of the church at Constantinople when Theodosius called the council. Were there any developments within the city that presaged such grand claims for the see's Christian status as the council has come to represent?

The scant primary sources surrounding the council do not give any sense that it was convened for the grand purpose later assigned to it. Socrates states that the emperor convened the synod to establish the Nicene Creed and appoint a bishop of Constantinople.²⁷ Sozomen reports the same two motivations, while Gregory simply states that it was convened to consolidate the bishopric's orthodoxy.²⁸ Given that, at the time of the council, Constantinople had no official bishop and that one of its first acts was to ordain Gregory in the role, we can assume Socrates' and Sozomen's accounts are accurate and that Gregory left out specific mention of the aim to appoint a bishop because he wanted to sideline his own failures. These generalised statements of the council's original

²⁶ Council of Chalcedon, *Session 16*, 12 (CCCOGD 1.150–51); see Richard Price and Michael Gaddis, *The Acts of the Council of Chalcedon*, vol. 3, *Translated Texts for Historians*, vol. 45 (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2005), 84. Leo denied knowledge of the canons of 381; Leo I, *Ep.* 106 (ACO 2.4.56.59–62).

²⁷ Socrates, *HE* 5.8 (*SCh* 505.166).

²⁸ Sozomen, *HE* 7.7 (*SCh* 516.94); Greg. Naz. *DVS* 1514 (ed. Jungck, 126–28).

intent give away little. However, they do provide a clue that the council was closely connected to the religious predilections of the new emperor.

The emperor Theodosius' religious policy has rightfully been considered pivotal to understanding the convocation and content of the council. Theodosius' reign initiated the return of Nicene Christianity to official state sponsorship, and the emperor is portrayed as using the council as a stage to send a clear and unequivocal message to his new eastern subjects of this change in religious policy.²⁹ Stephen Williams and Gerard Friell, in their study of Theodosius, judge that in comparison to previous emperors he "was in a very different mould...he took the teachings of the church and the condition of his own soul very seriously indeed".³⁰ While the extent to which Theodosius was motivated by ensuring his own spiritual salvation is unknowable, the emperor was undoubtedly keenly interested in establishing the unity of the church, and he promoted Nicene theology as the basis of this unity.³¹ Early on in his reign, this emperor with strong familial ties to the ardently Nicene church of his Spanish homeland sent a clear message to his new capital about what form of Christianity was to be favoured.³² In 27 February 380 he issued an edict that ordered Constantinopolitans to follow the Christian theology represented by Damasus of Rome and Peter of Alexandria.³³ The message was stark: a new emperor was on the throne, he was a convinced and recently baptised Nicene, and he intended to take an active role in the spiritual wellbeing of his subjects.³⁴ It is therefore logical to assume, as many have, that Theodosius' decision to make Constantinople his permanent residence was the direct motivation for the formulation of the third canon – a devout and authoritative ruler required an equally devout and authoritative capital.

However, a closer look at the situation Theodosius found on his arrival in the east will reveal the inherent contradiction in the contention that the emperor's piety led to Constantinople's ecclesiastical promotion. The emperor's commitment to the Nicene church, far from providing the motivation for him to promote his new residence as a centre

²⁹ N. Q. King, *The Emperor Theodosius and the Establishment of Christianity* (London: SCM Press, 1961), 30.

³⁰ Williams and Friell, *Theodosius*, 52.

³¹ Liebeschuetz, *Barbarians*, 157.

³² For a survey of the religious background and familial ties of Theodosius, see John Matthews, *Western Aristocracies and Imperial Court, A.D. 364-425* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1975).

³³ *CTh* 16.1.2 (*SCh* 497.114).

³⁴ The ideological background to the emperor's sense of spiritual responsibility is conveyed in Gregory's account of his first interview with Theodosius at which the emperor told him that, through him, God handed Gregory the care of the church; *Greg. Naz. DVS* 1311–12 (ed. Jungck, 118).

of ecclesiastical authority, is more likely to have led him to comprehend Constantinople's complete lack of suitability for becoming a principal see.

The Eve of 381: Constantinople's Religious Landscape

Theodosius' *Cunctos Populos* would not have been met with enthusiasm in his new capital. It was not that Theodosius held up Rome and Alexandria as the prime markers of Nicene orthodoxy that would have caused the residents of Constantinople indignation (as it would later residents), but that he was simply promulgating a Nicene line altogether.³⁵ Constantinople at the time of Theodosius' ascension was a deeply sectarian religious environment, and a decidedly non-Nicene one at that.

Early Constantinople's religious community was multifarious even by eastern standards. Aside from the pagan population, the Christians of Constantinople were divided among the dominant Homoian establishment, strong contingents of Apollinarians and Macedonians, as well as entrenched congregations of Novatians, Messalians, and Eunomians.³⁶ While the presence of multiple Christian communities within a city was not unusual, the strength of the various non-Nicene factions at Constantinople was more pronounced than elsewhere, with the city being the eastern base of operations for the Arian, Novatian, and Eunomian movements.³⁷ The strength of these diverse Christian communities made Constantinople a particularly sectarian religious environment. Gregory of Nyssa was taken aback by the level of open disputation between rival theological communities he observed in the city, remarking on the willingness of the money-changers, bakers, and bath-attendants to hold forth on their views on the Trinity.³⁸

The depth of this diversity was undoubtedly a product of the city's unique nature. While imperial initiatives had seen new cities founded or reconstructed in the past, never had a city of such size been created in such a short span of time. After Constantinople's inauguration, the city developed at an incredible pace. The Constantinian and Theodosian

³⁵ Neil McLynn, believing the edict to be issued to appease Nicene lobbyists, points out that the edict was made intentionally toothless by its referral of dissenters to "the judgement of heaven"; Neil McLynn, "Moments of Truth: Gregory of Nazianzus and Theodosius I," in *From the Tetrarchs to the Theodosians*, Yale Classical Studies, Vol XXXIV, ed. Scott McGill, Cristiana Sogno, and Edward Watts (Cambridge: CUP, 2010), 215–40, 222. However, this does nothing to diminish the fact that the edict represented the emperor's preferred theological stance as well as highlighted the fact that, before arriving in Constantinople, he had been considering to some extent his strategy towards his chosen capital.

³⁶ Socrates, *HE* 5.20 (*SCh* 505.208–10); Sozomen, *HE* 7.17 (*SCh* 516.150–2).

³⁷ See Peter Van Nuffelen, "Episcopal Succession in Constantinople (381–450 C.E.): The Local Dynamics of Power," *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 18:3 (2010): 425–51, 436.

³⁸ Gregory of Nyssa, *De deitate filii et spiritus sancti* (PG 46.557).

emperors instituted mass building programs and attracted a huge influx of people from across the empire that resulted in Constantinople growing from a city of around 30,000 to 300,000 in just over half a century.³⁹ The flood of people coming to the city hailed from a broad geographical range and held equally varied spiritual outlooks. By the end of the fourth century it was not unusual to hear psalms sung throughout the city in Greek, Syriac, Latin, and Gothic.⁴⁰ The scale and pace of Byzantium's reinvention and the ethnic diversity of the city's new inhabitants ensured that any local religious traditions aligned to the old city would have been quickly overwhelmed. Without the same level of shared religio-cultural history that gave a broader sense of cohesion to the more established centres, such as Alexandria and Antioch, the population of Constantinople was a unique melting pot of competing Christianities. Gregory of Nyssa's comments were echoed by his fellow Cappadocian, Gregory of Nazianzus, whose experiences of the city led him to describe Constantinople as "the city where extreme positions in the faith come together from every direction...it hums with so many languages seemingly from everywhere".⁴¹ The strength of Constantinople's non-Nicene community continued to be a significant feature of the city for many decades to come and a source of concern for the bishops who followed Gregory. John Chrysostom was appointed in part to try and win more of the city's Christians to the imperial faith, while Nestorius, coming to the city half a century after Gregory, was similarly taken aback by the many Christian factions in the city.⁴² What is significant in regards to the convocation of the council of 381 is that, of the mosaic of contrasting Christian groups that made up the city in 380, the Nicene church was one of the least substantial, its few adherents persecuted and without a bishop.⁴³

³⁹ Dagron, *Naissance*, 521–22; Jean Durliat, *De la ville antique à la ville byzantine. Le problème des subsistances* (Paris: Ecole Française de Rome, 1990), 252–57; Errington, *Imperial Policy*, 167; Mango, *Le Développement*; Alexander Skinner, "Senate of Constantinople," 128–48.

⁴⁰ Chrysostom, *Nov. hom.* 2 (PG 63.472.10–13).

⁴¹ Greg. Naz. *Or.* 42.10 (*SCh* 384.72); trans. Brian E. Daley, *Gregory of Nazianzus* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 145. This diversity of beliefs would have been supplemented by Constantinople's role as a prestigious port city. Constantinople was a hub for communication and trade from across the empire and the city was highly dependent on food flowing in from around the empire. As a consequence, the city's population was bolstered by a large and changing contingent of foreigners. Jean Durliat, "L'approvisionnement de Constantinople," in *Constantinople and its Hinterland*, ed. Cyril Mango and Gilbert Dagron (Aldershot: Variorum, 1995), 9–34, 19–33; Johannes Koder, "Fresh Vegetables for the Capital," in *Constantinople and its Hinterland*, ed. C. Mango and G. Dagron (Aldershot: Variorum, 1995), 49–56; Janet Wade, "Sex and the City: Lower Class Leisure Culture in the Late Antique and Early Byzantine Worlds" (paper presented at the Australian Early Medieval Association Conference, Sydney, Australia, 11–12 February, 2016).

⁴² Tiersch, *Johannes Chrysostomus*, 31–41; Nestorius, *Liber Heraclidis* 1.2.151–3 (ed. Nau, 91–2).

⁴³ A Nicene bishop named Evagrius was active in Constantinople in 370; however, details are scant; Socrates, *HE* 4.14 (*SCh* 505.100). Sozomen, *HE* 6.13 (*SCh* 495.308–310).

Gregory of Nazianzus arrived at Constantinople in 379 to head the city's Nicenes, and it is through his writings that we gain an invaluable insight into the state of the city on the eve of the council.⁴⁴ The fact that, before Gregory's mission, the city had no bishop to lead the Nicenes is itself an indication of the minority status of Constantinople's Nicenes, and the Theologian himself described the Nicenes he found there as constituting a very small number.⁴⁵ Not only was the Nicene community of Constantinople insignificant, it was treated with particular enmity, thanks to the city's strong Homoian population. Gregory's account of his time in the city recounts the many instances in which his small Nicene following was set upon by Arian "wolves", stirred to action by his arrival.⁴⁶ While Gregory employs heavy rhetoric and classical tropes throughout his accounts of his struggle with Constantinople's Homoian population, as we will see below, his portrayal of the weakness of the Nicene community at Constantinople is corroborated by the city's history in the decades leading up to Gregory's arrival.

Constantinople's unique spiritual landscape was not dictated by the city's novel demographics alone but was also profoundly shaped by imperial policy. The minority status of Constantinople's Nicene community at Gregory's arrival was a direct product of imperial initiatives in the city during its earliest decades. Before Theodosius' reign brought the imperial church back under Nicene auspices, the official church of the eastern territories operated under the Homoian banner.⁴⁷ The Homoian formula came about as a direct result of Constantius II's attempt to unify the fragmented church he inherited from his father's religious enterprises.⁴⁸ While Constantius' doctrinal preferences were imposed across his eastern territories, Constantinople came under special attention from the imperial executive. The lengths to which Constantius went to coerce the shape of the Constantinopolitan church is evidenced through the troubled career of Paul, the first Nicene bishop elected at the newly christened Constantinople.⁴⁹ Paul became bishop of

⁴⁴ Gregory's mission to Constantinople was most likely decided at the council at Antioch in 379; McGuckin, *Saint Gregory*, 236.

⁴⁵ Greg. Naz. *DVS* 589 (ed. Jungck, 82–83).

⁴⁶ Greg. Naz. *DVS* 690–95 (ed. Jungck, 86–89).

⁴⁷ For this crucial period, see Manlio Simonetti, *La crisi ariana nel IV secolo*, *Studia Ephemeridis Augustinianum* 11 (Rome: Institutum Patristicum Augustinianum, 1975), 161–249.

⁴⁸ While Constantius' reputation as a heretic and caesoropapist still informs some modern accounts of his reign, the emperor's religious policies were a product of reasoned political necessity rather than the actions of an unscrupulous dictator; Richard Klein, *Constantius II und die christliche Kirche* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche, Buchgesellschaft, 1977). For an authoritative outline of this period, see Ayres, *Nicaea*, 133–66.

⁴⁹ For the following details of Paul's life, see William Telfer's still magisterial examination of the Nicene's career; William Telfer, "Paul of Constantinople," *The Harvard Theological Review*, vol. 43, 1 (1950): 30–92.

Constantinople in 337 after being elected to succeed Alexander. The election was hotly contested by the court-savvy Arian, Macedonius. However, when Constantius was made aware of Paul's election, he convened a synod (c.339) that exiled Paul and named Eusebius of Nicomedia as his replacement. Although the reasons behind Constantius' reactions are not explicit at this point, it is likely that Constantius' anti-Nicene sentiment played a large part. The choice of Eusebius as his replacement supports this supposition because not only was he closely linked to the court, but he shared the emperor's semi-Arian theological views.⁵⁰ On Eusebius' death in 341, Paul was duly reinstated by his supporters in the city. However, Paul's second tenure was again cut short by imperial initiative, this time of a much more unapologetic nature. Paul's old rival, Macedonius, returned to the fray at the head of an anti-Nicene faction that received military support. After clashes between the two groups escalated, Constantius personally intervened, sending Paul into exile for a second time. This was not to be the wily Paul's last sojourn at Constantinople. While Constantius supported Arian-leaning doctrine, his brother Constans I, who ruled in the west, followed a Nicene line and, fortunately for Paul, the balance of power was in Constans' favour.⁵¹ In 344, thanks to the rulings of the synod of Serdica, Paul found himself again reinstated as bishop. Once again the mechanisms of imperial authority swung into action to oppose Paul, this time in the form of the praetorian prefect who, on Constantius' orders, ejected Paul for the third and final time, allowing the anti-Nicene Macedonius to take up his second tenure in the city. In his relentless quest to prevent Paul from gaining power, Constantius had mobilised all the tools of imperial coercion available to him: summoning a synod, tasking a military general to quell popular support, and even having the praetorian prefect abduct the bishop. When in 341/2 opposition to Paul's attempted removal led to popular rioting, the emperor responded by rushing to the city to stamp out opposition personally. He expressed his displeasure in having to take such measures by halving the city's bread dole.

The importance Constantius set on making sure Constantinople was brought into line with his broader state-wide ecclesiastical policies belied Constantinople's ecclesiastical status which, at the time, was yet to receive primatial honours, remaining instead under the jurisdiction of the metropolitan of Heraclea. It was likely Constantinople's political importance to Constantius' regime that saw the emperor go to

Timothy Barnes provides an authoritative synthesis and critical reading of modern literature on Paul; Barnes, *Athanasius and Constantius*, 212–17

⁵⁰ Barnes, *Athanasius and Constantius*, 36–37.

⁵¹ See Barnes, *Athanasius and Constantius*, 63–70.

such lengths to ensure the city subscribed to official imperial doctrine. Even though he chose not to reside there, Constantius found in Constantinople a space in which to promote his prestigious imperial lineage that additionally acted as an administrative support centre while Rome was under the control of the emperor's rival in the west.⁵² In any case, whatever the motivation, the religious initiatives of Constantius and his successor Valens were to have a fundamental impact on the ecclesiastical life of the newly developing Constantinople.⁵³ The imperial suppression of the Nicene faith had a much more devastating effect on the Nicene church of Constantinople than elsewhere. Whereas the pro-Nicene communities of the ancient churches, such as at Antioch, survived imperial exclusion, the lack of a deeply entrenched Christian tradition at Constantinople and the use of heavy-handed imperial persecution saw the city develop into the preeminent stronghold of the Homoian faith.⁵⁴ Under such scrutiny, the Nicene community at Constantinople buckled and withered away. By the time we reach the reign of Valens, the Nicene movement there is barely perceptible. Basil, writing in the 370s, reports that Constantinople's Christians were united in their support of the city's Homoian bishop Demophilus.⁵⁵ The synodical letter drafted at Constantinople in 382 further confirms that no trace of Constantinople's pre-existing Nicene establishment remained by the time of Theodosius' ascension. The letter, which was sent to the west to report on the council of 381 and authored by those who had attended the council, describes the Constantinopolitan church as one that had been "newly set up".⁵⁶

It was into this hostile environment that Gregory arrived. Preoccupied with fighting the Goths, Theodosius would not enter the city until November of 380 and, until then, Gregory had to contend with the city's Homoian institution without imperial support. With the Homoians holding all of the major churches at Constantinople, Gregory was forced to convert part of the villa of his cousin into a chapel in order to have an appropriate venue for liturgical celebrations.⁵⁷ The lack of any substantial Nicene element in the city is

⁵² Vanderspoel, *Themistius and the Imperial Court*, 61.

⁵³ See Noel Lenski, *Failure of Empire: Valens and the Roman State in the Fourth Century A.D.* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 234–63.

⁵⁴ McGuckin, *Saint Gregory*, 235; Barnes, *Athanasius and Constantius*, 148.

⁵⁵ Basil, *Ep.* 48 (ed. Deferrari, 314–16).

⁵⁶ This letter was drafted at a follow up synod at Constantinople. Theodoret, *HE* 5.9 (PG 82.1211–1218); Translated in Tanner, *Decrees*, 29.

⁵⁷ For the Anastasia, see Rochelle Snee, "Gregory Nazianzen's Anastasia Church: Arianism, the Goths, and Hagiography," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, vol. 52 (1998): 157–86. The domination of the churches by the non-Nicenes led Gregory to describe the city as having "lay in the depths of destruction" ever since Arius; Greg. Naz. *DVS* 575 (ed. Jungck, 82); Translation from Carolinne White, *Gregory of Nazianzus: Autobiographical Poems*, Cambridge Medieval Classics 6 (Cambridge: CUP, 1996), 53.

evident in Gregory's dedication of the chapel as *Anastasia* – a nod to his intention to resurrect the Nicene cause there.⁵⁸ The fact that Gregory's congregation was small and met at a private residence did not, however, mean that the Nicenes went unnoticed. With the appointment of a new emperor, tensions would have been high. Theodosius was an unknown entity, and uncertainty over what direction his religious policy might take would have heightened the potential for religious conflict in the city. If the Homoians of Constantinople were not explicitly aware of Theodosius' Nicene leanings before his arrival, it is reasonable to assume that with the new emperor coming from the west, the Homoian establishment of Constantinople were acutely aware of the potential threat to their standing that the new regime posed. In such an agitated climate it is no surprise that attempts to make Nicene inroads in the city were met with vehement opposition. In *Oration 23*, delivered after Easter of 380, Gregory complains at length about the way that the Homoian majority harass and belittle the Nicenes, treating them with much hostility and spite.⁵⁹ He relates that the Nicenes were subject to a very public program of propaganda as the city's Homoians broadcasted widely every fault and folly of Gregory's congregation.⁶⁰ The level of scrutiny by those who were opposed to Gregory's mission at Constantinople was so rigorous that on several occasions Gregory felt moved to castigate them for their incessant focus on their enemies: "It is the nadir of depravity to base one's security not on one's own source of strength but on the weaknesses of others."⁶¹ The hostility that the Homoians exhibited towards the Nicenes was not confined to verbal assault and public propaganda alone. Gregory recounts instances where he and his flock were subject to acts of physical violence. At one point an angry mob interrupted Gregory during his celebration of the Eucharist and pelted the bishop and his congregation with stones.⁶² Even more serious was an assassination attempt on Gregory while he lay in his sick-bed, his life spared only by the would-be assassin's lack of nerve.⁶³ So constant was the threat of harm that Gregory took to being accompanied by guards.⁶⁴

⁵⁸ Socrates, *HE* 5.7 (*SCh* 505.162).

⁵⁹ Greg. Naz. *Or.* 23.2 (*SCh* 270.282–5).

⁶⁰ Gregory relates that they seized on any opportunity to criticise the Nicenes; Greg. Naz. *Or.* 23.2 (*SCh* 270.282–3).

⁶¹ Greg. Naz. *Or.* 23.12 (*SCh* 270.304–5); Translation from Martha Vinson, *St Gregory of Nazianzus: Select Orations*, Fathers of the Church vol. 107 (Washington: CUA Press, 2003), 140.

⁶² Greg. Naz. *DVS* 665–67 (ed. Jungck, 86–87). *Ep.* 77.3 (PG 37.141).

⁶³ Greg. Naz. *DVS* 1454–64 (ed. Jungck, 124–25).

⁶⁴ Greg. Naz. *DVS* 1050 (ed. Jungck, 104–5).

The intensity of such attacks remained constant throughout Gregory's tenure at Constantinople.⁶⁵ The difficulties that Gregory faced from a hostile populace, even after Theodosius' intention to promote Nicene Christianity became clear, shows just how steadfast the anti-Nicene sentiments were at Constantinople. The Homoian church there was not dependent on imperial sponsorship, as can be argued for Alexandria and Antioch, but at Constantinople had become established and confident enough to stand its ground despite the change in fortune that Theodosius' *Cunctos Populos* represented.⁶⁶ Even by late 380, with Theodosius now resident in the city, the situation appears to have changed very little. The degree to which the populace opposed the Nicene line is evocatively recounted by Gregory's account of his installation in the Church of the Holy Apostles in November. This ceremony required a military operation with armed soldiers, some secretly positioned around the church, in order to hold back the masses who opposed the new bishop. Gregory recalled the "scuffles, sobbing, tears and cries" of the crowd which gave "the impression of a town taken by force".⁶⁷ The fact that the Nicene cause remained marginal in popularity is evident in the hostile crowd's taunts that the church was not even full for the ceremony.⁶⁸

The fact that this incident took place just five months before the convening of the council presents a clear obstacle to the traditional reading of the canons as outward looking, seeking to assert Constantinople's ecclesiastical dominance. Why would a Nicene emperor, or any attendant Nicene bishops, endorse the promotion of the see to such a prestigious status when the Nicene faithful there were so insubstantial that they could not even fill the church for their bishop's installation? How could the church at Constantinople be legitimately placed as second only to Rome, when the Nicene congregation required military protection? Any level of spiritual piety or ecclesiastical astuteness on the part of the emperor could only serve to make Theodosius more appreciative of the inappropriate nature of such an action.

The incongruity of a Nicene emperor singling out Constantinople for ecclesiastical promotion becomes even more pronounced when we consider the situation at

⁶⁵ We gain a sense of the desperation of Gregory's situation from a letter in which he wrote to his brother: "You ask how things are going with us. Very badly!...Goodness has vanished, evil is out in the open; we are sailing in the dark, and there is no light anywhere. Christ is asleep!": Greg. Naz. *Ep.* 80; Translation in Daley, *Gregory of Nazianzus*, 181.

⁶⁶ Outside of Constantinople, the Homoian movement was already showing signs of collapse, even before Theodosius was confirmed as Valens' successor; Timothy D. Barnes, "The Collapse of the Homoeans in the East," in *Studia Patristica*, vol. XXIX, ed. Elizabeth A. Livingstone (Leuven: Peeters, 1997), 136–40.

⁶⁷ Greg. Naz. *DVS* 1334–35 (ed. Jungck, 118); Translation from White, *Gregory of Nazianzus*, 109.

⁶⁸ Greg. Naz. *DVS* 1495–96 (ed. Jungck, 126–27).

Constantinople in relation to the broader ecclesiastical movements in the east during the last quarter of the fourth century.

The Eve of 381: The Wider Stage

The level of spiritual dissidence evident at Gregory's installation as bishop was not unique to Constantinople. The religious life of the other cities in the east was similarly marred by popular unrest and ecclesiastical conflict during this period.⁶⁹ Of particular importance to the events at Constantinople in 381 was the relationship between the two other principal sees of the east: Alexandria and Antioch.

While the more established Nicene communities outside Constantinople were better placed to resist the pressures that had come with imperial sponsorship of the Homoian church, the Nicene movement was itself divided.⁷⁰ As the scholarship of the last few decades has shown, the emergence of anything that could be considered a cohesive, clearly-defined Nicene movement was a complicated and drawn out process that lasted many decades.⁷¹ Due to the messy nature of this process and the spiritually-fluid environment of the second half of the fourth century, it can be misleading to rely too heavily on labels such as pro- or neo-Nicene as, those gathered under such appellations could differ greatly in their theological-ecclesiastical stance even from one congregation to another.⁷² However, within the Nicene world of the 360s onwards, we can point to the emergence of two distinct Nicene traditions centred around broadly defined geographical regions. By this time, Nicene doctrine had solidified around two divergent interpretations of orthodox theology. At the heart of the rift was disagreement over the perceived number of *hypostases* existing in the Godhead. The "eastern" or neo-Nicene position, followed since the council at Antioch in 341 and promoted by the Cappadocian Fathers and

⁶⁹ Antioch's religious environment was particularly conflicted one during this age of transition; David A. Heayn, "Urban Violence in Fifth Century Antioch: Riot Culture and Dynamics in Late Antique Eastern Mediterranean Cities," *Concept*, vol. 92 (2009): 1–29; Christine Shepardson, *Controlling Contested Places: Late Antique Antioch and the Spatial Politics of Religious Controversy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2014).

⁷⁰ Lenski, *Failure of Empire*, 211–63 esp. 252.

⁷¹ Ayres, *Nicaea*, 134–273.

⁷² Michel René Barnes provides an ingeniously clear summary of the complexities that sat at the heart of both the similarities and differences between various standpoints within the Nicene tradition; Michel René Barnes, *The Power of God: Dunamis in Gregory of Nyssa's Trinitarian Theology* (Washington: CUA Press, 2001), 169–72. For the dangers of relying too heavily on anachronistic labels, see Stephen M. Hildebrand, *The Trinitarian Theology of Basil of Caesarea: A Synthesis of Greek Thought* (Washington: CUA Press, 2006), 15–17.

Meletius of Antioch, was that there existed within the Trinity three *hypostases*.⁷³ Conversely, the “western” or old-Nicene view, followed by Damasus in Rome and Athanasius in Alexandria, adhered to the strict Nicene interpretation of only one.⁷⁴ Tensions between these two factions not only prevented the Nicenes from presenting a unified front against the Arian-leaning doctrines favoured by the imperial court, but informed and inhibited geo-ecclesiastical relations across the Nicene world.

It was at Antioch where these strains within the Nicene establishment were at their most evident.⁷⁵ The city’s Nicene faithful were split between two rival bishops. Meletius headed the see’s neo-Nicene party while his rival, Paulinus, remained faithful to the old-Nicene doctrine. Meletius was locally the more popular of the two; however, Paulinus’ position was buoyed by substantial external support in the form of the bishops of Alexandria and Rome.⁷⁶ In the 360s, Athanasius’ and Damasus’ recognition of Paulinus as the legitimate bishop at Antioch brought Meletius and his large Nicene congregation into schism with the Alexandrian see and further contributed to a general divergence between the churches of the east and west.⁷⁷ As we will see below, it was this embittered rivalry that would contribute to Gregory’s undoing during the council of 381. However, what is important here is that in the decade immediately prior to 381 the stalemate had begun to show signs of shifting.

While concerted efforts at reconciliation had been ongoing, it was only from 370 onwards, with the entrance of Basil onto the stage, that the rapprochement movement

⁷³ For Meletius’ neo-Niceneism, see Thomas Karmann, *Meletius von Antiochien. Studien zur Geschichte des trinitätstheologischen Streits in den Jahren 360-364 n. Chr.* Regensburger Studien zur Theologie 68 (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 2009).

⁷⁴ André de Halleux, “‘Hypostase’ et ‘Personne’ dans la formation du dogme trinitaire,” *Revue d’histoire ecclésiastique* 79 (1984): 313–69, 625–70. While acknowledging that the term neo-Nicene can be a historically loaded one (see Ayres, *Nicaea*, 237) in the remainder of the thesis, for the sake of brevity, I will use the term neo-Nicenes to denote the Antiochene and Cappadocian followers of a three-hypostases theology.

⁷⁵ Antioch was at the frontline of the theological tensions of the period; K. M. Spoerl, “The Schism at Antioch Since Cavallera,” in *Arianism after Arius: Essays on the Development of the Fourth-Century Trinitarian Conflicts*, ed. M. R. Barnes and D. H. Williams (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1993), 101–26.

⁷⁶ Paulinus criticised Meletius’ commitment to the orthodox position due to his earlier support of the compromise formula of Constantius; Socrates, *HE* 5.5 (*SCh* 505.156–8). It is such suspicions over the connection between the neo-Nicene stance and that of the Homoiousians that sat at the centre of the old-Nicenes’ distrust of the neo-Nicene. In fact, it appears likely that Meletius was indeed an avowed Homoian rather than the staunch Homoousion that his Nicene apologists would have preferred him to be remembered as. See Oliver Hihn, “The Election and Deposition of Meletius of Antioch: The Fall of an Integrative Bishop,” in *Episcopal Elections in Late Antiquity*, ed. J. Leemans et al. (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2011), 357–73. Liebeschuetz, *Barbarians and Bishops*, 160–61.

⁷⁷ For a thorough survey of Meletius’ role in the schism at Antioch, see Robin Ward, “The Schism at Antioch in the Fourth Century” (PhD diss., King’s College London, 2003); and for a survey of the Roman response, see Geoffrey D. Dunn, “The Roman Response to the Ecclesiastical Crises in the Antiochene Church in the Late-Fourth and Early-Fifth Centuries,” in *Ancient Jewish and Christian Texts as Crisis Management Literature*, ed. D. Sim and P. Allen (London: T & T Clark, 2012), 112–28.

gathered momentum and the frosty relationship between the two Nicene factions began to thaw.⁷⁸ While Meletius had continued to shun communion with Athanasius, after 370 his actions display a concerted effort to solve the conflict at Antioch and seek reconciliation with Rome.⁷⁹ This conciliatory strategy brought Meletius much success. At a synod at Antioch in 379, Meletius forged a peace-making agreement with Paulinus that enabled both congregations to co-exist until the death of one of the bishops. Even more encouraging was the fact that Meletius had reinstated communion with that most pugnacious and staunch ecclesiast, Pope Damasus.⁸⁰ While to suggest that lasting unity between the Nicene factions was close at hand may be an exaggeration, it is undeniable that both parties had made concessions and were moving towards, at the least, substantially warmer relations.⁸¹ According to Timothy Barnes, the movement toward reconciliation between the Nicene parties had even benefitted from imperial backing prior to Theodosius, with a decisive shift in imperial policy against the Homoians initiated during Gratian's reign.⁸² It was in this climate of an increasingly united Nicene front and imperial endorsement that Gregory went to Constantinople. The confidence and size of the Homoian party that Gregory found there was unique to Constantinople and unrepresentative of the situation across the rest of the east.

This growing momentum in the attempt to forge an empire-wide Nicene front brings the situation of the church at Constantinople at the time of Theodosius' ascension into stark perspective. Across the east the tide had turned decisively against the Homoian Christianity that dominated Constantinople. At Antioch the two Nicene bishops, Meletius and Paulinus, had the loyalty of the majority of the city's Christians, and both had come to recognise each other's validity, with Meletius even securing albeit temporary recognition from Rome. Alexandria maintained a united Nicene front, with Athanasius' successor, Peter, maintaining the see's traditionally strong ties with Rome and promoting the same

⁷⁸ There were attempts to heal Nicene schisms prior to the 370s, such as Athanasius' convocation of a synod at Alexandria in 362 to settle the Antiochene dispute. Despite the concessionary nature of the Tome that he presented to the assembly, scholarly opinion is now divided as to whether Athanasius' intentions were truly aimed at reconciliation, see Tom Elliott, "Was the Tome Ad Antiochenos a Pacific Document?" *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 58.1 (2007): 1–8.

⁷⁹ For Athanasius' attempts to heal the schisms at Antioch after the synod of 362, see Annette Von Stockhausen, "Athanasius in Antiochien," *Zeitschrift Für Antikes Christentum* 10.1 (2006): 86–102.

⁸⁰ Lester L. Field jr., *On the Communion of Damasus and Meletius: Fourth Century Synodal Formulae in the Codex Veronensis LX* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 2004), 189–200.

⁸¹ Johannes Zachhuber, "The Antiochene Synod of AD 363 and the Beginnings of Neo-Niceneism," *The Journal of Ancient Christianity*, vol. 4 (2000): 83–101. Zachhuber points out that the abundance of material coming down to us from Basil has skewed our view of the strength of the rapprochement movement.

⁸² Barnes, "Collapse of the Homoeans," 3–16.

Nicene traditions in which the new emperor had been raised.⁸³ The fly in the ointment was Constantinople, a city so predominantly non-Nicene that the newly resident Nicene bishop had to endure stoning and an assassination attempt.

Not only did Constantinople's status as the premier stronghold of the Homoians mean that the Nicene bishop there faced concerted internal opposition, it put him at a distinct disadvantage when attempting to reassert Constantinople's place within the wider Nicene world. In the same manner that complex bonds of patronage underpinned traditional aristocratic relationships, a bishop's standing within the wider church relied heavily on his standing within broad social networks.⁸⁴ The contours of geo-ecclesiastical relationships and diplomacy were marked by complex client-patron relationships and reciprocal alliances, and it was through utilising such well-established networks that a bishop could advance his see's interests or defend it against external interference.⁸⁵ The importance of these networks in defining a see's position was especially pertinent during this period prior to the development of a defined episcopal hierarchy, as a church's standing was highly dependent on the personality and connections of the bishop of the time.⁸⁶ With a clearly defined place within wider ecclesiastical networks so important to a see's function, Constantinople in 379 was at a marked disadvantage. Despite the fact that the Nicene faith had been outside imperial favour, the Nicene networks of the empire had continued to function and develop.⁸⁷ When Theodosius looked to reinstate the Nicene church as the sole state-sanctioned religion, the Nicene churches that came to the fore were already possessed of well-defined networks of support and alliance. At Constantinople, however, Homoian dominance and the lack of a Nicene representation there meant that the

⁸³ Gregory hints that Peter originally endorsed his placement at Constantinople; Greg. Naz. *DVS* 860 (ed. Jungck, 96).

⁸⁴ Peter Garnsey, "Roman Patronage," in *From the Tetrarchs to the Theodosians*, Yale Classical Studies Vol XXXIV, ed. S. McGill, C. Sogno and E. Watts (Cambridge: CUP, 2010), 33–54. For the translation of such traditional Roman social features into the ecclesiastical sphere in Gaul, see Raymond Van Dam, *Leadership and Community in Late Antique Gaul* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985).

⁸⁵ Such as with Paulinus in Antioch or Athanasius in Alexandria, who both relied heavily on patronage networks to secure their positions. For an examination of the networks in action, see Adam M. Schor, *Theodore's People Social Networks and Religious Conflict in Late Roman Syria* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010).

⁸⁶ Canon 3 of 381 was the first exercise in ranking sees.

⁸⁷ Even if we take a less enthusiastic view of the strength of the rapprochement movement, the fact remains that the Nicene churches of the empire were linked by continuous dialogue and that such dialogue, be it marked by conflict or camaraderie, allowed geo-ecclesiastical relationships and alliances to continue to develop.

see had been almost entirely absent from this wider Nicene network, putting the episcopate on the back foot.⁸⁸

Alongside this lack of a defined place within the wider church, another troubling prospect for the episcopal ambitions of any nascent Nicene establishment was the city's lingering association with the Homoian church. The Arian bishops of Constantinople had been prominent figures in the advancement of Homoiousion doctrine. Bishops such as Eusebius of Nicomedia and Eudoxius played central roles in establishing and maintaining inroads into Nicene territories.⁸⁹ Such activity had undoubtedly seen Constantinople's ecclesiastical reputation closely associated with the Homoiousion movement. After 40 years of Arian dominance there, the Nicenes in the rest of the empire would have looked to the city with distrust. As Gregory himself complained, Constantinople's Arian past had seen the city's name tainted by the deepest disgrace.⁹⁰

Given Constantinople's situation in relation to the wider Nicene church on the eve of 381, it seems highly unlikely that Theodosius, universally accepted as a convinced Nicene, arriving at a city home to the most popular and cohesive Homoian church (and various other non-Nicene outlooks) would seek to raise it up to the status of the principal see of the east. Rather than promoting a city that was, in Gregory's words, "in a wretched state" to a status above all but Rome, the first priority of an ecclesiastically attentive Nicene emperor would be to rehabilitate the Nicene church of his new capital.⁹¹ To discern the possible form such rehabilitation would take and to see if it matches what we know of the council of 381, we need to return to a closer examination of Gregory's tenure at Constantinople.

The New Nicene Church at Constantinople

While there is little to suggest that at Theodosius' arrival, Constantinople was ripe for conciliar promotion, a closer examination of Gregory's account of his time at

⁸⁸ As we will see, it was this vacuum that saw the intrusion of wider tensions into Constantinople's early Nicene establishment.

⁸⁹ Eusebius of Nicomedia and Eudoxius were both fundamental to the success of the Arian doctrines in the fourth century thanks to the sway they held over the emperors on religious matters. Eusebius can be seen as partly responsible for the Arian leanings of the Constantinian dynasty while Valens relied heavily on Eudoxius in determining religious policy; Sozomen, *HE* 6.10.3–12; 6.12.5 (*SCh* 495.292–96; 302); Simonetti, *La crisi ariana*, 398; Frances M. Young, *From Nicaea to Chalcedon: A Guide to the Literature and its Background*, 2nd ed. (London: SCM Press, 2010), 50 and 92.

⁹⁰ Gregory, *Or.* 21.22 (*SCh* 270.154–56). One of several of Gregory's sermons that were designed to flatter recently arrived Egyptians, see McGuckin, *Saint Gregory*, 310–11.

⁹¹ Greg. Naz., *DVS* 83 (ed. Jungck, 58); Translation from White, *Gregory Nazianzus*, 55.

Constantinople reveals convincing evidence that the city's faithful were in dire need of mediation and reconciliation. The nascent Nicene congregation that Theodosius found at Constantinople not only faced fierce opposition from the city's large Homoian community but was internally conflicted.

Unfortunately for Gregory, persecution by the Homoians does not appear to have forged a sense of unity and camaraderie amongst the city's Nicenes. A close examination of Gregory's works reveals a Nicene party that was rent by internal dissension. In both his farewell speech to the council and his autobiographical poems, Gregory bemoaned the problems he had faced in attempting to combat outside pressures while at the same time having to ease intense dissension that flared up within his small congregation.⁹² While he is not overtly explicit about what lay at the heart of the tensions within his congregation, Gregory's sermons indicate that one of the key issues he faced was related to the conflict between the neo-Nicene and old-Nicene communities at Antioch. In *Oration 22*, delivered in 379, Gregory complains of how those at Constantinople are being drawn into the conflict, adopting foreign enmities in order to advance foreign thrones.⁹³ He urged his flock to refuse to become involved, complaining that all the world had been divided down the middle in opposition.⁹⁴ McGuckin has interpreted these comments as suggesting that elements within Gregory's congregation opposed the bishop's support of Meletius' recent move to recognise Paulinus at Antioch.⁹⁵

Whatever lay at the core of the divisions, we gain a very clear indication in *Oration 32* that Gregory was having difficulty maintaining an authoritative influence over the Nicenes of Constantinople. Dated to the winter of 379, Gregory's sermon urged his congregation to overcome their differences in order to form a united front against the more pressing dangers of heresy.⁹⁶ The sermon is indicative of the situation Gregory found himself facing, with the bishop devoting much effort to addressing correct respect towards his role as leader of the congregation. Perhaps again alluding to the Antiochene schism, he begins by addressing the toxic situation within the congregation: "[W]e have been split down the middle of our homes and families, virtually each person against himself".⁹⁷

⁹² Greg. Naz. Or. 42.20 (Sch 384.92–5). Greg. Naz. DVS 679 (ed. Jungck, 86).

⁹³ Greg. Naz. Or. 22.13 (Sch 270.248); McGuckin, *Saint Gregory*, 249–51.

⁹⁴ Greg. Naz. Or. 22.14 (Sch 270.250).

⁹⁵ That Gregory supported the compromise forged at the Antiochene synod of 379 would also be made clear at the council where he advocated Paulinus inheriting Meletius' congregation. McGuckin, *Saint Gregory*, 254.

⁹⁶ For dating, see McGuckin, *Saint Gregory*, 253–54.

⁹⁷ Greg. Naz. Or. 32.4 (Sch 318.88–90); Translation from Vinson, *St Gregory*, 193.

Gregory quickly moves on to the core of the problem – respect for his authority: “Why do you make yourself a shepherd when you are a sheep...why do you try to play the general when you have been assigned to the ranks?”⁹⁸ Continuing with a long discourse about the natural order of hierarchy, using the disciples as his examples, Gregory provides his audience with an ideal exemplar:

In my opinion the humble-minded man is...one who shows restraint in discussing God, who knows what to say and what to keep to himself and to what to admit his ignorance, who yields to the one who has been charged with speaking and accepts the fact that another is more spiritually endowed and has made greater progress in contemplation.⁹⁹

In presenting this example as a corrective, Gregory reveals the virtues that he found lacking in his congregation. We can discern that members of his flock debated theological questions and that they did not automatically defer to Gregory’s authority without question. Evidence that tensions were at critical levels and that Gregory’s authority was under question is clear from his exhortation to his audience to listen to him and “resist the impetuous impulse to get up and leave before the end of the sermon”.¹⁰⁰ Gregory’s plea to his audience to accept him as their “physician to diagnose and correct” reveals the hefty suspicions he was facing over his ability to provide an authoritative way forward.¹⁰¹ As one particular incident shows, such exasperated exhortations were not merely rhetorical constructions.

The attempted leadership coup of Maximus the Cynic brings the challenges Gregory faced into focus. Maximus’ bid for power at Constantinople has played a central part in traditional scholarship surrounding Gregory’s time at Constantinople, as well as being an integral part of interpretations of the council of 381. Maximus, a cleric hailing originally from Egypt who came to Constantinople via Milan, was a member of Gregory’s clergy who in late 380 attempted to have himself consecrated as bishop in place of Gregory. The conventional interpretation of Maximus’ failed leadership attempt is deeply influenced by the wider narratives surrounding Constantinople’s rise to ecclesiastical dominance. Maximus’ actions are read as an attempt by Peter of Alexandria to assert his

⁹⁸ Greg. Naz. Or. 32.13 (Sch 318.112); Translation from Vinson, *St Gregory*, 200.

⁹⁹ Greg. Naz. Or. 32.19 (Sch 318.124–26); Translation from Vinson, *St Gregory*, 205.

¹⁰⁰ Greg. Naz. Or. 32.2 (Sch 318.88); Translation from Vinson, *St Gregory*, 107.

¹⁰¹ Greg. Naz. Or. 32.2 (Sch 318.86); Translation from Vinson, *St Gregory*, 107.

control over Constantinople by installing one of his own as bishop, a calculated attack that presaged the string of later attempts by Egyptian bishops to sabotage the rising Constantinopolitan bishopric.¹⁰² Such an interpretation fits neatly into the broad geo-ecclesiastical tensions that are seen as driving the council of 381. The Maximus incident is cited as explaining the formulation of not only canon 4, which explicitly rejected Maximus' claim to the episcopate, but also the second canon which reasserted the Nicene prohibition of bishops interfering in the affairs of dioceses outside their own.¹⁰³ However, once we view the incident outside the lens of geo-ecclesiastical politicking, it becomes clear that the incident was in fact a result of genuine dissension within Gregory's flock.

Putting to one side for the moment the theory that Maximus' ordination was part of the political machinations of Alexandria, one often ignored element of Maximus' attempted ordination is that it appears to have received a sizeable degree of support from within Gregory's congregation. While Gregory complains that Maximus used hired muscle for the attempted consecration, he also lets slip that he had lost support from some of his most intimate patrons: "My closest friends who had recently shown me respect, now scorned me...and readily inclined towards the worse like a pair of scales".¹⁰⁴ Although Gregory blames such desertion on pecuniary benefits, it seems unlikely that Maximus would have attempted a coup without a certain level of support.¹⁰⁵ A hint that Maximus indeed had significant local support comes in *Oration 26*, delivered after Gregory returned to the city following the failed coup. In this sermon it is clear that Gregory is facing strong criticism, as he attempts to address the accusations of his congregation. Through Gregory's response it becomes evident that his ability to lead the congregation is being challenged: he is accused of being ignorant, too old, and unable to fulfil his duties due to poor health.¹⁰⁶ He fancies that his enemies want to lock him out of his house and turn his friends against him.¹⁰⁷ McGuckin considers the source of these attacks to have come from an Egyptian delegation that stayed on after the failed leadership bid of Maximus.¹⁰⁸ However, that such criticisms originated solely from an outside party seems unlikely. Having just

¹⁰² Konrad Lübeck, "Die Weihe des Kynikers Maximus zum Bischofe von Konstantinopel in ihrer Veranlassung dargestellt," *Jahresbericht*, Königliches Gymnasium zu Fulda (1907): 3–23. Gómez-Villegas, *Gregorio de Nazianzo*, 103–12.

¹⁰³ Baynes, "Alexandria and Constantinople," 145–56; McGuckin, *Saint Gregory*, 314; Ritter, *Das Konzil*, 85–96; Liebeschuetz, *Barbarians*, 160–63.

¹⁰⁴ Greg. Naz. *DVS* 883–86 (ed. Jungck, 86); Translation from White, *Gregory Nazianzus*, 96.

¹⁰⁵ The fact Maximus felt confident enough to take his protests to Theodosius would support this: Greg. Naz. *DVS* 107–110 (ed. Jungck, 86).

¹⁰⁶ Greg. Naz. *Or.* 26.14 (*SCh* 284.258–61).

¹⁰⁷ Greg. Naz. *Or.* 26.15–16 (*SCh* 284.262–50).

¹⁰⁸ McGuckin, *Saint Gregory*, 322.

failed an attempted takeover it is unlikely that the Egyptians would have been confident enough to bring to bear such accusations openly *unless* backed by an element of local support.¹⁰⁹ Rather than the support for Maximus coming explicitly from Alexandrian backers, it seems much more likely that a discontented faction within Gregory's congregation, those who had supported Maximus' consecration, were the ones voicing such concerns. Gregory in fact states explicitly that many of those who turned against him were the earliest members of Gregory's congregation at Constantinople.¹¹⁰ Even clearer evidence that those within his congregation had followed Maximus comes in Gregory's assertion that he grieved "for those who have caused me pain. You who were once members of Christ, members precious to me however ravaged you may be now, members of this flock, which you have very nearly betrayed even before it was formed".¹¹¹ It appears Gregory is addressing members of his congregation who had previously been loyal to Gregory.

Further proof that Maximus received support from residents within Constantinople is evident in Gregory's assertion that when the consecration at the Anastasia was interrupted, Maximus and his entourage moved the ceremony to the house of a nearby supporter.¹¹² While Gregory dismisses this supporter as infamous (thereby insinuating he was a heretic), the fact that Maximus was able to take shelter there not only hints that he received well-established local support but also raises the possibility that Gregory's Anastasia was not the only Nicene church vying for the loyalty of the burgeoning Nicenes of Constantinople.¹¹³ As noted, the Anastasia was in actuality a private residence that was offered up for Gregory's use. This was a common practice for those of marginalised faiths, especially in Constantinople.¹¹⁴ The Anastasia was essentially a private meeting place for the Nicenes; it was only a church in the sense that those who worshipped there designated it as such. As Susanna Elm has shown, Gregory's insult of the owner of the house was intended to refute his orthodoxy and thereby disavow any claim that this building could be

¹⁰⁹ McGuckin, *Saint Gregory*, 322.

¹¹⁰ Greg. Naz. *Or.* 26.17 (*SCh* 284.268–71).

¹¹¹ Greg. Naz. *Or.* 26.18 (*SCh* 284.268–70); Translation from Vinson, *St Gregory*, 190.

¹¹² Greg. Naz. *DVS* 909 (ed. Jungck, 98).

¹¹³ For Gregory's use of the term 'infamous' to imply heresy, see Susanna Elm, "Church – Festival – Temple: Reimagining Civic Topography in Late Antiquity," in *The City in the Classical and Post-Classical World: Changing Contexts of Power and Identity*, ed. C. Rapp and H. A. Drake (Cambridge: CUP, 2014), 167–82; c.f. Neil McLynn, "Genere Hispanus: Theodosius, Spain and Nicene Orthodoxy," in *Hispania in Late Antiquity: Current Perspectives*, ed. K. Bowes and M. Kulikowski (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 77–120, 83–4.

¹¹⁴ John Philip Thomas, *Private Religious Foundations in the Byzantine Empire* (Washington: Dumbarton Oaks, 1987), 15–25; Kim Bowes, *Private Worship, Public Values, and Religious Change in Late Antiquity* (Cambridge: CUP, 2008), 103–24.

considered a church in the same sense as the Anastasia.¹¹⁵ The possibility that the house to which Maximus' consecration was moved could indeed be considered by some as a church raises tantalising possibilities. Perhaps the supporter who provided his house for Maximus' consecration was simply an established member of Gregory's congregation who backed Maximus' leadership bid. Even more enticing is the possibility that this house was already being used as a church for a rival Nicene group within the city and that Maximus' consecration at the Anastasia was an attempt to bring both communities together under his leadership.¹¹⁶ If this was the case it would not be surprising to find Gregory glossing over such details.

We cannot even rely on the manner in which Maximus' attempted coup failed as evidence of broad support for Gregory within his congregation. The forcible ejection of Maximus mid-way through his consecration appears at first glance to show passionate support of Gregory. Gregory himself presents the incident as a glorious defence of his honour: when word got around that Maximus was being consecrated bishop, an angry mob gathered, forcing Maximus and his supporters to flee.¹¹⁷ However, as McGuckin points out, on closer inspection the crowd was not made up of Gregory's supporters at all but, in the Cappadocian's own words, "people in high office, outsiders, and those who were not true Christians".¹¹⁸ A large portion of the crowd were therefore not members of Gregory's flock; they were Homoians and other anti-Nicenes and their disruption had less to do with defending Gregory than with preventing a Nicene – that is, *any* Nicene – from being consecrated bishop in Constantinople.¹¹⁹

The evidence that Maximus' ordination received a significant level of support from within Gregory's flock brings into question the traditional assumption that the episode can be explained away as a foreign attack on Gregory or Constantinople's authority. Indeed, that Maximus himself can even be said to have represented Alexandrian interests has been recently challenged.¹²⁰ While Maximus was originally from Egypt, he was a permanent resident of Constantinople. McLynn points out that there is no evidence to suggest that he was an agent of Peter of Alexandria and that, consequently, there is little "reason to believe that Maximus would have reduced Constantinople to an Alexandrian satellite had his coup

¹¹⁵ Elm, "Church – Festival – Temple," 173.

¹¹⁶ The nature of the possible division between the Nicenes will be explored below.

¹¹⁷ Greg. Naz. *DVS* 900–905 (ed. Jungck, 98–99).

¹¹⁸ McGuckin, *Saint Gregory*, 317.

¹¹⁹ McGuckin, *Saint Gregory*, 317.

¹²⁰ Justin Mossay, "Note sur Héron-Maxime, écrivain ecclésiastique," *Analecta Bollandiana* 100 (1982): 229–36.

succeeded, any more than his (temporarily triumphant) rival Gregory subjected it to Cappadocian interests”.¹²¹ If Maximus and his local backers cannot be aligned to an attempt by Alexandria to take control of Constantinople, the question then becomes, what drove the dissension?

One possible explanation is that Gregory’s unique style of episcopal management rankled with those in his congregation. Such a conclusion would certainly fit within conventional depictions of Gregory’s character. Analyses of Gregory’s tenure are imbued by the view that the Cappadocian was at heart a devoted ascetic ill-suited to the demands of the office of bishop.¹²² Gregory himself constantly referred to his desire to surrender his episcopal duties and return to the contemplative life.¹²³ As we will see below, this view of the bishop as lacking the political nous to survive as the bishop of a major city like Constantinople has deeply coloured evaluations of Gregory’s fall from favour at the council of 381. However, as Susanna Elm and Neil McLynn have shown, we should approach such self-representation in Gregory’s work with scepticism.¹²⁴ Bishops of late antiquity were adroit at obscuring any signs of ecclesiastical ambition or worldly concerns in their works. Considered alongside the fact that the extolling of ascetic values was a central component of establishing a bishop’s spiritual authority, Gregory’s biographical self-representation must be treated as a highly-politicised construct.¹²⁵ While the true character of Gregory’s episcopal management is difficult to untangle from his own highly partial account, a tempting alternative explanation for the resistance Gregory faced emerges when we consider the position of both Gregory and Maximus within the wider Nicene communities of the east.

McLynn’s criticism of the conventional view of Maximus, as being an Alexandrian puppet is a well-needed deconstruction of the common narrative that accompanies the popular view of Constantinople’s meteoric episcopal ascendance.¹²⁶ However, we should not discount the intrusion of broader geo-ecclesiastical tensions entirely, as a possible context to the struggle between Gregory and Maximus to head the church at

¹²¹ McLynn, “Canonizing Constantinople,” 351.

¹²² Gómez-Villegas, *Gregorio de Nazianzo*, 31.

¹²³ Francis Gautier, *La retraite et le sacerdoce chez Grégoire de Nazianze* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2002), 142.

¹²⁴ Susanna Elm, *Sons of Hellenism, Fathers of the Church: Emperor Julian, Gregory of Nazianzus, and the Vision of Rome* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012), 6–9; Neil McLynn, “A Self-Made Holy Man: The Case of Gregory Nazianzen,” *Journal of Early Christian Studies*, vol 6 (1998): 463–84.

¹²⁵ Andrea Sterk, *Renouncing the World Yet Leading the Church: The Monk-bishop in Late Antiquity* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004). Störin, “Silent Way”, 235–51.

¹²⁶ That Alexandrian interference at Constantinople was driven by jealousy of Constantinople’s meteoric rise in standing.

Constantinople. As outlined above, Gregory himself hints that tensions within his congregation turned on the ecclesiastical conflict that had divided the Nicenes at Antioch. McGuckin suggests that the rifts amongst the Nicenes of Constantinople were driven by reservations about the recent compromise engineered at Antioch in which Meletius agreed to recognise Paulinus. As McGuckin rightly points out, the compromise was unpopular amongst hard-nosed neo-Nicenes, and it is assumed that Gregory's support of the compromise rankled with the disgruntled neo-Nicene elements within his congregation.¹²⁷ However, while Maximus cannot be assumed to have been a proxy for Alexandrian hegemony, he was indeed a respected theologian within the western old-Nicene network, and the evidence that he enjoyed a level of internal support at Constantinople opens up the possibility that the divisions at Constantinople were not centred around disagreement *within* the neo-Nicene cause but represented tensions *between* neo- and old-Nicene factions.¹²⁸

Such a scenario is all the more likely when we consider the opportunistic nature of Gregory's mission to Constantinople. Constantinople's lack of an established Nicene church at the death of Valens, and the potential turnaround in Nicene fortunes that Theodosius' ascension represented, meant that the city was something of a frontier town for hopeful Nicenes. As we have seen, the Arian domination at Constantinople had seen the city cut off from any discernible Nicene tradition. With the Nicenes now poised to receive imperial endorsement, Constantinople was a vacuum which the various Nicene factions of the east would have undoubtedly looked to fill to their own advantage. The benefits of establishing a neo-Nicene-friendly institution at Constantinople could not have been lost on the Meletian party nor on the pro-western Nicene network.¹²⁹ It was this opportunity that motivated Meletius to send Gregory to Constantinople in order to expand the Nicene community there.¹³⁰ Despite the popular assumption that by the time of the Maximus affair Gregory could be considered the rightful bishop of the Nicenes at

¹²⁷ McGuckin, *Saint Gregory*, 253–54.

¹²⁸ Not only had he suffered persecution and exile at the hands of the Arians, but his works defending the Nicene position had received high praise from the likes of Athanasius and Ambrose. For Maximus' formidable friends within the Nicene networks of the west, see Rochelle Snee, "St Gregory Nazianzen's Constantinopolitan career, AD 379-381" (PhD diss., University of Washington, 1981), 8–36, 64–79.

¹²⁹ Gregory, while staunchly committed to the conciliatory rhetoric of the rapprochement movement, was nonetheless an influential champion of neo-Nicene theology. As will be explored below, his unwillingness to make concessions on his core theological convictions became evident at the council.

¹³⁰ Gregory's cousin, Theodosia, likely also played a part in bringing Gregory to Constantinople; Jean Bernardi, "Nouvelles perspectives sur la famille de Grégoire de Nazianze," *Vigiliae Christianae*, vol. 38, 4 (1984): 352–59.

Constantinople, his position was in fact by no means a *fait accompli*.¹³¹ Until Theodosius officially endorsed him, Gregory remained only a hopeful bishop. Within such a context it is logical to situate Maximus in a similar role, albeit representing and promoting an old-Nicene position. The fact that Theodosius' *Cunctos Populos*, issued earlier that same year, expressly promoted a western interpretation of Nicaea as the touchstone of orthodoxy would have certainly encouraged Maximus and his supporters within the old-Nicene network that Constantinople was ripe for a pro-western Nicene bishop. Not only that but the emperor's endorsement of the Nicene faith that was promoted at Rome and Alexandria would have been a powerful tool in convincing the elite and Homoian converts at Constantinople of which strain of Nicene interpretation to adhere.¹³² The only difference between Gregory's and Maximus' claim to lead the Nicenes of Constantinople was that Gregory had assumed the role several months before Maximus.

Such a perspective sheds new light on the divisions within Gregory's congregation. Given that in 379–380 the Nicene community was essentially up for grabs, we can perceive the conflict between Gregory and Maximus, not as a developing rivalry between Alexandria and Constantinople, but as an opportunistic scramble between neo- and old-Nicene elements to stake their claim on the newly re-established Nicene church at Constantinople, a goal that would have taken on increasing importance once it became clear the emperor intended to make the city his residence. With Maximus having received a degree of support from within Gregory's pre-existing congregation, we must consider the likelihood that such support came from those who were inclined towards supporting a more western interpretation of Nicene doctrine, while those who remained loyal to Gregory backed the Cappadocian's neo-Nicene vision. In short, the struggle between Maximus and Gregory to lead the church represents the importation of the wider Nicene tensions that divided the eastern empire into Constantinople. Such division provides a more than adequate reason alone for the convocation of a synod.

Despite the evidence of unrest within Gregory's Nicene congregation and the challenges he faced to his leadership, such internal dissension has often been overlooked

¹³¹ This is borne out by the fact that when the emperor arrived at Constantinople he first offered the episcopate to Demophilus, the city's then current Homoian bishop, on the proviso that he acceded to a *Homoousion* definition of faith; Socrates, *HE* 5.7 (*SCh* 505.162–4); Greg. Naz. *DVS* 1293–94 (ed. Jungck, 116).

Even after Demophilus refused this offer, evidence suggests that Gregory's position remained under probation; McLynn argues this line succinctly; McLynn, "Moments of Truth," 220.

¹³² While Theodosius had begun his rule in the east promulgating a western Nicene line as the touchstone of orthodox belief, his stance would alter, and by 381 Theodosius' familiarity with the religious contours of the east had prompted him to promote a more eastern-orientated style of Christianity.

as providing the central impetus behind the calling of a council in 381. This is perhaps due to the assumption that, despite such setbacks, Gregory's tenure saw the Nicene community at Constantinople flourish. This substantial growth is commonly taken to be an indication of Gregory's successful leadership.¹³³ Such a view is problematic. The evidence relies heavily on Gregory's own account. In his farewell speech, Gregory proudly states that, having found his congregation "small and incomplete",¹³⁴ he now leaves it "flourishing and spreading".¹³⁵ Leaving aside the fact that Gregory was openly hurt by the acceptance of his resignation and used his farewell speech to present his record at Constantinople in its best possible light, Gregory's claims of an enlarged congregation are not necessarily evidence of a harmonious and organically expanding congregation. The extent to which an increase in numbers can be put down to Gregory's performance as a bishop remains unclear. Many of the newcomers would have joined the congregation as a result of the increasingly clear spiritual predilections of the new emperor. We know the Nicene congregation at Constantinople was aristocratic in make-up – precisely those who would stand to benefit most from sharing the emperor's spiritual convictions.¹³⁶ The issuing of *Cunctos Populos* meant that non-Nicenes were actively disobeying the imperial command – a troubling proposition for those who wished to jockey for influence with the new emperor.¹³⁷ This was perhaps accentuated and magnified by the impact of the arrival of Theodosius' court. Theodosius transferred to the east a large number of relatives and supporters from his Spanish homelands and Rome.¹³⁸ These new arrivals quickly made a name for themselves as exceptionally pious Christians and, with Gregory as the only recognised Nicene bishop in the city (alongside Maximus), they would have undoubtedly made up a large portion of the new attendees in his congregation.¹³⁹ It is therefore unsurprising there was an increase in Gregory's flock: the religious predilections of the new emperor and the arrival of his retinue were enough to ensure that the small Nicene

¹³³ Ayres, *Nicaea*, 244.

¹³⁴ Greg. Naz. Or. 42.2 (*SCh* 384.52); Translation from Daley, *Gregory of Nazianzus*, 140.

¹³⁵ Greg. Naz. Or. 42.6 (*SCh* 384.52); Translation from Daley, *Gregory of Nazianzus*, 142.

¹³⁶ The Anastasia occupied some of the most lucrative real estate in Constantinople and Gregory's aristocratic congregation mocked his shabby appearance: Freeman, *AD 381*, 78–79; Elm, "Church – Festival – Temple," 171.

¹³⁷ See McLynn's argument that *Cunctos Populos* was not intended to be vigorously applied: McLynn, "Genere Hispanus," 79–87. While not intended to be enforced, the law would have nevertheless given the residents of the city a clear idea of the emperor's religious inclination.

¹³⁸ Matthews, *Western Aristocracies*, 101–21.

¹³⁹ Matthews, *Western Aristocracies*, 101–21. It would seem highly probable that western members of Theodosius' court would have arrived at Constantinople before the emperor. We can safely assume that at least some came to clear the way for the emperor once the decision had been made that the city would be his residence.

party was bolstered substantially. While it is difficult to discern of Gregory's activities supplementing these numbers, as we have already seen, there is ample evidence that he faced dissension and challenges to his authority.

This lack of definitive evidence that Gregory had met with success in increasing his congregation coupled with the dissension he faced within his already established flock provides further challenges to the traditional assumption that 381 represents Constantinople's coming of age as an ecclesiastically self-assured see, harbouring ambitions of ecumenical leadership. On the evidence above, it is highly unlikely that Gregory was being primed to take on a leading role in the church of the east, leaving us with no compelling explanation in the years leading up to the council that can account for its traditionally assumed promotion of Constantinople. The church at Constantinople was in a poor state. Not only was the city the last bastion of Homoian resistance amongst an increasingly united Nicene network, but the small congregation there was divided amongst themselves and not united behind its bishop. The first and most pressing concern for Theodosius and his Nicene court would not have been the promotion, but the rehabilitation, of his newly chosen capital. It is this intention of local rehabilitation rather than international promotion that we must attempt to apply to the council.

3. The Council of 381

The Council under Meletius' Presidency: A Local Synod

If the original aims of the council were to reconcile the Nicene factions within the city and unite them under an imperially-endorsed bishop, then there could have been no better candidate for president than Meletius. Just like the city of Constantinople, Meletius was a reformed Homoian. We know from Gregory that he commanded respect amongst the Nicenes in the city and, most importantly, he was practised at reconciling the same factional tensions that were evident at Constantinople. Meletius' credentials for facilitating reconciliation had been recently proven at the large synod he convened at Antioch in 379. While information about the Antiochene synod is sparse, two of its outcomes suggest that it met with the express purpose of bringing an end to the internal conflicts at Antioch.¹⁴⁰ Firstly, an agreement was made between Meletius and Paulinus whereby each recognised the other's status, with the right of succession going to the surviving party. Secondly, it

¹⁴⁰ Simonetti, *La crisi ariana*, 446.

issued a statement of orthodox faith that was inclusive of both neo- and old-Nicene factions (one approved by Damasus, if not actually authored by him). If then the council at Constantinople in 381 was primarily concerned with ending division amongst the Nicenes of Constantinople, not only was Meletius a perfect choice to preside over it but we would expect to find similarities between the two gatherings.

As McGuckin has shown, the synod of 379 was “in substance identical” to the council of 381 in terms of attendees, leading him to conclude that the gathering at Constantinople was “intended as a more solemnly sanctioned rerun of that earlier Antiochene synod”.¹⁴¹ However, while he concedes that they shared the same general aims, McGuckin sees the two assemblies to have differed in scope. McGuckin contends that the primary agenda of the synod at Antioch was to address the internal disputes at Antioch, an aim that necessarily meant the delegates would also need to address the wider eastern schism in general. The gathering of 381, on the other hand, McGuckin sees as being convened specifically to deal with the eastern schism and heal the ecclesiastical divisions across the empire as a whole.¹⁴² This interpretation of 381’s broad scope is echoed throughout much of the literature on the topic. However, without any surviving acts from the council and few reliable ancient sources, it is difficult to be sure of the council’s scope.

Discerning whether a synod was broad or localised in range is difficult, especially prior to the developments in the concept of the ecumenical council from 451 onwards.¹⁴³ As noted in the first chapter, the designation of a council as having been ecumenical or of major significance often hinged not on its contemporary setting but on the lasting impact of its pronouncements. The long-term impact of the council of 381, both theologically and ecclesiastically, has led many to assume it was intended from the outset to be far-reaching. Looking at the individual components of the council during Meletius’ leadership, there is little to suggest the council was convoked specifically to deal with empire-wide tensions.

In setting out a response to the Trinitarian controversy the council dealt with theological issues that sat at the heart of the tensions experienced across the empire; however, such broad theological deliberation does not mean the assembly was not focussed on local Constantinopolitan ecclesiastical politics. The interconnected nature of

¹⁴¹ McGuckin, *Saint Gregory*, 236; Ritter, *Das Konzil*, 38–40. For the number of attendees, see Hanson, *The Search*, 803.

¹⁴² McGuckin, *Saint Gregory*, 236.

¹⁴³ The council of 381 was deemed to be ecumenical as early as 382; however, this title did not have the same meaning as it would from 451 onwards. Henry Chadwick, “The Origin of the Title ‘Oecumenical Council’,” *JTS* 23 (1972): 132–35.

the early church meant that even the most local conflicts were inevitably played out within wider theological and political tensions. As we have seen in the case of Antioch, the various lines of ecclesiastical and theological support and opposition in any one city criss-crossed the empire. This meant that addressing conflict between rival parties within a see such as Antioch or Constantinople by necessity also meant having to tackle wider issues. Just as Meletius' endorsement of Damasus' theological formulae cannot be distanced from his intention to ease tensions within Antioch, the broad theological deliberations of the council of 381 should not be disassociated from the tensions evident within Constantinople. Given that the source of unrest within the Nicene community of Constantinople was linked, in one form or another, to the wider tensions evident at Antioch, a synod assembled as a response to local tensions in Constantinople would necessarily need to address broad ecclesiastical and theological questions.

Even the formulation of a creedal statement at Constantinople in 381 does not indicate the council's broad scope.¹⁴⁴ It was common practice for creeds and theological statements to be drafted and affirmed at synods that dealt with conflicts, both localised and empire-wide. The formulation and subscription to such statements was a popular tool used to forge agreement between opposing parties. The synods held at Alexandria in 362, Antioch in 379, and Constantinople in 381 all issued various creedal statements, yet the perceived scope of these meetings has differed greatly in modern interpretations.¹⁴⁵ Neither does the size of the council suggest anything unusual. At 150 attendees, the council ranks as being of a reasonable size (although it was less than half the numbers present at Nicaea and barely a quarter of those gathered at Chalcedon).¹⁴⁶ The geographical origin of these attendees also does not reveal any particular ecumenical theme, being almost exclusively of Antiochene background with no western delegates present nor, initially, any representatives from Alexandria.¹⁴⁷ In any case, as a letter likely authored by Meletius shows, attempting to classify the nature of a council as broad or

¹⁴⁴ It is not certain but appears likely that the Nicene-Constantinopolitan creed originated at the council (see below).

¹⁴⁵ Athanasius, *Tomus ad Antiochenos* 3–7 (PG 25.796–809). Athanasius attempted to ease hostilities between the two Nicene parties at Antioch by placing their respective theologies side-by-side and showing them to be compatible. For a still reliable account of the synod, see C. B. Armstrong, "The Synod of Alexandria and the Schism at Antioch in A.D. 362," *JTS* 22, 4 (1921): 347–55.

If the creed of 381 was indeed specifically geared towards reconciling factions within Constantinople, and not intended for wide dissemination, then this would account for its lack of broad circulation.

¹⁴⁶ See Chapter 1.

¹⁴⁷ Ritter, *Das Konzil*, 38–40.

narrow, local or ecumenical based on size or geographical representation is problematic.¹⁴⁸ The letter sent to the west expressing the need to convoke a synod to settle the situation at Antioch requests western emissaries to attend in order to lend their weight to bringing together the Nicene factions in the city, stating that their dignity and additional numbers would give the council added gravitas.¹⁴⁹ The proposed synod in this letter may well be the Antiochene assembly of 379. Regardless, the letter demonstrates that greater numbers and a wide geographical representation were thought to bring greater efficacy but did not necessarily detract from a primarily local focus.

So far there appears to be no evidence to suggest that the council was explicitly intended as outward-looking in nature, yet there is significant evidence to suggest that on the eve of the council the Nicene Church in Constantinople was small, internally divided, and externally beset by disgruntled Homoians. It therefore stands to reason that, just like the synod at Antioch in 379, the council of 381 was called to heal factions within the Nicene population, reinforce the authority of the bishop, and present a united front against the Homoians. This sits comfortably within the assertions of Gregory, Socrates, and Sozomen that the council was convened in order to appoint a bishop at Constantinople and strengthen the Nicene movement. Such a localised focus also accounts for many of the key features of the council – Meletius’ presidency, Gregory’s appointment, the repudiation of Maximus’ challenge for the episcopate, and even the formulation of a compromise creed.

Unlike the synod at Antioch, however, the one at Constantinople did not run smoothly and, at the death of Meletius, changed nature dramatically. For many scholars it is this turning-point in the council’s proceedings that saw the intrusion of bitter geo-ecclesiastical enmities that were to shape the council’s pronouncements. The death of Meletius put the question of succession to the bishopric of Antioch on the agenda. Gregory, continuing his support for the compromise forged in 379, maintained that Paulinus should be recognised as the sole legitimate bishop of the Nicens of Antioch.¹⁵⁰ However, this move led to mass indignation from the neo-Nicene majority at the council who supported the ordination of a more favoured candidate.¹⁵¹ The ensuing clamour over Gregory’s suggestion was made worse by the arrival of the Alexandrian party. Timothy of Alexandria, backed by the bishop of Thessalonica, immediately set about attacking the

¹⁴⁸ The letter is traditionally attributed to Basil but its Meletian authorship seems likely; W. A. Jürgens, “A Letter of Meletius of Antioch,” *The Harvard Theological Review*, vol. 53, 4 (1960): 521–60.

¹⁴⁹ Basil, *Ep.* 92 (ed. Deferrari, 132–146, esp. 140–42).

¹⁵⁰ Greg. Naz. *DVS* 1574–1679 (ed. Jungck, 130–37).

¹⁵¹ Hanson, *The Search*, 810.

legitimacy of Gregory's position as head of the church at Constantinople.¹⁵² Gregory had previously been consecrated bishop of Sasima, and the Alexandrians argued that his position at Constantinople was invalid, invoking the 15th canon of Nicaea, which prevented the transference of bishops between sees.¹⁵³ A tired and broken man, Gregory resigned his post.¹⁵⁴ While the primary sources give little indication of the motivation underlying the Alexandrian attack on Gregory, the secondary sources overwhelmingly consider the impetus to be the innate hostility that the see of Alexandria exhibited toward Constantinople. It is this Alexandrian attack on Constantinople, alongside the recent episode with Maximus, that is seen as accounting for the council's canons being aimed squarely at Constantinople's ecclesiastical rival – Alexandria. Let us now turn to an examination of these developments and ask whether they did, in fact, represent a change in the council's scope.

The Council under Gregory's Presidency I: The Antioch Question & the Arrival of the Alexandrians

The timing of the Alexandrians' arrival and the reasons for their attendance is speculative.¹⁵⁵ Henry Chadwick cites the hostility of the Alexandrians toward Constantinople to explain their earlier absence, reading it as a rebuke to those in attendance: "It could not have escaped notice in 381 that the bishop of Alexandria, Peter's successor Timothy, did not come to Theodosius' great council, nor had the Roman see sent any legates, and that this absence was obviously connected with Alexandrian and Roman non-recognition of Meletius".¹⁵⁶ Chadwick's explanation of the absence of the Alexandrians relies on the council having had a broad scope from its inception. If the council had indeed originally been intended "to heal the long standing doctrinal schism between East and West" then surely the Alexandrians would have been invited from the

¹⁵² Greg. Naz. *DVS* 1810–12 (ed. Jungck, 142–43).

¹⁵³ Greg. Naz. *DVS* 1810–12 (ed. Jungck, 142–43).

¹⁵⁴ Greg. Naz. *DVS* 1810–12 (ed. Jungck, 142–43).

¹⁵⁵ Henry Chadwick relies on the hostility of the Alexandrians toward Constantinople to explain their earlier absence, reading it as a rebuke to those in attendance: Chadwick, *Church in Ancient Society*, 427. Malcolm Errington argues they were delayed; Malcolm Errington, "Church and State in the First Years of Theodosius I," *Chiron* 27 (1997): 21–72, 43. However, as evidence points to the council originally being a localised affair, it seems a reasonable assumption that the Alexandrians were only invited after the council had to take on a wider ecumenical scope due to the death of Meletius.

¹⁵⁶ Chadwick, *Church in Ancient Society*, 427.

outset.¹⁵⁷ However, as we have seen, there is little evidence to suggest that this council was intended to be “great” or that recognition of Meletius at this point was a particular issue for Rome and Alexandria. Gregory himself asserts that the Alexandrians were not originally invited and that Theodosius requested their attendance only after Meletius died.¹⁵⁸ If Gregory’s chronology is correct, it further backs up the contention that this was originally a locally-focussed council and that the Alexandrians were only requested to attend when the issue of the succession at Antioch required a broader and more authoritative consensus.

The primary sources give little indication of the motivation behind the Alexandrian attack on Gregory’s status as bishop. Gregory blames his loss of the episcopate on those who were envious of his eloquence on the ambo as well as the steadfast nature of his doctrinal stance. When referring to Timothy’s opposition, in particular, Gregory puts it down to a vague desire to land a blow against the eastern bishops in retaliation for issues both old and new, and that it was made clear that it was not due to any hostility towards himself.¹⁵⁹ Modern analysis of the episode places it firmly within the narrative of conflict between east and west, and commonly portrays Gregory as a victim of an alliance between Alexandria and Rome against the upstart see of Constantinople. Charles Freeman sums up this line of thought in his portrayal of Timothy of Alexandria as “determined to exercise Alexandria’s control over Constantinople and get rid of Gregory”.¹⁶⁰ It is this belief that the Alexandrian rejection of Gregory’s episcopal legitimacy was designed to inflict a heavy blow on Constantinople’s prestige that has seen 381 ensconced within a neat continuity that starts with the Maximus affair and is projected over the decades to come, leading all the way up to Chalcedon seventy years later.¹⁶¹ As outlined above, this traditional understanding of the hostility of the Alexandrians and their desire to destabilise Constantinople has provided the interpretational framework for understanding the formulation of canons 2, 3, and 4 as a stinging rebuke to Alexandria. However, as the above survey of Constantinople’s ecclesiastical history in the decades leading up to 381 attests, Alexandrian jealousy of Constantinople appears unlikely. The conceptualisation of Alexandria’s “innate rivalry” with Constantinople is based on the Egyptians being

¹⁵⁷ Williams and Friell, *Theodosius*, 29.

¹⁵⁸ Greg. Naz. *DVS* 1800–1805 (ed. Jungck, 142).

¹⁵⁹ Greg. Naz. *DVS* 1815–20 (ed. Jungck, 142). For Gregory’s various claims of jealousy and internal politics in his downfall, see Greg. Naz. *Carm.* II, 1, 2–10 (ed. Bernardi, 44–56); John McGuckin, “Autobiography as Apologia,” *Studia Patristica* 37, 4 (2001): 160–77, 166–69.

¹⁶⁰ Charles Freeman, *AD 381: Heretics, Pagans, and the Christian State* (London: Random House, 2009), 97.

¹⁶¹ McGuckin, *Saint Gregory*, 314.

threatened by Constantinople's growing authority. However, the Nicene church at Constantinople at this junction provided very little in the way of a threat on a geo-ecclesiastical level. Once we consider the wider implications of Gregory's removal from office, it becomes even less likely that the Alexandrians' episcopal assassination of Gregory was a product of antipathy towards the Constantinopolitan see.

Once we situate the actions of the Egyptians within the specific geo-ecclesiastical situation of the time, rather than within a broad (and often vaguely stated) century-long jealousy of the Constantinopolitan bishops, we find that the Alexandrians had, in actuality little to gain from rejecting Gregory's candidature. As noted, Gregory's support of Paulinus was problematic.¹⁶² While Meletius himself forged the compromise that Gregory now sought to enact, hostility towards Paulinus proved too great amongst the neo-Nicene Antiochene majority at the council. Rallying against Gregory's adherence to the compromise, the pro-Meletian assembly suggested that the neo-Nicene presbyter Flavian replace Meletius at Antioch.¹⁶³ With the neo-Nicenes deeply opposed to Gregory's continued insistence on Paulinus' legitimacy, Timothy's moves to oppose Gregory's validity played into the hands of the neo-Nicenes who, after Gregory's resignation, duly elected Flavian as their new bishop. Conversely, if Gregory's policy had been successful and Paulinus declared sole bishop at Antioch, it would have represented a great victory for the ecclesiastical policy of the Alexandrians as, as an old-Nicene, Paulinus had for many years received the backing of both Alexandria and Rome. We could perhaps still situate the Alexandrians' removal of Gregory as an act of ecclesiastical sabotage if they hoped to install an overtly pro-Alexandrian candidate in his place. However, given that the council was made up of pro-Meletian neo-Nicenes and was held in Constantinople under the authority of the emperor, Timothy must have appreciated that such an outcome was highly unlikely.¹⁶⁴

In fact, while Gregory was undoubtedly neo-Nicene in his theological stance, he had proven to be particularly amenable to the Alexandrian cause. Gregory's continued dedication to rapprochement ideals and support of Paulinus in the face of local opposition

¹⁶² While Gregory was merely adhering to the path that was laid down by Meletius, the death of the Antiochene bishop who was so pivotal in forging a Nicene alliance, coming so soon after the death of its grand architect, Basil, altered the ecclesiastical climate. Meletius and Basil both garnered high respect, and it was through their force of personality and well-established authority that they were able to keep a lid on dissensions that constantly threatened the fragile Nicene alliance.

¹⁶³ Greg. Naz. *DVS*, 1585–86 (ed. Jungck, 131).

¹⁶⁴ Gregory's support of Paulinus invalidates the line taken by Lübeck and the generations of scholars that followed him that Peter had backed Maximus' consecration at Constantinople because he wanted a bishop who would support Alexandrian interests at Antioch. Lübeck, "Maximus zum Bischofe," 3–23.

is clear evidence that he was more amenable to the Alexandrian ecclesiastical agenda than some of his neo-Nicene compatriots would have been. Gregory's sermons at Constantinople show him to have represented the Alexandrian see in a favourable light; on two occasions in particular he even held up Alexandria and its bishops as examples of superior Christian piety.¹⁶⁵ Gregory even hints that his placement at Constantinople was explicitly endorsed by Timothy's predecessor.¹⁶⁶

Viewing the Alexandrians' rejection of Gregory's election through the lens of geo-ecclesiastical politicking, the Egyptians had far more to lose by opposing the Cappadocian than by allowing him to stay in office. This brings the traditional interpretation of the council's canons into question. If Alexandrian calls to remove Gregory cannot be assigned to a general antipathy towards Constantinople, then the council's canons can no longer be read as intended to chastise Alexandria. If not a calculated strike against the see of Constantinople, what drove the Alexandrians to call for Gregory's resignation? To present an alternative motivation behind the Alexandrian contingent's actions, we must focus on the target of their hostilities.

The Council under Gregory's Presidency 2: Gregory's Suitability for the Role Questioned

If the council was originally called to deal with leadership issues within the church at Constantinople, then the death of Meletius and Gregory's appointment as president put his position under even greater scrutiny. Unfortunately for Gregory, his actions as president raised further questions about his ability to lead the church at Constantinople. Despite the challenges to his leadership considered earlier, for many commentators it is Gregory's continued insistence on Paulinus' right to the episcopate of Antioch that first reveals severe deficiencies in his abilities as a bishop.¹⁶⁷ However, Gregory's inadequacies in the field of geo-ecclesiastical politics were not just confined to his suggested resolution of the

¹⁶⁵ In Oration 21, in particular, Gregory spends much time praising the Alexandrians and eulogising the great bishop Athanasius (*SCh* 270.110–93). In another oration that was part of the same series of sermons, Gregory states that while Alexandria ranks alongside, or close to, Constantinople as a city, her expression of Christian zeal exceeds that of all other cities. *Greg. Naz. Or.* 25.3 (*SCh* 284.162–63). Gregory's sermons at Constantinople go as far as to juxtapose the Christian virtue of Alexandria with the poor state of Christian expression at Constantinople.

¹⁶⁶ *Greg. Naz. DVS*, 860 (ed. Jungck, 96–97).

¹⁶⁷ Malcolm Errington finds that by this action "the unsuitability of Gregory of Nazianzus for the leading function in the Eastern Church was exposed", along with his "weakness in synodal conflict"; Errington, "Church and State," 56–57. Charles Freeman also blames the break-down of the council on Gregory's inadequacy: "he suddenly found himself cast in a role for which he was totally unsuited, and it was his intransigence that proved his immediate undoing...the bishop of 'the second Rome' had shown himself to have been a hopelessly inadequate leader"; Freeman, *AD 381*, 95–96.

Antiochene issue. A look at Gregory's wider performance as president provides us with several more examples of his unsuitability for the role. So striking are these transgressions that they raise an alternative explanation for his being pushed out of the episcopate.

After his speech in favour of Paulinus met with so much opposition, Gregory, the head of the council, despairing of his policy winning the day, took ill and retired to his home.¹⁶⁸ On his return, Gregory found himself pressed to make concessions to certain policies and, once again, his reaction was to withdraw from the council altogether, this time staying away even from the privacy of his living quarters.¹⁶⁹ Such a retreat was in keeping with Gregory's previous actions and was likely part of his self-constructed image of being a detached and contemplative ascetic-bishop.¹⁷⁰ However, whatever success such strategies might have met with in the past, they were highly problematic in the arena of council politics. The effect of Gregory's non-attendance whenever the proceedings were not going his way was that it stymied any ability for the council to progress. In light of this, Timothy's agitating for Gregory's removal, far from striking a blow to Constantinople's prestige, was working in the interests of the council – enabling it to continue by opening the way for an active president to be appointed.

While Gregory's self-imposed exile from the council is itself a reasonable explanation for his dismissal, what precipitated his absence gives us a further clue that he was at loggerheads with the rest of the council. Gregory's second self-exile from the assembly appears to have been prompted by growing pressure for him to make concessions to his theological stance. Gregory laments that, at the death of Meletius the bishops at the council were polluting the pure stream of Nicene orthodoxy in the cause of finding a moderate stance between the various theological standpoints.¹⁷¹ He is explicit in detailing the pressure he was under to accede to such innovations: "Why should I relate the many different arguments used by my closest friends to try and win over this grey head of mine? ...that I should cooperate in everything".¹⁷² It becomes clear that Gregory was standing in the way of broad consensus: "[W]ho could imagine...that I would be led to do anything by

¹⁶⁸ Greg. Naz. *DVS* 1744–46 (ed. Jungck, 138–39) Translation from Denis Molaise Meehan, *Three Poems: Concerning Himself and the Bishops, and Concerning His Own Life*, The Fathers of the Church 75 (Washington: CUA Press, 1987), 125.

¹⁶⁹ Greg. Naz. *DVS* 1777–81 (ed. Jungck, 140–41) Translation from Meehan, *Three Poems*, 126.

¹⁷⁰ See Gautier, *La retraite*, 461–65. Daley, *Gregory of Nazianzus*, 10–15. Gregory himself implied that his close friend Basil feigned illness as a strategy to prompt guilt and sympathy in others. Greg. Naz. *Ep.* 40.2 (ed. Gallay, 1:49).

¹⁷¹ Greg. Naz. *DVS* 1704–10 (ed. Jungck, 136–37).

¹⁷² Greg. Naz. *DVS* 1765–73 (ed. Jungck, 139–41); Meehan, *Three Poems*, 126.

the majority, not by God's word?"¹⁷³ What specific policy caused Gregory such disquiet remains unclear. However, one possible issue fits the bill neatly. If the Creed of Constantinople was indeed formulated during the council of 381, it is the perfect candidate for the compromise that distressed Gregory so much, as it represented a half-way doctrine, one designed to be as inclusive of the Nicene factions as possible.¹⁷⁴ It seems likely that the creed was indeed formulated at the council prior to the arrival of the Alexandrians, while Gregory was still president.¹⁷⁵ Gregory's resistance to the theological schema that was being advanced undoubtedly put his leadership under strain.¹⁷⁶ Not only did his refusal to accede to the wishes of the majority bring him into conflict with the other bishops at the council, but the pressure to validate the concessions under discussion was, by Gregory's own admission, coming directly from the emperor himself.¹⁷⁷ In addition to standing in the way of the council reaching consensus, Gregory was now acting in direct opposition to imperial wishes.¹⁷⁸ Gregory's refusal to accede to imperial authority put his position in great jeopardy. With Gregory's ability to lead the Nicene congregation at Constantinople already under question, his decision to resist the imperially-sanctioned proposals of the council was perhaps the final nail in his coffin.

It is unfair to cast Gregory's opposition to theological compromise and his recourse to ascetic retreat as inadequacies. Gregory's example embodies well the contemporary tensions over the role of the bishop. On one hand, the position of bishop required an adroit politician, one able to deal with the secular and ecclesiastical duties that required a certain amount of compromise and consensus building. On the other hand, the perceived power of the bishops was increasingly based on their position as a holy man and an exemplar of holy conduct.¹⁷⁹ Gregory was astute in his understanding of the inherent difficulties in holding these two positions simultaneously, but came down vehemently against those

¹⁷³ Greg. Naz. *DVS* 1773–76 (ed. Jungck, 140) Translation from White, *Gregory of Nazianzus*, 141.

¹⁷⁴ J. N. D. Kelly, *Early Christian Creeds*, 3rd ed. (London: Longman, 1972), 296–331; Hanson, *The Search*, 819.

¹⁷⁵ Hanson, *The Search*, 818. Uncertainty over whether the Creed of Constantinople was indeed formulated in 381 rests on the fact that varying expressions of Nicene orthodoxy could be referred to under the catchall 'Nicene faith'; J. Lebon, "Les anciens symboles dans la définition de Chalcédoine," *RHE* 32 (1936): 809–76.

¹⁷⁶ Gregory is clear on the part his theological stubbornness played in his losing support at Constantinople. Greg. Naz. *Carm.* II, 1, 2–10. (ed. Bernardi, 44–56).

¹⁷⁷ This image of Theodosius promoting a moderate stance is well in keeping with what we know of the emperor's preference for moderation over coercion.

¹⁷⁸ Gregory would later criticise the emperor's moderation in religious matters, suggesting he lacked hardihood in enacting his policies: Greg. Naz. *DVS*, 1282–93 (ed. Jungck, 116). McLynn interprets this as a display of *parrhesia* on Gregory's part, rather than genuine criticism of the emperor: McLynn, "Moments of Truth," 215–16).

¹⁷⁹ Claudia Rapp, *Holy Bishops in Late Antiquity: The Nature of Christian Leadership in an Age of Transition* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 137–52.

bishops whom he saw as sullyng their spiritual purity to safeguard secular power. Resisting the pressures to alter one's standpoint in the name of political sensibilities was a central pillar of Gregory's ideology.¹⁸⁰ This ethos is clearly seen in Gregory's preaching at Constantinople. In praising Athanasius, Gregory emphasised the Alexandrian bishop's virtue in refusing to bow to compromise and imperial pressure as so many others had.¹⁸¹ His stubborn belief in his own spiritual convictions over ecclesiastical expediency is also at play during the council when Gregory quips that streams would flow upwards and fire change direction before he would give up any slight ground in his beliefs in order to meet the consensus of the majority.¹⁸² However, despite the virtuous nature of Gregory's stance, his uncompromising stance made his continued role as bishop of Constantinople and president of the council untenable. Gregory's unwillingness to accede to the majority of the council as well as imperial policy allows Alexandrian interference at the council to be interpreted in a different light.

If the council was indeed convoked in order to set firm Constantinople's fledgling Nicene church, Gregory's presidency could have only increased any doubts over his ability to unite the Nicenes of the city. Gregory's actions brought him into opposition with nearly the entire council. His support of Paulinus meant that he fell foul of the council's Syrian majority, tensions he exacerbated by refusing to take part in deliberations surrounding a proposed theological compromise. Such moves not only weakened the Cappadocian's authority in the eyes of his compatriots but earned Gregory the displeasure of the imperial authority as well. With this level of opposition towards the council's president, far from being the unwanted agitators at the council, the Alexandrians took on the role of its saviours. Taking into consideration the extent to which Gregory's position had become untenable, it is conceivable that Timothy was called upon by Theodosius or the other attendant bishops to oust Gregory. At the very least, the emperor and council must have been thankful for the Alexandrian's intervention. The question of why the Alexandrians attacked Gregory's position becomes merely a question of what other bishop was there to formally agitate for Gregory's removal. With the bishop of Constantinople under question and Antioch without a bishop, who else at the council but Timothy had authority enough to remove Gregory?

¹⁸⁰ See McLynn, "Self-Made Holy Man," 463–83.

¹⁸¹ Greg. Naz. *Or.* 21.26–27 (*SCh* 270.164-9).

¹⁸² Greg. Naz. *DVS* 1747–75 (ed. Jungck, 140).

The Canons Reconsidered

Having outlined the internal challenges faced by the Nicene establishment at Constantinople, we can now approach an interpretation of the council's canons that is free of a reliance on external patriarchal rivalries. Approaching the council from the standpoint of the decades leading up to 381 rather than the decades and centuries that followed, it appears that the council was convened in order to rehabilitate the Nicene church at Constantinople and ease the internal tensions dividing its burgeoning congregation. Having repositioned Gregory's loss of the bishopric as due to his unsuitability for the role, rather than a product of competition between Alexandrian and Constantinople, there is no need to assume that the council drastically deviated from its localised focus. Indeed, examining the council's pronouncements in the context of the tensions evident within Constantinople, we can locate the canons as part of a concerted attempt to address the ecclesiastical tensions within the city.

First, canon 1, by extolling the orthodoxy of Nicaea and condemning dissenting doctrines, laid the foundation for Constantinople's rehabilitation. The canon officially sanctioned the Nicenes of Constantinople and censured, in particular, the Arians who had attempted to quash the Constantinopolitan church in its infancy. Following on from canon 1's pronouncement against the Nicenes external enemies at Constantinople, canon 2 can be read as an attempt to address disruptive entities that were internal to the Nicene establishment at the city.

Canon 2 reasserted the Nicene prohibition against bishops interfering in ecclesiastical matters outside their diocesan boundaries. As outlined above, this is widely interpreted as a rebuke of the Alexandrian subterfuge assumed to have been evident in the Maximus affair and Gregory's resignation. However, as we have seen, the idea that these instances were a product of Alexandrian sabotage does not stack up in terms of motivation or evidence. Therefore we have to look elsewhere for the foreign interference that the canon was rallying people against. An alternate target for the canon's rebuke quickly comes to the fore when we consider the nature of the divisions experienced within Constantinople. The burgeoning church at Constantinople was divided and, as we have seen, this disunity was a product of the importation of foreign enmities into Constantinople's ecclesiastical sphere. Tensions at Constantinople were deeply informed by the wider conflict between the neo- and old-Nicenes, with the congregation divided over the question of episcopal succession at Antioch. Gregory and Maximus were

ensconced within the wider networks of the two divergent Nicene networks that were at the centre of the divisions evident at Antioch, and it is highly likely that their activities at Constantinople exacerbated the translation of such tensions into the Constantinopolitan environment. In light of the damaging effect that such divisions were having on the developing Nicene community at Constantinople, canon 2 can be read as condemning the parties who had introduced these wider tensions to the city. While this means that the canon can be read as a rebuke of both Gregory and Maximus, as well as their potential backers beyond Constantinople, the canon could alternatively be interpreted as a reprimand of Gregory alone.¹⁸³ With the Alexandrians' protest that Gregory had already been acting bishop at Sasima upheld, the first line of the canon: "Diocesan bishops are not to intrude in churches beyond their own boundaries nor are they to confuse the churches", could be read as a veiled rebuke of Gregory's mission to Constantinople.¹⁸⁴

It is pertinent here to take a moment to consider the order of the diocesan boundaries listed in canon 2. After prohibiting extra-territorial interference, the canon goes on to list all the major episcopal regions of the eastern empire and the territorial limitations of the metropolitan bishops.¹⁸⁵ The fact that Alexandria heads this list has been taken as proof that the Egyptian bishops were the ones being admonished: "[I]n accordance with the canons, the bishop of Alexandria is to administer affairs in Egypt only".¹⁸⁶ However, the fact that the Alexandrians are mentioned first is simply a preservation of the order of sees from the original Nicene canon that is being referenced in which the bishops of Alexandria are also listed first. The fact that the Egyptian see takes foremost position in the list of 381, far from being a slight to the Alexandrians' prestige, actually preserves their privileged position. Interestingly, the bishops of Thrace, of which the bishop of Constantinople was one, feature last on the list.

Having admonished Constantinople's anti-Nicene communities and asserted the city's sovereignty in the face of the intrusion of foreign episcopal prerogatives, canon 4 (which denied Maximus' claims to the Constantinopolitan episcopate) was intended simply to clear up any lingering challenges for the episcopate before the election of a new bishop. The new bishop, selected by Theodosius himself, can be seen as a direct expression of canon 2's attempt to prevent the factional ecclesiastical politics of the east

¹⁸³ After all, canon 4 deals with Maximus' case explicitly.

¹⁸⁴ First Council of Constantinople, Canon 2 (*CCCOGD* 1.65). Translation from Tanner, *Decrees*, 31–32.

¹⁸⁵ The fact that Rome is absent from this list again hints that the council was never intended to have a broad scope.

¹⁸⁶ Constantinople, Canon 2 (*CCCOGD* 1.65) Translation from Tanner, *Decrees*, 31–32.

from inhibiting Constantinople's Nicene development. Nectarius was an unbaptised ex-city prefect, unaffiliated with any particular Christian faction.¹⁸⁷

Having repositioned the council within the decades leading up to 381, we have been able to interpret the majority of its canons outside the traditional framework of anti-Alexandrian sentiments. However, one prominent canon, on face value, appears to remain obstinately outside of the interpretation of the council being aimed at rehabilitation rather than expansion and it is to this canon that we must now turn.

4. Reading Canon 3 Backwards

A Troubling Fit

Canon 3, which granted the bishop of Constantinople “the prerogatives of honour after the bishop of Rome through its being New Rome”, does not at first glance fit easily within an interpretation of 381 as an attempt to rehabilitate the local church on an internal level.¹⁸⁸ However, difficulty in contextualising the canon with the rest of the council is not a novel problem. Despite the propensity of modern commentators to place canon 3 front and centre in their readings of the council, the Constantinopolitan historians writing only half a century after the council already found the canon an oddity and struggled to align its intention with the assembly's broader program.¹⁸⁹ This disparity between modern scholars' confidence in canon 3's role at the council and the confusion of the ecclesiastical historians of the early fifth century can be explained by the fact that Socrates and Sozomen were writing before the Council of Chalcedon, a council that drastically altered the retrospective perception of the council of 381. The certainty of modern sources on the importance of canon 3 is granted by the distance from which they view it. The significance assigned to canon 3 is based on three components: it is the first statement of the Constantinopolitan see's standing, it is the first ecclesiastical pairing of Constantinople and Rome, and it was used as the foundation for canon 28 in 451. The significance of each of these interrelated parts is not in their immediate impact but in their future implications. As noted in Chapter 1, the council of 381, in particular its third canon, only came to the fore at the council convened at Chalcedon 70 years later. It is only then that the implications of

¹⁸⁷ Socrates, *HE* 5.8 (*SCh* 505.168). Sozomen, *HE* 7.8 (*SCh* 516.182).

¹⁸⁸ Constantinople, Canon 2 (*CCCOGD* 1.65) Translation from Tanner, *Decrees*, 31.

¹⁸⁹ McLynn, “Canonizing Constantinople,” 348; Socrates, *HE* 5.8 (*SCh* 505.166–70); Sozomen, *HE* 7.9 (*SCh* 516.104–106).

canon 3 took on geo-ecclesiastical import, through its association with canon 28 of Chalcedon and all that came with it.

Despite Chalcedon's role in reshaping perspectives of canon 3, the vast majority of scholars still treat the canon as a substantial advance in Constantinople's claim to primacy in its own right. Just like most evidence of early Constantinople's development, the exact nature of the canon's importance has been contentious. The debate over canon 3's significance is centred on the question of whether its granting of privileges of honour after Rome was intended to bestow any real authority. Many scholars, such as Brian E. Daley, consider that such privileges should be interpreted as conferring very real and practical powers on the Constantinopolitan episcopate, while others have argued that the canon should be interpreted as more of a ceremonial designation that had little jurisdictional implication.¹⁹⁰ Despite such differing interpretations, even those who take a minimalist view of canon 3's immediate impact continue to treat the canon as a prelude to 451. The canon is almost invariably connected to a program of expanding geo-ecclesiastical jurisdiction that leads up to the pronouncements of Chalcedon and primacy in the east. However, McLynn's recent insightful work on the topic reveals the distorting impact of viewing the canon through the lens of such later developments.

As McLynn shows, the "excitements of the future" have fostered a teleological perspective of the canon's significance that obscures the vast differences in Constantinople's situation between 381 and its development over the following decades.¹⁹¹ Despite the fact that in 381 even Constantinople's place as an imperial residence was yet to be established, canon 28's reference to the third canon of 381 has led to the canons being paired as having essentially the same impetus – establishing Constantinople's primatial authority. Such a retrospective rationalisation of canon 3 has led scholars to overlook contemporary evidence that directly contradicts this interpretation of the canon's intention. Not only did Socrates and Sozomen struggle to explain the canon's formulation but, as McLynn points out, even those bishops who attended the council appear to have promptly ignored canon 3's pronouncement.¹⁹² Even more telling is the fact that the canon is

¹⁹⁰ In a similar manner to the special status bestowed on Jerusalem by the 7th canon of the Council of Nicaea. This canon made the bishop of Jerusalem most prominent after Rome, Alexandria, and Antioch yet it remained under the authority of metropolitan Caesarea, see Jan Willem Drijvers, *Cyril of Jerusalem: Bishop and City* (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 35–39.

¹⁹¹ McLynn, "Canonizing Constantinople," 363.

¹⁹² There is no trace of the canon in either the synodal letter of 381 or Gregory's writing (Gregory does use the New Rome motif but never in terms of ecclesiastical privilege); McLynn, "Canonizing Constantinople," 356–62.

conspicuous by its almost complete lack of utilisation. Despite the numerous instances where reference to it would have seemed natural, the canon was not employed in Constantinople's ecclesiastical politicking in the decades following 381.¹⁹³

A further supplement to McLynn's assertions over the canon's misrepresentation in the post-council period can be added in terms of canon 3's perceived place in Constantinople's expanding territorial influence between 381 and 451. The assumption that canon 3 was a prelude to canon 28 of 451 is strengthened by the supposition that canon 3 initiated, or supplemented, a campaign by the Constantinopolitan bishops to expand the see's territorial rights. For the first century and a quarter of its existence, Constantinople remained officially under the episcopal jurisdiction of the metropolitan city of Heraclea. However, as Constantinople continued to grow as an imperial capital, both physically and symbolically, its bishop increasingly featured in the episcopal life of its neighbours. By the Council of Chalcedon, it was already common practice for the bishop of Constantinople to consecrate bishops in its neighbouring territories, and such influence was codified at the council with canon 28 officially granting the see supervisory authority over the bishoprics of Thrace, Asia, and Pontus.¹⁹⁴ Such expansion of Constantinople's ecclesiastical influence was a natural and inevitable product of the city's development, but, the nature of the expansion of Constantinople's geographical influence has been distorted by teleological perspectives of Constantinople's rise.¹⁹⁵ Due to the strength of the traditional notion that the bishops of Constantinople from very early on harboured a desire to rise to the top of the episcopal food chain, the pronouncement of canon 28 of 451 is often seen as the result of a cohesive decades-long campaign to expand Constantinople's authority. Instances of Constantinopolitan bishops interfering in the episcopal life of their neighbours are interpreted as part of a wider program of expansion in which the bishops of Constantinople aggressively promoted their authority and steadily accumulated expanded territorial rights.

However, such a perspective overlooks the fact that Constantinople's increasing influence over its vicinal sees did not take the form of a cohesive program but was a

¹⁹³ McLynn, "Canonizing Constantinople," 363. McLynn neglects to note that the canon was referred to four decades after the council in reference to a conflict with Rome over the administration of Illyricum. *CTh* 16.2.45 (*SCh* 497.212), although, even then, it is used with understated reserve. That pronouncement warned that no decision over the administration of Illyricum should be made at a synod without the Bishop of Constantinople being notified.

¹⁹⁴ André de Halleux "Le décret chalcédonien sur les prerogatives de la Nouvelle Rome," *Ephemerides theologicae Lovanienses* 64 (1988): 288–323.

¹⁹⁵ See Dvornik on the principle of accommodation; Dvornik, *Byzantium*, 27–39.

piecemeal and disjointed development, highly contingent on individual circumstances.¹⁹⁶ Firstly, teleological perspectives of Constantinople's expansion overlook the instances in which extra-territorial interventions were abject failures. For example, while John Chrysostom is often referred to as having aggressively championed Constantinople's prerogatives, the Syrian's machinations outside his episcopate were not only ultimately unsuccessful but contributed significantly to his loss of the bishopric.¹⁹⁷ Secondly, a feature of John's intervention in Asia that is central to understanding the disjointed nature of early Constantinople's ecclesiastical activities is that his intervention was by invitation. The location of the court at Constantinople and the local bishops' growing prestige meant that the Constantinopolitan church was a natural target for episcopal petitions. As we will see later, the position of Constantinople as a centre for petition was in fact a cause of many upheavals. What is important to note at this point is that, with Constantinople's activity outside its scope based on request not regulation, it is difficult to ascribe to it any cumulative territorial expansion. Next to Chrysostom, Atticus is the other bishop most often lauded as vigorously promoting Constantinople's territorial rights. During his two decades as bishop, Atticus certainly did play a significant role in the ecclesiastical politics of the region, consecrating bishops in Asia and Thrace and even clashing with Rome over jurisdiction of Illyricum.¹⁹⁸ The majority of these instances came about as a result, not of proactive expansion, but of requests for Atticus' intervention. This distinction is important. Requests for Constantinople's help depended on the advantages of doing so for the petitioners. When the inhabitants of Alexandria Troas asked for Atticus' help in securing an appropriate bishop, or the disgruntled Illyrian bishops asked for Atticus' aid in repealing the election of the new bishop at Corinth, the request was made in the hope of attaining a beneficial outcome.¹⁹⁹ With intervention not dependent on Constantinopolitan hegemony but the benefit and willingness of the parties involved, such instances of intervention were a product of circumstance, the prevailing ecclesiastical politics, and the

¹⁹⁶ A possible exception is the see's missionary tradition of ordaining bishops within barbarian territory, see Ralph W. Mathisen, "Barbarian Bishops and the Churches 'in barbaricis gentibus' during Late Antiquity," *Speculum*, 72 (1997): 664–97.

¹⁹⁷ Dagon, *Naissance*, 465–69; on Chrysostom advancing Constantinople's interests. John's activities at Ephesus figured in the deliberations of his enemies at the Synod of the Oak; Peter Van Nuffelen, "Theophilus against John Chrysostom: The Fragments of a Lost *liber* and the Reasons for John's Deposition," *Adamantius* 19 (2013): 138–55.

¹⁹⁸ The evidence that he appointed a bishop at Nicaea is not entirely clear. Socrates reports that he was there for an ordination but it is not clear if he was performing it, Socrates, *HE* 7.25.15 (*SCh* 506.98). For ordinations at Philippopolis and Alexandria Troas; Socrates, *HE* 7.37 (*SCh* 506.132–36).

¹⁹⁹ Similarly, the chance of the Constantinopolitan bishop acting on a petition depended on the benefit to himself. Atticus chose not to act on petitions where he saw fit; Socrates, *HE* 7.3 (*SCh* 506.26).

bishop of the time not the institution itself. It was Atticus' genial policies and good relationship with the emperor that made him a popular figure of support.²⁰⁰ However, the influence that Atticus was able to exert was not inherited by his successors. The experiences of Atticus' successor Sisinnius demonstrate that Atticus' consecration of bishops in neighbouring sees did not represent an accumulation of rights. Sisinnius' attempt to consecrate his own priest at Cyzicus, a town only 85 miles south of Constantinople in the diocese of Asia, was rejected out of hand by locals who instead installed their own candidate, claiming that the right of the bishop of Constantinople to do so was a privilege granted to Atticus alone.²⁰¹ Sisinnius' reaction to this rejection was hardly that of a bishop of an ambitious upstart see. He put forward no protest and recalled Proclus to the capital. By failing to take into account the pitted and fragmented nature of the examples of Constantinopolitan bishops acting outside their jurisdiction, and instead seeing them as a coherent program of expansion, a false sense of continuity has developed that enables canon 3 to be effortlessly linked to the episcopal privileges granted by canon 28.

That the canon was not used suggests that a more restricted reading of the canon is required. With canon 3 so conspicuously absent until its incorporation into Chalcedon's canon 28, such lack of application must have been by design. Indeed, using an analysis of the canon's Nicene phraseology, McLynn convincingly argues that the canon was intentionally devoid of practical implications for Constantinople's authority, and that it sought to create "a self-contained class for the two Romes" that was ultimately "descriptive rather than prescriptive".²⁰² After McLynn's adroit exposition of the canon as a mere honorary title, lacking any legislative clout, he is forced to turn to the same question that we must now face. Why would the council promulgate a canon that is intentionally designed to be toothless?

Neutralising Constantinople's Influence

McLynn argues that canon 3 should be aligned to the fallout from Gregory's recently-ended tenure at Constantinople. As we have seen, Gregory used his position at Constantinople to try to influence wider ecclesiastical politics, such as the Antiochene

²⁰⁰ Socrates, *HE* 6.20, 7.25 (*SCh* 505.344, 506.94–100). Sozomen, *HE* 8.27 (*SCh* 516.356–58).

²⁰¹ Socrates, *HE* 7.28 (*SCh* 506.104–106).

²⁰² McLynn, "Canonizing Constantinople," 353–55.

question. This would have not been a problem for the neo-Nicene contingent who were now at the council as it coincided with their interests. However, with Gregory now standing down, McLynn argues that these elements at the council would have been keen to prevent the influence that Gregory exerted beyond Constantinople's walls from being institutionalised as part of the Constantinopolitan bishop's wider remit. In McLynn's estimation, canon 3's expression of a lofty yet ultimately empty rank for the bishop of Constantinople was therefore designed to prevent Gregory's successor from being able to claim the right to influence affairs outside his see.²⁰³

McLynn's ingenious argument that, rather than expanding Constantinople's territorial influence, canon 3 sought to limit it, means that we do not have to look to future events in order to understand the canon, and supports the view that the council was focussed on current local issues rather than broad geo-ecclesiastical initiatives. Nevertheless, McLynn's limiting of the canon to a response to Gregory's tenure is unconvincing. Going to such lengths as to invent a whole new tier of honorary rank appears to be an inordinate amount of effort just to dispel an extra-jurisdictional influence exerted during Gregory's extremely short tenure. As we have seen in the case of Proclus at Cyzicus, instances in which a bishop exerted extraterritorial influence over a neighbouring see was not seen as establishing a precedent that was then automatically passed on from one bishop to the next. Instead, it was understood that such instances were influenced by the personalities and relationships unique to the time. Indeed, the council's second canon, which reasserted Nicaea's strictures on the sovereignty of defined episcopal boundaries, had already made this patently clear. But, there is another way to approach McLynn's argument that the canon was intended to limit Constantinople's extra-jurisdictional interference, without restricting it to a consequence of Gregory's short tenure. As argued above, the driving impetus behind the council of 381 was not a desire to advance Constantinople's prerogatives but to rehabilitate the city from its Arian past. Let us then consider the possibility that canon 3 sought to nullify not just Gregory's extra-jurisdictional influence but that of his Arian predecessors.

It is not with Gregory that we find the most far-reaching examples of a Constantinopolitan bishop wielding influence over the sees of the east. That honour goes to the Arian bishops of Constantinople in the decades leading up to 381. The bishops

²⁰³ McLynn, "Canonizing Constantinople," 360; Such an interpretation is tantalising in that it would turn the traditional perspective on its head, with McLynn arguing that the extra-territorial influence the canon attempted to neutralise was that which Gregory had exerted over the episcopates of Pontus and Asia – the same dioceses that would come under Constantinople's influence in 451.

Eusebius of Nicomedia, Macedonius, Eudoxius, and Demophilus were all active in the episcopal life of neighbouring sees, installing friends and like-minded bishops in neighbouring sees and persecuting theological enemies.²⁰⁴ Such influence was not limited to localised meddling. Thanks to their close relationship with the reigning emperors, Eusebius and Eudoxius were both pivotal in guiding the imperial policy that saw the exiling of Nicene bishops across the east as well as the instalment of Arian bishops as far away as at Alexandria.²⁰⁵ Many scholars go as far as to subsume such instances of extra-territorial influence by the Arian bishops of Constantinople into the broader program of intentional expansion that is perceived to have occurred throughout in the period between 381 and 451, placing the machinations of the likes of Eudoxius and Demophilus alongside the pronouncements of canon 3 and 28 in an unbroken trajectory of rising prestige.²⁰⁶ However, as indicated above, to assume continuity between the ecclesiastical institutions of the Homoians and Nicenes at Constantinople is misleading. The strength of the Arian movement at Constantinople and its suppression of any local Nicene community meant that Constantinople had not only become disconnected from the Nicene world but was tainted by its associations with decades of Arian dominance. The Nicene institution of Constantinople at 381 was “newly set-up”, and any gains won under Homoian auspices would have held very little weight in the eyes of the reinvigorated Nicene communities that had suffered suppression under an Arian authority emanating from Constantinople.²⁰⁷ It seems plausible that it was these advancements won by the Homoian bishops of Constantinople, rather than those of Gregory’s short tenure, that canon 3 was designed to neutralise. By disavowing the legitimacy of the Arian advances that had so antagonised the Antiochene and Alexandrian Nicene communities present at 381, canon 3 was part of an initiative to rehabilitate Constantinople from its Homoian past and make the see acceptable to the Nicene world.

²⁰⁴ Socrates, *HE* 2.38; 2.42 (*SCh* 493.188–200; 222–24); Sozomen, *HE* 2.27 (*SCh* 306.348–54); Kreilkamp, *Origin of the Patriarchate*, 13–39; Dagron, *Naissance*, 423–47.

²⁰⁵ Eusebius was central in overseeing the Arian takeover of Alexandria; Socrates, *HE* 2.11 (*SCh* 493.50); Valens’ banishment of Nicene bishops in 367 was likely masterminded by Eudoxius; Theodoret, *HE* 4.13 (*SCh* 530.230).

²⁰⁶ Kreilkamp, *Origin of the Patriarchate*, 13–39; Karlin-Hayter, “Activity,” 179–82.

²⁰⁷ The disconnect between Constantinople’s Homoian institution and the reinstated Nicene one would have been further exacerbated by the fact that, unlike elsewhere, there appears to have been little to no crossover between the Homoian establishment and the new Nicene church at Constantinople. Demophilus held firm to his theological convictions and continued to tend to the city’s Homoians. Elsewhere across the east, it was not uncommon for Homoian bishops to gravitate to the Nicene faith (as was likely the case with Meletius), fostering a high degree of institutional continuity.

There is one particular element of the canon that requires further exploration. Central to the perceived significance of canon 3 has been its characterisation of Constantinople as New Rome. It is this feature that has seen the canon connected so effortlessly to Constantinople's future significance. It is 381's association of Constantinople with Rome that aligned the Constantinopolitan bishop's prestige with that of Rome's, a move that would have reverberations for the relationship between the two sees in the centuries to come. Due to the later significance of this use of New Rome and the way in which it has been used to suggest that the council of 381 foreshadowed Constantinople's claims to patriarchy, it is important to explore the connotations of its use within the context of the period. Instead of linking the canon's conceptualisation of Constantinople as New Rome with future ecclesiastical tensions, it is important to contextualise it within the decades leading up to the council.

Constantinople and the Theodosian Government in 379: Two Institutions Experiencing an Identity Crisis

The origin and function of early Constantinople's associations with Rome has been a highly contentious topic. Evidence for such symbolic pairing before 381 is sparse and open to various interpretations.²⁰⁸ Many scholars argue that Constantinople's representation as a New Rome was an integral part of Constantine's vision for the city, a foundational feature of its civic identity that was gradually translated into Constantinople's ecclesiastical realm.²⁰⁹ Others have contended that such early coupling of the two cities was far less pronounced than is assumed, with some even arguing it to be a complete fallacy.²¹⁰ To take a measured approach to the debate, it appears certain that, from quite early on, Constantinople was indeed (to a degree) symbolically associated with Rome as well as intentional in mimicking physical features previously only found at Rome.²¹¹ However, these early allusions to Rome cannot be attributed to any nascent desire to rival or surpass

²⁰⁸ See for example, Bardill's discussion of the possibility that the Tyches of Rome and Constantinople were established side by side by Constantine at Constantinople; Bardill, *Constantine*, 262–63.

²⁰⁹ For example; Rolf Köhn, "Konstantinopel: Roms Tochter oder Schwester? Zur Selbst- und Fremddeutung der Stadt Konstantins des Großen," *Unikate* 34 (2009): 34–45.

²¹⁰ F. Dölger, "Rom in der Gedankenwelt der Byzantiner," *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte* 56 (1937): 1–42. One recent article has even argued that Constantinople's characterisation as New Rome developed exclusively within the ecclesiastical sphere, citing canon 3 as the origin of the tradition; Melville-Jones, "Constantinople as 'New Rome'," 247–62.

²¹¹ It was common for regional capitals to mimic aspects of Rome, such as the positioning of palace and Hippodrome; however, Constantinople boasted features previously found only at Rome, such as a grain dole and senate; Grig and Kelly, "Introduction," 7–13.

the western capital, either ecclesiastically or otherwise, but were part of an attempt to establish Constantinople's identity as a city of import, in particular a city aligned with imperial majesty.²¹²

As noted in Chapter 2, the city's earliest identity was founded on its connection to the imperial family. Constantine's reinvention of Byzantium was shaped by themes of imperial glory and permanence, especially that of his own regime.²¹³ This image of Constantinople as a city of particular imperial symbolism remained a constant theme in the city's early history, even when the emperors chose not to reside there.²¹⁴ In Gregory's *Second Invective Against Julian*, written in the 360s, he refers to Constantinople as a great imperial city.²¹⁵ It is this association of Constantinople with imperial majesty that lay at the heart of comparisons with Rome. The city's imperial connotations would later lead Gregory to describe Constantinople and Rome as "two Romes, beacons of the whole world" and Ps. Martyrius to echo earlier designations of Constantinople as the daughter of Rome.²¹⁶

It is tempting to connect the Constantinian symbolism of Constantinople as an imperial centre and second Rome with the city's later position as the primary economic and cultural centre of the east, in an unbroken line of development. However, as demonstrated in the previous chapter, Constantinople's early evolution into an imperial capital was piecemeal, and approaching a re-reading of canon 3 it is essential to appreciate that by 379 Constantinople's claim to be a great imperial city appeared to be on increasingly shaky ground.

Despite the importance Constantinople had achieved by the time of Theodosius' death in 395, as late as 380 the cultural function of Constantinople was still unclear.²¹⁷ In fact, at the time that Theodosius took up the throne, Constantinople's fortunes had been in

²¹² The way in which early allusions to Rome were retrospectively subsumed into a narrative of Constantinople's founding mission is highlighted by John Burke, "Inventing and re-inventing Byzantium: Nikephoros Phokas, Byzantine Studies in Greece and 'New Rome'," in *Wanted: Byzantium. The Desire for a Lost Empire*, ed. Ingela Nilsson and Paul Stephenson (Uppsala: Uppsala Universitet, 2014), 9–42.

²¹³ Chapter 2, sections 1 and 2.

²¹⁴ Jones, *Later Roman Empire*, 688.

²¹⁵ Gregory, *Or.* 5.17 (*SCh* 309.326)

²¹⁶ Ps. Martyrius, *Or. fun.* 13 (ed. Wallraff-Ricci, 58). This terminology is also evident in western sources; Augustine, *De civitate dei*, 25. Orosius stated that Constantinople "alone could worthily be equal to Rome in beauty and power"; Orosius, *Historiae Adversus Paganos*, 7.28, Translation from Roy J. Deferrari, *Seven Books of History Against the Pagans*, Fathers of the Church, vol. 50 (Washington: CUA Press, 1964), 331. See Erwin Fenster, *Laudes Constantinopolitanae* (Munich: Institut für Byzantinistik und Neugriechische Philologie, 1968), 28–54.

²¹⁷ Theodosius' impact on Constantinople was immense; Ward-Perkins, "Old and New Rome," 54; Croke "Reinventing Constantinople," 142.

something of a decline. If Constantine had envisioned Constantinople's function as an imperial residence to continue after his death, he would have been disappointed with his dynastic successors. The eastern emperors of the Constantinian dynasty chose not to reside at Constantinople, and visited the city surprisingly little.²¹⁸ This did not mean that the city had no relevance. Constantinople's infrastructure continued to develop with amenities needing to keep pace with the demands of the mass influx of people over the previous decades.²¹⁹ More importantly, the city's close association with Constantine meant that it still figured in the mind of his successors. The city functioned as a type of dynastic capital, its symbolic connection to Constantine ensuring its development as space in which the emperors could emphasise their royal lineage and stage imperial ceremonies.²²⁰ However, when the Constantinian line came to an end in 363, the city that bore the name of its progenitor must have looked to the future with a mounting sense of vulnerability. Would a new emperor without the same familial connections to Constantine maintain the city's symbolic importance?

The reign of Valens began promisingly for Constantinople, with the city chosen by Valentinian I as the venue for his brother's elevation.²²¹ Such a decision suggests that the city's symbolism as a key venue for imperial ceremony was set to continue. However, the relationship between emperor and city soon turned sour. The following year, Constantinople rebelled against Valens, supporting Procopius' rival claim to the throne.²²² Procopius could boast Constantinian lineage, and it is perhaps the safety that such connection guaranteed for Constantinople's continued imperial relevance that led those within the city to support Procopius' bid for power.²²³ Unfortunately for his Constantinopolitan backers, less than eight months after he was proclaimed emperor by the

²¹⁸ Dagron, *Naissance*, 78–86. Constantius, for example, spent very little time at Constantinople. Apart from an extended stay in 359–60, the emperor only visited briefly on a handful of occasions; Barnes, *Athanasius and Constantius*, 218–24.

²¹⁹ It took until Justinian's reign for the city's infrastructure to match the needs of the city's earlier ambitious re-foundation; Wendy Mayer, "John Chrysostom on Poverty," in *Preaching Poverty in Late Antiquity: Perceptions and Realities*, ed. Pauline Allen, Bronwen Neil, Wendy Mayer (Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2009), 69–118, 74–76.

²²⁰ Croke, "Reinventing Constantinople," 253–54; Albrecht Berger, "Imperial and Ecclesiastical Processions in Constantinople," in *Byzantine Constantinople: Monuments, Topography and Everyday Life*, ed. Nevra Necipoğlu (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 73–88, 73–77; Michael McCormick, *Eternal Victory: Triumphal Rulership in Late Antiquity, Byzantium, and the Early Medieval West* (Cambridge: CUP, 1986), 34–64, 189–230.

²²¹ This proclamation of Valens by the military on the outskirts of the city was part of the city's growing ceremonial symbolism. Dagron, *Naissance*, 87–88; 100–101.

²²² Procopius, *PLRE* 1.742–43.

²²³ Procopius seems to have made much use of Faustina, widow of Constantius II, in his bid for power; Shaun Fitzroy Tougher, "Imperial Blood: Family Relationships in the Dynasty of Constantine the Great," in *Families in the Roman and Late Antique World*, edited by Mary Harlow and Lena Larsson Loven (London: Continuum, 2012), 181–98, 190.

senate and people of Constantinople Procopius was dead and his rebellion quashed. The imperial city was now in the difficult position of having backed the wrong imperial horse. As revealed by Themistius' grovelling apologia for the part his city played in the rebellion, Constantinople's citizenry was well aware of the damage their support of Procopius had done to the city's reputation in Valens' eyes and were deeply concerned about what the episode would mean for the city's standing.²²⁴ Such concerns appear to have been justified, as evidence suggests that Constantinople remained firmly out of favour with Valens. While the emperor's choice to reside elsewhere was entirely in keeping with his predecessors, Valens actively avoided the city even when it proved inconvenient to do so.²²⁵ In addition to avoiding the city, there is also a strong suggestion that Valens took measures to officially downgrade the city's status.²²⁶

This then was the situation at Constantinople on the eve of Valens' untimely death at Adrianople. The Imperial City had gone from being the showpiece of the Constantinian dynasty, a second Rome for the east, to being actively shunned by the ruling emperor – an imperial city lacking an imperial patron. With the city facing an uncertain future, the Constantinopolitan senate was determined to start its relationship with the new emperor on better terms than it had with Valens. At the conclusion of the hostilities with the Goths, the senate sent a delegation to Theodosius in order to promote Constantinople's virtues and attempt to convince the emperor to come to Constantinople.²²⁷ Luckily for the Constantinopolitans, the delegation found in Theodosius someone in equal need of rehabilitation.

Due to the power and longevity of Theodosius' imperial propaganda, which celebrated the emperor as a great military general and ardent persecutor of heretics, it is easy to overlook the dire state in which Theodosius' regime found itself after only a year of his rule. When Theodosius was made co-Augustus in January 379, the eastern half of the empire was in free-fall. With the bulk of the empire's finest perishing alongside Valens at Adrianople, disgruntled and emboldened Gothic masses threatened the survival of the empire's eastern territories.²²⁸ It was the new emperor's ability to solve the Gothic crisis

²²⁴ Themistius, *Or.* 7; see John Vanderspoel, *Themistius and the Imperial Court*, 161–67.

²²⁵ Grig and Kelly, "Introduction," 14.

²²⁶ Socrates, *HE* 4.38 (*SCh* 505.144); John Vanderspoel, "A Tale of Two Cities: Themistius on Rome and Constantinople," in *Two Romes: Rome and Constantinople in Late Antiquity*, ed. Lucy Grig and Gavin Kelly (Oxford: OUP, 2012), 233–37.

²²⁷ Themistius, *Or.* 14; Heather and Moncur, *Politics, Philosophy and Empire*, 225–30; Errington, "Theodosius and the Goths," 893–94.

²²⁸ Peter Heather, *The Fall of the Roman Empire: A New History* (New York: OUP, 2006), 183.

that was the central pillar of his early imperial marketing. On his ascension, imperial propagandists lauded Theodosius as the required stabilising force – an experienced general who would quell the Goths and return glory to the Imperium.²²⁹ However, Theodosius’ military campaign against the Goths did not produce the crushing imperial victories hoped for. Instead, the emperor found himself forced to negotiate conciliatory treaties with the barbarian forces.²³⁰ With the legitimacy of his regime having been predicated on his ability as a military general, having failed to inflict decisive defeat on the Gothic forces meant that Theodosius’ rule was facing something of a crisis in legitimacy by the time the Constantinopolitan delegation reached him in 380.²³¹ The meeting was fortuitous. The imperial ideology underpinning Theodosius’ regime required repositioning and the city of Constantinople provided an ideal setting in which to achieve that.

Having not fulfilled the role of imperial conquer, Theodosius with the help of the Constantinopolitan orator, Themistius, set about rehabilitating his image by promoting his virtues as a civil ruler rather than as a military tactician.²³² The new direction of Theodosian propaganda turned to themes of stability and imperial continuity, and the city of Constantinople, with its associations with the great stabiliser Constantine as well as the permanence of Rome, was for these reasons a perfect space for the emperor to reinvent his rule.

Canon 3 and Constantinople’s Second Founding as Second Rome

Theodosius’ reign marked Constantinople’s emergence as a true capital and seat of imperial power. The city was at the heart of Theodosius’ initiative to reinvent himself as a civic ruler, with the emperor initiating a vast legislative and architectural revamp of his new capital that proved so transformative that he can be considered Constantinople’s second founder.²³³ Central to this transformation of Constantine’s imperial city was Constantinople’s symbolism as a second Rome.

²²⁹ Peter Heather, “Liar in Winter: Themistius and Theodosius,” in *From the Tetrarchs to the Theodosians*, ed. Scott McGill, Cristiana Sogno and Edward Watts (Cambridge: CUP, 2010), 185–214, 185–86.

²³⁰ Kulikowski, *Rome’s Gothic Wars*, 144–53.

²³¹ Attempting to promote diplomatic settlements with the Goths as victories to subjects who had so recently been promised more decisive triumphs required some deft propaganda by the Theodosian regime; Errington, *Imperial Policy*, 63–66.

²³² Heather, “Liar in Winter,” 190.

²³³ As Brian Croke recently noted, the extent to which Constantinople was pivotal in developing and expressing Theodosius’ rule has not received due recognition, and this in turn has also led to a lack of

Theodosius' wide-ranging building program saw the construction of many grand civic projects: new grain stores, personal palaces, a new hippodrome, a new harbour and the Arcadian baths, as well as an extension of the aqueduct of Valens.²³⁴ He was also responsible for the erection of multiple statues of himself throughout the city, including an equestrian statue that presented Theodosius as a "second light-bringing sun".²³⁵ Such construction work emphasised and fostered connections between Constantinople and Rome, with renovations explicitly themed on both an ideological and physical mimicry of the western capital. One of the most ambitious projects initiated by Theodosius was the construction of a new forum for the heart of the city. The *Forum Theodosii* was a deliberate copy of Trajan's forum at Rome.²³⁶ The imitation was made more obvious by the addition of a large marble column decorated by a spiral relief depicting Theodosius' Gothic campaign: the similarities between this and the columns of Trajan and Marcus Aurelius in Rome were intentional and would not have been lost on the viewer. Another characteristically Roman monument that was emulated at Constantinople was the enormous obelisk in the Hippodrome. The size of the Theodosian obelisk and its location in the middle of the Hippodrome indicated a clear intention to mimic the one erected by Constantius II in Rome's Circus Maximus.²³⁷

Not only was association with Rome expressed through new monuments, but even the city's topography was readjusted, at least administratively, to imitate Rome. Cyril Mango suggests that it was under Theodosius that the city was reorganised into 14 regions mirroring those of the western capital.²³⁸ The high level of construction was accompanied by a flurry of laws that sought to endow the ruling class of Constantinople with the functions and appearance more suitable to the emperor's ostentatious vision for the city.²³⁹ Theodosius' laws reveal his desire to elevate the Constantinopolitan senate's prestige, if only on a superficial level. Laws were passed that regulated the status and entitlements of the senatorial class, and legislation attempted to ensure the ruling class took on an

appreciation of the importance of the emperor in "transforming the city into an imperial and Christian city"; Croke, "Reinventing Constantinople," 242–43.

²³⁴ Ward-Perkins, "Old and New Rome," 57–62; Croke, "Reinventing Constantinople," 257–61; Errington, *Imperial Policy*, 144–46.

²³⁵ Croke, "Reinventing Constantinople," 260.

²³⁶ Errington, "Imperial Policy," 145–46; Ward-Perkins, "Old and New," 57.

²³⁷ Ward-Perkins, "Old and New," 59.

²³⁸ Cyril Mango, "Le Mystère de la XIVe Région de Constantinople," *Travaux et Mémoires* 14 (2002): 449–55.

²³⁹ Errington, *Imperial Policy*, 165.

appearance more appropriate to their station.²⁴⁰ The underlying intention behind these laws was, in the words of Malcolm Errington, “to persuade those who knew ‘Old Rome’ to believe that ‘New Rome’ was also real Rome.”²⁴¹ Given the wide-ranging program to promote symbolic associations between Constantinople and Rome instigated under Theodosius’ rule, it is hardly surprising to find his council pairing the two city’s bishops, and it is in this context that we should approach canon 3.

Canon 3’s association of Constantinople with Rome fits neatly alongside wider imperial initiatives to rehabilitate the emperor’s reputation, as well as Constantinople’s identity as a city of imperial status. This suggests that the canon’s pairing of the two cities had its origin in imperial designs. It is certainly feasible that such ‘secular’ considerations could have influenced the council, considering that we know Theodosius himself took a hand in directing the contours of the council and that its third president, Nectarius, was a member of the city’s elite who up to that point had been outside of the ecclesiastical establishment.²⁴² Together, Nectarius and Theodosius represented the two parties that were most invested in Constantinople’s rehabilitation as a centre of imperial prestige – the emperor, looking to fortify his position through his newly chosen capital, and Constantinople’s elite, who sought to re-establish Constantinople’s Constantinian significance.

Proposing that canon 3 was of imperial origin may at first glance suggest undue interference on the part of the emperor. Indeed, McLynn labels scholarly works that attribute the origin of the canon to Theodosius, as taking a caesaropapist line.²⁴³ However, such a judgement is dependent on the view that the canon had a tangible impact on the bishop’s authority. If canon 3 did indeed signal Constantinople’s intention to achieve ecclesiastical dominance, any imperial involvement in its pronouncement could certainly be read as the imperial government dictating fundamental changes within the ecclesiastical organisation. However, as McLynn’s own analysis reveals, canon 3 did not confer any real power on the Constantinopolitan see. This then raises the possibility that Theodosius’ program of associating Constantinople with Rome offered the bishops of the council the perfect formula to disavow Constantinople’s Arian past (as outlined above), without overtly attacking the status of Theodosius’ new residence. Once we move beyond the

²⁴⁰ Errington, *Imperial Policy*, 165.

²⁴¹ Errington, *Imperial Policy*, 167.

²⁴² Gómez-Villegas, *Gregorio de Nazianzo*, 159–62. The emperor would certainly have wielded significant sway over the council, given that its Nicene participants owed their recent resurgence to his policies.

²⁴³ McLynn, “Canonizing Constantinople,” 350.

assumption that any imperial involvement in canon 3 was inherently caesaropapist in nature, we find that Theodosius' potential involvement in its formulation further confirms the toothless nature of the canon.

McLynn's assessment of canon 3 as nothing more than empty posturing situates it neatly alongside Theodosius' wider religious legislation. Again, we can thank the efficiency of Theodosius' imperial propaganda for the longevity of the emperor's reputation as a litigious oppressor of heresy. Theodosius' much vaunted laws against heresy have long been thought to represent hard-line imperial support for the Nicene cause. However, in the same manner in which canon 3 conferred an honorary yet ultimately hollow title on the bishop of Constantinople, such Theodosian legislation has in recent decades been revealed as not only ineffectual but deliberately designed to be ineffective: grand rhetoric not intended for practical enforcement.²⁴⁴

In canon 3's imagery of Constantinople as a New Rome we can see the influence of a wider, imperially-driven initiative to promote the city of Constantinople and not its ecclesiastical standing. This primary purpose makes sense when we consider the lack of any significant religious aspect in Theodosius' transformation of Constantinople. The emperor did not match his ambitious public building program at Constantinople with an enthusiasm for church building. Theodosius was a "limited church builder", with only three relatively modest Christian building projects undertaken in the city during his reign.²⁴⁵ Nor can we discern any attempt to modify Constantinople's religious environment by legislation, with only one law addressed to the *praefectus urbi* pertaining to the religious life of the city.²⁴⁶

If we approach the canon's imagery of New Rome from the perspective of Theodosius' campaign to endow his new city with the appearance of a prestigious imperial centre, it is no surprise that canon 3 that did little more for the bishop than give his office an air of imperial prestige. Theodosius' residency at Constantinople and his convocation of the council certainly does mark Constantinople's emergence as New Rome. However, Rome has many connotations, and the Rome that was being evinced in canon 3 was not the Rome of the popes but Imperial Rome, home of the emperors. From this perspective, Sozomen's explanation of the canon provides a clear statement that canon 3 was

²⁴⁴ Malcolm Errington, "Christian Accounts of the Religious Legislation of Theodosius I," *Klio* 79 (1997): 398–433; McLynn, "Genere Hispanus," 77–120.

²⁴⁵ The Church of John the Baptist, the Holy Notaries, and the Church of Saint Mark; Croke, "Reinventing Constantinople," 260.

²⁴⁶ Errington, *Imperial Policy*, 167–68.

formulated in the context of civic promotion. He explains that the bishop was granted a rank comparable to Rome due to the fact that Constantinople was in possession of a senate and enjoyed the same legal privileges as Rome in the west.²⁴⁷

Conclusion: Canon 3 and Constantinople's Three-fold Rehabilitation

Having considered the neutralising nature of canon 3's honorary ranking of Constantinople alongside the secular significance of the canon's use of the title New Rome, we find that the canon does indeed fit into the broader council's aims to rehabilitate the city.

Incorporating the imperial imagery of Constantinople as Rome, the canon was an ingenious piece of legislation that served to address three separate issues at Constantinople simultaneously. Canonical recognition of Constantinople's position as a second Rome helped buoy the incoming emperor's image of a legitimate imperial ruler, whilst at the same time confirmed to the senate and people of Constantinople the city's restoration as a legitimate imperial capital. Not only this, but more pertinently to the wider aims of the council, the pairing of Rome and Constantinople in canon 3 gave the bishops of 381 a perfect way in which to disavow Constantinople's Arian past and rehabilitate the see's reputation without openly chastising or damaging the prestige of the new Nicene church.

While Constantinople's eventual establishment as a leading see was far from certain at this point, having disavowed its Homoian background and attempted to rid the Nicene congregation of divisions, the Nicene church that emerged from the council of 381 would have looked to the future with high hopes. The fact that Constantinople was once again in favour with the ruling emperor must have been viewed by contemporaries as a good omen for the Constantinopolitan church's future. However, it is essential not to assume that imperial interests and ecclesiastical fortunes were naturally fused. As this chapter has highlighted, while the city was honoured as a New Rome, the Nicene establishment at Constantinople bore institutional flaws that would continue to trouble its bishops over the following decades. The Nicene movement was still far from established in the city, its inhabitants remained deeply spiritually divided, and the bishops lacked clearly defined institutional influence. Despite assumptions to the contrary, as the following chapter will demonstrate, having the imperial executive on hand in no way rectified such problems and in fact in many cases made them significantly worse. While 381's Nicene rehabilitation was a direct consequence of Theodosius' arrival at

²⁴⁷ Sozomen, *HE* 7.9 (*SCh* 516.104–106).

Constantinople, as we will see, having a resident Nicene emperor did not equate to heightened episcopal authority for the local bishop.

Christianissimus Imperator

Constantinople as Home of the Christ-loving Emperors

Outlining the significance of John Chrysostom's elevation to the Constantinopolitan episcopate, J. N. D. Kelly stated that the bishop of Constantinople's access to the emperor "could not fail to enhance his authority".¹ This assumption that the imperial presence was naturally advantageous for the Constantinopolitan bishop is a commonly held one, with the bishop's proximity to the imperial court widely considered to be the primary driver behind Constantinople's growing episcopal authority during its early period. However, this chapter, by looking beyond such broad assumptions will contend that in fact the opposite is true. Through an examination of the many ways in which the bishop's position at the heart of imperial politics destabilised and undermined his authority, this chapter will argue that the interaction of *sacerdotium* and *regnum* at Constantinople not only inhibited the city's episcopal growth but was at the heart of the many controversies that racked the capital in the decades leading up to Chalcedon.

The assumption that the imperial presence benefitted the bishop is logical. From a broad perspective, it was the imperial transformation of Constantinople that lay behind the bishop's increasing significance – the bishop of Byzantium would hardly have achieved the same importance had Constantine decided to found his namesake city at Ilium, or had Theodosius settled at Serdica.² The transformation of Byzantium and the growth of its administrative importance guaranteed a subsequent rise in its episcopal scope thanks to the accommodation principle, which dictated that ecclesiastical hierarchy mirror civil structures.³ That the bishop profited from having the emperor resident also makes sense from an institutional perspective. In the fifth century, access to the imperial court was everything.⁴ With the court sitting at the centre of imperial policy-making and the nexus of

¹ Kelly, *Golden Mouth*, 108–9.

² Both cities had been amongst those Constantine considered for the location of his capital. Jill Harries, *Imperial Rome AD 284 to 363: The New Empire* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012), 121.

³ Dvornik, *Byzantium*, 27–39.

⁴ Christopher Kelly, "Emperors, Government and Bureaucracy," in *The Cambridge Ancient History. Volume 13: The Late Empire, AD 337–425*, ed. A. Cameron and P. Garnsey (Cambridge: CUP, 1997), 138–83, 150–51.

all patronage, the Constantinopolitan church's close proximity to this potent source of influence sits at the heart of the assumption that its bishop wielded enhanced authority.⁵

A cursory glance at the conciliar bookends of the period of this thesis appears to confirm this conventional view. The council of 381, traditionally considered as announcing Constantinople's arrival as a serious force in the ecclesiastical world, was very much the result of imperial initiative, as was the council of 451, which saw Constantinople's episcopal credentials further enshrined in canonical law.

However, closer scrutiny of the period between the councils brings this correlation into question. As already noted, the linking of the two councils as forming a trajectory of exponential growth in Constantinople's ecclesiastical status conceals a turbulent time for the Nicene church at Constantinople. Rather than a gradual elevation in authority, the seven decades between 381 and 451 saw an episcopal development hampered by controversy and internal schism. The troubled tenures of Gregory, Chrysostom, Nestorius, and Flavian were marked by internal dissention emanating from within the city's structures of power. The contradiction that such internal conflict poses to the image of a see that is experiencing exponential growth in episcopal authority has been thoroughly obscured by the traditional historiographical approach to the tenures of these deposed bishops. As noted in Chapter 1, examination into the causes of this internal discord has tended to place great emphasis on the agency of the personalities involved.⁶ It is the peculiarities of Gregory, Chrysostom, and Nestorius' personalities that is traditionally blamed for having stirred up resentment within Constantinople.⁷ Such an approach diverts attention from any meaningful consideration of the way in which the city's episcopal landscape itself contributed to the escalation of conflicts. The internal conflicts surrounding the bishops are conceptualised as anomalies – speed-bumps on the road to primacy. However, this chapter, by looking beyond this reliance on personalities to explain events within Constantinople, argues that the internal tensions that erupted during the tenures of Chrysostom, Nestorius, and Flavian expose deep flaws within the Constantinopolitan episcopate's institutional

⁵ “[Constantinople’s] bishops were at the centre of government, and could expect imperial endorsement of their authority”; David Hunt, “The Church as a Public Institution,” in *The Cambridge Ancient History. Volume 13: The Late Empire, AD 337–425*, ed. A. Cameron and P. Garnsey (Cambridge: CUP, 1997), 238–76, 247–48. Such advantage in accessing imperial sanction is considered integral to the see’s rise in standing: “[T]he see had come to enjoy a high status” due to the fact that “the bishop of this imperial city had the chance of direct access to the emperor”; Freeman, *AD 381*, 78.

⁶ Chapter 1, section 3.

⁷ Gregory for being a simple ascetic unsuited to the political world, John for his strict disciplinarian approach, and Nestorius for displaying both these attributes with a heavy dose of theological error thrown in. In the case of Flavian, history has seen to it that it is his Constantinopolitan adversary, Eutyches and his allies, whose extreme views and traits are depicted as having encouraging conflict.

architecture, flaws that were a direct consequence of Constantinople's status as residence of the emperor.

Far from easing ecclesiastical tensions during this tumultuous period or providing the incumbent Constantinopolitan bishop with imperial backing, it will be shown that the city's status as imperial capital played a significant role in fuelling ecclesiastical instability and conflict at the capital. The destabilising relationship was not the result of overt imperial interference or ineptitude, but was simply an unavoidable result of the close pairing of episcopal and court politics at the city. As the first section will show, the ideological marriage between empire and church presented many challenges about how *sacerdotium* and *regnum* would interact in the post-Constantinian world. While such challenges were experienced throughout the empire, it was at Constantinople that such difficulties had their most direct and disruptive expression. It is here that we witness the myriad problems of two separate but intermingling hierarchies of authority operating side-by-side. It was at Constantinople that the emperor's need to negotiate his image as a pious Christian and protector of the church with the wider needs of state and navigate the politically volatile rivalries of court and senate saw the preferences of the bishop constantly take a backseat to the needs of the ruling dynasty.

Key to understanding the relationship between court and bishop is an appreciation of the impact that the multiple levels of patronage had on the city's episcopal mechanisms. This will be the focus of the second section. Complex relationships of patronage and alliance shaped the contours of Constantinople's imperial and ecclesiastical politics. It is the powerful patronage available to those at Constantinople that lies at the heart of the assumption that the bishop of Constantinople enjoyed enhanced powers; however, this section will show that the patronage available at Constantinople in actuality constrained the bishop's sphere of influence and worked to destabilise the traditional bedrock of episcopal authority. First, it will examine how access to patronage decentralised the bishop's rule and emboldened seditious elements within the clergy. Secondly, by focussing on the relationship between the bishop and the empresses at Constantinople, it will show how the close interaction between piety and politics at the capital not only constrained the bishop's episcopal autonomy but also drew the episcopate into the city's many destructive political rivalries. Finally, this section will explore how the many powerful interest groups that pervaded the highest levels of Constantinopolitan society worked to limit the bishop's scope to strengthen the church within his own see. We will see that, taken together, the politically fraught and divided nature of Constantinopolitan society not only often cut

across and destabilised the bishop's access to influence but fundamentally altered the requirements of episcopal office at New Rome.

Having examined the underlying contours of the relationship between court and bishop that were exposed during times of conflict, the third and final section of this chapter considers the way in which the political pressures of the capital were reflected in the character of the bishops who enjoyed uninterrupted tenures at Constantinople. It will be shown that the unique and varied political pressures that came with the court and senate at Constantinople had an indelible impact on Constantinople's broader episcopal culture. In contrast to dominant episcopal trends found elsewhere, Constantinople's unique setting meant that bishops who maintained a *laissez faire* approach to episcopal authority and a passive attitude towards rival religious communities enjoyed success. Approaching the tenures of Chrysostom and Nestorius from this perspective, we can discern that it was not their particular style of episcopal management that was the anomaly, rather it was Constantinople's episcopal landscape that was unusual – one in which mild bishops prospered.

1. The Position of the Emperor and the Church

For Theodoret of Cyrus, Theodosius I's decision to appoint Meletius as president at the council of 381 was not borne out of reasoned logic but divine instruction. In his ecclesiastical history Theodoret recounted that, shortly before Theodosius was made emperor, he had received a vision from God in which Meletius invested him with the imperial vestments.⁸ That the emperor was privy to such divine revelations was not an alien concept for Theodoret or his contemporaries. Neither would it have seemed out of place that the emperor was the one to dictate such ecclesiastical matters. This idealised vision of the emperor working hand in hand with the episcopacy under divine guidance was a product of the gradual melding of Christian Church and Roman state. The newly developing ideology of imperial rule allowed – or to be more precise, necessitated – the emperor taking an active part in guiding and safeguarding the church. It was this ideological evolution that underpinned the traditional approach to the relationship between

⁸ Theodoret, *HE* 5.6 (*SCh* 530.350–52). Theodoret's account of the emperor's dream was influenced by political motivations. Due to the fact that the historian was trying to depict Theodosius in the best light, his vision of the emperor receiving God's word directly and actively interfering in ecclesiastical matters, represents not just the acceptable actions of an emperor but the ideal. David Rohrbacher, *Historians of Late Antiquity* (London: Routledge, 2002), 133, 275–76.

emperor and bishop at Constantinople. The contention that the bishop of Constantinople benefitted from access to imperial authority rests on an assumption that the emperors had a freehand in coercing ecclesiastical politics. However, to conceptualise the benefit of proximity to the emperor in terms of such a simple equation suggests a caesaropapist approach to understanding the emperor's interaction with the ecclesiastical sphere.⁹

While the melding of a Christian narrative to the imperial rhetoric of rule provided imperial leaders with a potent expression of authority, it also brought with it many challenges and subsequent limitations. Because the mechanisms of imperial government were focussed at Constantinople, the tensions born of the developing relationship between *sacerdotium* and *regnum* in the fifth century had the greatest impact there. When exploring the relationship between court and bishop at Constantinople, it is therefore essential to first take a close look at the basic contours of the developing Christian ideology of imperial rule. It is only then that we can fully appreciate the way in which the negotiation between broad imperial considerations and regional episcopal concerns impacted on the relationship between the emperor and the bishop of Constantinople.

1.1 God-Chosen: The New Narrative of Empire

When approaching the interaction between *sacerdotium* and *regnum* in the fifth century, it is pivotal to appreciate the extent to which, at the heart of the relationship between emperor and bishop, stood very tangible considerations of state politics.

The shifts in ideology underpinning imperial authority that saw the emperor so involved in church affairs were rooted not just in the growth of Christianity but in the way in which Christian narratives provided a fresh angle from which to address questions brought on by the deterioration of traditional narratives of power.¹⁰ While the long list of

⁹ Caesaropapism, the political theory that the Byzantine emperors held ultimate authority over both the state and church, has been a long-standing feature of Byzantine historiography. However, over the course of the last half a century, this theory has been progressively exposed as erroneous from two fronts. Firstly, the idea that the eastern emperors held dictatorial authority over the church has been shown to have been influenced by post-factum narratives that were imbued with heavy cultural and religious biases. Secondly, it has been argued that such an approach to understanding imperial power completely overlooks the complexities of the relationship between the emperor and the bishops, one in which the actions of both parties were restrained and moderated by the considerations of the other. Dagron, *Emperor and Priest*, 282–312; Alexander Angelov, “In Search of God's only Emperor: Basileus in Byzantine and Modern Historiography,” *Journal of Medieval History*, vol. 40(2), (2014): 123–41; Deno J. Geanakoplos, “Church and State in the Byzantine Empire: A Reconsideration of The Problem of Caesaropapism,” *Church History*, Vol. 34, 4 (1965): 381–403.

¹⁰ The use of spiritual auspices to shore up imperial authority within itself was by no means novel or new:

Roman emperors creates the image of a monolithic unchanging institution, the role of emperor was in fact a very fluid one that went through several fundamental shifts in ideology. Each time the empire faced a period of political restructuring, the ideological foundations underpinning imperial authority also required readjustment.¹¹ The changes in ideology that led to the emperors being viewed as God's vicegerent can be traced back to a response to the crises of the third century. The military juntas of the third century and the gradual debasement of the senate's authority saw the ideological bedrock of the emperor's *auctoritas* gradually weaken. In response to this crisis in authority, the emperors began to present themselves as conduits of divine power. Associating themselves with gods such as Jupiter and Hercules allowed them to pin the legitimacy of their rule on the permanence and majesty of the gods, rather than on fickle earthly institutions.¹² Constantine's association with the Christian god sat within this development. However, while Diocletian and his colleagues utilised the multiple gods of the pagan pantheon as a means to rationalise the sharing of power between several emperors, the monotheistic religion of the Christians offered Constantine a way to contrast his regime with those of his predecessors: one emperor, one empire, one god.¹³

Constantine's changes did not imbed themselves within imperial convention overnight; the Christianisation of the ideology of empire was a slow process and had many opponents. But, with military and political threats to the empire continuing well beyond the fourth century, the universalist themes of early Christian political theorists such as Philo, Origen, and Eusebius proved useful in redefining the empire's place in the world.¹⁴

J. R. Fears, *Princeps a Diis Electus: The Divine Election of the Emperor as a Political Concept at Rome*, Papers and Monographs of the American Academy at Rome, XXVI (Rome: American Academy, 1977), 15–30; Kaldellis, *Byzantine Republic*, 173–77.

¹¹ For instance, when Augustus took sole charge of the empire he had to take utmost care in how he justified his seizure of power. He did this by leaning on the established language of power in the republican period, going to great lengths to present himself as protecting rather than destroying the ideals of the old republic, a theme adopted by his successors; Howard Hayes Scullard, *From the Gracchi to Nero: A History of Rome from 133 B.C. to A.D. 68*, 5th ed. (London: Routledge, 1982), 208–212.

¹² The emperor had long been associated with the divine as the centre of imperial cults; but now emperors such as Aurelian and Diocletian associated themselves directly with divine patrons; Paul Stephenson, *Constantine: Unconquered Emperor, Christian Victor* (London: Quercus, 2009), 71–86. For an in-depth study of this process and how it related to wider crises, see Matthew P. Canepa, *Two Eyes of the Earth: Art and Ritual of Kingship between Rome and Sasanian Iran* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010), esp. 79–121.

¹³ In the Tetrarchic system, senior emperors were associated with Jupiter and the junior emperors with Hercules; Van Dam, *Roman Revolution*, 228–51. Kaldellis convincingly argues that such theologies of power had little impact on what were widely understood to be the practical foundations of government (i.e. the consent of the people and army). However, the rhetoric of God and emperor was in one way or another inescapably linked to the political climate of the time. Kaldellis, *Byzantine Republic*, 89–164.

¹⁴ From Paul's preaching of potential salvation for both Jew and Gentile alike to the apocalyptic vision of the Book of Revelation and the eschatological ideals of Origen, Christianity had an expansionist bent that looked

By reinterpreting Augustus' founding of the Empire and Constantine's adoption of Christianity as all part of a divine plan in which the Roman Empire was the vehicle through which God's kingdom would flourish, Christian narratives of empire provided a way in which the Roman mission statement could be reconceptualised whilst retaining the same themes of hegemony and predestination.¹⁵ It is in the post-Constantinian setting, with increasing numbers of Romans becoming Christian, that the idea that the Roman Empire was God-chosen became embedded in political rhetoric and, with it, the position and responsibilities of the emperor underwent a conceptual shift.¹⁶

1.2 Power in Piety: The Principles of Imperial Christian Sovereignty

With the rhetoric of Christian mission welded onto the rhetoric of empire, the imperial regime gained an evocative narrative of power. As long as the empire continued to enjoy God's favour, the emperor could claim the authority of a powerful patron.¹⁷ This narrative naturally placed great emphasis on political symmetry between heaven and earth. If the empire was the earthly vehicle of God's designs, then it was only through harmony between heaven and earth that the security and stability of the empire could be assured.¹⁸

to the future. Salvian's *De gubernatione Dei*, Orosius' *Historiae Adversus Paganos*, and Augustine's *De civitate Dei* can all be situated in this wider milieu in which the empire's misfortunes were reinterpreted through Christian narratives; Fowden, *Empire to Commonwealth*, 86–93.

¹⁵ For Origen on Augustus' reign paving the way for God's kingdom, see Origen, *Contra Celsum*, 2.30 (*SCh* 132.361). Eusebius drew heavily on the universalist themes of such earlier works in formulating his vision of divine imperial rule; Erik Peterson, *Der Monotheismus als politisches Problem: ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Politischen Theologie im Imperium Romanum* (Leipzig: Jakob Hegner, 1935). Such narratives provided the empire with an ideology that was not only unifying but forward looking: "not myth that explains but revelation that exhorts"; Fowden, *Empire to Commonwealth*, 59.

¹⁶ See Keith Hopkins, *A World Full of Gods: Pagans, Jews and Christians in the Roman Empire* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1999), 334–35. The memory of Constantine is a salient example of the way in which Roman identity became increasingly interwoven with a Christian one as he gradually came to represent both a latter-day Romulus and an Abraham.

¹⁷ Defining the exact contours of this relationship was a complex and ongoing debate. In the decades following Constantine's reign, Christian and pagan writers, imperial officials and emperors all struggled with how to express and elucidate the mechanisms of Roman power within an emerging Christian narrative. The transition to a Christian ideology of imperial rule threw up several pressing questions, such as where to position the emperor within a hierarchy in which God was the one source of all authority and the bishops his representatives on earth, without diminishing either group, and what a God-chosen Roman empire meant for non-Christian Romans. This negotiation between convention and novelty lasted for some time; Philip Rousseau to describe the period of this thesis as one of a "crisis of authority"; Rousseau, *Early Christian Centuries*, 237.

¹⁸ The idea that Eusebius established a distinct political theory that achieved constitutional status, has in recent years come under attack; Kaldellis, *Byzantine Republic*; Satoshi Toda, "The 'Political Theology' of Eusebius of Caesarea: A Reappraisal," in *Studies of Religion and Politics in the Early Christian Centuries*, ed. David Luckensmeyer and Pauline Allen, vol. 13 (Brisbane: St. Pauls Publications, 2010), 123–35. However, it remains undeniable that Eusebius' writings encapsulate the concepts of harmony between heaven and earth that underpinned the expression of political power in the Christian empire.

With unity with heaven central to stability, the relationship between God and emperor took on special resonance. Harmony with the godhead was primarily expressed through the emperor's piety. It linked him to God as a conduit through which God's plan was unfolding. This coupling of imperial *pietas* and *auctoritas* instituted a shift in the way in which imperial legitimacy and stability were expressed.

Divine favour had long played a central role in the rhetoric of the emperor's rule. In the pre-Christian empire the blessing of the gods came as a result of an emperor's many virtues. Within the Christian political model, however, the emperor's temporal actions took on a more passive role in his success. With God the one power in the world from which all authority was derived, piety was elevated to the top of the pantheon of necessary imperial virtues.¹⁹ If the emperor exhibited rightful devotion towards God, then all else would fall into place.²⁰ Following the lead of Eusebius, Rufinus ascribed Constantine's military victories to his piety alone and, by the time we reach Theodosius ascribing an emperor's successes not to his actions, or those of his soldiers, but to his Christian piety alone had become a common feature of imperial rhetoric.²¹ The association between imperial legitimacy and Christian piety not only pervaded literary representations of the emperor but was also found in statues, coinage, letters, laws, and seals, which all became thoroughly imbued with Christian symbolism that emphasised the accord between God and emperor.²² With the fortunes of the empire and the piety of the emperor merged, the

¹⁹ This is not to say that the transition to a Christian rhetoric of rule was a stark one. In fact, the adoption of Christianity initially led to very little change in representations of the emperor, especially during the early period in which there remained overwhelmingly more continuity with traditional tropes; Canepa, *Two Eyes*, 100; Meaghan McEvoy, *Child Emperor Rule in the Late Roman West, AD 367-455* (Oxford: OUP, 2013), 23–46.

²⁰ Sozomen, *HE* 9.1 (*SCh* 516.370).

²¹ Rufinus, *HE* 10.8 cited in Philip R. Amidon, *The Church history of Rufinus of Aquileia, Books 10 and 11* (Oxford: OUP, 1997), 18 and f.n. 15 at 45. Eusebius situates Constantine's piety and love of God as the driving factor behind his success; for example, Eusebius, *Vita Constantini* 1.6 (*SCh* 559.184). Theodosius' triumph at the battle of the Frigidus is presented as a direct consequence of Theodosius' display of piety; Socrates, *HE* 5.25 (*SCh* 505:248–50). For the linking of piety and imperial success in church histories, see Pauline Allen, *Evagrius Scholasticus the Church Historian*, *Spicilegium Sacrum Lovaniense Études et documents* Fasc. 41 (Leuven: Spicilegium Sacrum Lovaniense, 1981), 61–63.

²² It is tempting to dismiss such associations between heavenly accord and imperial success as empty tropes. However, while no doubt embellished and inflated, the rhetoric of harmony with the divine reflects a natural feature of the late-antique mental landscape in which the temporal and spiritual worlds were thoroughly interwoven; Peter Brown, *Authority and the Sacred: Aspects of the Christianisation of the Roman World* (Cambridge: CUP, 1995), 3–26. For how such intermarriage manifested in imperial ecclesiastical relations during this period, see Justin Stephens, "Religion and Power in the Early Thought of John Chrysostom," in *The Power of Religion in Late Antiquity*, ed. Andrew Cain and Noel Lenski (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), 181–88. As Michael Gaddis puts it, "both state and society in Late Antiquity were profoundly if subtly shaped by discourses ultimately religious in origin"; Michael Gaddis, "The Political Church: Religion and the State," in *A Companion to Late Antiquity*, ed. Philip Rousseau (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), 512–24, 524.

relationship between *ekklēsia* and *basileia* became a central consideration in the running of the state.

If harmony between God and emperor was essential to the state's survival, the security of the empire depended on the emperor maintaining a symbiotic relationship with the bishops. It was through the bishops' *parrhesia* with God and the maintenance of correct worship that the church won divine favours for the prosperity of the empire.²³ However, the emperor's broad remit to ensure unity of the church and the entwining of spiritual and temporal spheres in the late-antique world-view meant that the boundaries between ecclesiastical and imperial authority were ill-defined. This left a large scope for the imperial government to interfere in church matters. Indeed, it is in the name of safeguarding the church and protecting the citizens of the empire that, throughout the fifth century and beyond, we find emperors wading into ecclesiastical matters: convoking councils, exiling bishops, and even having a direct hand in forging theological formulas.²⁴

It is this view of the emperor as able to wield ultimate authority over the church that underpins assumptions that the emperor's authority automatically benefitted the bishop of Constantinople. With the emperors seen to be keen to glorify the city in which they resided, the assumption is that the imperial authority was both willing and able to throw his authority behind the bishop of Constantinople above all others. However, such an assumption carries with it the residue of a caesaropapist interpretation of the emperor's position in relation to the church. The emperor's interaction with his bishops rarely took the form of untempered imperial imposition, but rather was governed by a slew of intersecting religious and political interests that severely mediated the emperor's influence over the church.

1.3 The Limitations of Piety

While the merging of imperial and Christian authority gave the emperors access to a potent narrative of imperial power, it also introduced new and potentially highly damaging sources of instability and constraint. With piety and God's approval a central component

²³ Peter Brown, *Power and Persuasion in Late Antiquity: Towards a Christian Empire* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1992), 61–69; Rapp, *Holy Bishops*, 75–76, 86–90, 268–69.

²⁴ Theology could legitimately sit alongside such matters as military strength and diplomacy as central considerations of state security; H. A. Drake, "Intolerance, Religious Violence, and Political Legitimacy in Late Antiquity," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 79/1 (2011): 193–235, 198–99; J. R. Lyman, "Ascetics and Bishops: Epiphanius on Orthodoxy," in *Orthodoxie, christianisme, histoire*, ed. Susanna Elm, Éric Rebillard, and Antonella Romano (Roma: École française de Rome, 2000), 149–61.

of Roman government, the emperor had to negotiate his image as an upstanding Christian with the wider practical needs of the state. This negotiation was extremely complex, as the realities of rule often compelled the emperor to undertake actions that could bring his perceived accord with divine authority into question.

Challenges from Within

One of the most pressing threats to the emperor's reputation as an upright Christian ruler was conflict within the church. Constantine understood well the advantages of having a monotheistic religion underpinning political authority in contrast to a polytheistic set-up. The pagan pantheon offered difficulties in defining a single source of power: "[H]ow could I cultivate one (god) especially without dishonouring the others?"²⁵ However, what Constantine did not foresee was the plurality of Christian outlooks which brought with it the same essential problem. The attempt to define an orthodox form of Christianity led to many rifts in the church, rifts that presented the imperial figurehead with serious challenges to his authority.

On a practical level, in order for an emperor to take advantage of the authority invested in a close relationship between church and empire, the faith of the imperial church needed to reflect that of the majority of Christians. Episcopal elections and theological disputes were a primary source of popular unrest in late antiquity, and the more divided the church, the more severe such unrest became. An even more dangerous prospect arising from religious conflict was that those who dissented from the imperially-sanctioned church found their loyalties divided between church and government. Such considerations can be seen at play in Milan during the conflict between Ambrose and Valentinian II. The Homoian emperor purportedly lifted his siege of Ambrose's basilica because he feared that the Nicene soldiers amongst the besieging force could not be trusted to enact imperial orders due to the risk of excommunication they faced.²⁶

The civil disorder that came with religious conflict added to the ideological challenges faced by an imperial government dealing with ecclesiastical divisions. Conflict within the church worked to undermine the very basis of authority that Christianity

²⁵ Eusebius, *Oratio ad sanctorum coetum* 3.3–4 (GCS 1.156–57); translation from H. A. Drake, "The Church, Society and Political Power" in *The Cambridge History of Christianity, Vol 2 Constantine to c. 600*, ed. A. Casiday and F. Norris (Cambridge: CUP, 2007), 403–428, 406.

²⁶ Ambrose, *Ep.* 76.13 (CSEL 82.114–115); See Neil McLynn, *Ambrose of Milan Church and Court in a Christian Capital* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 192–93.

provided. As outlined above, legitimate governance was articulated by the symbiotic relationship between emperor and God; conflict within the imperial church therefore represented a direct challenge to imperial legitimacy. By failing to rein in religious dissension, the emperor was perceived as unable to safeguard the empire from catastrophes, both temporal and spiritual in nature.²⁷ To make matters worse, bishops were not averse to pointing this danger out publically. Athanasius, when attempting to dissuade Constantius from his Arian leanings, assured the emperor that returning to a Nicene touchstone of faith would guarantee the emperor a long and peaceful reign.²⁸ Reading between the lines, the audience would have clearly understood the veiled threat to imperial stability. So too Cyril's appeals to the court during his conflict with Nestorius made constant reference to the importance of the correct expression of piety in ensuring the strength of the imperial court and the security of the empire.²⁹ Such warnings were not only employed by bishops but could also be utilised by rival rulers; in his campaign to destabilise Valentinian's regime, Magnus Maximus cast aspersions on the emperor's pro-Arian leanings.³⁰

Here we see the other side of the political marriage between church and empire – while harmony between the emperor and church provided a powerful narrative of authority, so too disharmony fundamentally undermined imperial authority. Given the damaging effect of such conflict, as well as the emperor's avowed role in safeguarding God's kingdom on earth, the imperial authorities were often compelled to intervene in an attempt to resolve such rifts. But their involvement was itself a precarious operation, as intervention inherently brought the emperor's piety under greater scrutiny. With the post-Constantinian empire placing such stress on the correct expression of imperial Christianity, the emperors faced a danger that the pagan emperors rarely had to consider – the emperor himself could be accused of exhibiting wrong belief or, even worse, being conceived of as a persecutor of the true faith. The histories of the period were replete with stories of

²⁷ Earthquakes, foreign invasion, and other catastrophes both manmade and natural were frequently portrayed as manifestations of God's judgement. For example, Sozomen recounts how God's displeasure with Julian's reign led to earthquakes, famine, and drought; Sozomen 6.2 (*SCh* 495.250–58).

²⁸ Athanasius, *Apologia ad Constantium* (*SCh* 56.174).

²⁹ Cyril, *Oratio ad Arcadium et Marinam augustas* (ACO 1.1.5.62–118); Cyril, *Oratio ad Theodosium imp* (ACO 1.1.1.42–72), cited in Susan Wessel, *Cyril of Alexandria and the Nestorian Controversy: The Making of a Saint and of a Heretic* (Oxford: OUP, 2004), 97–100. Cyril was particularly adept at employing themes of civic instability; Maijastina Kahlos, "Ditches of Destruction – Cyril of Alexandria and the Rhetoric of Public Security," *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 107, 2 (2014): 659–90.

³⁰ *Coll. Avellana, Ep.* 39 (CSEL 35.88–90).

imperial regimes paying the price for incorrectly interpreting God's will.³¹ Such accounts no doubt weighed heavily on the minds of emperors forced to arbitrate on matters of the church.

Challenges from Without

The emperor's piety came under threat not only in his dealings with those within the church but also in the government's necessary interactions with many outside of the church. Whilst in decline, the pagans of the empire, alongside Jews, still made up a substantial number of tax-paying citizens.³² How then was a pious emperor supposed to deal with these groups who, despite their religious status, remained Roman citizens and essential to the state? This question became a pressing problem in a progressively less tolerant Christian environment.³³ When zealous Christians burned a synagogue in Callinicum, Theodosius was obliged to punish the perpetrators accordingly, attracting criticism from Ambrose.³⁴ Theodosius' son Arcadius is alleged to have faced a similar situation, feeling himself compelled to decline the bishop of Gaza's request to have pagan temples destroyed, on account of the temple's attendees remaining lawful tax-payers.³⁵ By being seen to protect or facilitate the activities of Jews and pagans, the emperor ran the risk of being seen as too weak or, even worse, complicit in their conspiracies.

The problem was no doubt compounded by the fact that non-Christians not only continued to contribute to the imperial coffers but remained a presence within the organs of state control.³⁶ Pagans and other elements considered as heretical by the state-

³¹ Invasion of Roman territory, usurpation, and military disaster are all positioned as a result of divine displeasure; Socrates, *HE* 2.10 (*SCh* 493.48), Socrates, *HE* 4.3 (*SCh* 505.30), Sozomen, *HE* 6.40 (*SCh* 495.648–70).

³² See discussion of numbers below.

³³ Michael Gaddis, *There Is No Crime for Those Who Have Christ: Religious Violence in the Christian Roman Empire* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 68–102.

³⁴ See discussion in Gaddis, *There Is No Crime*, 194–96.

³⁵ Mark the Deacon, *V. Porphyrii* 41 (ed. Gregoire and Kugener, 35). While the life of Porphyry can no longer be considered originating from the fifth century. The fact that ensuring the flow of taxation needed to be considered alongside religious policy is verified by the prefect Taurus' warning to Theodosius II that imposing the formula of reunion on the bishops in Cilicia would endanger the flow of taxes from that region; Hugh Elton, "Imperial Politics at the Court of Theodosius II," in *The Power of Religion in Late Antiquity*, ed. A. Cain (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), 133, 133–42. Timothy Barnes, *Early Christian Hagiography and Roman History* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), 260–83. While the life of Porphyry cannot be trusted as a historical source for the fifth century, if we accept Aude Busine's argument that it presents the world-view of the Justinianic period, then the *Vita* provides evidence that preserving tax income was a consideration that continued into the sixth century; Aude Busine, "From stones to myth: Temple destruction and civic identity in the Late Antique Roman East," *JLA* 6.2 (2013): 325–46.

³⁶ See below, section 2.3.

sanctioned church remained influential in the Theodosian court and, while the emperor publically condemned their position, his policies no doubt took into account their political influence.³⁷ In addition to such publically ostracised parties, there were also other non-Nicenes within the capital with whom the emperor was obliged to maintain an open relationship.³⁸ In particular, the defence of the empire in the fifth century saw the government maintain close ties with many powerful barbarian elements of an Arian persuasion.³⁹ Again, this relationship presented the emperor with a difficult task in balancing the needs of the state with his image as an upstanding adherent of Nicaea.

The above examples are just a small sample of the many practical considerations of state that needed to be balanced with the emperor's image as a Christian ruler. He had to ensure that he had adequate political support for his rule, maintain the borders, keep the taxes flowing, advocate an inclusive Christian vision, and attend to the many other concerns that touched the interests of a wide audience, both within and outside the church. With such diverse and often contradictory considerations informing the emperor's dealings with the church, the actions of the emperor were not automatically aligned with the vision or desires of the individual bishops of the great sees. The emperor's relationship with the church entailed a delicate negotiation between many interests, and often saw broad imperial interests take precedence over the prerogatives of a local bishop. Inevitably, the see where imperial interests most often impinged on local episcopal management was at Constantinople.

1.4 The Interaction of *Imperium* and *Sacerdotium* at Constantinople

While all the great sees attracted their fair share of imperial intervention, as Peter Norton points out, "not all sees were equal".⁴⁰ The establishment of Constantinople as the permanent home of the emperor and his court meant that the city's episcopate was caught in the cross-winds of imperial power. While the emperor's representatives were naturally to be found throughout the east, the further the distance from the emperor, the greater the ability of local authority figures to ignore imperial directives or mislead the imperial

³⁷ Section 2.3.

³⁸ Section 2.3.

³⁹ Section 2.3.

⁴⁰ Peter Norton, *Episcopal Elections 250-600: Hierarchy and Popular Will in Late Antiquity* (Oxford: OUP, 2007), 82.

authorities at the centre.⁴¹ When the emperors made a permanent base at Constantinople and ceased to roam widely across their domains, this tendency increased: “The strong concentration of imperial power at the centre exacerbated its tendency to drain away at the edges of empire. Strong men in provinces far distant from Constantinople could frequently do as they pleased.”⁴² By the fifth century, such strong men included powerful bishops, such as those of Alexandria. On recounting the tensions between the bishop Cyril and the prefect Orestes at Alexandria, Socrates remarked on the growing propensity of the bishops of Alexandria to infringe on imperial jurisdiction.⁴³ At Constantinople, however, every facet of the bishop’s rule – every sermon, appointment, deposition, conflict, reform – came under immediate scrutiny from the imperial executive which, in turn, exercised its power to control church matters here more than anywhere else.⁴⁴ In addition, the bishops of Constantinople were regularly implicated in the various court intrigues and political wrangles that consistently bubbled away under the surface of Constantinopolitan society. Personal enmities, bribery, imperial feuds, and imperial sponsorship all intruded into the ecclesiastical life of Constantinople, to a level unprecedented elsewhere, and were at the heart of the many controversies and depositions that the see experienced. That the location of the emperor did little to ensure the stability of the episcopate is perhaps most obvious in the involvement of imperial authorities in episcopal elections.

The area in which imperial coercion was most noticeable was in determining who sat on the bishop’s throne and for how long.⁴⁵ As we have noted in the previous chapter, the heavy imperial interference in episcopal elections before 381 left an indelible mark on the religious landscape of Constantinople that ultimately disadvantaged the see’s

⁴¹ As Lauren Kaplow has shown in the case of the Alexandrian bishops, local bishops would flout imperial policy to the extent that they were able to do so without repercussions. The greater his physical distance from the imperial head the more a bishop could get away with. Lauren Kaplow, “Religious and Intercommunal Violence in Alexandria in the 4th and 5th Centuries CE,” *Hirundo* 4 (2005): 2–26, 18; Kelly, “Emperors, Government and Bureaucracy,” 158.

⁴² Christopher Kelly, “Emperors, Government and Bureaucracy,” 181.

⁴³ Socrates, *HE* 7.13 (*SCh* 506.48–54). For example, Cyril’s election was, according to Socrates, secured by co-opting regional military support; *HE* 7.7 (*SCh* 506.34–36).

⁴⁴ It is perhaps not a coincidence that Constantinople and Antioch, the two cities of the east that were the most ecclesiastically conflicted in the fourth century, were also the two main residences of the emperors and that Alexandria, the furthest away from the physical centre of imperial power, developed into the most unified see.

⁴⁵ Roger Gryson, “Les élections épiscopales en Orient au IV^e siècle Orient,” *Revue d’histoire ecclésiastique* 74, 2 (1979): 301–45, 336–37. It is no longer possible to say without controversy that the emperor had a free hand in appointing bishops. Recent scholarship has shown that imperial intervention was more dependent on prevailing popular opinion and political expediency than previously thought. However, it would be misleading to marginalise the impact of imperial influences on episcopal elections at Constantinople; Johan Leemans and Peter Van Nuffelen, “Episcopal Elections in Late Antiquity: Structures and Perspectives,” in *Episcopal Elections in Late Antiquity*, ed. Johan Leemans, Peter Van Nuffelen, Shawn W. J. Keough, and Carla Nicolaye (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2011), 1–19, 10–15.

development for decades to come. While it is disingenuous simply to blame imperial intervention for the lack of a strong Nicene church at Constantinople (Constantius and Valens could not have known that the Nicene outlook would eventually win the day over its rival doctrines), the decades following Valens' death provide further evidence that imperial intervention into episcopal appointment was not the stabilising factor that may be assumed. Both Chrysostom and Nestorius were brought to Constantinople by the local imperial authorities to address local divisions. In both cases the imperial government opted to bring in outsiders as a solution to highly-contested elections within the city.⁴⁶ In addition, the bishops were selected specifically for their gifts in preaching, which it was hoped would help ease sectarian tensions at Constantinople.⁴⁷ The utter failure of these imperial initiatives is attested by the fact that, in both cases, the same imperial regime that presided over the bishops' appointments was complicit in seeing them deposed. Even more condemning is the fact that both bishops left even more pronounced divisions within the city than before they arrived.⁴⁸

While episcopal elections provide the most easily observable examples of imperial interaction with ecclesiastical politics at Constantinople, to appreciate fully the impact that imperial prerogatives had on the Constantinopolitan episcopate we must look beyond such infrequent examples and instead examine the effect it had on a more consistent, day to day basis.

2. Politics, Patronage and the Episcopate at Constantinople

In the troubled third century, the external military threats to the empire's borders necessitated that the emperors eschew the comforts of residing permanently at Rome. Instead, the emperor and his large entourage of attendants, advisors, and generals roamed widely across their territories, moving from one regional capital to another in order to react best to the most pressing military threat. However, from Theodosius' reign onwards, this trend abated in the east, with Constantinople providing a convenient location near both of

⁴⁶ Socrates, *HE* 6.2; 7.29 (*SCh* 505.260; 506.106); Sozomen, *HE* 8.2 (*SCh* 516.234); Ps.-Martyrius, *Or. fun.* 14–15 (ed. Wallraff-Ricci, 61); Nestorius, *Liber Heraclidis* 2.1.376–79 (ed. Nau, 242–43).

⁴⁷ Socrates, *HE* 6.2; 7.29 (*SCh* 505.262; 506.108).

⁴⁸ For example, the conflict surrounding Chrysostom long outlived the Syrian himself, with the rift his deposition caused amongst the Nicene faithful within Constantinople lasting for two and a half decades after he had left the city, see Peter Van Nuffelen, *Un héritage de Paix et de Piété: Étude sur les Histoires Ecclésiastiques de Socrate et de Sozomène* (Leuven: Peeters, 2004), 30–35.

the most pressing military threats.⁴⁹ The appropriateness of the city's location, combined with the increasing move away from the emperors leading their armies in the field, saw the city become the permanent residence of the imperial household.⁵⁰ The knock-on effect of Constantinople's emergence as permanent home to the emperors was a substantial increase in the city's political and administrative infrastructure.

Thanks to the earlier initiatives of the Constantinian emperors, Constantinople already had a well-developed political organisation; however, after the Theodosian dynasty made the city their permanent eastern residence, this feature of the city was further bolstered. In previous decades, the court had travelled along with the itinerant emperor. These vital members of staff and imperial hangers-on made up a large assembly; however, inevitably many influential members of the political elite – imperial family members, senators, and influential aristocrats – remained at Rome or their home cities. The development of Constantinople as capital meant that, for the first time in many decades, the emperor, imperial family, court, and senate were all located in one geographical location on a permanent basis. With all the organs of state control in one place, the number of bureaucrats and political aspirants surrounding the eastern court was significantly increased.⁵¹ As the Roman political hub par excellence, Constantinople was now the place to be for ambitious generals, aspiring chamberlains, and hopeful administrators, not to mention the destination for a never-ending stream of foreign visitors coming to the city to petition imperial authorities. The core attraction to Constantinople was access to political patronage.

Just as in earlier Roman culture, the contours of early fifth-century society continued to be defined by its relationships of patronage.⁵² Fostering and navigating complex networks of deference and privilege was key to an individual's social and political progress, opening up opportunities for financial sponsorship, imperial appointment, and increased social currency. Such intricate webs of client-patron relationships not only dictated the contours of the empire's political institutions but was

⁴⁹ Allowing the emperor to be close at hand to deal with threats from both the barbarians of the lower Danube as well as the Persian Empire to the east.

⁵⁰ After Theodosius, very few emperors personally led the army; Michael Whitby, "War and State in Late Antiquity: Some Economic and Political Connections," in *Krieg - Gesellschaft - Institutionen: Beiträge zu einer vergleichenden Kriegsgeschichte*, ed. Burkhard Meissner, Oliver Schmitt, and Michael Sommer (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2005), 355–85, 368–69.

⁵¹ This effect was magnified by the fact that the governmental structures from the Tetrarchic period onwards became increasingly centralised around the emperor and around him developed an ever-expanding bureaucratic machine; Simon Swain, *Hellenism and Empire: Language, Classicism, and Power in the Greek World AD 50-250* (New York: Clarendon, 1996), 4–5.

⁵² See Richard P. Saller, *Personal Patronage under the Early Empire* (Cambridge: CUP, 1982).

also the primary mechanism through which bishops maintained their influence within episcopal networks.⁵³ With the emperor residing at Constantinople and surrounded by a population of wealthy and upwardly mobile aristocrats, the city was fertile ground for lucrative sponsorship. People from all over the empire – from barbarian generals and sausage sellers to ascetics and theologians – sought to take advantage of the opportunities that Constantinople offered.

It is this feature of Constantinople as a hub of patronage that underpins the assumption that its bishop was at a distinct advantage. It is supposed that enjoying permanent access to the court as well the city's wealthy aristocracy, the bishop's ability to gain imperial favour and enhance his own position as a patron was naturally increased. This calculation is not, however, as clear-cut as first seems. The bishop at Constantinople was by no means guaranteed unimpeded access to the patronage on offer at Constantinople, but had to compete for it alongside other candidates, even potential ecclesiastical rivals.⁵⁴ This was no simple task as competition for imperial favour and political patronage was fierce. The aristocratic cliques orbiting the emperor were engaged in a constant struggle to buoy support and acquire or sustain influence.⁵⁵ Imperial family members, military commanders, officials, courtiers, and ambitious newcomers were all linked in complex alliances and enmities between and against each other. Not only was such competition ripe with political intrigue but it was ever-shifting. The desire of prominent figures to safeguard their position or ambitious bureaucrats to raise their profile meant lines of patronage and alliance shifted across all forms of kinship groups: between Arians and Nicenes, Romans and Goths, old senatorial families and new men, ascetics and eunuchs.⁵⁶ The diversity of religious, political, and strategic interests of the various factions within the Constantinopolitan elite meant that their interests were by no means

⁵³ Rousseau, *Early Christian Centuries*, 246.

⁵⁴ As noted in Price and Gaddis, *Council of Chalcedon*, vol. 1, 14. As we will see in the case of Severian resisting Chrysostom and Proclus opposing Nestorius (sections 2.1 and 2.2), rival clerics could enjoy powerful patronage that could be brought to bear in opposition to the bishop. It was not just those within the established church hierarchy that could take advantage of such patronage but, as we will see in the following chapter, the city's monks also proved particularly adept at utilising their networks of patronage to influence imperial episcopal policy.

⁵⁵ Those at Constantinople who sought riches and imperial appointments were not restricted to the aristocracy or military alone. At New Rome 'new' men were able to rise to prominence beyond the usual restrictions of aristocratic lineage; Brian Croke, "Dynasty and Aristocracy in the Fifth Century," in *The Cambridge Companion to the Age of Attila*, ed. Michael Maas (Cambridge: CUP, 2014), 98–124, 116.

⁵⁶ Alan Cameron and Jacqueline Long, *Barbarians and Politics at the Court of Arcadius* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993) 71–91; Holum, *Empresses*, 67–68, 84–86; Susanna Elm, "What the Bishop Wore to the Synod: John Chrysostom, Origenism, and the Politics of Fashion at Constantinople," *Adamantius* 19 (2013): 156–69, 156–59.

automatically aligned to the interests of the local bishop. In fact, they could be directly opposed.

By surveying the ways in which imperial, ecclesiastical, and political patronage intersected and interacted at Constantinople, it will become clear that rather than strengthening the bishop's networks, the powerful lines of political patronage that underscored Constantinopolitan society worked to undermine some of the central foundations of episcopal authority and encourage conflict.

2.1 Court Patronage and Constantinople's Rebellious Clergy

Timothy E. Gregory, noting the propensity for clerics and monks who had fallen foul of local authorities to gravitate towards Constantinople, remarked that the city had a reputation for being a "haven for rebellious clergy".⁵⁷ The motivation behind these fringe elements seeking shelter at Constantinople was the opportunity for lucrative patronage available at the city. By winning over wealthy and influential patrons, disaffected clerics could not only avoid censure from their episcopal opponents at home but could thrive in their own right. Talented Christian teachers, preachers, and writers could earn riches and prestigious advancement at Constantinople, as was the case for Gerontius who arrived there in the late fourth century. Formerly a deacon under Ambrose at Milan, Gerontius fled to Constantinople in order to avoid episcopal discipline after falling foul of his bishop. Once he was a safe distance from Ambrose's protestations, Gerontius ingratiated himself with the city's elite, eventually winning enough favour at court to be promoted to bishop of Nicomedia.⁵⁸

While Gregory's comment on Constantinople's characteristic as a safe harbour for rebellious clergy was made specifically in reference to clerics such as Gerontius who came to the city after rebelling against episcopal authority elsewhere, the designation of Constantinople as home to rebellious clergy can be applied equally to the Constantinopolitan clergy's attitudes towards the city's own resident bishops. The episcopal upheavals experienced at Constantinople between 381 and 451 were underlined

⁵⁷ Gregory, *Vox Populi*, 174. These included persecuted Pelagians, disenfranchised ascetics like the Sleepless Monks, as well as heretics who were hounded out elsewhere, such as Eunomius.

⁵⁸ Ambrose did attempt to intervene in Gerontius' success at Constantinople but his former deacon's popularity and favour at court likely prevented any action against him; Vasiliki Limberis, "Bishops Behaving Badly: Helladius Challenges Gregory of Nazianzus and Gregory of Nyssa," in *Re-Reading Gregory of Nazianzus: Essays on History, Theology, and Culture*, ed. Christopher A. Beeley (Washington: CUA Press, 2012), 159–77, 169–70.

by high levels of internal clerical sedition. As we saw in the previous chapter, Gregory of Nazianzus faced an attempted coup from within his own ranks, and this trend was to continue with John Chrysostom and Nestorius, who both faced open rebellion from prominent figures within the city's clergy. The high incidence of Constantinopolitan clergy agitating against their bishop has traditionally been attributed to the deficiencies of the individual bishops involved. However, through examination of the clerical opposition faced by John Chrysostom, I will argue in this section that the same patronage that drew disgraced clerics such as Gerontius to Constantinople also worked to decentralise the local bishop's authority and offer heightened opportunity for clerical rebellion.⁵⁹ As we will see, by gaining influence amongst the wealthy patrons at Constantinople, ambitious clerics could undermine the bishop's influence within the city or even oppose his authority outright.

John Chrysostom's Episcopal Enemies

John's loss of the bishopric is often ascribed to geo-ecclesiastical politicking,⁶⁰ but internal episcopal dissension at Constantinople was central to the bishop's fall from office. Theophilus' convening of the synod at which John was deposed was only made possible due to the high level of agitation from within the city. John's most vocal enemies – Severian of Gabala, Antiochus of Ptolemais, and Acacius of Beroea – waged a surreptitious campaign to undermine the bishop's authority at the capital, and it was current and ex-members of the clergy that not only presented the charges against John at the Oak but provided first-hand accounts of Chrysostom's abuses.⁶¹ The origin of this clerical opposition is traditionally put down to John's unusually stern brand of clerical management. However, once we look at John's episcopal activities at Constantinople in relation to the city's unique clerical culture, we can reconceptualise John's episcopal

⁵⁹ Thanks to the rich sources dealing with John Chrysostom's episcopate, we have a much clearer picture of the makeup of the internal clerical opposition he faced than that of the other two bishops.

⁶⁰ Russell, Theophilus, 17; Susanna Elm, "The Dog that Did Not Bark: Doctrine and Patriarchal Authority in the Conflict between Theophilus of Alexandria and John Chrysostom of Constantinople," in *Christian Origins I*, ed. Lewis Ayres and Gareth Jones (London: Routledge, 1998), 68–93; McGuckin, *Saint Gregory*, 314; Gregory, *Vox Populi*, 44.

⁶¹ Palladius, *Dial.* 4 (*SCh* 341.92–94). Liebeschuetz names them, alongside the empress Eudoxia, as the most prominent figures undermining John at the capital; Liebeschuetz, *Barbarians*, 198. The first sets of charges were compiled by two clerics that John had deposed, while the archimandrite Isaac proffered additional testimonies: Palladius, *Dial.* 8 (*SCh* 341.162); Photius, *Bibl. Cod.* 59 (*SCh* 342.100–114).

management not as a moral crusade but an attempt to mitigate the destabilising effect that high levels of imperial patronage had on the office of bishop at Constantinople.

John's Constantinopolitan Reforms

On taking up the episcopal chair, John implemented a slew of episcopal reforms. Dismayed by the episcopal culture he found there, one of John's first actions as bishop was to expel several members of the clergy before embarking on a sweeping campaign to modify the ecclesiastical culture of Constantinople, with an emphasis on removing overt signs of worldliness in the clergy.⁶² In conjunction with this attempt to amend clerical behaviour, John initiated a reform of the church's finances. Bringing the flow of funds under his direct supervision, John took a hard line against profiteering and unnecessary expenditure, in particular, cutting costs by curtailing lavish spending.⁶³ Taken together, it is clear that the focus of John's financial and clerical management was focussed on rooting out practises that were motivated by temporal gain. Given the moral overtone of these reforms, John's initiatives are traditionally linked to the Syrian's reputation for having been a dour disciplinarian with an overdeveloped moral compass.⁶⁴ It is the perceived unnecessary severity of his clerical management that has been positioned as the central cause of the internal opposition the bishop subsequently faced.⁶⁵ However, considering John's actions in the context of alongside Constantinople's culture of patronage, it is

⁶² Photius, *Bibl. Cod.* 59 (Sch 342.100–114); Socrates, *HE* 6.3–4 (Sch 505.264–68); Sozomen, *HE* 8.3 (Sch 516.242–44); Palladius, *Dial.* 5 (Sch 341.118–26). Such reforms even included eating habits.

⁶³ Sozomen, *HE* 8.3 (Sch 516.242–44); Palladius, *Dial.* 5 (Sch 341.118–26); Gone was the extravagant banqueting the clergy had previously enjoyed, while wealth earmarked for the adornment of churches was diverted to various social projects. For the financial charges levelled against John, see charges 3, 4, and 17 at the Oak; Photius, *Bibl. Cod.* 59 (Sch 342.100–108).

⁶⁴ The approach of Chrysostomus Baur, who depicted John's reforms as motivated by the Syrian's unbending morality, has remained influential in subsequent scholarship. John's episcopal reforms are conceived as a direct product of his unique brand of strict leadership, an attempt to enforce his own unusually high standard of behaviour over his fellow representatives of the church; Chrysostomus Baur, *John Chrysostom and His Time*, Vol. 2, Part 1, trans. M. Gonzaga, 2nd Ed. (Belmont, MA.: Notable & Academic Books, 1988), 56–69.

⁶⁵ Kelly, *Golden Mouth*, 121; Liebeschuetz, *Barbarians*, 209–10; Tiersch, *Johannes Chrysostomus*, 135–51; Rudolf Brändle, *John Chrysostom: Bishop, Reformer, Martyr*, English translation by John Cawte and Silke Trzcionka (Strathfield: St Paul's Publications, 2004), 66 and 106. In depicting John as a difficult and uncompromising man, such works follow the lead of ancient sources, such as Socrates who presents John as arrogant (*ἀλαζονικός*), quick to anger (*θυμῶν*), and unreasonably harsh (*πικρότερος*) – characteristics that he reports quickly turned the clergy against their new bishop; Socrates, *HE* 6.3–4 (Sch 505.264–68). However, such uncritical reading of the sources underestimates the extent to which such perceptions were a product of the continuing fallout from John's fall from office. See Wendy Mayer, "The Making of a Saint: John Chrysostom in Early Historiography," in *Chrysostomosbilder in 1600 Jahren: Facetten der Wirkungsgeschichte eines Kirchenvaters*, ed. Martin Wallraff and Rudolf Brändle, AKG, Bd 105 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2008), 39–59; Wendy Mayer, "John Chrysostom: Deconstructing the Construction of an Exile," *Theologische Zeitschrift* 62 (2006): 248–58; F. Van Ommeslage, "Que vaut le témoignage de Pallade sur le procès de Saint Jean Chrysostome?" *AnBoll* 95 (1977): 389–413.

possible to view the reforms not as a product of the Syrian's personal quirks, but as a reaction to the peculiarities of Constantinople's episcopal landscape.⁶⁶

John's reforms hint at a clerical culture underlined by lavish lifestyles and profiteering. This is no surprise as Constantinople was a lucrative environment for ecclesiasts. As Christianity became increasingly entwined with the operations of state, and piety became ever more synonymous with imperial legitimacy, association with holy men and patronage of evocative preachers had become a central feature of aristocratic culture and a key strategy in climbing the social ladder.⁶⁷ Naturally, the Constantinopolitan church benefitted materially from its proximity to a well-spring of wealthy and ambitious patrons who were eager to patronise religious figures. The desire to associate with holy men amongst the political elite of Constantinople was so prevalent, and the rewards so lucrative, that itinerant preachers, philosophers, bishops, and monks began to stream into the city from throughout the empire.⁶⁸ It is no surprise then that John found the Constantinopolitan clergy to have been marked by a particular culture of profiteering and materialism. While John's campaign against such a clerical culture fits neatly with the Syrian's reputation, we should be careful not to ascribe his reforms to a moral undertaking alone. Aside from the fact that any references to John's personal qualities in the sources should be treated with caution, John's reforms must be considered in close context with the practical impact such heavy clerical patronage had on the episcopal hierarchy at Constantinople. By doing this we will find that John's attempt to overhaul clerical practices at Constantinople can be viewed as a pragmatic attempt to safeguard the episcopal authority of the office of bishop at Constantinople.

⁶⁶ For a fuller account of the way in which modern perspectives of Chrysostom's tenure have been distorted by teleological approaches to Constantinople's episcopal landscape, see Justin Pigott, "Capital Crimes: Deconstructing John's 'unnecessary severity' in Managing the Clergy at Constantinople," in *(Re)Visioning John Chrysostom: New Theories and Approaches*, ed. Chris de Wet and Wendy Mayer (Leiden: Brill, 2017), Forthcoming.

⁶⁷ Susanna Elm demonstrates how, at Constantinople, patronage was a key socio-political tool in displaying one's religious credentials; Elm, "What the Bishop Wore," 162–65.

⁶⁸ Patronising monks was particularly popular amongst the Constantinopolitan aristocracy, leading to a rapidly increasing monastic population both in and around the city. See Peter Hatlie, *The Monks and Monasteries of Constantinople, ca. 350–850* (Cambridge: CUP, 2007), 67–86. For the role of patronage in Isaac's establishment at Constantinople, see Daniel Caner, *Wandering, Begging Monks Spiritual Authority and the Promotion of Monasticism in Late Antiquity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 192–93.

The Destabilising Effect of Imperial Patronage on the Episcopate

Having received his episcopal education at Antioch, John would have well appreciated the fact that a bishop maintained authority through his function as the preeminent religious patron within his episcopate.⁶⁹ A bishop's authority within the local episcopal organisation rested on his ability to provide hospitality, receive petitions, appoint and promote clergy, and administer social justice. Therefore, John would have quickly recognised the way in which aristocratic patronage at Constantinople directly threatened such a model of episcopal leadership.

As John's attempt to funnel the proceeds of patronage through himself demonstrates, the material benefits received by the clergy was not administered in a hierarchical fashion but was a highly individualistic practice. So too political patronage and protection were not granted on the bishop's terms but, as we will see below, could be won by individuals in the clergy, even against the bishop's will.⁷⁰ The diffuse nature of aristocratic patronage posed a direct challenge to the bishop's own position as a patron. Through access to powerful alternative sources of patronage, clerics within the city could not only survive and flourish independently of the local episcopal establishment but, with the backing of influential imperial sponsors, could even directly challenge the bishop's authority. The threat that such patronage posed is most evident when considering the large number of visiting clergy that came to Constantinople to take advantage of the patronage on offer.

From the moment Constantine bestowed his favour on the Christian church, the court became the destination for a constant stream of bishops seeking the imperial ear.⁷¹ The large and well-connected aristocracy that grew up around the court at Constantinople increased this influx, with many bishops coming to the capital not only to petition the emperor but to take advantage of the patronage available there.⁷² Amongst these

⁶⁹ Meletius and Flavian, the Antiochene bishops under whom John served, both provided instructive examples of the various tools and strategies needed to maintain leadership in a spiritually and politically volatile environment; Wendy Mayer, "Patronage, Pastoral Care and the Role of the Bishop at Antioch," *Vigiliae Christianae* 55, 1 (2001): 61–64, 58–70.

⁷⁰ As we will see below.

⁷¹ Rapp, *Holy Bishops*, 265–66.

⁷² By the 340s the numbers of ecclesiasts canvassing the emperor was becoming a pressing problem, with canon 7 of the Council of Sardica condemning the practice of bishops coming to the court with a view to winning worldly appointments or favour. As the series of later pronouncements against the practice attest, such attempts at prohibition did little to stem the flow. Sardica canon 8 (in Latin) and 7 (in Greek) reprinted from C. H. Turner, *Ecclesiae Occidentalis Monumenta Iuris Antiquissima* in Hamilton Hess, *The Early Development of Canon Law and the Council of Serdica* (Oxford: OUP, 2002), 216 and 231.

newcomers, the most menacing to the local bishop were those visiting clerics who came to the city in the hope of using their talent for preaching for economic gain.⁷³ On a most basic level, these gifted orators provided unwanted competition for the local establishment, with successful preachers syphoning money and potential audience members away from the local bishop, not to mention undermining his charismatic authority.⁷⁴ However, a second and more alarming threat posed by these itinerant preachers was the inherent danger of such visitors finding favour at court. At Constantinople, with the court rather than the local bishop the incentive for coming to the city, the episcopal hierarchy could be turned on its head by an ambitious cleric. By gaining the ear of a powerful courtier, empress, or even the emperor, a favoured clergyman had access to influence that could run roughshod over that of the local bishop. The case of Severian of Gabala was a prime example of this.

Severian came to Constantinople during John's episcopate seeking to replicate the success of his fellow Syrian, Antiochus, who had amassed a small fortune after a short stint in the city.⁷⁵ The bishop of Gabala's eloquence of speech was quickly rewarded at the capital, and he was even tasked with taking over Chrysostom's preaching duties while the bishop was away in Asia Minor. Not long after John's return, the relationship between the two soured, and disciplinary issues led John to dismiss Severian from the clergy and eject him from the city.⁷⁶ The underlying politics inherent in the sources make it difficult to discern the exact circumstances that led to the deterioration of the relationship between the two; however, one likely explanation that can be gleaned from the sources is that Severian had taken advantage of John's absence by attempting to usurp the bishop's authority.⁷⁷ Given Severian's motivation for coming to Constantinople, such an attempt on John's position seems plausible. As we have already seen in the case of Maximus the Cynic only two decades earlier, well-received visitors could find themselves able to challenge for the bishop's chair. In any case, whatever drove a wedge between the two men, the reaction of the court to John's ruling reveals the extent to which the bishop of Constantinople's authority was handicapped by high levels of imperial patronage in the city.

⁷³ Due to the prestige of having exotic figures amongst an aristocrat's network, these foreign holy men were a particularly sought-after social commodity; Elm, "What the Bishop Wore," 164.

⁷⁴ Peter Van Nuffelen, "A War of Words: Sermons and Social Status in Constantinople under the Theodosian Dynasty," in *Literature and Society in the Fourth Century AD: Performing Paideia, Constructing the Present, Presenting the Self*, ed. Lieve Van Hoof and Peter Van Nuffelen (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 201–17; Wendy Mayer, "At Constantinople, How Often did John Chrysostom Preach? Addressing Assumptions about the Workload of a Bishop," *Sacris Erudiri* 40 (2001): 83–105, 101.

⁷⁵ On their motives see Socrates, *HE* 6.11 (*SCh* 505.304); Sozomen, *HE* 8.10 (*SCh* 516.278).

⁷⁶ For the incident, see Socrates, *HE* 6.11 (*SCh* 505.306–14).

⁷⁷ Severian either became too much of a threat to John's position or clashed with Serapion, John's trusted deacon, see Mayer, "Making of a Saint," 43–45.

Severian's talent as a preacher had won him admirers within the court and with it imperial protection. Evidently a favourite of the empress, when Eudoxia learned of Severian's exile she stepped in to overturn John's decision. This act by the imperial executive not only directly undermined the bishop's authority but served to destabilise his position, as John was forced to re-accommodate a disgruntled Severian back into his clergy.⁷⁸ The situation posed a substantial threat to John. Severian had a serious grievance against John and could pursue his machinations against the bishop from within John's clergy and do so with the confidence of implicit imperial protection. Given this context, it is entirely unsurprising to find Severian as one of the influential clique of bishops who were fundamental in undermining John's rule.

The bishop of Gabala's use of patronage to resist, and fight back against, John's episcopal discipline cannot be ascribed to a particular quirk of Chrysostom's episcopate alone. Instances in which patronage of religious figures at Constantinople worked to undermine the local bishop's authority are not limited to John's tenure, but are found throughout early Constantinople's episcopal history.⁷⁹ One particularly salient example in which patronage networks were employed to influence episcopal outcomes was the conflict between the bishop Flavian and the archimandrite Eutyches. In 448, when the Constantinopolitan archimandrite Eutyches' extreme Christological views earned him accusations of heresy from Eusebius of Dorylaeum, Flavian was forced to convene a synod to pass judgement. With the synod duly finding Eutyches guilty of denying the human nature of Christ, Flavian denounced the monk as a heretic.⁸⁰ Unfortunately for Flavian, Eutyches had proved himself adept at nurturing connections with powerful individuals within the court, and they now came to his defence. Two of Eutyches' most prominent advocates, the eunuch Chrysaphius and the patrician Nomus, held immense sway at court and used their close relationship with the emperor Theodosius II to advance Eutyches' cause and turn the emperor against his bishop.⁸¹

⁷⁸ As Peter Van Nuffelen suggests, the incident indicates that "John was not in full control of the ecclesiastical affairs in Constantinople"; Peter Van Nuffelen, "Playing the Ritual Game in Constantinople (379–457)," in *Two Romes: Rome and Constantinople in Late Antiquity*, ed. Lucy Grig and Gavin Kelly (Oxford: OUP, 2012), 183–201, 196.

⁷⁹ Such as Dalmatius' intercession with the emperor when the imperial authority was considering Nestorius' fate (see Chapter 5).

⁸⁰ Price and Gaddis, *Council of Chalcedon*, vol. 1, 25–30; R. Draguet, "La Christologie d'Eutyches d'après les Actes du Synode de Flavien," *Byzantion* 6 (1931): 441–57.

⁸¹ Paul Goubert, "Le rôle de Sainte Pulchérie et de l'eunuque Chrysaphios," in *Das Konzil von Chalkedon*, vol. 1, ed. Alois Grillmeier and Heinrich Bacht (Würzburg: Echter, 1951): 303–21; Holum, *Empresses*, 303–21.

While the conflict between Flavian and Eutyches cannot be separated from the deeper undercurrent of growing tensions between Antiochene and Alexandrian theologies, the cases of Severian and Eutyches using their influence amongst the highest echelons of government, to destabilise imperial support for the bishop reveals a systemic flaw in Constantinople's episcopal structure. Constantinople's powerful patronage networks could subvert episcopal authority. In this context, John's attempts to reform the clergy at Constantinople should be viewed not as driven by moral outrage but rather as a strategic response to such institutional weaknesses. His attacks on lavish living and profiteering within the clergy were designed to disrupt well-entrenched reciprocal arrangements between the clergy and elite of Constantinople and, in doing so, head off the potential dangers inherent in such patronage. John would have been well aware that he could not rid Constantinople of patronage, nor would he have wanted to considering the benefits that it offered.⁸² Instead he attempted to moderate the risks it presented by regulating its flow. By attempting to redirect the benefits of patronage through his own control, John sought to combat the self-serving clerical culture of the capital and buoy his episcopal influence. Unfortunately for John, his attempts to reform episcopal culture at Constantinople saw him fall foul of the very dangers to episcopal authority that he sought to minimalise.

That John's reforms sought to deconstruct the self-serving clerical culture is confirmed by the composition of the lobby group that campaigned against him. The bishops who were central to campaigning against John at Constantinople were those who came to the capital to benefit from the patronage that Chrysostom now sought to regulate. As noted, Severian and Antiochus came to Constantinople seeking lucrative patronage and, while the reason for Acacius of Beroea's coming to Constantinople is less clear, his complaints about the lack of hospitality offered by John suggest a similar motive.⁸³ Being foreign bishops who came to Constantinople to take advantage of the resources available there, these men had the most to lose from John's attempt to curtail lavish living and funnel the rewards of patronage through himself. John was rallying against the same profiteering and pursuit of prestige that was attracting, in his opinion, the wrong type of

⁸² John himself was better placed than any to know the importance of imperial patronage, having owed his appointment to the favoured court eunuch Eutropius. The bishop himself enthusiastically pursued the patronage of aristocrats such as Olympias. Wendy Mayer, "Constantinopolitan Women in Chrysostom's Circle," *Vigiliae Christianae* 53, 3 (1999): 265–88; Tiersch, *Johannes Chrysostomus*, 31–41.

⁸³ For Acacius' complaint, see Palladius, *Dial.* 8 (*SCh* 341.126).

ecclesiast to Constantinople. Unfortunately for John, such clerics were also uniquely placed to resist his authority.

That this group successfully campaigned against John's rule further points to the dangers that such visiting clergy posed. Severian, Antiochus, and Acacius, while lowly in terms of episcopal standing, were uniquely situated to damage the local bishop's standing, enabling attacks from both internal and external enemies. The fact that these co-conspirators were those who had had experience of John's clerical management but hailed from sees beyond Constantinople's scope is significant. While the bishop at Constantinople gradually took on wider ecclesiastical responsibilities after the imperial government permanently put down roots there, the Constantinopolitan episcopate needed many decades to exert any official authority over wider territories of the east. This meant that visiting bishops such as Severian and Antiochus hailed from sees well beyond any official influence of the Constantinopolitan bishop. With their attraction to Constantinople founded not on the local bishop's influence but the patronage available through proximity to the court, a visiting cleric's fealty to the resident bishop was in no way guaranteed, increasing the prospect of such bishops serving the politics of sees more influential to their local episcopate than Constantinople.⁸⁴ This was a dangerous prospect indeed as such rebellious elements married foreign interests with intimate knowledge of the local Constantinopolitan episcopal landscape.

The familiarity that visiting clerics had with the internal politics of the Constantinopolitan church not only provided valuable entry points for foreign interests but encouraged sedition amongst disgruntled native elements within the city's episcopal establishment. In any other episcopal setting, John's reform of clerical conduct may well have succeeded without any repercussions. Within large, highly hierarchical ecclesiastical institutions such as the church at Alexandria, the clergy would have had very little recourse to protest the directives of their bishop. However, at Constantinople, the alternative sources of episcopal patronage offered by groups such as disgruntled visiting bishops and political patrons offered alternative pathways for the local clergy to advance their grievances. Familiarity with the internal politics of the Constantinopolitan church, networks within John's clergy, and familiarity with members of the court was a potent cocktail for sedition and allowed disgruntled clergy, both foreign and native, to work

⁸⁴ This explains the ease with which Alexandrian bishops were able to exert influence over the ecclesiastical politics of Constantinople, not just in the case of John, but throughout the first half of the fifth century.

assiduously behind the scenes to organise resistance to John's rule and lobby imperial authority for action.

When we view John's reforms as a reaction to the unusual situation he found at Constantinople, rather than as a reflection of the Syrian's own unique character traits, his attempt to reform the clerical culture at Constantinople reveals the inherent challenges to the office of bishop that came with the city's position as a hub for imperial patronage. The high levels and diffuse nature of the patronage available at the capital subverted the traditional episcopal hierarchy, a problem that was exacerbated by the fact that the prospect of patronage attracted particularly self-seeking clerics to Constantinople. In John's reforms we can see an attempt to centralise episcopal patronage around the office of bishop, as was common elsewhere. By doing this, John hoped to prevent Constantinople's wealth of patronage being turned against him; his failure illustrates the entrenched nature of this feature of the Constantinopolitan episcopate. Unfortunately for the bishops of Constantinople, the destructive potential of patronage was not confined to ecclesiastical politics. Imperial patronage also saw the church at Constantinople implicated within the wider political conflicts of the capital.

2.2 Imperial Patronage: The Politics of Piety at Constantinople

The same merging of piety and power that enabled dissenting ecclesiasts to access alternate pathways of influence at Constantinople also saw court politics spill over into the ecclesiastical realm, as prominent political figures attempted to shape the city's episcopal landscape to their own advantage. A close look at the political influences behind the conflict between Flavian and Chrysaphius indicates the multiple levels of political and strategic considerations that informed episcopal politics at the capital.

Chrysaphius' support of Eutyches in his struggle against Flavian was a product of the interlinking of piety and power. Having been baptised by Eutyches, Chrysaphius personally aligned himself with the monk's Christological teachings.⁸⁵ In a political environment in which spiritual status was linked to political efficacy, Flavian's denouncement of Eutyches' teachings not only endangered Chrysaphius's status as an orthodox Christian but threatened to undermine the courtier's political reach.⁸⁶ The interrelation between government and religion also informed the conflict on a broader

⁸⁵ Liberatus, *Breviarium* 11 (ACO 2.5.114).

⁸⁶ Caner, *Wandering, Begging Monks*, 226.

level as Chrysaphius' opposition to Flavian took place within the wider political alliances and rivalries of the capital. Chrysaphius' formidable power at court was predicated on his ability to influence the emperor. However, in the empress Pulcheria he faced a formidable rival for the emperor's ear. Just as the alliance with the archimandrite Eutyches helped fortify Chrysaphius' influence within the city, Pulcheria buoyed her political prominence at the capital by fostering deep connections within the city's ecclesiastical networks, in particular by maintaining a close relationship with the city's bishop, Flavian.⁸⁷ With the empress and eunuch bitter rivals, and Flavian and Eutyches prominent figures within their respective networks, the conflict between bishop and archimandrite, while on the surface centred on theological, was deeply influenced by political tensions.

The multiple political pressures underlying Chrysaphius' opposition to Flavian reveals flaws in the traditional assumption that the bishop of Constantinople's proximity to the mechanisms of imperial government, by definition bought him enhanced influence. It is indisputable that, by residing in the imperial city the bishop of Constantinople had access to powerful patrons in the form of the resident emperors, empresses, and courtiers. However, as this section will show, having the backing of such prestigious political figures also led to the bishop being drawn into the political power struggles of the capital. Furthermore, imperial patronage itself carried with it challenges for the Constantinopolitan bishop. Imperial patronage of the bishop came with substantial trade-offs to episcopal self-determination. In order to maintain the benefits of imperial patronage that the city had to offer, the bishop was obliged to adopt episcopal policies that best complimented the needs of his backers. As we will see, this not only moderated the bishop's episcopal management but undercut some of the fundamental precepts of episcopal authority. The most pertinent examples of such effects of imperial patronage during the first half of the fifth century are found in the actions of the city's empresses.

The relationship between the empress and church at Constantinople was a significant feature of the episcopal life of the capital. The empresses of Constantinople figure prominently in the episcopal life of the city in this period; in particular, the empress Eudoxia played a prominent role in John Chrysostom's tenure, while her daughter, Pulcheria, was praised by the bishops at Ephesus in 431 and Chalcedon in 451 for having cast out Nestorius. A close look at the episcopal activities of these two figures provides

⁸⁷ See below, this section.

important insights into the Constantinopolitan bishop's unique location at the interface between Christian piety and imperial power, and the impact it had on the episcopate.

The Empresses and Constantinople

That the empresses came to prominence at this time, exerting particular influence over the religious politics of Constantinople was no coincidence. Before looking at the examples of Eudoxia and Pulcheria, it is important to examine the special relationship that developed between the empress and the Constantinopolitan church. The institutional underpinnings that facilitated the consistent influence of empresses on ecclesiastical politics at Constantinople have long been obscured by a narrative approach to the institution of the empress. Such an approach has tended to treat examples of *Augustae* exerting influence over the church as anomalous – instances of overly-ambitious empresses over-stepping their traditional roles.⁸⁸ However, this gendered and narrative-based assessment of the Byzantine empress has recently given way to studies on the role of the imperial female that have revealed the extent to which empresses customarily wielded very real and tangible authority.⁸⁹ By examining the foundations of the power wielded by the empresses, we will gain an essential insight into the functioning of episcopal power in early Constantinople as the rise of the empress is intimately linked to both the establishment of Christianity as the official state religion and to the adoption of Constantinople as the permanent capital of the empire.

As with so many other aspects of the religious and political life of the empire, the period of the Theodosian dynasty saw the role of the empress make important departures from previous decades, developing traits that would set the tone for centuries of Byzantine rule to come.⁹⁰ The empresses Flaccilla, Eudoxia, Pulcheria, and Eudocia all left an indelible mark on the history of their period, each of them wielding influence outside of

⁸⁸ For example, instances where the empresses interfered in episcopal matters are often presented as a product of an unusually strong-willed empresses coupled with weak-willed emperors. Such perspectives are deeply influenced by gendered stereotypes. For example, see Bronwen Neil on the gendered judgement inherent in both ancient and modern evaluations of Empress Eirene; Bronwen Neil, "Regarding Women on the Throne: Representations of Empress Eirene," in *Questions of Gender in Byzantine Society*, ed. Bronwen Neil and Lynda Garland (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013), 113–31.

⁸⁹ In particular, by taking an institutional approach to the office of empress; Liz James, *Empresses and Power in Early Byzantium* (London: Leicester University Press, 2001); Anne McClanan, *Representations of Early Byzantine Empresses: Image and Empire* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002); Judith Herrin, *Women in Purple: Rulers of Medieval Byzantium* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002).

⁹⁰ Holum aligns this development to Theodosius' emphasis on establishing dynastic security; Holum, *Empresses*, 3–7.

the more passive forms of traditional female imperial power. Judith Herrin recently cited the development of Constantinople as possibly the single most crucial factor in this evolution of the empress' role.⁹¹

Just as for their male counterparts, the location of Constantinople as a home for the imperial family gave the empresses a permanent space in which to develop the expression of their power. The physical location of Constantinople provided a landscape in which the great *Augustae* of the past could be commemorated and emulated by those of the present. In the same way that Constantinople provided Theodosius I with the opportunity to associate his rule with the memory of Constantine, the city provided the women of the Theodosian dynasty with a powerful prototype in the form of Constantine's mother. Alongside Constantine's growing significance in the cultural world of Byzantium, Helena became celebrated as a symbol of feminine majesty and sanctity.⁹² To the many statues of Helena that adorned the capital subsequent empresses added their own, connecting themselves to past paragons of female imperial prestige and providing a visual key to their importance.⁹³

As the symbolism of Helena attests, the symbolic importance of the empresses centred, in large part, on their role in providing the empire with emperors. This was no small contribution. The greatest threat to the stability of the empire came not in the form of military failure, plague, or earthquake but the interregnum period between the death of one emperor and the establishment of the new imperial figurehead. By emphasising dynastic continuity through the legitimacy and imperium of the empress, and by extension, the children she reared, the chances of a smooth transition of power greatly increased.⁹⁴ In the

⁹¹ Judith Herrin, *Unrivalled Influence: Women and Empire in Byzantium* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013), 164. Another contributing factor was the decline of the importance of military prowess as a key virtue of imperial power, making room for the role for an empress to develop; Liz James, "Ghosts in the Machine: The Lives and Deaths of Constantinian Imperial Women," in *Questions of Gender in Byzantine Society*, ed. Bronwen Neil and Lynda Garland (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013), 93–112, 98.

⁹² Leslie Brubaker, "Memories of Helena: Patterns of Imperial Female Matronage in the Fourth and Fifth Centuries," in *Women, Men and Eunuchs: Gender in Byzantium*, ed. Liz James (London: Routledge, 1997), 52–75; Andriani Georgiou, "Helena: The Subversive Persona of an Ideal Christian Empress in Early Byzantium," in *Journal of Early Christian Studies*, vol. 21, 4 (2013): 597–624. In the same way as emperors could be hailed as new Constantines, upright empresses could earn the epithet "Helena".

⁹³ *Parastaseis Syntomoi Chronikai* 11, 16, 34, 43, 52, 58; in *Constantinople in the Early Eighth Century*, ed. Averil Cameron and Judith Herrin (Leiden: Brill, 1984), 70–71, 78–79, 94–95, 181–20, 125–26, 134; Caillan Davenport, "Imperial ideology and commemorative culture in the Eastern Roman Empire, 284–450 CE," in *Byzantium, Its Neighbours and Its Cultures*, ed. Danijel Dzino and Ken Parr, *Byzantina Australiensia* 20 (Brisbane: Australian Association for Byzantine Studies, 2014), 45–70, 46.

⁹⁴ Herrin, *Women in Purple*, 23. For the importance placed on establishing a dynasty, see Dagron, *Emperor and Priest*, 23–32. The importance of the empress in these tense interregnum periods was especially significant considering that the empresses routinely outlived their respective emperors; Michael McCormick, "Emperor and Court," in *The Cambridge Ancient History. Volume 14: Late Antiquity: Empire and*

fifth century, the pragmatic importance of imperial childbearing was augmented by a new symbolic significance due to the growing reverence for the Virgin Mary. It was no accident that the empresses of Constantinople embraced the emerging cult of Mary, which emphasised not only the importance of motherhood but the sanctity of women.⁹⁵

It was, however, not just through her function as a mother that the empress provided new members for the imperial family. The permanent location of the court and senate alongside the household of the empress at Constantinople exaggerated the significance of imperial women as key access points to the imperial household.⁹⁶ Marriage to imperial women brought with it not just prestigious appointments but could even see previously unimportant men rise to the throne.⁹⁷ Aside from this admittedly rare avenue for gaining office, the empress presented more than just marriage prospects for the ambitious. Forging friendships or alliances with imperial women was an important strategy to gain prestige at the capital. With the imperial government settling down in one spot and the growth of the institution of the palace and court, the empresses became important figures of authority and patronage in their own right.⁹⁸ Not only did they sit at the centre of a nexus of influential persons, distributing substantial social and material largess, but their potential influence over the emperor ranked them as some of the most powerful political entities in the empire.⁹⁹

Finally, the physical landscape of Constantinople also allowed empresses to indulge in another activity associated with Helena: church-building. While later empresses continued to follow Helena's lead by sponsoring church-building in the Holy Land, the

Successors, AD 425-600, ed. Averil Cameron, Bryan Ward-Perkins, and Michael Whitby (Cambridge: CUP, 2001), 135–63, 146–48.

⁹⁵ It was through association with the Cult of Mary that empresses such as Pulcheria and Verina achieved reputations as defenders of orthodoxy; Limberis, *Divine Heiress*; Richard Price, “Theotokos: The Title and its Significance in Doctrine and Devotion,” in *Mary: The Complete Resource*, ed. Sarah Jane Boss (London: Continuum, 2007), 56–74; Herrin, *Women in Purple*, 21.

⁹⁶ On the mothers, wives, sisters, and daughters of the emperors became increasingly important in the fifth century, see Croke, “Dynasty and Aristocracy,” 99.

⁹⁷ Marcian was a relatively unimportant military figure of only recent senatorial rank before Pulcheria made him emperor; likewise, Anastasius was an insignificant *silentarius* before his marriage to Ariadne; Evagrius, *HE* 2.1, 3.29 (ed. Bidez and Parmentier, 36–37, 125).

⁹⁸ The court and attendants surrounding the residence of the imperial women eventually grew to number in the thousands, and was by this period likely already a substantial group; Lynda Garland, *Byzantine Empresses: Women and Power in Byzantium 527–1204* (Routledge: London, 1999), 5.

⁹⁹ Liz James points out that the common conceptualisation of the empress' power being dependent on her personal influence over the emperor is a result of the traditional view of the empress' lack of institutional power. As James deftly points out, the structure of government meant that influence over the emperor was the primary means to power for *all* members of government. Therefore, the empresses not only had the same basis for exerting power but had an advantage through their closer access to the emperor; James, *Empresses*, 84–5.

development of Constantinople saw the focus of their patronage lie within the city.¹⁰⁰ The Theodosian empresses were prolific patrons of religious buildings, providing us with a long list of churches and martyria founded at Constantinople, including amongst many others, the churches of Saints Polyeuktos, Menas, Mokois, Laurence, Isaiah, the Forty Martyrs, and the chapel of Saint Stephen.¹⁰¹ Association with such churches provided the empress with a powerful and permanent statement of her prestige, as well as winning important allies in the churches and monasteries.

That the empresses came to express their prestige through church building is significant. Liz James points out that the reason why church-building was do favoured by imperial women was because they did not have access to the political arenas outside the church, such as the senate or the Hippodrome.¹⁰² Indeed, it is through the deliberate cultivation of close links with the church in the fifth century that imperial women at Constantinople not only managed to subvert such political limitations but even forged dynamic new pathways of power.

Power and Piety: Empress and Bishop

While the avenues of influence emphasised at Constantinople – motherhood, marriage, and building – were prestigious in their own right, within their traditional paradigm they were essentially secondary to imperial authority. They bolstered and disseminated the image of imperial rule but did not actively participate in it.¹⁰³ However, the rise to prominence of Christianity occurring concurrently with Constantinople's development into a city of unequalled political importance endowed the empresses with much wider scope to exert

¹⁰⁰ James, *Empresses*, 153.

¹⁰¹ Pulcheria's activities account for many of these, see Dagron, *Naissance*, 97, 400–401. The empress may have also been responsible for the construction of the church of the Virgin Chalkoprateia and the church of the Virgin at Blachernae although Mango argues that this is unlikely; Cyril Mango, *Studies on Constantinople*, 4.

¹⁰² James, *Empresses*, 154.

¹⁰³ Imperial women of the Constantinian family were “used to cement political alliances and to bind men to each other”; James, “Ghosts in the Machine,” 112.

authority.¹⁰⁴ It was through this new manifestation of female imperial authority that Byzantium became “famous for its empresses”.¹⁰⁵

At the heart of this change was the increasing importance of the virtue of imperial piety. The expression of Christian piety was of course not confined to men and, with piety becoming a touchstone of imperial authority, the empress’ religious reputation, like that of the emperor’s, quickly became an essential means for her to exert influence and maintain legitimacy.¹⁰⁶ While Helena again provided an early prototype, it is from Flaccilla’s time onwards that it became common practice to praise an empress and legitimise her rule in terms of her level of piety. Even more so than the emperors, whose authority rested on many pillars, the empresses progressively became defined by their image as pious Christians.¹⁰⁷ The association of the empress with pious attributes would in the fifth century enable her to exert *basileia* in a way that was not possible within traditional forms of female authority of the past. Two empresses in particular were fundamental in seeing this reputation for piety translate into tangible influence: Eudoxia and her daughter Pulcheria. Both these empresses, utilising perceptions of piety, managed to wield influence that was outside the more passive symbolism inherent in the traditional role of empress. The arena in which they exerted such influence was naturally ecclesiastical politics and, in both instances, their religious influence had an indelible effect on the autonomy of the bishop at Constantinople.

¹⁰⁴ Sylvain Destephen, “L’*évergétisme* aristocratique au féminin dans l’Empire romain d’Orient,” in *Les réseaux familiaux: antiquité tardive et moyen âge in memoriam A. Laiou et É. Patlagean*, ed. Beatrice Caseau, Centre de Recherche d’Histoire et Civilisation de Byzance, monographies 37 (Paris: ACHCByz, 2012) 183–203; Peter Van Nuffelen, “Social ethics and moral discourse in Late Antiquity,” in *Reading Patristic Texts on Social Ethics: Issues and Challenges for Twenty-first Century Christian Social Thought*, ed. Johan Leemans, Brian Matz, and Johan Verstraeten (Washington: CUA Press, 2011), 43–61.

¹⁰⁵ Herrin, *Women in Purple*, 3. While scholars have identified many contributing factors to the development of strong empresses – such as Brian Croke who points to the lack of male heirs in the late fifth century – it is the rise of imperial Christianity in the late-fourth to early fifth century that provided the ideological foundations for female imperial rule. Brian Croke, “Ariadne Augusta: Shaping the Identity of the Early Byzantine Empress,” in *Christians Shaping Identity from the Roman Empire to Byzantium: Studies inspired by Pauline Allen*, ed. G. D. Dunn and W. Mayer (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 293–320, 293.

¹⁰⁶ Holum, *Empresses*, 51.

¹⁰⁷ The growing importance of the empresses’ piety can be witnessed in the emerging tradition of portraying imperial women as not only spiritually independent of the emperor but at times responsible for his religious leanings. Ambrose’s funeral oration for Theodosius is an early example, portraying Helena’s Christian piety as integral to establishing Constantine’s reign; Ambrose, *De Obitu Theodosii Oratio* 41–51 (CSEL 73.7.393–98). The piety of the empress compared with that of her emperor became a common theme. Sozomen, for example, reports that it was Flaccilla’s ardour for the Nicene faith that prevented Theodosius from meeting with Eunomius of Cyzicus, leader of the Eunomian church; Sozomen, *HE* 7.6 (*SCh* 516.90). Such responsibility for the emperor’s spiritual convictions saw the empresses share responsibility for the security of the empire. For example, see Kenneth G. Holum, “Pulcheria’s Crusade A.D. 421–22 and the Ideology of Imperial Victory,” *Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies* 18, 2 (1977): 153–72.

Eudoxia and Ecclesiastical Petition

Eudoxia made use of the traditional symbolism of female imperial power, leaning heavily on her position as a mother in securing Severian's re-entry to the Constantinopolitan clergy as well as in convincing the emperor to accede to episcopal petition.¹⁰⁸ However, leaning heavily on themes of Christian piety, the empress also exerted influence beyond the traditional limits of female authority. Eudoxia put great emphasis on cultivating a reputation for personal piety at Constantinople. She did this through public and well-orchestrated displays of *eusebeia*, in particular making sure she took a prominent part in the translation and housing of the relics that were streaming into the city.¹⁰⁹ That such activity was an attempt to enhance her personal reputation and cultivate an authority that was autonomous from her role as wife of the emperor is clear from the fact that we find her on more than one occasion managing events to ensure that she was the sole imperial representative present during such religious processions.¹¹⁰ Such initiatives paid dividends, with Eudoxia establishing a reputation as a powerful religious patron and exerting formidable influence over ecclesiastical matters. With the empress' influence so closely aligned to the spiritual sphere, it was inevitable that her relationship with the local bishop would take on special significance.

Having an empress closely aligned to the city's Nicene institutions was certainly not an unwelcome prospect for the bishop. When in harmonious alliance, the relationship between bishop and empress was a reciprocal one; by aiding the bishop the empress could bathe in the reflected Christian glory, while the bishop had a great resource of support and wealth. We see this advantageous interaction early on in Chrysostom's tenure, with the empress providing both material and human resources for John's nocturnal processions against the Arians.¹¹¹ The empress would have certainly felt these were resources well spent when the bishop himself extolled the empress' virtues from the pulpit.¹¹² However, alongside such benefits came restrictions on John's autonomy. As we have already seen in

¹⁰⁸ These instances present complex interactions of imperial authority, both male and female, in their relation to religious authority; Laurence Brottier, "L'impératrice Eudoxie et ses enfants," *Revue des sciences religieuses* 70 (1996): 313–32.

¹⁰⁹ Holum, *Empresses*, 55–58.

¹¹⁰ See Chrysostom, *Homilia dicta postquam reliquiae martyrum etc.* (PG 63.470) Translated in Wendy Mayer and Pauline Allen, *John Chrysostom* (New York: Routledge, 1999), 86–92; Brottier, "L'impératrice Eudoxie," 329.

¹¹¹ Socrates, *HE* 6.8 (*SCh* 505.294–8); Sozomen, *HE* 8.8 (*SCh* 516.270–4).

¹¹² E.g. his high praise of the empress during the translation of relics; Chrysostom, *Quod freq. conven.* (PG 63.461–68). Van Nuffelen argues against Tiersch's reading of this homily that it undercuts imperial authority: Tiersch, *Johannes Chrysostomus*, 194–204; Van Nuffelen "Ritual Game," 197.

the case of Severian, Eudoxia took measures to ensure her favourites maintained a place in the clergy, despite the protests of the bishop. Another way in which Eudoxia's spiritual authority disrupted episcopal proceedings at Constantinople was by receiving and responding to ecclesiastical petitions.

In Mark the Deacon's *Life of Porphyry*, when the bishop arrives at Constantinople to appeal for imperial support in persecuting the pagans of Gaza, he is informed by those in the know, including Chrysostom himself, that it is to Eudoxia rather than the city's bishop that he ought to direct his petition.¹¹³ While the veracity of this account is unlikely, that Eudoxia played a central role in responding to ecclesiastical petitions is attested by less apocryphal evidence; in the lead up to John's final exile, it was to Eudoxia, not Arcadius, that John's supporters addressed their appeals.¹¹⁴ This particular manifestation of the empress' authority in Constantinople not only undermined episcopal authority in the city but had disastrous consequences for its bishop.

As mentioned above, outside the symbolic and rhetorical basis of divine authority, the bishops of late antiquity maintained their position within the wider ecclesiastical world through complex bonds of patronage and deference, similar to those that characterised the aristocratic world of politics.¹¹⁵ Essential to a bishop's standing within these wider ecclesiastical networks was his ability to receive and act on ecclesiastical petitions. The nature of the petitions varied greatly. They could come in the form of requests to adjudicate between bishops in disputes over jurisdictional boundaries, appeals over disciplinary matters, or requests for mediation in theological disputes. With the nature of these appeals cutting across such volatile topics, the reception and response to such petitions was fraught with complex considerations. In the early fifth century, when the ecclesiastical hierarchy was still far from reaching any formal structure, a bishop's response to ecclesiastical petition contained an implicit display of power or deference that could raise questions of theological authority and tensions over ecclesiastical jurisdiction.¹¹⁶ Because petitions were such an intrinsic and delicate element of geo-ecclesiastical diplomacy, a bishop's ability to respond to ecclesiastical petitions was an

¹¹³ Mark the Deacon, *V. Porphyrii* 33, 36–37 (ed. Gregoire and Kugener, 28, 30–23). The text was almost certainly written at a much later date and whether or not it contains any remnants of an earlier account is a disputed topic; Barnes, *Early Christian Hagiography*, 260–83.

¹¹⁴ Palladius, *Dial.* 9 (*SCh* 341.194).

¹¹⁵ Bishops were tied together in broad geo-ecclesiastical networks, with the bishops of the major sees becoming central figures.

¹¹⁶ Chrysostom's extra-territorial activities in Asia came as a result of a petition for him to investigate ecclesiastical wrong-doings; Palladius, *Dial.* 13–16 (*SCh* 341.273–303).

integral component of his authority. However, with the empress carving out her *basileia* within the religious sphere, Eudoxia's efficacy as an alternate point of ecclesiastical petition undercut the bishop's ability to exercise this role – a practice that had fatal consequences for John.

The conflict between Chrysostom and Theophilus, that ended in the Alexandrian bishop deposing his Constantinopolitan counterpart at the Synod of the Oak, had its origin in the petition of a group of Alexandrian monks known as the Tall Brothers, who came to Constantinople to protest their mistreatment at the hands of Theophilus. Following in the footsteps of Porphyry, the monks' first stop was to seek an audience with the bishop. John was well aware of the sensitivity of such a petition. He had no jurisdictional rights to hear such a case and had no desire to impinge on the Alexandrian bishop's authority.¹¹⁷ The Syrian's caution is in keeping with his character. Despite his reputation for pushing Constantinople's episcopal boundaries, John proved himself to be well informed and relatively sensitive to proper episcopal procedure. His adherence to due process was demonstrated by his refusal to sit in judgement of Theophilus at Constantinople, even at the emperor's behest, as well as his reticence to resume his place at Constantinople after his exile without a synod first overturning the decision of the Oak.¹¹⁸ Such caution is apparent in John's approach to the Tall Brothers' complaints. John was careful to avoid exhibiting any partisanship for their cause, allowing them to be housed only by the charity of those outside the church and not admitting them to communion.¹¹⁹ According to Palladius, John cross-checked the monks' story with some visiting Egyptian clergy, and showed sensible caution in urging the monks to keep their business secret until his investigations were completed.¹²⁰ John's further inquiries appear to have been equally cautious; he wrote to Theophilus employing overtly genial rhetoric to enquire about the Alexandrian's side of events.¹²¹ John's enquiries garnered no response from Theophilus, and it is telling of John's attitude towards the monks complaints that he did not pursue the matter any further. It was in fact almost two years before the monks got their desired sponsorship and it did not come via the bishop.

¹¹⁷ Kelly, *Golden Mouth*, 195.

¹¹⁸ Chrysostom, *Ep. 1 ad Innocentium* (SCh 342.72); Socrates, *HE* 6.15 (SCh 505.328); Sozomen, *HE* 8.18 (SCh 516.314).

¹¹⁹ Kelly, *Golden Mouth*, 196–97.

¹²⁰ Palladius, *Dial.* 7 (SCh 341.148–52).

¹²¹ John's letter, which did not survive, either inquired over Theophilus' side of the story or asked him as a friend and brother to accept the monks back into communion; Palladius, *Dial.* 7 (SCh 341.152); Sozomen, *HE* 8.13 (SCh 516.290–92).

Having failed to gain the aggressive patron they had hoped for in John, the monks remained at Constantinople in order to lobby the many rich and powerful patrons in the city.¹²² This was a sound strategy: as we have seen, ecclesiastical visitors and refugees could enjoy a rewarding lifestyle at Constantinople and monks were particularly well-received by the city's elite.¹²³ It was during this time canvassing Constantinople's elite that the monks' case reached the ear of the empress.¹²⁴ By winning Eudoxia's patronage the Tall Brothers gained a much more aggressive patron. In contrast to John's cautionary approach, the empress took a combative stance towards the accused Alexandrian bishop. Aggrieved by the mistreatment of the monks, Eudoxia promised to intervene on their behalf and convene a synod at Constantinople at which Theophilus would answer the accusations. Through the empress' advocacy, a subsequent imperial order was issued for Theophilus to come to Constantinople and stand trial.¹²⁵

With the petition taken out of the control of the bishop and into the sphere of imperial authority, Eudoxia had not merely cut John out from proceedings but placed him in danger. It was this unsubtle partisanship towards the Tall Brothers, one which John had been so careful to avoid, that vexed the Alexandrian bishop and brought him into direct conflict with John. Whether Theophilus knew it was imperial authority behind the positive response to the Tall Brother's petition or whether he assumed the bishop of the capital had played a part is not clear; in any case, Theophilus could not attack the imperial couple and so went on the offensive against John.¹²⁶ The cornered Alexandrian bishop, angered by the slight on his episcopal authority, fought back against the accusations made against him by discrediting his would-be judge.¹²⁷

¹²² Theophilus' Easter letter of 402 betrays the Alexandrian's concern over the monks' continued canvassing of Constantinople's elite; Theophilus, *Ep. paschalis* (in Jerome *Ep.* 98.28; CSEL 55.208–209); Liebeschuetz, *Barbarians*, 203–204.

¹²³ This will be explored further in Chapter 5.

¹²⁴ The monks purportedly achieved Eudoxia's support by appealing to her Christian and imperial sensibilities; Palladius, *Dial.* 8 (*SCh* 341.156–58); Sozomen, *HE* 8.13 (*SCh* 516.292).

¹²⁵ Palladius, *Dial.* 8 (*SCh* 341.156–8); Sozomen, *HE* 8.13 (*SCh* 516.292). It is such authoritative interference by Eudoxia in matters that are seen by John's allies as sitting within the domain of episcopal authority alone, that lay at the heart of the empress' vilification in subsequent sources (see below). Eudoxia's interference is depicted as the actions of a conniving and unstable autocrat. However, Eudoxia's actions are better understood as a product of the merging of *imperium* and *sacerdotium* as she could rightfully claim to be safeguarding the well-being of the empire as well fortifying imperial power; Wendy Mayer, "Doing Violence to the Image of an Empress: The Destruction of Eudoxia's Reputation," in *Violence in Late Antiquity: Perceptions and Practices*, ed. Harold Allen Drake (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), 209–212.

¹²⁶ Liebeschuetz, *Barbarians*, 204.

¹²⁷ This tactic, derived from Aristotelean rhetoric, was one that Theophilus had already employed in his campaign against Origenism; Krastu Baney, *Theophilus of Alexandria and the First Origenist Controversy: Rhetoric and Power* (Oxford: OUP, 2015), 114–122.

Pulcheria: A Power Founded on Piety

For the majority of the four decades from when she was declared empress at the age of 15 until her death two years after the Council of Chalcedon, Pulcheria managed to maintain exceptional influence over both the political and religious life of Constantinople and beyond. Having acted as regent for Theodosius II in his youth, as well as remaining influential over him in his adult years, Pulcheria's imprint can be discerned behind many acts of state, from the issuing of laws and declarations of war to active participation in the affairs of court and church.¹²⁸ The scope of her influence exceeded that of the empresses that came before her, a feat achieved through Pulcheria's careful use of piety.¹²⁹

Just like her mother, Pulcheria was careful to associate herself with the influx of relics to Constantinople, personally participating in their translation and even claiming to have received through divine revelation the location of the bones of local martyrs.¹³⁰ Pulcheria also followed her mother's example in sponsoring the construction of many religious buildings at Constantinople, including *martyria* to house the relics she accompanied into the city.¹³¹ However, while closely following Eudoxia's lead in these initiatives, Pulcheria also made use of the marriage of imperial and Christian authority to tap into new paradigms of female power.

For Pulcheria such adaptation was necessary if she wanted to maintain autonomous authority. Pulcheria's mother, Eudoxia, had leaned heavily on the traditional norms of female imperial power – motherhood and marriage. This was natural since Eudoxia's role as wife and mother to emperors was an inescapably essential part of her imperial authority. Pulcheria, however, was in a different position. As the sister of the emperor, the prospect of marriage and motherhood threatened to sideline Pulcheria's independent influence, and she avoided such a risk by deftly drawing on the Christian virtues of renunciation and

¹²⁸ For Pulcheria's sway over Theodosius, see Sozomen, *HE* 9.1 (*SCh* 516.370); Theophanes, *AM* 5905 (ed. de Boor, 82).

¹²⁹ Elizabeth Chew, "Virgins and Eunuchs: Pulcheria, Politics and the Death of Emperor Theodosius II," *Historia: Zeitschrift für alte Geschichte* 55, 2 (2006): 207–227.

¹³⁰ In particular, the relics of St Lawrence and the prophet Isaiah; Holum, *Empresses*, 137. Pulcheria did not just gain reflected glory from these relics; she participated in the discovery of relics through divine revelation. Sozomen claims it was Pulcheria herself who discovered the resting place of the bones of the Forty Martyrs after their location was revealed through divine visitations; Sozomen, *HE* 9.2 (*SCh* 516.378–88). Interestingly, Sozomen emphasises that Pulcheria succeeds where the church clergy had failed.

¹³¹ Holum, *Empresses*. The depth of Pulcheria's devotion to Marian piety and its centrality to the conflict between Nestorius and Pulcheria has been moderated by a more even-handed appraisal of the evidence; Kate Cooper, "Contesting the Nativity: Wives, Virgins, and Pulcheria's *imitatio Mariae*," *Scottish Journal of Religious Studies* 19, 1 (1998): 31–43.

virginity.¹³² Pulcheria's vow of virginity was central to her maintaining and elevating her authority while openly rejecting the attributes of the female sex that had previously underpinned an empress' significance.¹³³ In conjunction with making sure her commitment to chastity was widely known, Pulcheria worked hard to cultivate a reputation for practising outstanding personal piety in all aspects of her life, to the extent that the palace purportedly became akin to a convent.¹³⁴ Through her vow of virginity and personally pious habits, Pulcheria gained a powerful persona on which to build her influence.¹³⁵ The association of Pulcheria and her court with devotion to the emerging cult of Mary and the piety usually reserved for ascetics, coupled with her generous sponsorship of churches, charities, and monks, ensured that the empress was an ever-present force in the religious and political life of the capital.¹³⁶ So ever-present was Pulcheria within the city's spiritual life that her image possibly even hung above the altar of the Great Church itself where she customarily took communion in the sanctuary alongside the bishop.¹³⁷

The importance of piety in obtaining and retaining the empress' political influence at the capital is most plainly demonstrated in the rivalry between Pulcheria and her sister-in-law Eudocia, wife of Theodosius II.¹³⁸ At what point the relationship between the two empresses broke down is not clear; however, it is likely Pulcheria's firm grip on power at the capital and her continuing influence over her brother contributed to Eudocia's hostility. It is a testimony to the growing link between piety and power for the position of the empress that the way in which Eudocia fought back against Pulcheria's political influence was through enhancing her own religious reputation. With Pulcheria's grip on power at the capital seemingly watertight, Eudocia had to go elsewhere to find the spiritual charisma she needed to carve out her own stake of imperial piety. It was during her pilgrimage to

¹³² Sozomen, *HE* 9.1 (*SCh* 516.370).

¹³³ Sozomen states openly that Pulcheria's vow of virginity was born not out of piety alone but a desire to prevent ambitious men obtaining power through marriage into the imperial family; Sozomen, *HE* 9.1 (*SCh* 516.370). By disavowing marriage, the empress fortified her own imperial power, not only through perceptions of piety but by stymying potential competition for Theodosius' ear.

¹³⁴ Pulcheria had her vow of virginity inscribed on an ornate altar table that she had installed at the Great Church; Sozomen, *HE* 9.1 (*SCh* 516.370). On the pious environment of the women's quarters of the palace, see Socrates, *HE* 7.22 (*SCh* 506.46–48), Holum terms it "imperial cenobitism"; Holum, *Empresses*, 145.

¹³⁵ Limberis, *Divine Heiress*. It is important not to over-exaggerate the novelty of Pulcheria's approach as it leans on some well-established imperial tropes; Kate Cooper, "Empress and *Theotokos*: Gender and Patronage in the Christological Controversy," in *The Church and Mary*, Studies in Church History 38, ed. R. N. Swanson (Suffolk: Boydell Press, 2004), 39–51.

¹³⁶ Nicholas P. Constatas, "Weaving the Body of God: Proclus of Constantinople, the *Theotokos*, and the Loom of the Flesh," *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 3, 2 (1995): 169–94; Limberis, *Divine Heiress*, 50.

¹³⁷ *Lettre à Cosme* (ed. Nau, Appendice I, 363–64).

¹³⁸ Holum argues convincingly that Eudocia's marriage to Theodosius II was arranged by Pulcheria's many enemies at court who sought to diminish her influence over the emperor; Holum, *Empresses*, 121.

Jerusalem that Eudocia improved her standing at the capital not only through her deeds but by returning to Constantinople with powerful relics.¹³⁹ The attack on Pulcheria's own religious standing was unmistakable. Previously, Pulcheria had gone to great lengths in procuring the hand of Saint Stephen, an event she made great use of by personally accompanying the relic into the city and building a church to house it in.¹⁴⁰ Eudocia in a provocative move of one-upmanship now brought the rest of Stephen to the capital.¹⁴¹

Buoyed by the status endowed by such religious prestige, Eudocia was better placed to attack Pulcheria and she quickly found an ally within the court in the form of the eunuch Chrysaphius who, as we have seen, also had a vested interest in undermining Pulcheria's standing.¹⁴² Together, the empress and eunuch endeavoured to clip Pulcheria's wings by using her carefully maintained reputation for ascetic-styled piety against her. They sought to marginalise Pulcheria's influence by convincing Theodosius to have Pulcheria ordained a deaconess.¹⁴³ These plans were scuppered thanks to the city's bishop, Flavian, who gave Pulcheria forewarning of the plot against her.¹⁴⁴ That the schemes of Pulcheria's enemies involved making use of the city's ecclesiastical organisation, and that the bishop was central to its success or failure, is significant. With the empress' access to power built on her reputation for piety, it was inevitable that the political power struggles of the capital intersected or were played out within Constantinople's ecclesiastical sphere, a phenomenon that would have serious effects on the city's episcopal office, both in limiting the bishop's scope as a preacher and encouraging a conflicted environment.

Preaching and Political Power at Constantinople

That Flavian should be in Pulcheria's camp is unsurprising. With the empress having been so politically influential within the city, ever-present as a patron to the church in particular, it would have been unwise of the bishop not to have fostered a relationship with the empress. However, remaining onside with imperial authorities meant making sacrifices. One way in which kowtowing to power politics undermined episcopal autonomy was that

¹³⁹ Theophanes, *AM* 5927 (ed. de Boor, 92); Holum, *Empresses*, 184–88. Eudocia proved a prolific religious builder in the Holy Land throughout her reign; E. D. Hunt, *Holy Land Pilgrimage in the Later Roman Empire AD 312-460* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1982), 239–42.

¹⁴⁰ Theophanes, *AM* 5920 (ed. de Boor, 86–87).

¹⁴¹ Holum, *Empresses*, 189.

¹⁴² Pulcheria was a formidable roadblock in his ability to coerce the emperor; see below.

¹⁴³ Theophanes, *AM* 5940 (ed. de Boor, 98–100).

¹⁴⁴ Holum argues that it was Proclus not Flavian who forewarned Pulcheria; Holum, *Empresses*, 192.

the bishop was unable to promote views that would damage or undermine imperial authority, a limitation that impinged on the bishop's autonomy as a preacher.¹⁴⁵ Forming the backbone of his office, and central to establishing and communicating his theological and ecclesiastical identity, a bishop's sermons were keenly discussed by his audience for what they inferred on a wide range of topics, from Christology to child-rearing. At Constantinople, however, one particular subject received more scrutiny than elsewhere. Naturally, with the imperial family resident, sermons that touched on imperial power were of great interest to local authorities, and this was particularly true during the ideologically-charged environment of the early fifth century.

As already noted, the adoption of Christianity as the religion of state threw up complex questions over the nature of the relationship between ecclesiastical and imperial authority. By Theodosius' reign there was pressing debate over the extent to which the emperor should submit to the bishop's authority, with bishops such as Ambrose advocating that the imperial authority should be subordinate to that of the church.¹⁴⁶ For obvious reasons such views were problematic for the emperors, and part of the reason why Ambrose could be so forthcoming in such views, was his distance from the court.¹⁴⁷ At Constantinople such views would have been more difficult to espouse without immediate repercussions. Delivering homilies such as those of Chrysostom, in which he extolled the superiority of episcopal authority over imperial sovereignty, was a risky undertaking at Constantinople. Such explicit commentary on imperial power could of course be diplomatically avoided by Constantinopolitan bishops, without any real loss to their autonomy as a spiritual teacher; however, imperial censure was not restricted to sermons that specifically dealt with the subject of imperial power alone, but any topic that might indirectly impact on imperial sensibilities.

One of the contributing factors to John's loss of imperial support at Constantinople appears to have been the impact his preaching on social issues had on perceptions of imperial authority. John's sermons at Constantinople had a common thread of attacking the excesses of the wealthy.¹⁴⁸ These sermons won John the admiration of Constantinople's wider populace but also brought him enemies amongst the city's ruling elite. It is easy to

¹⁴⁵ This was an especially pressing consideration at Constantinople where the bishop faced such heavy competition in maintaining patronage both imperial and otherwise; Van Nuffelen, "A War of Words," 201–17.

¹⁴⁶ G. W. Bowersock, "From Emperor to Bishop: The Self-Conscious Transformation of Political Power in the Fourth Century A.D." *Classical Philology* 81, 4 (1986): 298–307.

¹⁴⁷ Drake, "Church, Society and Political Power," 411.

¹⁴⁸ Tiersch, *Chrysostomus*, 243–48.

see how attacking the impieties associated with wealth and luxury, John's preaching threatened to disrupt the carefully manicured image of imperial authority at Constantinople, in particular that of the empress. Reserving particular criticism for aristocratic women, no one had more to lose from associations with impiety than the empress, and it is perhaps this feature of John's tenure that saw the bishop lose the support of Eudoxia.¹⁴⁹ Indeed, Palladius recounts that one such sermon was taken to be a direct attack on the empress herself, or at least it was reported as such to the empress by John's detractors, and it was this that led to the empress petitioning the emperor to move against the bishop.¹⁵⁰ While such reports should be approached with caution, whether Chrysostom was indeed using the pulpit to criticise Eudoxia or not, any attack on the impiety of the powerful women of the capital threatened to destabilise the empress' carefully cultivated image.¹⁵¹ John's program of preaching on issues of social justice did not stand out as overtly unusual compared to that of his counterparts elsewhere, however, at the capital they were deemed unacceptable because they interfered with the empress' pathways of influence. As Peter Van Nuffelen has argued, it was not Chrysostom's preaching on imperial authority and Christian piety at Constantinople that was unusual, but the setting in which he preached.¹⁵²

Post-factum perspectives of Eudoxia's role in John's downfall make it difficult to discern whether it was indeed the bishop's sermons that turned his imperial patrons against him. Fortunately, a more reliable example of imperial sensitivities restricting preaching at Constantinople can be found during Pulcheria's ascendancy.

The conflict between Nestorius and Pulcheria that saw the empress lauded at two ecumenical councils as the Syrian's vanquisher was sparked by the bishop's preaching on the Virgin Mary. By rejecting the title *Theotokos* (God-bearer) for Mary, Nestorius sparked a Christological debate that would eventually see him ousted from office.

¹⁴⁹ J. H. W. G. Liebeschuetz, "Friends and Enemies of John Chrysostom," in *Maistor: Classical, Byzantine and Renaissance Studies for Robert Browning*, Byzantina Australiensia 5, ed. A. Moffatt (Canberra: Australian Association for Byzantine Studies, 1984), 85–111; Tiersch, *Chrysostomus*, 243–48.

¹⁵⁰ Socrates, *HE* 6.15 (*SCh* 505.324); Sozomen, *HE* 8.16 (*SCh* 516.302); Palladius, *Dial.* 6 (*SCh* 341.126). While John did undoubtedly lose the support of Eudoxia, accounts that have the empress central to John's undoing must be treated with scepticism; Wendy Mayer, "Media Manipulation as a Tool in Religious Conflict: Controlling the Narrative Surrounding the Deposition of John Chrysostom," in *Religious Conflict from Early Christianity to the Rise of Islam*, ed. Wendy Mayer and Bronwen Neil (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2013), 151–68; Mayer, "Doing Violence," 205–13.

¹⁵¹ Kelly, *Golden Mouth*, 211. Nathanael Andrade demonstrates that John's activities at Constantinople "encroached upon the identity and legitimacy that the imperial family sought to harvest for itself"; Nathanael Andrade, "The Processions of John Chrysostom and the Contested Spaces of Constantinople," *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 18, 2 (2010): 161–89, 184.

¹⁵² Van Nuffelen "Ritual Game," 199.

Pulcheria played a pivotal role in Nestorius' loss of support at the capital, providing support for his enemies within and without Constantinople and advancing their protestations within the court. While her part in defending Cyrilline Christology saw Pulcheria portrayed as having been driven by fervent piety in her opposition to Nestorius, the empress' hostility towards the bishop cannot be separated from very pragmatic political concerns.¹⁵³ Imperial advocacy of one theology over another was driven in part by the implications it had on imperial authority. It has been postulated that the Constantinian emperors favoured Arian doctrine due to the fact that it allowed for a more powerful image of the emperor than the Nicene doctrine.¹⁵⁴ Pulcheria's opposition to Nestorius must be viewed in the same terms. As we have seen, Pulcheria's prodigious influence at the capital was founded on her reputation for piety, in particular her close association with the figure of Mary. Subsequently, Nestorius' preaching on the misuse of the term *Theotokos* posed a significant threat to the empress' standing.¹⁵⁵ By downgrading the status of Mary, Nestorius' theological stance meant a subsequent demotion of Pulcheria's status. On a pragmatic level, Pulcheria's campaign to muzzle Nestorius can be seen as a reaction to the threat his preaching posed to her influence at the capital.

Pulcheria's opposition to Nestorius had at its heart political considerations as much as pious ones, and not only highlights the way in which imperial politics could limit episcopal autonomy at Constantinople; it also raises the question of to what extent imperial politics exacerbated ecclesiastical tensions at Constantinople.

Political Rivalries and the Episcopate

When analysing the underlying causes of the conflicts that punctuated the tenures of Chrysostom, Nestorius, and Flavian, much emphasis has been placed on the attendant Christological and geo-ecclesiastical tensions. However, in all these events we gain hints that political undercurrents at Constantinople played a significant role in furthering such controversies. This is particularly true of the reign of Pulcheria.

¹⁵³ Chew, "Virgins and Eunuchs," 218; Cooper, "Empress and *Theotokos*," 39–51.

¹⁵⁴ Deno John Geanakoplos, "Church Building and 'Caesaropapism,' A.D. 312–565," *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies* 7 (1966): 175–76, 167–86; K. M. Setton, *Christian Attitudes towards the Emperor in the Fourth Century, Especially as Shown in Addresses to the Emperor* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1941), 82.

¹⁵⁵ "Images of Pulcheria and the Virgin were so close that an attack on the one could, and was perhaps supposed to be seen as an offense to the other"; Constas, "Weaving the Body," 188.

That Nestorius came into conflict with Pulcheria is for some scholars not merely an unintentional result of the Syrian's theological beliefs but the fruition of a well-laid plan masterminded by Pulcheria's opponents.¹⁵⁶ Whether, as it has been convincingly proposed, one of the specific motivations behind Theodosius II bringing Nestorius to Constantinople was in order to lessen his sister's hold on political power, it is impossible to discern; however, what is evident is that the rivalries of the capital served to escalate ecclesiastical tensions.¹⁵⁷ Even if Nestorius' appointment was not specifically intended to disrupt Pulcheria's powerbase at Constantinople, the moment that tensions arose between empress and bishop it was inevitable that support for and against the bishop within the city would be dictated in large part by court politics. Those who had a political interest in seeing Pulcheria's position undermined would have been inclined to back Theodosius' continuing support of the bishop, while those who benefitted from Pulcheria's patronage no doubt tended towards opposition to the Syrian.¹⁵⁸ Such a situation reveals a substantial flaw in the belief that proximity to the imperial family naturally enhanced the bishop's authority, as imperial support for the bishop could be divided.

With the emperor determined to remain loyal to his bishop and Pulcheria equally determined to aid Nestorius' enemies, this was a highly destructive situation for the local ecclesiastical institution. There were effectively two centres of imperial patronage playing off against each another within the city. While Theodosius' support ensured that Nestorius maintained control of the city's churches, Pulcheria lent her resources and vast support network to opposing the incumbent bishop.¹⁵⁹ Pulcheria's formidable standing in the city and influential network undoubtedly contributed to the confidence with which Nestorius' opponents within the city openly campaigned against him. Proclus, who spearheaded local ecclesiastical opposition to Nestorius, indeed enjoyed a close relationship with the

¹⁵⁶ See John McGuckin, "Nestorius and the Political Factions of Fifth-century Byzantium: Factors in his Personal Downfall," *Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester*, vol. 78, 3 (1996): 7–21.

¹⁵⁷ McGuckin argues that Nestorius was brought in by Theodosius II to lessen his sister's and the monasteries' hold on Constantinople's ecclesiastical politics; McGuckin, "Nestorius and the Political Factions," 8.

¹⁵⁸ Due to his ignominious fall, we have little information as to who supported Nestorius at Constantinople, apart from the emperor himself. However, it is clear that he enjoyed a certain level of support amongst the local aristocracy; Gregory, *Vox Populi*, 96.

¹⁵⁹ During this time, Pulcheria resided at the Hebdomon palace on the city's outskirts, from which she supported opponents to Nestorius such as the archimandrite Manuel; Holum, *Empresses*, 196; Robert V. Sellers, *The Council of Chalcedon: A Historical and Doctrinal Survey* (London: SPCK, 1961), 75–76; Theophanes, *AM 5940* (ed. de Boor, 98–99). Therefore, during the conflict over Nestorius, there were essentially two loci of imperial support at Constantinople, both opposed to the ecclesiastical designs of the other.

empress.¹⁶⁰ While the exact relationship between the two has attracted speculation, it seems likely that when Proclus so brazenly denounced Nestorius' teachings from the pulpit of the Great Church in the presence of the Syrian himself, he did so, if not in concerted alliance with Pulcheria, then at the very least in the knowledge that he enjoyed her support.¹⁶¹ Another leading Constantinopolitan voice against Nestorius who was closely allied with Pulcheria, possibly in her service, was the imperial official Eusebius.¹⁶² Despite being a layman, Eusebius was extremely vocal in his opposition to the bishop, interjecting during Nestorius' service and authoring a propaganda sheet that denounced him as a heretic.¹⁶³ While the extent to which these figures worked in collaboration in their opposition to Nestorius is not discernible from the extant sources, the knowledge that influential imperial family members openly opposed the local bishop undoubtedly contributed to an environment in which the bishop's authority was under siege.

In a politically charged environment such as Constantinople, one in which political and religious credentials were intimately linked, it was only natural that political rivalries both influenced and produced ecclesiastical conflicts. It is likely no coincidence that the same Eusebius who protested against Pulcheria's enemy, Nestorius, after becoming the bishop of Doryleum, was the very bishop who raised the accusations of heresy against Eutyches, godfather of Pulcheria's bitter rival Chrysaphius.¹⁶⁴

The political tensions at Constantinople not only influenced the episcopal landscape there during moments of ecclesiastical conflict but, as we will see in the next section, the political considerations of the capital moderated episcopal power on a more routine basis.

2.3 Political Patronage: Non-Nicenes and Episcopal Authority at Constantinople

The one characteristic of early Constantinople which perhaps most directly contradicts the contention that the location of the emperor at Constantinople endowed the local bishop with extra authority is the strength of the non-Nicene communities within the city. If

¹⁶⁰ It has been suggested that Proclus' particular form of Mariology was influenced by his contact with Pulcheria; Constatas, "Weaving the Body," 188–90.

¹⁶¹ Some scholars consider Proclus and Pulcheria to have worked in close cooperation; Holum, *Empresses*, 155–57; Limberis, *Divine Heiress*, 112–13. Others are more cautious; Leena Mari Peltomaa, *The Image of the Virgin Mary in the Akathistos Hymn* (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 53

¹⁶² Gregory, *Vox Populi*, 90; Limberis, *Divine Heiress*, 55.

¹⁶³ Nicholas Constatas, *Proclus of Constantinople and the Cult of the Virgin in Late Antiquity* (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 54–55.

¹⁶⁴ ACO 2.1.1.100–101.

proximity to the imperial court did indeed imbue the bishop with enhanced jurisdiction and greater powers of coercion, we would expect the most immediate result of such benefits to have been not growing scope to impose his authority on sees outside his jurisdiction, but greater influence in expanding the church within his own see. However, the non-Nicene communities at Constantinople not only persisted for many decades after the city's official Nicene status, but in some cases flourished.¹⁶⁵ To resolve this apparent contradiction, we must view the strength of the non-Nicenes of Constantinople not as flying in the face of imperial policy but occurring as a result of the imperial politics of the capital, influenced in particular by the makeup and authority of the court.

As we have seen, alongside the empresses, court officials such as Chrysaphius exerted significant influence over the ecclesiastical politics of the capital. However, unlike with the empresses who were beholden to the Nicene faith of the imperial household, powerful court figures held a wide variety of non-Nicene beliefs. The many important political figures of differing religious sensibilities who were deeply ensconced within the political patronage networks of the capital inevitably had a significant impact on the religious environment of Constantinople. It is his proximity to such politically influential non-Nicenes that inhibited the local bishop's ability to expand his church and strike out against rival communities within the city.

Constantinople's Non-Nicene Communities

As the Nicenes in the rest of the east continued to consolidate their position as the dominant Christian church, the size of the non-Nicene contingent at the capital was a source of continuing embarrassment for the court.¹⁶⁶ Throughout the first half of the fifth century, Constantinople remained home to adherents of a diverse range of doctrinal outlooks, a point driven home by the fact that, of the three main historical sources at Constantinople during this period, only one was a Nicene.¹⁶⁷

Despite the Nicene leanings of Theodosius, support for the Homoian position did not wane quickly in Constantinople. When in 388 rumour spread that Theodosius had been killed while in the west, the emboldened Homoian populace rose up in violent protest.

¹⁶⁵ See below.

¹⁶⁶ The imperial appointments of Chrysostom and Nestorius appear to have been motivated by a desire to strengthen the imperial faith at Constantinople: Socrates, *HE* 6.2, 7.29 (*SCh* 505.262, 506.108).

¹⁶⁷ Socrates was a Novatian, Philostorgius a Eunomian, and Sozomen a Nicene; see Van Nuffelen, "Episcopal Succession", 428.

Disgruntled at the reversal in their fortunes, they made the Nicene bishop, Nectarius, the target of their aggression, his house being burnt down in the ensuing tumult.¹⁶⁸ Despite the efforts of Nectarius' successors, the Arian community remained a notable presence at Constantinople, even overcoming their own internal divisions to forge renewed unity in 419.¹⁶⁹ They were still prominent enough to attract the immediate attention of Nestorius on his arrival at the city in 428, and there is evidence to suggest that Arian bishops were still active within the city right up to the sixth century.¹⁷⁰

The high level of non-Nicene activity at Constantinople was not limited to the Homoian community alone. The city was the stronghold and centre of operations for other dissenting churches such as the Eunomians, Novatians, and Macedonians.¹⁷¹ The Novatians, in particular, sustained a healthy community which, Socrates claims, was even expanded and strengthened during the 410s.¹⁷² The success of the Novatians at Constantinople was linked to their acceptance of the principles of Nicaea.¹⁷³ However, followers of doctrines that were anathema to the imperial church, much more so than that of the Novatians, continued to have a significant presence at the capital. The Eunomians, followers of the extreme strain of Arianism promoted by Eunomius who resided at Constantinople after his views had seen him lose the bishopric of Cyzicus, also remained a presence at the capital.¹⁷⁴ Imperial laws show that the Eunomians were influential enough to be specifically legislated against up to 415, and there is suggestion that they retained significant numbers within the city up to the 440s.¹⁷⁵ It was the relatively high level of Eunomian activity at Constantinople that attracted fellow Arians such as Philostorgius to the capital.¹⁷⁶ To this list of prominent non-Nicene elements at Constantinople also needs

¹⁶⁸ Socrates, *HE* 5.13 (*SCh* 505.188); Sozomen, *HE* 7.14 (*SCh* 516.130).

¹⁶⁹ In 419 the divided Arian community at Constantinople managed to forge a unity that eluded those elsewhere in the east; Socrates, *HE* 5.23 (*SCh* 505.240–42).

¹⁷⁰ As evidenced by the Roman-Arian bishop Deuterius, see Ralph W. Mathisen, "Barbarian 'Arian' Clergy, Church Organization, and Church Practices," in *Arianism: Roman Heresy and Barbarian Creed*, ed. Guido M. Berndt and Roland Steinacher (Farnham: Taylor and Francis, 2014), 153. Also, see G. Greatrex, "Justin I and the Arians," in *Studia Patristica* 34, ed. M.F. Wiles and E.J. Yarnold (2001), 72–81.

¹⁷¹ Van Nuffelen, "Episcopal Succession," 436. The level and diversity of non-Nicene activity at Constantinople is evident in the preaching of Severian of Gabala against Apollinarianism and Manichaeism; see Michael Aubineau, *Un traité inédit de christologie de Sévérien de Gabala: In centurionem et contra manichaeos et Apollinaristas. Exploitation par Sévère d'Antioche (519) et le synode du Latran (649)*, Cahiers d'Orientalisme 5 (Geneva: Patrick Cramer, 1983).

¹⁷² Socrates, *HE* 5.10 (*SCh* 505.180).

¹⁷³ See below.

¹⁷⁴ On Eunomius' career, see Raymond Van Dam, *Becoming Christian: The Conversion of Roman Cappadocia* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003) 17–45.

¹⁷⁵ *CTh* 16.5.58 (*SCh* 497.322).

¹⁷⁶ One of the factors that led Philostorgius to come to Constantinople appears to have been to seek camaraderie amongst fellow Eunomians; Van Dam, *Becoming Christian*, 160.

to be added the continued existence of well-entrenched congregations of Messalians and Apollinarians.¹⁷⁷ To understand how these non-Nicene groups could persist within such close proximity to the Nicene emperors, we must turn to the organs of imperial government.

The Constantinopolitan Court: Imperial Policy and Non-Nicenes

The court at Constantinople was made up of people who had varying degrees of influence. While the majority were involved in the low-level administration roles, others held positions in which they could exert considerable influence over imperial policy. The *magister officiorum*, the *magister militum*, and the *praepositus sacri cubiculi*, to name but a few prominent positions, were not offices of mere ceremonial import but were instrumental in the governance of the east.¹⁷⁸ The running of a vast and complex political entity such as the Roman Empire required the manpower and talents of many capable individuals, and as a result the emperor not only depended heavily on the advice of senior officials in the court but delegated much of the political decision-making to them. In particular, the *proceres palatii*, a collection of the most preeminent and trusted palace officials, could have significant influence over the direction of imperial policy.¹⁷⁹

The scope that such powerful court figures had in governing the state was enhanced in the first half of the fifth century due to periods in which the reigning emperor was too young to rule himself, such as during Theodosius II's minority, or when he took a more politically hands-off approach to government, such as Arcadius. During such periods the emperor's position could be likened to a symbolic figurehead for the policies formulated by more adept men and women. Perhaps it was because of this high incidence of young and easily led emperors during the first half of the fifth century that we find several examples of power at court being centralised around one or two prominent court figures. These powerful individuals, be they eunuchs such as Eutropius or Antiochus, prefects such as Rufinus or Anthemius, or military generals such as Plinta, could rise to positions influential enough to effectively rule the empire single-handedly.

¹⁷⁷ Atticus' letter to Euppsychium attests to the strength of Arianism and Apollinarianism in Constantinople during the tenure of Atticus; Atticus, *Epistula ad Euppsychium*; Translated in Maurice Brière, "Une lettre inédite d'Atticus, patriarche de Constantinople," *ROC* 29 (1933–1934): 378–421.

¹⁷⁸ Szymon Olszaniec, *Prosopographical Studies on the Court Elite in the Roman Empire (4th century A. D.)* (Wydawnictwo Naukowe Uniwersytetu Mikołaja Kopernika: Toruń, 2013), 9–22.

¹⁷⁹ A.H.M Jones, *The Decline of the Ancient World* (London: Routledge, 2014), 129.

Whether it was under the guidance of politically hands-on emperors or not, the importance of the court should not be underestimated. It was the mechanism through which imperial rule was implemented, the nexus around which the political alliances and networks of patronage revolved, and the source of political support for the current regime, not to mention the likely source of any potential challenges to the emperor's position. Given the importance of this shifting and influential elite, it is vital to consider the significance of the fact that many in the court, including some of those who reached positions of untrammelled influence, were either not of a Nicene persuasion, or maintained alliances with those outside of the Nicene fold. Powerful Arian generals, prominent pagans, respected Novatians, and lingering Homoians were all represented within the halls of power. Having such powerful non-Nicene political entities entrenched within Constantinople's structures of power inevitably had an impact on the religious landscape of the capital.

As noted in the previous chapter, Theodosian legislation against heresy was deliberately designed to be ineffectual. This lack of a persecuting zeal exhibited by the imperial executive was driven by political pragmatism. Taking into account even conservative estimates of the number of non-Nicene Christians and pagans that were still evident in the empire during the late fourth to early fifth century, it is clear that the emperors could ill afford to alienate such a sizable group.¹⁸⁰ Given their high number at Constantinople, the need for the emperor to retain the loyalty of non-Nicenes was particularly pressing. Such caution is evident in the imperial reaction to the Arian riots that swept through Constantinople in 388. In the aftermath of the unrest it was discovered that several influential court eunuchs had remained surreptitiously loyal to the Eunoian church.¹⁸¹ These Eunoians received surprisingly lenient treatment, with the laws against them being rescinded, reapplied, and finally rescinded again several years later.¹⁸² The mixed reaction to the existence of such "heretics" within the innermost circle of government is indicative of the complex considerations the emperor faced. An immediate and pressing consideration facing any emperor was the preservation of political support and, with influential individuals in the court and senate of Constantinople sitting firmly

¹⁸⁰ It was only in the 350s that the Christian population of the empire reached a tipping-point, came to outnumber the non-Christians of the empire. Even if only 15% of the population remained non-Christian by the close of the fourth century, this represents 9 million citizens who could ill be isolated (let alone Christians of a non-Nicene persuasion); Keith Hopkins, "Christian Number and Its Implications," *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 6.2 (1998): 185–226.

¹⁸¹ The riot occurred in 388; Socrates, *HE* 5.13 (*SCh* 505.188); Sozomen, *HE* 7.14 (*SCh* 516.130).

¹⁸² *CTh* 16.5.23, 25, 27, 36 (*SCh* 497.264, 266–68, 268).

outside the Nicene fold, this necessitated maintaining a moderate religious policy. Avoiding alienating influential cliques within the city's power structures would not have only been a concern for the emperor, but would have also constrained the many influential figures in the court who, if not themselves of non-Nicene sentiments, had to consider the religious sensibilities of those in their support network who were.

The influential non-Nicenes in Constantinople's political tapestry would have inevitably impeded the local bishop's ability to move against non-Nicene communities within the city. In sees such as Alexandria, where the bishop had a central role in local civil government, the bishop had substantial scope to pursue policies that marginalised dissenting spiritual communities.¹⁸³ However, operating alongside Constantinople's vast political machine obviated this possibility for the Constantinopolitan bishop, with imperial prerogatives working to hold the zeal of the local bishop in check. It is telling that the *proceres palatii*, so essential to developing imperial policy, did not routinely include the city's bishop during this period.¹⁸⁴

By looking at three religious communities at Constantinople who dissented from the imperial faith, we can discern that the political importance and aristocratic connections of prominent non-Nicenes at Constantinople can be correlated with the ability of so many non-Nicene communities to thrive there, political patronage providing them protection from interference by the Nicene bishop.

Arians

The continuing strength of the Arian communities at Constantinople is the most telling evidence that the imperial presence did little to bolster local Nicene authority. The imperial rulings against heresy that were proclaimed at Theodosius' ascension gave particular attention to all forms of so-called Arianism, singling out the likes of the Homoians and Eunomians for special denunciation.¹⁸⁵ While these laws did indeed signal Roman Arianism's decline across the rest of the east, Constantinople proved the exception, with the city's Arian community persisting for many decades to come. It was the city's location at the centre of imperial politics that contributed to the community's survival there.

¹⁸³ For example, Cyril forcibly expelling Alexandria's Jews in direct opposition to the wishes of the city prefect, Orestes: John of Nikiu, *Chron.* 84.87–103 (ed. Zotenberg, 344–6); Socrates, *HE* 7.13 (*SCh* 506.48–54).

¹⁸⁴ Elton, "Imperial Politics," 138.

¹⁸⁵ *CTh* 16.1.2; 16.5.6 (*SCh* 497.114, 234–36).

The steadfast resistance of Constantinople's Arians in the face of imperial directives suggests a level of support from amongst the aristocracy; without it, it would have been very difficult for such a sizable community to survive. However, the particular animosity between the Nicene church and the Arians makes it difficult to discern the extent of Arian support within the elite at Constantinople. The Nicene credentials of the imperial family meant that many at court would have avoided openly advertising connections with prominent Arians, a problem compounded by the fact that the extant sources tend to gloss over evidence of Arianism. That some of the members of the local aristocracy remained partial to Arian theologies is to be expected considering the city's Homoian past. As we have seen, thanks to lengthy earlier imperial sponsorship, the Homoian doctrine was the premier theology of the governing class at Constantinople. These same aristocratic families who dominated Constantinople's political scene during the Constantinian decades remained equally influential during the Theodosian dynasty and, while many such leading figures did adopt Nicene convictions, it was inevitable that they retained ties to those in the city who refused to give up their Homoian loyalties.¹⁸⁶

We are not, however, completely devoid of evidence for prominent Arians at Constantinople. While it is difficult to gauge the numbers of Roman Arian sympathisers within the court, there is copious evidence for Arian influences in the form of the string of Gothic military generals who rose to prominence during the fifth century.¹⁸⁷ It is with these barbarian influences that we can gain a sense of how well-connected non-Nicenes could impinge on the local bishop's authority.

In order to buoy up the empire's buckling defences, the government of Theodosius I and his heirs, depended on a military partnership with non-Romans, which saw large contingents of Goths serving in the Roman army.¹⁸⁸ Maintaining a partnership with Gothic forces provided an ideological challenge for a Theodosian government that had come to power boldly proclaiming its support for the Nicene church, as it meant accommodating within Roman society a group with strong Arian leanings.¹⁸⁹ However, with the empire

¹⁸⁶ Liebeschuetz, "Friends," 96–104.

¹⁸⁷ J. H. W. G. Liebeschuetz, *East and West in Late Antiquity: Invasion, Settlement, Ethnogenesis and Conflicts of Religion* (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 72–75.

¹⁸⁸ Peter Heather, *Goths and Romans: 332–489* (Oxford: OUP, 1994).

¹⁸⁹ It is no longer possible to treat the Goths as exclusively Arian. Defining Gothic ethnic identity itself has proved to be a highly controversial endeavour, to the extent that we can no longer be certain that such an identity existed prior to Gothic interaction with the Roman Empire; Michael Kulikowski, *Rome's Gothic Wars from the Third Century to Alaric* (Cambridge: CUP, 2007), 60–68. The deconstruction of ethno-homogeneous perspectives of the Goths has led to questions over traditional understandings of 'barbarian Ariansim'; for example, Hans Christof Brenneke "Deconstruction of the So-called Germanic Arianism," in

facing dire military pressures the imperial executive duly issued imperial legislation that exempted the barbarian Arians from the same prohibitions that were applicable to Roman Arians.¹⁹⁰

The influx of such powerful Gothic elements impacted on the religious landscape of the capital as Constantinople became home to a large community of Goths.¹⁹¹ Having to contend with an Arian community that received at least tepid imperial approval provided a clear challenge to the Nicene bishop's charismatic authority. It would have been difficult to propound the triumph of orthodoxy in such close proximity to Nicaea's primary adversary. However, the military importance of these Goths, as well as the threat of military uprising, lent these Arians a protected status that was supported by the top echelons of Constantinopolitan society. When Nestorius arrived at Constantinople to find Arians worshipping freely within the city's walls, he immediately sought to prohibit such a blatant affront to Nicene authority. Despite Nestorius' reputation for being a firebrand, his reaction would not have been out of place in the episcopal landscapes beyond the Theodosian Walls. However, Nestorius' moves against Constantinople's Arians instantly aroused hostility not only from the Arians themselves but from within the Constantinopolitan aristocracy.¹⁹² When the Arians reacted to the bishop's initiative by setting fire to parts of the city, it was not the riotous Arians who were blamed for the conflagration but the unnecessarily aggravating policy of the bishop.¹⁹³ McGuckin assumes that aristocratic opposition to Nestorius' policy against the Arians came from a Roman population that understood the importance of keeping onside with the Gothic Arians.¹⁹⁴ This is no doubt correct; however, it is also highly likely that support for the

Arianism: Roman Heresy and Barbarian Creed, ed. Guido M. Berndt and Roland Steinacher (Farnham: Taylor and Francis, 2014), 117–30. As Jonathan Stanfill has recently shown, we must approach the many Gothic groups in the empire as not only widely distinct but holding various Christian beliefs, including Nicene; Jonathan Stanfill, "Embracing the Barbarian: John Chrysostom's Pastoral Care of the Goths" (PhD diss., Fordham University, 2015), 78–145.

¹⁹⁰ Mathisen, "Barbarian 'Arian' Clergy," 147–48.

¹⁹¹ Stanfill, "Embracing the Barbarian," 146. As Stanfill shows, these Goths at Constantinople were not exclusively Arian and likely represented a diverse range of doctrinal affiliations; However, even taking a cautious approach it is safe to say that a large portion of the military Gothic contingent at Constantinople held Arian beliefs; Stanfill, "Embracing the Barbarian," 78–145. Gainas' request for a Gothic church at Constantinople and Nestorius' reaction to the Arian practices of the Goths in the city (see discussion of both instances below) points to the popularity of Arianism with the Goths at Constantinople. The need to accommodate Gothic Arians at the city would persist into the sixth century; Greatrex, "Justin I and the Arians," 72–81.

¹⁹² McGuckin, "Nestorius," 10–14.

¹⁹³ Socrates, *HE* 7. 29 (*SCh* 506.106–110); McGuckin, "Nestorius," 11. The failure of Nestorius' crackdown in spite of imperial support, suggests that the authority of the emperor could mean very little in the face of such vested interests at Constantinople.

¹⁹⁴ McGuckin, "Nestorius," 11–13.

Arian population also originated from Arians within the court itself, as the same military policy that saw Gothic mercenaries able to worship in Constantinople also opened up government positions of the highest influence to Arians.

The *magistri militum* of the first half of the fifth century held a position of great significance. Holders of this office were tasked with overseeing the military defence of the empire after this responsibility was divested from the role of the prefects.¹⁹⁵ Not only did the continuing martial threats to the empire in the early fifth century mean that these men were in a powerful position but their political influence was accentuated by the spectre of military usurpation that lingered on after the crises of the third century. In addition, the recent memory of the death of an emperor and the near collapse of the eastern empire at the hands of a barbarian force must have further emphasised the need for the imperial government to keep on side with those who held the loyalty of the troops.¹⁹⁶ Such considerations gave these generals substantial political leverage. While the career of the Gothic *magister militum* Gainas was short-lived, his time at Constantinople is an example of the level of influence such generals could obtain, having come close to setting himself up as the default regent of the east in the style of Stilicho in the west.¹⁹⁷ Many other generals of Germanic extraction and likely Arian persuasion managed much longer careers. Another Goth, Plinta, after a long and well-respected career, reached the rank of *magister militum* and achieved a position of such influence that Sozomen reports that he was the most prominent figure in the court.¹⁹⁸ Another highly influential general was the Goth-Alan, Aspar, who for half a century exerted significant sway over the incumbent emperors, as well as played kingmaker for Marcian.¹⁹⁹ With such Arian-leaning elements so well established within the highest echelons of power and playing such a vital role in safeguarding the empire, the imperial desire to keep them on-side would have given such generals significant influence over imperial policy. It is just such a desire to maintain the loyalty of the barbarian elements at Constantinople and not to offend the religious

¹⁹⁵ N. J. E. Austin and N. B. Rankov, *Exploratio: Military and Political Intelligence in the Roman World from the Second Punic War to the Battle of Adrianople* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 228–32.

¹⁹⁶ Valens and the bulk of the eastern army was killed by a Gothic force at Adrianople in 378, see Ian Hughes, *Imperial Brothers: Valentinian, Valens and the Disaster at Adrianople* (Barnsley: Pen & Sword Military, 2013), 184–209.

¹⁹⁷ Another influential *magister militum*, who fell by the wayside in the wake of Gainas' rebellion, was Fravitta; *PLRE* I 372–73; Cameron and Long, *Barbarians and Politics*, 236–52.

¹⁹⁸ Sozomen, *HE* 7.17 (*SCh* 516.158).

¹⁹⁹ Fl. Ardabur Aspar, *PLRE* 2, 164–9.

sensibilities of powerful Gothic figures that prevented proselytizing bishops such as Nestorius' from attempting to rein in Arian influences within the city.²⁰⁰

Perhaps the most clear-cut example of such political considerations impinging on the bishop's prerogatives at Constantinople occurred during John's episcopate when Gainas was at the height of his power at Constantinople. Ever since Theodosius had issued laws that prohibited heretical groups from assembling within Constantinople's walls, the city's Arians had been forced to worship beyond the city limits.²⁰¹ However, Gainas, unhappy with this situation, complained to the emperor Arcadius requesting that a church be established within Constantinople's walls in which his fellow Goths could practise their Arian faith. No doubt mindful of the Gainas' importance and wary of his influence, Arcadius was inclined to acquiesce. John intervened, vehemently protesting such a move by pointing out that the emperor's orthodox convictions should preclude such an action.²⁰² Socrates reports this incident as an example of John's inappropriate outspokenness.²⁰³ However, far from indicating the Syrian's difficult personality, the incident illustrates the way in which imperial prerogatives directly impinged on the Constantinopolitan bishop's sphere of influence. Granting Gainas' request required John's cooperation in handing over one of the city's churches to the Arians. By this act, Arcadius was asking John not only to flout the laws of his father but to contravene one of the most fundamental functions of a bishop. In the spiritually conflicted world of the early church, safeguarding the true faith and combating heresy were central tenets of episcopal leadership.²⁰⁴ Providing facilities for Arian worship stood in stark contrast to that obligation and, while John's reaction has been read as a product of the Syrian's fiery temperament, it is hard to imagine

²⁰⁰ Whether or not the generals themselves were Goths is largely irrelevant if their troops were.

²⁰¹ *CTh* 16.1.3; 16.5.6; 16.5.8; 16.5.11; 16.5.12 (*SCh* 531.116; 234–36; 242; 248; 248–50).

²⁰² See Tiersch, *Johannes Chrysostomus*, 281–96. Whether or not John succeeded in preventing Gainas' request being granted is not clear, see Liebeschuetz, *Barbarians*, 190–91. In fact, even John's role in the incident is far from assured; Mayer, "Making of a Saint", 42. Conversely, there is also a possibility that John in fact acceded to the request; J. H. W. G. Liebeschuetz, *Ambrose and John Chrysostom: Clerics between Desert and Empire* (Oxford: OUP, 2011), 230–31, such a concession would further prove the power of political considerations over the episcopal authority at Constantinople.

²⁰³ Socrates, *HE* 6.5 (*SCh* 505.274).

²⁰⁴ The maintenance of orthodoxy is one of seven central categories of pastoral activity advanced in Pauline Allen and Wendy Mayer, "Through a Bishop's Eyes: Towards a Definition of Pastoral Care in Late Antiquity," *Augustinianum* 40 (2000): 245–97. On the importance of this central tenet of holding office, see Daniel Edward Doyle, *The Bishop as Disciplinarian in the Letters of St. Augustine* (New York: P. Lang, 2002), 223–77.

Not only would acquiescing to the request force John to act in opposition to the ideological foundation of his position, but it threatened to undo the progress he had made in forging good relations with the Goths; Liebeschuetz, *Barbarians*, 169–70.

even the most moderate of Nicene bishops willing to accede to Arcadius' request without offering at least a modicum of protest.

The reason for Arcadius' lenient approach toward Arian worship within the city is clear. Gainas and his troops posed a very real and pressing threat within the city, and the likelihood of violent rebellion was increasing daily. With the stakes so high it is not difficult to understand the emperor's willingness to risk his Nicene credentials. However, outside such moments of crisis, the persistent influence at court of Gothic generals such as Plinta and Aspar undoubtedly contributed to the vitality of the Arian movement at Constantinople in a more routine and inconspicuous manner.

It may even be possible to connect the presence of high-ranking barbarian Arians at Constantinople to the continuing strength of not just the Gothic Arians of the city but the Roman Arian church as well. In 419, when the city's Arians were bitterly divided by a theological dispute that cut across both Roman and Gothic parties, we find the court favourite, Plinta, personally stepping in to reunite the warring factions.²⁰⁵ Plinta's activities within the Arian community of Constantinople were no doubt tolerated due to his prominent connections at court and usefulness to the imperial executive. It is even possible that the sway of the Gothic generals at court attracted some Romans to the Arian church with evidence of at least one Roman aristocrat converting to Arianism, most likely in order to secure favour at a Gothic dominated court.²⁰⁶

Indeed, we do not have to look hard to find other examples of the effect that aristocratic patronage could have on the strength of dissenting religious communities at Constantinople, as in the case of the city's Novatian community.

Novatians

Because of the close theological relationship between the Nicene and Novatian churches, the Novatians of Constantinople were able to maintain a much more open relationship with the aristocracy than those of an Arian persuasion.²⁰⁷ It was this toleration that not only explains the strength of the Novatian movement at the capital but gives us a clearer picture

²⁰⁵ Socrates, *HE* 5.23 (*SCh* 505.240–42).

²⁰⁶ Eutychanus, who was from a prestigious Roman line and served as prefect of the east and consul, was allied to the Gothic party at Constantinople; Eutychanus, *PLRE* 1.319–21. Many aristocrats must have at least maintained healthy networks within the Arian community during such periods

²⁰⁷ Sozomen says as much; Sozomen, *HE* 8.1 (*SCh* 516.230). The Novatians were protected by legislation in 362 but subsequently legislated against as heretics in 423 and 428; *CTh* 16.5.2, 16.5.59, 16.5.65 (*SCh* 497.228, 324, 332–336).

of the ways in which aristocratic patronage of religious establishments outside the state-sanctioned one impacted on the Nicene bishop's capacity to secure and expand his church's fortunes within his own city.

The Novatians were particularly well-connected within the upper echelons of Constantinopolitan society into at least the 430s.²⁰⁸ Indeed, many of the city's Novatian bishops came to the role after respectable careers within the imperial administration, such as Chrysanthus who became bishop of the Constantinopolitan Novatians after a long career as a trusted imperial representative, including a military post at the palace before being made consul of Italy and subsequently assigned to the post of *vicarius* of Britain.²⁰⁹ It is through such connections with the ruling class at Constantinople that the Novatians were able to maintain a presence. Socrates reports that one Novatian presbyter, an ex-palace guard called Marcian, was appointed as tutor to the emperor's daughters, a position from which he was able to temper imperial zeal against the Novatians.²¹⁰ The esteem in which Novatian bishops were held by members of the aristocracy is evidenced by another Novatian bishop, Agelius, who was purportedly so well-respected within the city that he was regularly consulted by the city's Nicene bishop, Nectarius.²¹¹

While the substantial Novatian presence at Constantinople was not as galling to the local Nicene bishop as the city's Arian population, the existence of any episcopal hierarchy outside the local Nicene one posed a significant problem. The universal episcopal objective of combating dissenting Christian communities, the objective that had driven John Chrysostom's refusal of Gainas' request for an Arian chapel, was not founded on purely theological grounds but was built on sound episcopal strategy. The existence of any form of rival episcopal hierarchies drained potential resources, both human and economic, from the local Nicene establishment, not to mention providing an implicit spiritual challenge to the bishop's authority. It was such considerations that led empire-building bishops such as Cyril of Alexandria and Leontius of Ancyra to shut down Novatian churches in their sees and dismantle their support networks.²¹² However, bishops of the same ilk as Cyril would find Constantinople a much more difficult environment.

Socrates singles out the bishops of Constantinople as the only ones to have allowed the Novatians to exist free of persecution, while the bishops of other metropolitans closed

²⁰⁸ Van Nuffelen, "Episcopal Succession," 430.

²⁰⁹ Socrates, *HE* 7.12 (*SCh* 506.46–48). s.v. Chrysanthus, *PLRE* 1.319–21.

²¹⁰ Socrates, *HE* 4.9 (*SCh* 505.44).

²¹¹ Socrates relays that Nectarius had a high regard for Agelius and that they worked together to deal with those Christians whom both men considered heretical; Socrates, *HE* 5.10 (*SCh* 505.178–80).

²¹² Socrates, *HE* 6.5, 6.22 (*SCh* 505.274, 350). Wessel, *Cyril*, 20–21.

their churches.²¹³ This policy of tolerance towards the Novatians was not driven by clemency but necessity, as the Novatians' close relationship with the elite at Constantinople afforded them a protected status, as is proven by the instances in which Constantinople's bishopric was entrusted to men of a less moderate temperament.

As would be expected from a bishop of Chrysostom's reputation, the Syrian was no admirer of the Novatian church, a fact confirmed by his closure of Novatian churches during his travels through Asia Minor.²¹⁴ However, despite John's attack on Novatians outside his own see's jurisdiction, he was unable to move against the Novatians within his own city. Socrates recounts the tensions between John and the city's Novatian bishop Sissinius. He quotes the Novatian's pithy retorts to John's insistence that he was the only legitimate bishop in the city.²¹⁵ While we cannot rely on Socrates' pro-Novatian account of Sissinius' triumph in the face of John's bombast, John's moves against the Novatian community at Constantinople never did advance beyond mere hostile rhetoric. Sissinius retained his position within the city well after John's ill-fated tenure, and resumed peaceful cohabitation with Chrysostom's Nicene successor.²¹⁶ The reason for John's impotency in his dealings with the Novatian church of Constantinople is clear. Sissinius was well-connected, esteemed by the most influential men in the senate.²¹⁷ That the close relationship between the Novatian church and the leading men of Constantinople enabled them to resist the persecuting zeal of Nicene bishops is also clear from Nestorius' tenure. Taken aback by the multitude of dissenting theological viewpoints he found at Constantinople, Nestorius took immediate steps to strengthen the local Nicene church by moving against the rival churches. However, just as with Chrysostom, Nestorius soon found the well-connected Novatian community off-limits, this time with the emperor himself preventing the bishop from attacking them.²¹⁸

²¹³ Socrates, *HE* 7.29 (*SCh* 506.106–110).

²¹⁴ Socrates, *HE* 6.11, vers. B (*SCh* 505.313); The manuscript provides two separate recensions and it is the inclusion of the details of John's interference with Novatian and Quartodeciman churches that has led Wendy Mayer to argue that the shorter recension (version B in *SCh* 505) is Socrates' own; Mayer, "Making of a Saint," 43 n.22.

²¹⁵ Socrates, *HE* 6.22 (*SCh* 505.348–52).

²¹⁶ John's successor, Atticus, was kindly disposed to the Novatians; Socrates, *HE* 7.25 (*SCh* 505.98–100).

²¹⁷ Socrates, *HE* 6.22 (*SCh* 505.350–52).

²¹⁸ Socrates, *HE* 7.29 (*SCh* 506.110).

Pagans

Another non-Nicene group who continued to maintain a sizable presence within the elite of Constantinople were the city's pagans.²¹⁹ The case of Constantinople's pagan population provides an interesting counterpoint to the assumption that Constantinople's imperial status naturally strengthened the city's Christian standing. The cosmopolitan attractions of the court and the university, in fact, saw many pagans flock to the city.²²⁰ The contrast this presents to other cities in the east is made clear by the fact that when, in the late fourth century, the prevailing Christian environment of Alexandria became too oppressive for prominent pagans there, it was to Constantinople that they fled.²²¹

Early in the reign of Theodosius, pagans continued to take a very active role in the mechanisms of state government. Themistius acted not only as court orator at the city but also held the role of city prefect, alongside prominent pagans in the senate such as Proculus and Flavius Eutolmius Tatianus who were appointed city prefect and prefect of the east respectively.²²² As would be expected, the instances of avowed pagans being appointed to the top echelons of the imperial administration dwindled as Christianity became ever more entrenched within government; however, we can discern the continuing prominence of pagans within Constantinople's elite well into the reign of Theodosius II. One very powerful individual whose religious loyalty to the Christian faith has been subject to suspicion was Anthemius. As praetorian prefect of the East, Anthemius reached a position of such influence that he is said to have virtually run the empire for the decade in which he was in ascendance.²²³ While evidence of his own spiritual affiliations are

²¹⁹ That we find pagans active within Constantinople's elite even after Theodosius enters the city is unsurprising given recent scholarship surrounding the continuation of pagan influences within the empire. The studies of both Alan Cameron and Edward Watts have gone a long way in dismantling the modern perspective that the fourth century witnessed a face-off between the old pagan and emerging Christian elite. While Watts has made clear that until the end of the fourth century there was little concerted governmental policy to root out pagans, Alan Cameron has similarly dismantled the idea that the pagan elite represented a cohesive body that fought back against the encroachment of Christianity. The picture that emerges from these studies is one in which the new Christian order overcame pagan traditions in government gradually and in a piecemeal fashion. It was only in the decades after Theodosius' council pronounced Constantinople as New Rome that the religions of old Rome began to face concerted repression from a new generation of Christians. Cameron, *The Last Pagans*; Edward J. Watts, *The Final Pagan Generation* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2015).

²²⁰ Constatas, *Proclus of Constantinople*, 3–15.

²²¹ Socrates, *HE* 5.16 (*SCh* 505.196).

²²² For pagan influences at Constantinople, see Paul Petit, "Les senateurs de Constantinople dans l'oeuvre de Libanius," *L'antiquité classique Année* 26 (1957): 347–82. For a list of pagans who were given high rank by Theodosius, see Holum, *Empresses*, 13. s.v. Proculus, *PLRE* 1.746–47; s.v. Flavius Eutolmius Tatianus, *PLRE* 1.876–78.

²²³ Socrates, *HE* 7.1 (*SCh* 506.20–22); Synesius, *Ep.* 73 (ed. Garzya, 130–33).

lacking, Anthemius' close association with the sophist Troilus and other prominent pagans, if not signalling a personal partiality for the pagan faith, attests that pagans continued to be well-respected within the city and influential in policy-making. Socrates goes so far as to claim that Anthemius did nothing without first consulting Troilus.²²⁴

As the career and Constantinopolitan network of Synesius of Cyrene attest, congenial relationships and political alliances between influential figures at Constantinople were not driven by religious sentiments alone, but by a large slew of shared interests, such as a political allegiances or opposition to Gothic influences.²²⁵ This political cross-pollination between prominent pagans and Christians is significant in explaining Constantinople's moderate religious landscape. Maintaining a prominent position at Constantinople meant taking into account the many interests represented there. Indeed, it was Anthemius' accommodating approach to all interested parties at the capital that had purportedly ensured his success.²²⁶ With shared interests and political alliances holding such disparate religious groups together, it stands to reason that the power-brokers at Constantinople were far less receptive to bishops whose persecuting attitudes threatened the political status quo. Given John's destruction of pagan temples in Asia Minor and his rhetoric against other non-Nicene groups in the city, it is perhaps no surprise to find the pagan sympathiser Anthemius as one of his most ardent and active opponents.²²⁷ Another oppressor of the Johannites of Constantinople was the pagan prefect Optatus.²²⁸ Optatus' persecution of John's supporters, considered alongside his status as both a pagan and prefect of Constantinople, home of the *Christianissimus Imperator*, is testimony to the varied political and religious sensibilities of the capital.

As the next section will show, understanding the ways in which such multifarious sensibilities interacted and conflicted with episcopal ideals at Constantinople, not only provides the key to understanding what went wrong during the tenures of Chrysostom and Nestorius, but it also offers an interpretational basis thorough which to approach an understanding the nature of the Constantinopolitan bishopric in general.

²²⁴ Socrates, *HE* 7.1 (*SCh* 506.20–22). Another influential aristocrat at Constantinople who was perhaps equally as prominent as Anthemius and was himself a pagan was the urban prefect Cyrus; *PLRE* 1.336–39.

²²⁵ Cameron and Long, *Barbarians and Politics*, 71–91; Holum, *Empresses*, 67–68, 84–86.

²²⁶ Socrates, *HE* 7.1 (*SCh* 506.20–22).

²²⁷ Theodoret, *HE* 5.29 (*SCh* 530.458–60); Liebeschuetz, *Barbarians*, 219.

²²⁸ Socrates, *HE* 6.18 (*SCh* 505.340).

3. The Triumph of the Mild Bishops of New Rome

As the previous section has shown, imperial patronage at Constantinople, rather than fortifying episcopal rule in the city, worked to undermine central aspects of ecclesiastical authority. The concentration of imperial politics and powerful patronage in the city decentralised episcopal authority, disrupted ecclesiastical relationships, and protected dissenting religious communities from censure. So far, this chapter has identified the impacts of imperial authority at Constantinople by focusing on moments in which they were exposed by conflict. It is through the conflicts that marked the tenures of Chrysostom, Nestorius, and Flavian that we are able to gain a glimpse of the underlying political pressures on the bishopric at Constantinople. However, these pressures did not just intrude on the church during moments of conflict, but must have exerted influence on the contours of the city's episcopate on a consistent basis. By examining the bishops who enjoyed more peaceful tenures between 381 and 451, this section will consider the broader impact that imperial prerogatives had on the see's institutional architecture. The survey will reveal that the type of bishops who succeeded at Constantinople did not exhibit the characteristics we would expect to find in those who headed a see experiencing a meteoric rise to primacy.

Nectarius as a Model of Episcopal Success at Constantinople

After Gregory of Nazianzus' lack of political nous and opposition to imperial initiative saw him lose the episcopate in 381,²²⁹ Theodosius opted for a replacement who was in every way Gregory's opposite. Nectarius was a politically astute ex-official with few Christian credentials and little experience at preaching.²³⁰ Due to his lack of theological sophistication or proven eloquence on the ambo, there is a tendency to treat Nectarius' election as an anomaly.²³¹ Such a judgement seems to be confirmed by the failure of Nectarius to swell the ranks of the local Nicene supporters or diminish those of its enemies, suggesting that he was an inappropriate choice for the Arian-dominated Constantinople. Yet despite his perceived shortcomings, Nectarius proved to be one of the longest-serving and most successful bishops at Constantinople between 381 and 451.

²²⁹ Chapter 3, section 3.

²³⁰ Socrates, *HE* 5.8 (*SCh* 505.168); Sozomen, *HE* 7.8 (*SCh* 516.182).

²³¹ Tiersch, *Chrysostomus*, 19–30.

Given the political pressures faced by the episcopacy at Constantinople, that Nectarius' success in the episcopate had little to do with traditional episcopal qualities should not be surprising. Instead, it was the appropriateness of Nectarius' secular skillset that made his tenure a long and peaceful one.

Being an unbaptised layman did not necessarily preclude Nectarius taking to his new role with the zealous energy of a Theophilus (one only has to look at Ambrose to prove the point).²³² However, Nectarius' skills as a capable diplomat and willing political collaborator were far more pertinent within the Constantinopolitan setting than spiritual zeal.²³³ A popular senator and urban praetor, Nectarius came to the role already deeply embedded within the ruling elite of Constantinople, and his awareness of the volatile politics of the capital no doubt ensured his peaceful tenure. Nectarius' time in office was marked by moderation and non-partisanship. Noted for his mild manner, he not only worked in harmony with the emperor but also with the leaders of non-Nicene congregations, such as Agelius, bishop of the Novatians.²³⁴

Of the bishops who followed, those who enjoyed similarly uninterrupted tenures exhibited the same attributes as Nectarius. After the failure of John's reign, Nectarius' brother Arsacius was raised to bishop. A product of the local Constantinopolitan episcopate, Arsacius is described as notable for his very mild disposition and, in contrast to Chrysostom, inclined to take an especially hands-off approach to managing his clergy.²³⁵ After Arsacius' peaceful tenure the role was taken up by Atticus. Another product of the Constantinopolitan church, Atticus was also marked out by his mildness; according to Socrates, he even had the admiration of many heretics due to his clement attitude towards them. Clemency was a characteristic of Atticus' tenure, with the historian citing Corinthians in describing him as having been all things to all men.²³⁶ Another notable characteristic Atticus shared with his Constantinopolitan predecessors was a lack of evocative preaching. Socrates remarked that his speeches were not worthy of recording.²³⁷ After Atticus' long and peaceful tenure the propensity for moderate bishops to sit at

²³² Ambrose was also an unbaptised official before being made bishop; Rufinus *HE* 11.11, cited in McLynn, *Ambrose of Milan*, 1–3.

²³³ Socrates, *HE* 5.8 (*SCh* 505.168); Sozomen, *HE* 7.8 (*SCh* 516.102).

²³⁴ Nectarius was noted for his mild manner; Socrates, *HE* 5.8 (*SCh* 505.168); Sozomen, *HE* 7.8 (*SCh* 516.100–102). Socrates relates that Nectarius had a high regard for Agelius. Regarding Nectarius' cooperation with Agelius against heretics, see section 2.3.

²³⁵ Socrates, *HE* 6.19 (*SCh* 505.342–44); Sozomen, *HE* 8.23 (*SCh* 516.332–34); Palladius sees him as an untalented man, spurred to take the seat only due to ambition, and breaking an earlier oath never to take up a bishopric; Palladius, *Dial.* 7 (*SCh* 341.216).

²³⁶ Socrates, *HE* 7.2 (*SCh* 506.22–24).

²³⁷ Socrates, *HE* 7.2 (*SCh* 506.22–24); Sozomen, *HE* 8.27 (*SCh* 516.356–58).

Constantinople continued, with the aged priest Sisinnius taking to the episcopal chair. A presbyter hailing from a village outside the city, Sisinnius' episcopal style was reportedly so genial and laid back that he was considered by some to be negligent in his post.²³⁸

Perhaps it was Sisinnius' extremely *laissez-faire* approach to episcopal management that contributed to the imperial executive's decision to bring the string of mild bishops to an end. After Sissinius' death in 427, Nestorius was appointed to replace him. Unlike his predecessors, Nestorius was a distinguished preacher and authoritative episcopal hierarch.²³⁹ However, just like the last Syrian to take the role, such attributes led to a short and turbulent tenure. After the failure of Nestorius, the bishopric fell to the monk Maximian. Maximian's short tenure marked a return to the characteristics commonly found in the Constantinopolitan bishops before Nestorius: he combined a moderate, non-interventionist approach to clerical management with a lack of eloquence at the pulpit.²⁴⁰ After Maximian's death, next to inherit the position, after many attempts to secure the bishopric, was the Constantinopolitan Proclus. Proclus' fierce resistance to Nestorius and celebrated eloquence might suggest a bishop who would employ a more proactive role in imposing the bishop's authority at Constantinople. However, Socrates goes to great lengths to describe Proclus' episcopal style as even milder than that of his predecessors.²⁴¹ He tells us Proclus vowed never to move against any heresy or do anything to upset those who held beliefs that were other to his own.²⁴² After Proclus' death, Flavian took up the episcopal chair. Little is known of Flavian's character or his background before becoming bishop. Flavian's denouncement of Eutyches and at least passive resistance to Eudocia suggests he may have been a bishop willing to throw his weight around. Whether or not that was indeed the case, Flavian, like the outspoken bishops before him, was fell victim to the politics of the capital.

As this brief survey shows, the bishops who prospered at the capital shared several common attributes.²⁴³ These attributes are not the type we would expect to find when

²³⁸ Socrates, *HE* 7.28 (*SCh* 506.106).

²³⁹ Socrates, *HE* 7.29 (*SCh* 506.108).

²⁴⁰ Socrates, *HE* 7.35 (*SCh* 506.126). Maximian's origin is unknown.

²⁴¹ Socrates, *HE* 7.41 (*SCh* 506.142–44).

²⁴² Socrates, *HE* 7.41 (*SCh* 506.144).

²⁴³ It is important to note that the historian Socrates' designation of bishops as mild and clement towards heretics was applied in terms of demonstrating positive attributes. Rather than lessening Socrates' assessment of the bishops, such a judgement provides further evidence of the effect that Constantinople's uniquely political environment had on what were considered valuable episcopal characteristics. Socrates was a native of Constantinople and his view of laudable episcopal virtues was informed by his Constantinopolitan environment. His high praise for bishops who took a mild approach to ecclesiastical authority was influenced by his acculturation within Constantinople's sectarian landscape. Like many other of his fellow

considering the modern assumption that during this period, the bishops of Constantinople were experiencing dramatic growth in authority and standing. Bishops of the major apostolic sees and especially those who expanded or rigorously defended their reach – the Ambroses and Cyrils of the fifth-century ecclesiastical world – did so through strategies that limited opposition and enhanced authority, such as: coercing or persecuting non-conforming Christians, pressuring local secular authority, and centralising episcopal infrastructure.²⁴⁴ In contrast, the bishops who came to the fore at Constantinople were those who maintained genial relationships with those of all spiritual persuasions, did not attempt to impose the Nicene faith on those outside the church, took a very moderate approach to episcopal hierarchy, and were amenable to the demands of secular authority. Furthermore, in contrast to bishoprics elsewhere, little premium appears to have been put on adept preaching.²⁴⁵

The prevalence of such episcopal characteristics at Constantinople is a product of the city's unique political landscape. With patronage destabilising the authority of the bishop, and political efficacy and imperial objectives taking precedence over local episcopal objectives, it is hardly surprising to find mild bishops being the ones who enjoyed uninterrupted tenures at New Rome. That the imperial politics of Constantinople had an indelible impact on episcopal values at the capital is further highlighted by considering the development of the Nicene church of Constantinople at a broad institutional level.

Constantinople's Unique Episcopal Development

In order to understand why mild bishops such as Nectarius prospered at Constantinople while those such as Chrysostom failed, it is essential to appreciate how Constantinople's peculiar episcopal development meant that episcopal strategies that were essential to success in large sees elsewhere were destined to fail when applied at New Rome.

Constantinopolitans, Socrates' own religious allegiance fell outside the official imperial church and his education at Constantinople would have further emphasised the ills of overbearing bishops, as his tutors, Helladius and Ammonius, were both pagans who had fled to Constantinople to avoid persecution at Alexandria; Socrates, *HE* 5.16 (*SCh* 505.196).

²⁴⁴ McLynn, *Ambrose of Milan*, 53–360; Wessel, *Cyril*, 15–111.

²⁴⁵ The lack of premium put on eloquence of speech for bishops at Constantinople is interesting considering that such a quality was essential to gaining patronage and power; Van Nuffelen, "A War of Words," 201–17. Such a finding suggests that, as argued above (section 2.1), episcopal authority and patronage at Constantinople was not consolidated around the figure of the bishop.

While the churches across the empire varied in custom from region to region, the contours of episcopal leadership amongst the ancient churches of the east shared many common characteristics. Such commonalities were a result of a shared heritage of persecution and internal schism. The older Nicene churches of apostolic origins, such as at Antioch or Alexandria, had developed through periods in which the Nicene community was a minority actively persecuted by the state. Imperial recognition had brought an end to such state-sponsored persecution, but it also brought new challenges, with attempts to secure a universal definition of the faith leading to damaging internal schisms.²⁴⁶ Naturally, their turbulent past left an imprint on the episcopal DNA of these churches. Having developed as highly self-sufficient communities that could exist independently of state sponsorship, as well as meet multiple internal challenges, the practices and expectations integral to the position of the bishop were honed by the need for self-preservation. Strategies such as centralising episcopal authority and providing for the city's poor had not become central tenets of episcopal practice via apostolic wisdom alone, but were proven strategies of survival.²⁴⁷ Approaching Constantinople's novel episcopal environment of the early fifth century, we should be careful not to discount the extent to which the Nicene establishment there stood outside of such a heritage.²⁴⁸

Unlike episcopates elsewhere, where the Nicene communities had survived the persecutions of earlier decades, due in large part to a groundswell of support amongst the general populace,²⁴⁹ the Nicene establishment at Constantinople grown from the top-down. After the religious machinations of Constantius II and Valens erased virtually any trace of a Nicene movement at Constantinople, it was only through the imperial initiatives of Theodosius that the Nicene church was able to gain a foothold in the city while so many of its inhabitants remained loyal to non-Nicene institutions. Lacking the entrenched traditions of an ancient see and having developed as a result of imperial endorsement rather than independently of it, the Nicene church of Constantinople was, from its Theodosian outset

²⁴⁶ See Ayres, *Nicaea*, 86–272. Certainly, the episcopal institution at Antioch where John received his ecclesiastical education had experienced persecution and schism to a high degree. In the fourth century, the Christians of the city were divided not only between Arian and Nicene lines but internally within such parties as well; Spoerl, “The Schism at Antioch,” 101–26. However, even relatively stable sees experienced deep divisions during this period, such as the Meletian schism in Egypt; L.W. Barnard, “Athanasius and the Meletian Schism in Egypt,” *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 59 (1973): 181–89.

²⁴⁷ Rapp, *Holy Bishops*.

²⁴⁸ As will be shown in Chapter 5, section 1, the bishops of Alexandria could depend on several episcopal attributes that the bishops at Constantinople lacked, such as: well-established theological credentials, the loyalty of local monasteries, a broad suffragan network, and increased political clout.

²⁴⁹ The early church's power within the local community lay in its groundswell of support; Peter Brown, *Poverty and Leadership in the Later Roman Empire* (Hanover: University Press of New England, 2002) 45–73.

fundamentally shaped by imperial concerns. This top-down development altered the concerns and power parameters of the city's bishops. Elsewhere, the expansion of the Nicene congregation, campaigns against heretics, and the centralisation of authority were fundamental to the survival of a local church; at Constantinople, however, it was imperial favour and harmonious relations with the city's elite that were the keys to the church's success.²⁵⁰

With the heritage of the early Constantinopolitan church being aligned so closely to imperial prerogatives and intimately linked to the aristocracy of the senate and court, bishops such as Nectarius, with his lack of theological nous and pro-court approach to the ministry, represented not an anomaly but, rather, perfect candidates for the Constantinople of their time. It is from the standpoint of Nectarius' suitability for the episcopate that we must reconsider the Constantinopolitan careers of John Chrysostom and Nestorius.

While the historiography surrounding both bishops' controversial tenures at Constantinople has rightly emphasised the geo-ecclesiastical politics and theological tensions that marked their time in office, in both cases it was internal dissension within Constantinople that proved central to their demise.²⁵¹ Blame for this internal enmity is traditionally often attributed to the bishops themselves. Both the Syrians are portrayed as dour disciplinarians and zealous persecutors who promoted rigorously ascetic ideals, character traits that are read into the bishops' episcopal policies at Constantinople.²⁵² The Syrians' attempts to centralise episcopal authority, strike out against heresy, and criticise the excesses of the Constantinopolitan aristocracy are judged as being overly rigorist in nature, causing much local resentment.

However, the fact that both bishops who were decried for an overzealous approach to episcopal authority happened to come from a major see well beyond Constantinople's episcopal culture is no coincidence. For bishops enculturated in the strictures of the large

²⁵⁰ It was this top-down development that accounts for the particularly aristocratic character of the early Constantinopolitan church. The congregation which Gregory of Nazianzus led appears to have been aristocratic from the outset (Freeman, *AD 381*, 78–79), and many subsequent bishops came from the local political elite (such as Nectarius and Arsacius). Given the high levels of political competition and ambition at Constantinople this is unsurprising; joining the priesthood for political gain was not uncommon throughout the empire but Constantinople's unique position as a hub of politics and patronage perhaps saw the trend increased there. Raymond Van Dam, "Bishops and Society," 345–47; Hunt, "Church as a Public Institution," 250–72.

²⁵¹ See above, section 2.

²⁵² Just as in the case of Chrysostom (see section 2.1 above), modern accounts of Nestorius' time at Constantinople emphasise the Syrian's unique traits in having stirred up resentment against him within the city. Such studies have tended to follow uncritically the lead of the primary sources in characterising the bishop's episcopal management as being defined by inflexibility, arrogance, and lack of political moderation. See Carl E. Braaten, "Modern Interpretations of Nestorius," *Church History: Studies in Christianity and Culture* 32, 3 (1963): 251–67, 251; For example, see McGuckin, "Nestorius," 9.

bishoprics outside Constantinople, the episcopal strategies of centralising episcopal power and reprimanding non-Nicenes, enacted by Chrysostom and Nestorius, were normative. However, given what we have seen of the varied influences on episcopal structures at Constantinople it is no surprise that such an approach engendered deep hostility at the capital.²⁵³ Such episcopal endeavours threatened well-entrenched reciprocal arrangements at Constantinople and, as a result, the monks, clergy, imperial family members, and aristocrats of the capital mobilised their powerful lines of patronage to resist them. Instead of providing evidence for Chrysostom's and Nestorius' unique foibles, their failures at Constantinople are better seen as testimony to the fact that the Constantinopolitan environment was not in the early fifth century compatible with a bishop who was in the same mould as the leaders of churches such as Antioch.

Conclusion

As Philip Rousseau asserts, the early church developed not as a coherent commonwealth but a loose network of individual communities.²⁵⁴ Even as Christianity moved ever closer to the mechanisms of state government, regional differences remained strong. Subsequently, the expectations and role of the bishop could differ between local environments. The unique features of Constantinople's development marked the city's episcopate as significantly distinct from other sees.

Theodosius' decision to make Constantinople home, establishing the city's position as the undisputed political capital of the east, had wide ramifications for the city's bishops. While traditional readings have assumed that proximity to the emperor was an overwhelmingly beneficial prospect for the bishop, a closer examination of the institutional quirks and characteristics of the episcopate suggests that such an assumption is unfounded. When the emperor and his court made a permanent home at Constantinople, the bishop found himself beset by the many coercive factors that came with imperial power. As this chapter has demonstrated, the high levels of non-Nicene activity, imperial patronage, and political power struggles of fifth-century Constantinople made it an ecclesiastical environment unlike any other. Having to navigate such a politically sensitive

²⁵³ As McGuckin points out, Nestorius' strategies for strengthening the Constantinopolitan see closely resembled those employed by Cyril at Alexandria; John A. McGuckin, *St. Cyril of Alexandria: The Christological Controversy, Its History, Theology, and Texts* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2004), 23.

²⁵⁴ Rousseau, *Early Christian Centuries*, 88–97, 181–183.

environment constrained the bishop's influence and destabilised the traditional bedrock of his episcopal authority. Without due appreciation of such institutional characteristics, scholarship on Constantinople of this period has often overlooked the way in which the pressure to serve political interests deeply influenced the culture and mechanisms of the Constantinopolitan church. The imperial city demanded not merely a bishop of mild disposition but one with very different episcopal priorities than were found elsewhere.

It is perhaps telling that the final bishop of this period, Anatolius, the bishop who presided over the council that issued canon 28 (which imbued the episcopate with greater authority), far from being a product of the Constantinopolitan episcopal system, was an Alexandrian ordained by Cyril and elected at Constantinople through the influence of Cyril's successor, Dioscorus.²⁵⁵ As we will see in the next chapter, canon 28 was part of an attempt to address the systemic weaknesses of the capital's episcopal system and, given the mild bishops of Constantinople, who better to raise the standing of the Constantinopolitan see than an Alexandrian?

²⁵⁵ Before his elevation Anatolius had been "Dioscorus' agent at Constantinople"; Price and Gaddis, *Council of Chalcedon*, vol. 1, 89; Chadwick, "Exile and Death of Flavian," 23–24.

Christoupolis

**Chalcedon 451:
A Response to Constantinople's Episcopal Failings**

The Council of 451 marked a coming of age for the Constantinopolitan church. The council's twenty-eighth canon granted the Constantinopolitan episcopate substantial gains by clarifying the bishop's parity with Rome, as well as endowing the see with jurisdiction over a defined geo-ecclesiastical territory.¹ In contrast to Chapter 3's analysis of canon 3 of 381, this chapter does not contest that canon 28 did indeed represent a tangible increase in the Constantinopolitan bishop's power. However, it argues that the canon should be read as a response to the see's past failings, rather than an affirmation of its triumph.

Having examined several weaknesses inherent to the Constantinopolitan episcopate in the years between 381 and 451, we arrive at the convocation of the council at Chalcedon from a different angle than the one via which scholars commonly approach it.

Conventional scholarship interprets canon 28's elevation of Constantinople as the result of the see's consistent rise in power over the preceding decades.² However, having now sketched out the image of a bishopric whose authority had been undermined from multiple directions both within and without Constantinople in the decades after 381, we find that the bishopric arrived at the council of 451 in a position of marked weakness and fragility. By analysing Constantinople's gains in 451 in close relation to its see's fractured past, this chapter questions the assumption that canon 28 represented the crowning conclusion of Constantinople's rise to prominence in the east and final victory over Alexandria.

As this chapter will show, the underlying weakness of Constantinople's ecclesiastical standing in 451 masks the traditional narrative that the period between 381 and 451 witnessed a fierce rivalry between the episcopates of Constantinople and Alexandria. A close look at Alexandrian attitudes towards Constantinople's rise reveals

¹ See Appendix III.

² See Chapter 1, section 1. For example, Daley, "Position and Patronage," 529–553; Holm, *Empresses*, 214; Rousseau, *Early Christian Centuries*, 190; McGuckin, *Saint Gregory*, 314; McGuckin, *Saint Cyril*, 71–72; Kelly, *Golden Mouth*, 128–29; Hatlie, *Monasteries of Constantinople*, 59–61. Such a view is in part a product of canon 28's contemporary justification at Chalcedon, which saw a manufactured lineage linking the canon to canon 3 of 381; see Chapter 1, section 3.

that Egyptian activity at the capital was not driven by jealousy of Constantinople's episcopal rise, as is assumed, but was motivated by a desire to manipulate the city's ecclesiastical development. In this light, Alexandrian interferences can be seen as motivated not by a desire to damage Constantinople's authority but as an attempt to prevent pro-Antiochene interests taking hold at the capital. In this context, the conflicts between the Antiochene bishops of Constantinople and those of Alexandria, rather than indicative of the see's rising power, serve to further demonstrate Constantinople's dearth of geo-episcopal authority and stability.

Not only does the focus on Alexandrian jealousy of Constantinople misconstrue the nature of the threat Constantinople's rise posed to Alexandria, it conceals the extent to which bishops such as Chrysostom and Nestorius were opposed and undermined by those within Constantinople. The focus on Alexandrian culpability has cast Constantinopolitans who agitated for the bishops' removal as agents of Alexandria. However, once we shift the spotlight from Alexandrian jealousy of Constantinople, we find that they were not agents but parties who were very much part of Constantinopolitan society. At the core of the internal opposition were the monasteries of Constantinople. As we will see, the monks represented a substantial hurdle to the development of episcopal authority at Constantinople. The particular features of Constantinople's monastic movement made for a highly influential and politically engaged spiritual institution that rivalled the city's official episcopal institution. With the powerful and autonomous monasteries adding yet another destabilising element for the city's early ecclesiastical development, this chapter proposes that the pronouncements of 451 were a reaction not only to the theological crises of the decades preceding 451 but also a response Constantinople's episcopal faults.

Having repositioned the geo-ecclesiastical controversies played out at Constantinople in the decades leading up to Chalcedon as a product of Constantinople's ecclesiastical shortcomings rather than a result of its growth in episcopal power, this chapter argues that the formulation of canon 28 reveals much more about the fragility of the Constantinopolitan see than about its global ambitions. So often seen as the defining moment in Constantinople's ecclesiastical stature, the canon was not a statement of the see's growing power but an attempt to inject a solid basis for authority that until that point had been sorely lacking.

The Council of Chalcedon

The council of 451 was an important turning-point in the history of the church. The large council that met on imperial orders at Chalcedon came in the wake of two decades of increasing theological and ecclesiastical turmoil. The assembly attempted to address the many issues arising from this tumultuous period by making rulings in three distinct areas.³ Firstly, the most important outcome of the council was the new definition of faith. The Chalcedonian Creed was an attempt to put an end to dissension surrounding the nature of Christ's divinity by affirming his possession of two natures – one human, one divine – that came together in one hypostasis in Christ's person.⁴ Secondly, the council issued many canons concerning ecclesiastical regulations across a wide range of topics. The rulings focussed in particular on clarifying and defining the contours of a bishop's authority both within his see and without. Such efforts to clarify the scope of a bishop's authority bled into the council's third area of significance – the reorganisation of episcopal boundaries and redefinition of the geo-episcopal hierarchy.⁵ It is within this third area of the council that we find the canon of concern to this study. Coming in a close second to the Chalcedonian Creed in terms of lasting consequence, the council's 28th canon marked a defining moment in Constantinople's development. Canon 28 reaffirmed and elaborated on canon 3 of 381's alignment of the prestige of the bishop of Constantinople with that of Rome and, in addition, granted the Constantinopolitan bishops authority to ordain the Metropolitan bishops of Pontus, Asia and Thrace.⁶ As we have seen, canon 28 has been almost universally considered as signifying the Constantinopolitan bishops' final victory in establishing their dominance over the east.

With canon 28 of Chalcedon we find a slightly different situation than that faced when reconstructing the context of canon 3 of 381. As argued in Chapter 3, canon 3 has been understood almost exclusively in light of its subsequent importance. Apart from

³ The council's theological and ecclesiastical importance has led to 451 receiving much attention in modern scholarship. Two works in particular have forged the way for our understanding of 451's broad impact: Alois Grillmeier and Heinrich Bacht (eds), *Das Konzil von Chalkedon: Geschichte und Gegenwart*, vol. 1–3 (Würzburg: Echter-Verlag, 1954) and Price and Gaddis, *Council of Chalcedon*, vol. 1–3. Alongside these two monumental works must be placed Robert Seller's survey of 451; Sellers, *Chalcedon: A Historical and Doctrinal Survey*.

⁴ For a recent reappraisal of Chalcedon's theological significance see: J. van Oort and J. Roldanus (eds), *Chalkedon: Geschichte und Aktualität: Studien zur Rezeption der christologischen Formel von Chalkedon* (Leuven: Peeters, 1997).

⁵ Alongside granting Constantinople increased privileges, the council granted Jerusalem ecclesiastical independence from Antioch, see Price and Gaddis, *Council of Chalcedon*, vol. 2, 244–50.

⁶ See Appendix III.

being vaguely connected to Constantine's founding vision for his city, canon 3 and the council at which it was formulated have rarely been approached by way of a close consideration of developments at Constantinople in the years preceding the council. In contrast, examination of 451 and the issuing of canon 28 is commonly grounded firmly within the more specific context of Constantinople's preceding seven decades.⁷ However, again, there is little contextual consideration of the role of the internal politics at Constantinople in the canon's formulation, as the canon is read through the lens of broad geo-ecclesiastical rivalries.

The spectre of Alexandrian jealousy used to explain Gregory's downfall in 381, takes on increasing importance in the historiography of the various Constantinopolitan controversies in the lead-up to Chalcedon.⁸ Theophilus' convening of the Synod of the Oak, Cyril's hard-fought campaign against Nestorius, and Dioscorus' role in the Robbers' Synod have naturally led to an assumption that the bishops of Alexandria were engaged in a prolonged campaign to undermine the position of the bishop at Constantinople. This emphasis on Egyptian hostility towards Constantinople has shaped perspectives of canon 28. The canon's formulation, like canon 3 of 381, is framed within the narrative of competition between Constantinople and Alexandria, only this time the canon is read as the climax to the ecclesiastical feud that began during Gregory of Nazianzus' tenure: "The struggle for ecclesiastical primacy in the East between Constantinople and Alexandria that was to end in catastrophe for the Egyptians seventy years later at Chalcedon began in 381."⁹ In Constantinople being accorded equal privileges to that of Rome, canon 28 is seen as Constantinople's final victory.¹⁰

With modern approaches to canon 28 so firmly entrenched within the perceived rivalry between Constantinople and Alexandria, the motivation for the decree is viewed in terms of representing Constantinople's lofty episcopal ambitions. This assumption is exaggerated by the protests of Rome. Leo accepted all of the council's decrees except for canon 28 on the grounds that it was counter to previously established privileges.¹¹ With the canon perceived as a defeat of Alexandrian interests and a pivotal moment in the relationship between Constantinople and Rome, it is understandable that modern scholars have approached the canon via a focus on its outward-facing ramifications – what it tells

⁷ See Chapter 1, section 1.

⁸ See discussion in the following section (in addition, see Chapter 1, section 1 and Chapter 3, section 1).

⁹ Russell, *Theophilus*, 12.

¹⁰ See Chapter 1, sections 1 and 2; Chapter 2, section 5.

¹¹ Leo, *Ep.* 105 and 106 (ACO 2.4.55.57–59; 2.4.61.59–62).

us about Constantinople's external geo-ecclesiastical pretensions.¹² However, with the preceding chapters having questioned the assumption that Constantinople in the lead up to 451 experienced a meteoric rise in standing, and revealed several inherent weaknesses in the Constantinopolitan bishopric, the canon of 451 requires reconsidering. Was canon 28 indeed indicative of Constantinople's growth in ecclesiastical power? To answer that question, we must examine the assumption that canon 28 was representative of an ongoing rivalry between Constantinople and Alexandria.

The Road to Chalcedon Part 1:

External Influences – Alexandrian Attitudes Towards Constantinople

Alexandrian Jealousy of Constantinople

Scholarly evaluation of the relationship between Alexandria and Constantinople in the decades leading up to 451 has stressed the resentment of the Egyptians towards Constantinople's ecclesiastical development. Jealousy of Constantinople's rising fortune is presented as the unifying theme in instances of Alexandrian interference at the capital.¹³ Bishops such as Theophilus and Dioscorus are cast in the role of jealous saboteurs, protecting their see's dominance by attempting to arrest Constantinople's development and weaken the see's authority at any opportunity.

The idea that Alexandrian attitudes towards Constantinople were driven by bitterness over the city's sudden rise has a long pedigree. Modern works still echo the sentiments expressed almost a century ago by Norman H. Baynes, that the driving motivation behind Alexandrian interferences was not theological but "the struggle of the

¹² As was the case with the analysis of 381, the argument of this thesis – that teleological perspectives of early Constantinople's development have obscured the fact that during this time Constantinople's church was unstable and lacking in influence – leaves little room for traditional assumptions that 381 and 451 had an anti-Rome component. The contention that by this time Constantinople was already looking to appropriate Rome's standing is founded not on canon 28's contemporary intention but its retrospective rereading in light of later tensions between old and new Rome. Leo's opposition to canon 28 should not be read as evidence of an institutional rivalry between Rome and Constantinople; instead it was an attempt by the bishop of Rome to safeguard the basis of his own internal authority. That 451 did not intend to usurp Rome's prestige is clear in the invitation for Leo to sit as council president. On the evolution of Roman primacy being a piecemeal process related far more to instances of individual internal and political instability than an ensconced institutional continuity, see Demacopoulos, *Invention of Peter*, (see 63–71 for canon 28).

¹³ For example, Theophilus' campaign against Chrysostom is commonly viewed through such broad geo-ecclesiastical perspectives: "Without question, the dominating influence enjoyed by the Alexandrian metropolitan in the East, was being replaced by that of the ascendant Constantinople...[Theophilus'] actions demonstrate his desire to maintain the Alexandrian patriarchate as the leading see in the East": C. Wilfred Griggs, *Early Egyptian Christianity: From Its Origins to 451 C.E.* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1991), 188.

Bishop of Alexandria to maintain the supremacy of his see against the upstart bishopric of Constantinople.”¹⁴ So closely do scholars still adhere to Baynes’ work that there is a notable uniformity of language, with “jealousy” commonly used to sum up the approach of the Alexandrians and “upstart” just as often used to denote the Egyptian view of Constantinople. Modern scholars have also continued to adopt Baynes’ use of highly emotive language to describe the Alexandrian bishops. The “growing jealousy of the bishops of Alexandria and their readiness to interfere in the internal affairs of their upstart rivals in Constantinople” is not portrayed as a considered political reaction to Constantinople’s growth but a knee-jerk emotional reaction.¹⁵ For example, in praising Cyril’s ecclesiastical acumen, J. N. D. Kelly ascribes the Alexandrian’s occasional “uncharitable tone” to the effects of “jealousy of the upstart see of Constantinople”.¹⁶ By reducing Alexandrian attitudes toward Constantinople to the emotive label of jealousy, it is easily applied as a blanket motivation underlying the actions of the Alexandrian bishops at Constantinople over several decades. The antagonistic attitude of Alexandrian bishops towards those of Constantinople is seen as passed on from one bishop to the next, each becoming more determined than the last to prevent Constantinople exerting its ecclesiastical authority as New Rome.¹⁷ This perceived reaction to Constantinopolitan gains has even led one eminent scholar to label the bishops of Alexandria collectively as “sore losers”.¹⁸

The belief that the Alexandrians were jealous of Constantinople is predicated on the threat that Constantine’s city is assumed to have posed to Alexandria’s position. The bishops of Alexandria had enjoyed preeminent status in the east long before Constantinople became a city worthy of inspiring jealousy.¹⁹ The bishops of Alexandria had maintained a close relationship with the see of Rome and had played a decisive part in the many religious conflicts of the east, acting as prime provocateur in some cases and

¹⁴ Baynes, “Alexandria and Constantinople,” 145–46. Baynes’ article remains by far the single most commonly cited—modern work on the general relationship between Constantinople and Alexandria.

¹⁵ Gregory, *Vox Populi*, 44.

¹⁶ J. N. D. Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*, Fifth Revised Edition (London: Bloomsbury, 1977), 318.

¹⁷ “Alexandria made a particular point of challenging the rising power of Constantinople, waging an often ruthless vendetta that seemed to continue from one episcopal generation to the next”: Price and Gaddis, *Council of Chalcedon*, vol. 1, 12. “Dioscorus, Cyril’s successor in the see of Alexandria (444–51), determined to achieve the total victory that had eluded his predecessor”, Richard Price, “The Council of Chalcedon (451): A Narrative,” in *Chalcedon in Context*, ed. R. Price and M. Whitby (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2009), 71.

¹⁸ Van Dam, “Bishops and Society,” 355.

¹⁹ Constantinople’s “growing status was the source of considerable animosity in Alexandria in particular, long accustomed to regarding itself as the premier see of the eastern Mediterranean”, A. D. Lee, *From Rome to Byzantium AD 363 to 565: The Transformation of Ancient Rome* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013), 134.

mediator in others.²⁰ The rise of Constantinople as a newcomer to the ecclesiastical environment of the east threatened to upset the equilibrium of the existing power structure, and it is easy to see how the bishops of Alexandria would have viewed the explosive growth of the city with a mounting sense of vulnerability. Aside from the immense pace of the city's physical growth prior to 381, the significance of the establishment of Constantinople as a permanent imperial capital under the Theodosians would not have been lost on the Alexandrians. It is certainly logical that the Alexandrians would have taken steps to safeguard their authority in a changing geo-political landscape. However, to conceive of the actions of the Alexandrians at Constantinople as driven by jealousy of Constantinople and as a competition for ecclesiastical dominance of the east is misleading.

Problems with the Jealousy Model

Viewing the relationship between Constantinople and Alexandria during this period in terms of a dichotomous rivalry to assert pre-eminence in the east is deeply informed by traditional assumptions about early Constantinople's development and, as such, is problematic on several levels.

Firstly, the theory that Alexandrian attitudes towards Constantinople was driven by jealousy depends on an overestimation of Constantinople's ecclesiastical standing and influence prior to 451. The rivalry between Alexandria and Constantinople is thought to have been a product of simple power politics. Susanna Elm sums up the conventional perspective, stating that conflict between Alexandria and Constantinople boils down to a simple fact: "these were the two most important sees in the Eastern empire".²¹ However, as the previous chapters have outlined, the Constantinopolitan church in the seventy years between the councils was a long way from being a see poised to assert patriarchal dominance. The disparity between the episcopal standing of the Constantinopolitan bishops and that of their Egyptian counterparts is made all the starker when we consider the unique institutional advantages enjoyed by the bishops of Alexandria.

²⁰ It was largely on the back of Athanasius' tireless campaign against the teaching of Arius that Alexandria's reputation for staunch defence of Nicene values was founded. As we have seen above, the Alexandrian bishop with the support of Rome exerted much influence over theological developments in the east, and it is no accident that Theodosius' *Cunctos populos* explicitly named both as the markers of faith: Annick Martin, *Athanasie d'Alexandrie et l'Église d'Égypte au IVe Siècle (328-373)* (Rome: École Française de Rome 1996), 393–449.

²¹ Elm, "The Dog that Did Not Bark," 69.

Tracing their episcopal lineage back to Mark the Apostle, the bishops of Alexandria held a position of high spiritual authority, known for their theological sophistication and rigorous defence of the Nicene faith. Building on a rich heritage of theology that included figures such as Clement of Alexandria and Origen, and drawing on the works of others such as Apollinaris of Laodicea, the theological nous and shrewd political strategies of bishops such as Athanasius had seen the see of Alexandria take on a position of high authority not only in the east but across the empire as a whole.²² However, the authority of the Alexandrian church was not grounded on theological and apostolic lineage alone as it was buoyed by several unique institutional features.

Foremost amongst the institutional advantages enjoyed by the Alexandrian bishop was his position at the centre of a large ecclesiastical network. By the time Chrysostom was elevated to the episcopate at Constantinople, the bishops of Alexandria sat at the centre of an extensive network numbering nearly a hundred suffragan bishops whose position depended on approval from Alexandria.²³ These relationships of dependency on Alexandria were not restricted to Egyptian sees alone but covered a large geographical area that included the Thebaid, Libya, and Pentapolis.²⁴ The size of this network, unique amongst the other bishops of the east and protected by conciliar legislation, gave the Alexandrian bishop exceptional influence.²⁵ Alongside such far-ranging episcopal influence, the bishop of Alexandria also held an exceptionally prominent position as a civic leader. The bishops of Alexandria could exercise considerable political clout thanks to two features of the city's episcopal institution. Firstly, the church at Alexandria controlled substantial economic wealth, exerting control over much of the city's commercial activity, including the all-important grain ships. Secondly, the considerable unity of Alexandria's Christians and their loyalty to the bishop provided the church with a potent tool of coercion. Particularly effective was the devoted support of the many Egyptian monasteries.²⁶ In several instances monks who were fiercely loyal to the local

²² Athanasius was central to establishing the strength of the Alexandrian, see Martin, *Athanasie d'Alexandrie*, 637–763.

²³ Russell, *Theophilus*, 5–6. By Theophilus' time the heads of ninety-eight sees required the bishop's approval before they could be consecrated: Roger S. Bagnall, *Egypt in Late Antiquity* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1993), 285–86.

²⁴ Ewa Wipszycka, *Études sur le Christianisme dans l'Égypte de l'Antiquité tardive*, *Studia Ephemeridis Augustinianum* 52 (Rome: Institutum Patristicum Augustinianum, 1996), 146–48.

²⁵ Canon 6 of the Council of Nicaea recognised the Alexandrian bishop's extended jurisdiction over Egypt, Libya, and Pentapolis: Canon 6 line 5 (ed. Tanner, 8–9).

²⁶ On the alliance between the monks of Egypt and their patriarch, see G. J. M. Bartelink, "Les Rapports entre le monachisme égyptien et l'épiscopat d'Alexandrie (jusqu'en 450)," in *Alexandria: hellénisme, judaïsme et christianisme à Alexandrie: mélanges offerts au P. Claude Mondésert* (Paris: Éd. du Cerf, 1987),

episcopate provided the bishopric with menacing displays of physical intimidation.²⁷ With recourse to such political and economic leverage, not to mention violence, the political clout of the bishop could rival, and sometimes even surpass, that of the local governor, and at times was even brought to bear against the imperial government beyond Egypt.²⁸ It was these characteristics of the Alexandrian episcopal institution that made the office of bishop one of immense influence.

In comparison, as we have seen, Constantinople in the seven decades after Theodosius' arrival was not an ecclesiastical force comparable to the likes of Alexandria. The church at Constantinople lacked any notable episcopal heritage, it had no theological school of its own, and it remained a deeply sectarian religious environment. While the Alexandrian bishop enjoyed near unanimous support from the Christians of Egypt, his counterpart at Constantinople had to contend with many rival Christian communities within the city's walls. In addition, as we will examine below, Constantinople's monasteries were not a ready source of support for the local bishop but were instead a steadfastly independent rival of the local Nicene episcopal hierarchy. Neither could the bishops of Constantinople depend on the support of a network of subordinate sees. As has been noted, the Constantinopolitan bishops did increasingly exert influence over neighbouring sees; however, it was not until the council of 451 that any formal relationship was recognised. This not only meant that the bishop's influence over neighbouring sees was limited to mutual agreement, but it also ensured that allegiance to Constantinople was by no means guaranteed. It was this lack of any official network that would see neighbouring bishops (those within Constantinople's post-Chalcedonian sphere of influence) side with the Alexandrian bishops in their struggles against Constantinopolitan

365–79. The loyalty of the monks was not always automatically guaranteed; however, the Alexandrian bishops proved adept at nurturing monastic support by actively accommodating their interests. For example, it was such concerns over maintaining the support of the monasteries that contributed to Theophilus' opposition to Origen: Banev, *Theophilus of Alexandria*, 166–92.

²⁷ Such as violently intimidating attendants at the councils of Ephesus and rioting in opposition to the Egyptian prefect Orestes: Nestorius, *Liber Heraclidis* 2.2.482 (ed. F. Nau, 308); Socrates, *HE* 7.14 (*SCh* 506.56).

²⁸ The influence that the bishop of Alexandria could exert over the local imperial government is illustrated by the conflict between Cyril and the prefect Orestes. Cyril first stepped on the prefect's toes by attempting to surreptitiously undermine Orestes' rulings, and as tensions increased, the bishop effectively usurped the prefect's authority outright by expelling the city's Jews. In the ensuing conflict, Cyril's mobilisation of a group of Nitrian monks led to the prefect being hounded and even physically assaulted. Orestes' refusal to subjugate his authority to the bishop's saw him eventually leave Alexandria altogether: John of Nikiu, *Chron.* 84.87–103 (ed. Zotenberg, 344–6); Socrates, *HE* 7.13 (*SCh* 506.48–54).

When Athanasius went to Constantinople in 328 in order to appeal his removal from office, he is said to have attempted to sway the opinion of the emperor by threatening to cut off the grain supply: Socrates, *HE* 1.35 (*SCh* 477.246–48).

bishops, as was the case at Chalcedon in 403 and Ephesus in 431.²⁹ Whereas the bishop of Alexandria could command the loyalty of suffragan bishops within a radius of hundreds of kilometres, the bishop of Constantinople found himself opposed by bishoprics as close as 10 kms across the Bosphorus. Finally, as we have seen in the previous chapter, living alongside the highest strata of imperial government meant that the bishop at Constantinople could not wield autonomous influence over the city's political sphere as did the bishops at Alexandria, instead he was constrained by and very much subject to imperial directives.

Such disparity in episcopal influence brings into question the validity of the characterisation of the Alexandrians being driven by jealousy of Constantinople's episcopal standing. Theologically divided, lacking a geographical network of suffragan sees, ecclesiastically decentralised, and restrained by imperial sensitivities, it is difficult to envision the bishops of Alexandria looking to the bishops at Constantinople with envious eyes.

That the Alexandrian interferences at Constantinople were unlikely to have been driven by jealousy of the city is further confirmed when we consider the underlying aims of Alexandrian activity at the capital. Characterising the Alexandrian bishops as being "jealous" of Constantinople's authority or "sore losers", the secondary sources assume that the ultimate aim of Alexandrian interference at Constantinople was simply to damage the see's reputation.³⁰ Threatened by Constantinople's rise, the actions of bishops such as Theophilus, Cyril, and Dioscorus are seen as designed to encourage conflict and chaos at the capital, seizing any opportunity to throw a spanner in the works. However, to suggest that the primary aim was to damage the see of Constantinople is overly simplistic and disingenuous for an Egyptian see that had a reputation for political astuteness. Whether

²⁹ Theophilus was able to use Chalcedon as his base of operations against Chrysostom due to the local bishop's animosity towards the bishop of Constantinople: Sozomen, *HE* 8.16 (*SCh* 516.302–304). At the Council of Ephesus in 431, the local bishop Memnon aided the Alexandrian cause in opposing Nestorius; Wessel, *Cyril*, 4. That Memnon opposed Nestorius is often connected in modern scholarship with Constantinople's episcopal rise. Scholars such as Gregory cite that animosity towards the Constantinopolitan bishop stemmed from the imperial city's growth impinging on Ephesian authority, such as Chrysostom's involvement in the see's episcopal life during his tenure: Gregory, *Vox Populi*, 102. However, this appears to be an example of teleological perspectives of Constantinople's rise privileging one thread of context over another as what is usually relegated to a footnote in such works is the fact that the cult of the Virgin Mary was a pivotal part of Ephesus' civic identity, a status that Nestorius' theology directly threatened.

³⁰ Andrew Louth presents Cyril's involvement at Constantinople as driven by such a motive: "Cyril, whose see was being threatened by the rising pretensions of Constantinople...was glad of an opportunity to disgrace his fellow patriarch", Andrew Louth, "Christology and Heresy," in *A Companion to Byzantium*, ed. Liz James (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 187–98, 191; "Any political or theological weakness on the part of the incumbent of the see of Constantinople was eagerly seized on": Roger Collins, *Early Medieval Europe, 300-1000*, Third Edition (London: Palgrave, 2010), 72.

Constantinople's growth in ecclesiastical authority and self-confidence began around 381 or, as argued here, not until later, Alexandria would have very early on perceived the inevitability of Constantinople's increase in episcopal authority. The physical growth of the city and its increasing importance both commercially and politically meant that it was unavoidable that its church would also grow in significance. Given the inevitability of Constantinople's development, portraying the Alexandrians as acting only as agents of chaos assumes that their aims were short-sighted and of only temporary value. To better understand the nature of Alexandria's political presence at Constantinople we must assume that the Alexandrian bishops' actions at Constantinople were not driven by blind envy but by a nuanced political strategy; one that sought to influence Constantinople's growth rather than prevent it.

To understand the nature of this attempt to influence Constantinople's development we must examine Alexandria's relationship with Constantinople within the wider theological and ecclesiastical context of the time.

The Nature of Alexandrian Interference at Constantinople

The inadequacies of the jealousy model should not dissuade us from attempting to understand and interpret the collective actions of the Alexandrians at Constantinople on a broad conceptual level. We find the Alexandrian bishops interfering in Constantinople's ecclesiastical life with such regularity during this period that it constitutes a pattern that demands consideration as a broad phenomenon. That Alexandrian activity at Constantinople was prolific during this period in particular certainly suggests that Alexandrian interference was in one way or another linked to Constantinople's rise.

However, the inadequacy of the jealousy model raises the question of whether Alexandrian activity at Constantinople should be considered in terms of a rivalry at all. The term "rivalry" indicates a two-way exchange, a struggle between Alexandrian and Constantinopolitan for dominance of the east. However, with the Nicene church at Constantinople struggling to assert authority within its own see, let alone beyond, it is unsurprising to find that the examples of Alexandrian interference at Constantinople were not mirrored by similar examples of the Constantinopolitan bishop interfering directly at Alexandria. The conflicts between the bishops invariably took place in the streets, palaces and churches of Constantinople or nearby. If then Constantinople's rise was not such that it resulted in the city's bishops directly undermining the authority of Alexandrian bishops,

and the Egyptians were not acting out of jealousy of Constantinople, we must ask: what drove the Alexandrians' continuing involvement in the ecclesiastical politics of the city? To answer this, we must reassess the nature of the threat that Constantinople's development posed to Alexandria.

Synodos Endemousa

While the bishops of Constantinople did not directly interfere in the activities of the Alexandrian bishops, the traditional assumption is that the see's increasing prestige saw Alexandria's authority lessened. Canon 3's ranking of sees has been a central part of this contention but, as this thesis has argued, the canon's statement of Constantinople's primacy and the city's associations with Rome did not represent the traditional elevation in ecclesiastical authority that has been assumed. However, there is another feature of the episcopate that has been seen to account for Alexandria's hostility towards Constantinople.

While the Constantinopolitan see did not have an established ecclesiastical network or a distinct Nicene theological tradition, it did have one unique function that was a result of its proximity to the court. As noted in the previous chapter, the location of the emperor at Constantinople made the city a hub for ecclesiastical petitions.³¹ It was this attribute of the city that led to the development of Constantinople's *synodos endemousa* or Permanent Synod, an assembly made up of the various bishops who happened to be visiting the city tasked, usually by the emperor, with ruling on pressing ecclesiastical questions.³² Meeting as it did at Constantinople, it was naturally common for the city's bishop to act as president of this assembly.³³ This position was to become a very advantageous one for the bishop, with the evolution of the synod's authority eventually allowing him to exert substantial influence over a wide variety of ecclesiastical matters across the eastern territories.³⁴ It is such advantages bestowed by the *synodos endemousa* that has led to it

³¹ Chapter 4, section 2.2.

³² Dagon, *Naissance*, 461–73; Karl Baus, *The History of the Church, Volume 2: The Imperial Church from Constantine to the Early Middle Ages* (London: Burns & Oates, 1980), 245.

McGuckin interprets canon 3 of 381 as establishing Constantinople's authority as an ecclesiastical court of appeal; as a consequence he places this component of canon 3, rather than its ranking of sees, at the heart of the opposition to Constantinople's rise: John McGuckin, *Saint Cyril of Alexandria: The Christological Controversy* (Crestwood, N.Y.: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2004), 34.

³³ Although during this period he often shared this role with other bishops, see below.

³⁴ Hajjar, *Le synode permanent*; Richard Potz, *Patriarche und Synode in Konstantinopel: Das Verfassungsrecht des okumenischen Patriarchates* (Vienna: Herder, 1971).

being rightly deemed a pivotal component to Constantinople's episcopal growth. Joseph Hajjar states that "le Patriarcat byzantin est impensable historiquement sans le synode".³⁵

Despite the prominence of the *synodos endemousa* in subsequent centuries, we must be cautious not to over-emphasise the importance of its pre-Chalcedonian precursors. While the Permanent Synod came to be a central pillar of Constantinople's later patriarchal dominance, the assembly's early development is unclear. The origins of the synod have been traced back to the 380s, but it was not until 451 that the assembly became officially recognised and took on a function that is in any way comparable to its later medieval incarnation.³⁶ Similar early synods at Constantinople were infrequent and did not customarily have the same force of law as the later synods. This, combined with the fact that the term *synodos endemousa* itself does not appear until Chalcedon, raises the question of whether the pre-451 synods should even be considered in the same vein as the later Permanent Synods, and explains the disparity in scholarly descriptions of such synods.³⁷ In any case, whether or not these early synods took a similar form to the post-Chalcedonian ones, it can be stated without controversy that they led to the Constantinopolitan bishop playing a prominent role in dealing with the broad array of issues raised by petitioners coming to court. The prospect of the bishop of Constantinople sitting in judgement on episcopal issues that spanned the eastern ecclesiastical territories would certainly have posed a potential threat to the Alexandrian bishop's authority. Indeed, as we previously noted, it was the prospect of the bishop of Constantinople presiding over an investigation into the complaints of the Tall Brothers that brought Theophilus into conflict with John Chrysostom.

Before considering what Alexandrian attitudes to these local Constantinopolitan synods can tell us about the relationship between Constantinople and Alexandria, it is important to take a moment to note that the example of Theophilus moving against Chrysostom raises an important and neglected counterbalance to the assumption that the Permanent Synod was advantageous to the Constantinopolitan bishops of this period. The

³⁵ Hajjar, *Le synode permanent*, 186.

³⁶ Hajjar traces the origins of the synod to before 380, while some others consider the concept to have developed decades before, outside of Constantinople itself: Hajjar, *Le synode permanent*, 207–15; Christopher W. B. Stephens, *Canon Law and Episcopal Authority: The Canons of Antioch and Sardica* (Oxford: OUP, 2015), 90–93. In any case the synod went through many developmental stages and only came to true prominence and met on a regular basis in the 10th century: J. M. Hussey, *The Orthodox Church in the Byzantine Empire* (Oxford: OUP, 2010), 318.

³⁷ In this instance we once again see teleological views at play. McGuckin views the Constantinopolitan courts of this period as already acting as "the leading Christian tribunal of the entire oecumene", however, as we will see below, the authority presiding over such synods was not aligned with the bishop of Constantinople himself, as it would be in subsequent centuries: McGuckin, *Saint Cyril*, 34.

ecclesiastical petitioners who arrived at Constantinople came to the city not due to the standing of its bishop but because of the location of the court. When the imperial executive chose to act on petitions of an ecclesiastical nature, it was naturally the local bishop who was tasked with formulating a response. Such a role, at face value, would seem to have been advantageous to the bishop; however, with the pre-451 episcopate of Constantinople lacking the established episcopal authority or tools of coercion enjoyed by influential bishoprics elsewhere, presiding over synods dealing with such wide-ranging and heated ecclesiastical conflicts proved far from beneficial.

On several occasions we find that it was the Constantinopolitan bishop's potential involvement in investigating complaints brought to Constantinople that led to the bishops being embroiled in conflicts that ultimately led to their deposition. As we have seen, Chrysostom had little desire to act on the complaints of the Tall Brothers: it was imperial prerogatives that attempted to force his hand, leading to Theophilus' pre-emptive attack. Similar tensions also informed the conflict between Nestorius and Cyril. Before the two bishops came into conflict over theological differences, a group of Cyril's enemies petitioned the emperor about alleged injustices suffered at the hands of the Alexandrian bishop.³⁸ The emperor tasked Nestorius to investigate these complaints, a move that would have angered Cyril greatly and explains his later vehemence in discrediting Nestorius.³⁹ In addition, as we have seen, Flavian's downfall was also triggered by his presidency of the synod that was tasked to investigate Eusebius of Dorylaeum's accusations of unorthodoxy against Eutyches.⁴⁰

In these cases, it was the Constantinopolitan bishop's location next to the imperial court that led to him being embroiled in broad-ranging ecclesiastical struggles. At the same time, it was also the location of the imperial court at Constantinople that ensured its bishops were the least equipped to authoritatively rule on such issues. Not only did the bishops lack the necessary theological or episcopal clout but, as we have seen in the previous chapter, the bishops under investigation were able to manipulate political patronage and ecclesiastical dissension at the capital in order to topple their would-be-judges. After Chalcedon granted the Constantinopolitan bishop a defined ecclesiastical

³⁸ Nestorius, *Liber Heraclidis* 1.2.153–4 (ed. Nau, 92–3); Wessel, *Cyril*, 100–101.

³⁹ Wessel, *Cyril*, 101.

⁴⁰ Flavian, aware of the danger investigating Eutyches would put him in, purportedly tried desperately to dissuade Eusebius from raising the charges against the monk: ACO 2.1.1.419.131. Flavian's synod does not quite fit the same mould as these others as the accused was a Constantinopolitan resident, making it essentially a local matter – although its repercussions certainly were not. See Price and Gaddis, *Council of Chalcedon*, vol. 1, 25–30.

network and aligned the office with the new Chalcedonian definition of faith, the bishop came to wield increasing clout on inter-patriarchal matters. However, during the period of 381–451 there existed a discrepancy between Constantinople's standing as an imperial administrative centre and the standing of the city's bishops. In any case, despite the inherent weaknesses of doing so, the fact that Constantinopolitan bishops were granted agency over matters of broad ecclesiastical scope clearly presented a threat to the Alexandrian bishops and we must return to the question of Alexandrian attitudes to Constantinople's rise.

While it is undeniable that bishops such as Theophilus felt threatened at the prospect of being subjected to synodical investigation at Constantinople, examination of broader Alexandrian attitudes to the development of a Permanent Synod at New Rome does not reveal evidence of a pronounced rivalry with Constantinople. If the Egyptian see felt jealous of Constantinople's growing influence and sought actively to lessen its bishop's standing, we would expect to see explicit rejection of the see's institutional authority to rule on issues of broad jurisdictional scope. Yet it is notable that, even during incidents in which bishops of Alexandria were directly threatened by the potential of synodical censure, they did not attack the legitimacy of the bishop of Constantinople to preside over such cases, opting instead to attack the person of the bishop rather than his office. Far from disavowing the authority of the Constantinopolitan episcopate, Alexandrian bishops were in many cases willing participants in the synods convened at Constantinople. Prior to 451, the imperially-sanctioned synods held at Constantinople had a distinctly collegial flavour, with bishops from across the east often jointly presiding, infusing the synods with a type of inter-metropolitan authority.⁴¹ In several instances, the Alexandrian bishop presided at such synods alongside the Constantinopolitan bishop and, on occasion, even deferred matters to Constantinople.⁴² That the Egyptians were willing to participate alongside the Constantinopolitan bishop at these pseudo-Permanent Synods does not suggest an "innate rivalry" with Constantinople on an institutional level.

⁴¹ Karlin-Hayter suggests that such synods represented an attempt to establish a "unified ecclesiastical administration, parallel to the imperial one", Karlin-Hayter, "Activity," 188–93 at 191.

⁴² Such as the council at Constantinople in 394 that considered the reinstatement of Badagius to the see of Bostra and was jointly chaired by Theophilus and Nectarius, or a similar case heard at the capital in 443 which was presided over by both Cyril and Proclus: Karlin-Hayter, "Activity," 188–91. Far from shunning Constantinople's position as a location for hearing ecclesiastical petitions, the case being investigated in 394 had been deferred to Theophilus' judgement by the bishop of Rome and it was the Alexandrian himself who deigned to hear the case at Constantinople: Siméon Vailhé, "Le droit d'appel en Orient et le synode permanent de Constantinople," *Échos d'Orient*, vol. 20, 122 (1921): 129–146.

However, Alexandrian participation at the Constantinopolitan synods does hint at an underlying pattern of institutional rivalry, just not one aimed at Constantinople. In the 440s the Alexandrians and their supporters used the inter-metropolitan synods of Constantinople to suppress Antiochene interests.⁴³ It is this opposition to Antioch that is the key to understanding Alexandrian attitudes towards Constantinople.

Antiochene Influences at Constantinople

That the Alexandrians used the developing institution of a standing synod at Constantinople to destabilise the Antiochene church points to an alternative framework for understanding what drove Alexandrian interference at Constantinople. It is no coincidence that almost all the instances in which Alexandrian bishops interfered in the ecclesiastical politics of Constantinople between 381 and 451 coincided with moments in which bishops of Antiochene background took up the bishopric. Such a pattern suggests that we should view Alexandrian hostility at Constantinople through the lens of rivalry not between Alexandria and Constantinople but Alexandria and Antioch. This approach obviates the need to view Alexandrian activity at the capital as driven by jealousy of Constantinople, instead allowing for a nuanced political rationale to underpin Egyptian policy towards the city's rise.

As mentioned above, while Constantinople was still far from an ecclesiastical heavyweight, Alexandria would have no doubt appreciated the inevitability of Constantinople gaining in episcopal influence, given the growing importance of the city in every other sense. Irrespective of the Constantinopolitan bishop's current lack of ecclesiastical clout, the size of the city and importance of those in residence ensured that Constantinople would become an increasingly important strategic centre in geo-ecclesiastical politicking. With this in mind, we should conceptualise Alexandrian interference in the affairs of Constantinople not so much as an attempt to damage the authority of an ascendant see but rather to influence the course of Constantinople's ecclesiastical development. Rather than just temporarily stymie Constantinople's episcopal growth, the interference of the bishop of Alexandria was designed to manipulate it; to ensure Constantinople's development best served Alexandrian interests.

⁴³ Karlin-Hayter, "Activity," 195–98.

From very early on, developments at Constantinople would have given the Egyptians much cause for concern as Antiochene influences took a prominent role in the city's ecclesiastical growth. Eudoxius, who as we have seen was central in championing the Arian cause across the east, was originally bishop of Antioch before being transferred to Constantinople.⁴⁴ Such translation of Antiochene bishops into Constantinople's episcopal environment was not limited to the city's Arian period. Encouraged by the pro-Alexandrian language of the *Cunctos Populos*, the Alexandrians would have no doubt hoped that Theodosius' reestablishment of the Nicene church at Constantinople would see the enthronement of a bishop amenable to the Alexandrian (old-Nicene) position. Such hopes were quickly dashed. When Theodosius called a council at the city in 381, the presidency was given to Meletius, bishop of Antioch and staunch advocate of the competing neo-Nicene theology and, in addition, the assembly was stacked with his Syrian supporters.⁴⁵ What is more, the Cappadocian Gregory of Nazianzus, theologically part of the Antiochene school and a known Meletian sympathiser, was named bishop.⁴⁶ Unfortunately, from the Alexandrian perspective, this predilection to favour Antiochene influences at Constantinople proved not to be an isolated incident. In the following decades the imperial authorities revealed a tendency for placing Syrians on the bishop's seat. After Gregory's successor left office, the court brought in Chrysostom, a native of Antioch, student of Diodore of Tarsus and ordained by Meletius himself. Twenty-four years later, imperial initiative yet again opted for a Syrian bishop firmly entrenched within the Antiochene School. Alongside his close friend Theodoret of Cyrus, and Andrew of Samosata, Nestorius made up part of a "scholarly triumvirate of Antiochene theologians rooted in the tradition of the earlier Syrian teachers".⁴⁷

This propensity of the emperors to enthrone Antiochene and Antiochene-friendly bishops at Constantinople would have caused the Alexandrians much consternation. With early Constantinople having no theological school of its own, the predominance of Syrian influences there increased the likelihood of an Antiochene theological strain taking hold at the capital. This constituted a serious threat to the Alexandrians' position, one that can only be understood through consideration of the wider theological and ecclesiastical politics of the early fifth century.

⁴⁴ Socrates, *HE* 2.37, 242 (*SCh* 493.162–64, 222–24).

⁴⁵ See Chapter 3.

⁴⁶ See Chapter 3.

⁴⁷ McGuckin, *Saint Cyril*, 20–21.

Despite the assumption that Constantinople and Alexandria were the two most powerful sees in the east, the centres of influence in terms of theology remained firmly based around Antioch and Alexandria.⁴⁸ Both metropolitans had distinguished Christian histories that had seen them develop as loci of distinct, and increasingly opposed, strains of theology.⁴⁹ Dating back to the third-century works of Clement and Origen, the Alexandrian school of thought tended to highlight the divinity of Christ. This approach was elaborated to extreme lengths by Apollinaris, who argued that in Christ the Logos took the place of a human mind.⁵⁰ While the teachings of Apollinaris were condemned at various synods, they had a lasting impact on Alexandrian theology, with the view that Christ was God made flesh championed by Apollinaris' friend Athanasius and elaborated in turn by Cyril.⁵¹ In contrast was the theologians associated with Antioch, who from the late fourth century onward increasingly subscribed to the view that to undermine the humanity of Christ was a grave error.⁵² Theologians such as Diodore of Tarsus, his student Theodore of Mopsuestia, and the Cappadocian Fathers rallied against the perceived Apollinarianism of the Alexandrians by emphasising the duality of Christ's nature, both divine and human.⁵³

As we have seen in Chapter 3, in the fourth century these theological differences between the Antiochene and Alexandrian schools of thought had brought the two Nicene networks into conflict over the number of *hypostases* within the Godhead. Moving into the fifth century, debate surrounding the nature of God took on a new direction, with emphasis shifting to defining the nature of Christ. The conflict over emerging Christological

⁴⁸ While Antiochene and Alexandrian theology and ecclesiastical politics dominated the eastern scene, it would be misleading to imply the Antiochene ecclesiastical establishment was the equal of Alexandria. While Antioch was a significant and prestigious city, it lacked the broad religious sway of the Egyptian capital: Édouard Will, "Antioche, la métropole de l'Asie," in *Mégapoles Méditerranéennes. Géographie Urbaine retrospective*, ed. Jean-Charles Depaule, Robert Ilbert, and Claude Nicolet (Paris: Collection de l'École française de Rome, 2000), 482–91.

⁴⁹ To treat the Antiochene and Alexandrian schools of theology as rigidly defined and homogenous groupings is disingenuous; the geographical division of beliefs was not clear cut and there existed a lack of unity within each centre. However, the "schools" do efficiently represent two general movements within the east that were broadly centred around these two powerful sees. See Paul L. Gavrilyuk, *The Suffering of the Impassable God: The Dialectics of Patristic Thought* (Oxford: OUP, 2004), 137–39; Aloys Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition: From the Apostolic Age to Chalcedon (451)*, trans. John Bowden, 2nd revised edition (London: Mowbrays, 1975); Charles M. Stang, "The Two 'I's of Christ: Revisiting the Christological Controversy," *Anglican Theological Review*, vol. 94, 3 (2012): 529–47. For an appraisal of the Antiochene tradition that is sensitive to the ambiguities of defining a cohesive movement, see Paul B. Clayton, *The Christology of Theodoret of Cyrus: Antiochene Christology from the Council of Ephesus (431) to the Council of Chalcedon (451)* (Oxford: OUP, 2007), 53–74.

⁵⁰ Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*, 126–36 and 289–95.

⁵¹ Hanson, *The Search*, 639–53; McGuckin, *Saint Cyril*, 193–222.

⁵² D. S. Wallace-Hadrill, *Christian Antioch: A Study of Early Christian Thought in the East* (Cambridge: CUP, 1982), 14–26.

⁵³ Louth, "Christology and Heresy," 191.

questions was again divided along Antiochene and Alexandrian lines. In the decade leading up to Chalcedon, divisions intensified, and it was Constantinople that became the arena in which tensions came into direct and open conflict.⁵⁴ The emperors, by choosing Antiochenes to head the church at Constantinople, rather than importing able preachers as was their intention, imported the hostilities of the two dominant theological centres of the east. As we will see, the growing conflicts between the bishops of Alexandria and Constantinople cannot be viewed outside the escalating theological tensions between Antiochene and Alexandrian influences; it was the theological background of the Antiochene bishops of Constantinople that incited Alexandrian interference, not the Constantinopolitan see itself.

Between Alexandria and Antioch

Modern scholarship has treated the theological differences between the Alexandrian and Antiochene schools as contributing to an already existing rivalry between Constantinople and Alexandria. In putting Alexandrian jealousy of Constantinople in the driving seat of the conflicts leading up to Chalcedon, Judith Herrin states that “rivalry between Alexandria and Constantinople exacerbated theological differences”.⁵⁵ Such a view is misleading as it assumes that ecclesiastical power politics can be detached from theological tensions.⁵⁶ To treat Alexandrian attitudes to Constantinople as a distinct factor that can be considered outside of prevailing theological tensions enables assumptions over Alexandrian jealousy of Constantinople’s rise to exist untouched by the broader context that informed the relationship. In contrast, an appreciation of the extent to which theology and ecclesiastical considerations were intractably entwined will reveal the nature of the threat that Antiochene bishops of Constantinople posed to the Alexandrians. The theological leanings of the head of the Constantinopolitan church could have profound implications for the balance of ecclesiastical power empire-wide. As we will see, having

⁵⁴ For a succinct summary of the two theological approaches and how they came to a head in the Christological crises at Constantinople in the first half of the fifth century, see Karl-Heinz Uthemann, “History of Christology to the Seventh Century,” in *The Cambridge History of Christianity, Vol 2 Constantine to c. 600*, ed. Augustine Casiday and Frederick W. Norris (Cambridge: CUP, 2007), 460–87.

⁵⁵ Judith Herrin, *Byzantium: The Surprising Life of a Medieval Empire* (London: Allen Lane, 2007), 38–39.

⁵⁶ Attempting to separate theological beliefs and ecclesiastical politics is problematic. It is specious to disentangle one from another as both considerations informed the actions of individual bishops in an interrelated and indistinguishable manner. In most cases it seems unlikely that such motivations would have even been clearly separated out in the minds of the participants themselves, as personal beliefs, political ambition, and cultural conditioning all intersect in an unintelligible and unconscious manner.

Antiochene bishops ensconced at Constantinople would inevitably strengthen the ecclesiastical influence and standing of Antioch and its allies, and subsequently weaken Alexandria's position.

The most obvious impact of having an Antiochene bishop at Constantinople was that it would extend and strengthen the reach of the Syrian network. As already noted, a bishop's place in wider ecclesiastical networks was essential to his success. Just as with Roman society in general, ties of friendship, patronage, and mentorship were the mechanisms that shaped the relationships of power and influence amongst the bishops of late antiquity. The broad ecclesiastical networks of the empire were not homogenous but were defined by theological and episcopal orientations.⁵⁷ The ecclesiastical networks of the east, while vast and shifting, commonly coalesced into two broad networks centred around Antioch and Alexandria; networks that were increasingly polarised and shaped in the fifth century by the growing theological differences between the Antiochene and Alexandrian schools. The alliances and enmities of these networks dominated the ecclesiastical politics of the eastern empire. The Alexandrian bishops had proved particularly adept at maintaining a broad network of support.⁵⁸ However, having a Syrian head the Constantinopolitan church would expand the reach of the Antiochene networks. Bishops naturally sought to promote ecclesiastical and theological allies to positions of leadership wherever possible, such as when Eudoxius installed his friend Eunomius at Cyzicus, or Chrysostom ordained his close confidant Serapion at Heraclea.⁵⁹ With neighbouring sees increasingly looking to Constantinople to provide candidates for the bishopric,⁶⁰ having Syrian bishops at Constantinople would lead to the expansion of Antiochene-friendly networks.

⁵⁷ The primary way in which such networks were expanded was through letter writing; as has been evidenced by Adam M. Schor's survey of Theodoret's personal and conciliar letters. As the Syrian's letters show, while his network was indeed deeply shaped by doctrinal allegiances, it was not determined by theology alone. Theodoret sought out relationships with figures from all segments of society, be they Christian or pagan, bureaucrat or monk: Adam M. Schor, "The letters of Theodoret of Cyrrhus," in *Collecting Early Christian Letters: From the Apostle Paul to Late Antiquity*, ed. Pauline Allen and Bronwen Neil (Cambridge: CUP, 2015), 154–71. It is this melding of personal and powerful contacts with a network shaped by doctrinal allegiances that meant that the expansion or reduction of a bishop's network could have significant repercussions on the ecclesiastical balance of power.

⁵⁸ The Alexandrians fostered the support of the see's wide network of suffragan sees as well as alliances with sees outside Egypt, such as at Salamis, Jerusalem, Ephesus, and Rome in order to maintain a position of prominence in the east and repel threats to their authority. In combating Nestorius, Cyril expanded his network of allies to include those in Armenia, Palestine, and Cappadocia: Schor, *Theodoret's People*, 195.

⁵⁹ Socrates, *HE* 4.7 (*SCh* 505.36); Socrates, *HE* 6.17 (*SCh* 505.334).

⁶⁰ Such as the inhabitants of the vacant see of Alexandria Troas requesting Atticus' help in finding a fitting candidate: Socrates, *HE* 6.20 (*SCh* 505.344).

Even more threatening from the Alexandrian perspective was the potential for a close episcopal alliance to develop between the bishoprics of Constantinople and Antioch. With bishops of Syrian heritage being promoted at Constantinople, it was highly likely that they would look favourably on the Antiochene see. This was especially true when considering that, having come up through the episcopal ranks at Antioch, both Chrysostom and Nestorius already had strong relationships with the bishops of Antioch; Chrysostom had worked closely with Flavian while Nestorius had been a childhood friend of John of Antioch.⁶¹ Given Chrysostom's loyalty to the Antiochene see, it is no surprise that one of his first initiatives as bishop at Constantinople was to use his position to end the schism between Rome and Antioch.⁶² Naturally, the development of a close ecclesiastical alliance between the bishops of Constantinople and Antioch threatened to marginalise Alexandria's sway over eastern politics.⁶³

Finally, there was another aspect of having Syrian bishops based at Constantinople that would have alarmed the Alexandrians. With the city already a popular target for ecclesiastical petitioners, having an Antiochene head the church there raised the prospect of the city becoming a hub for anti-Alexandrian sentiment. The tendency for those who had fallen foul of the Alexandrian bishop to gravitate towards Constantinople would have likely increased during periods in which the episcopal chair was occupied by a bishop of Antiochene background. Complainants such as the Tall Brothers or those who petitioned against Cyril's mistreatment would probably not have so readily considered Constantinople a natural destination at which to air their grievances had a bishop of Alexandrian origin sat on the city's episcopal chair.

Since the theological background of a bishop and his support network had a profound impact on his see's political orientation, the inherent threat felt by Alexandria during moments when an Antiochene was appointed at Constantinople was magnified by Constantinople's lack of a dominant Nicene theology. If an Antiochene tradition took hold at Constantinople, all of the above threats to Alexandria's standing would become

⁶¹ Mayer, "Patronage, Pastoral Care and the Role of the Bishop at Antioch," 58–70; McGuckin, *Saint Cyril*, 20.

⁶² Kelly, *Golden Mouth*, 117.

⁶³ Although, placing an 'agent' on the episcopal throne of a rival see did not always work out as desired since a bishop's loyalty to his see of origin was not guaranteed. Dioscorus would discover this with Anatolius, who was originally placed at Constantinople to represent Alexandrian interests there, yet he was the bishop that would preside over the council of 451 and promote Constantinople's status to the detriment of his native, see Chadwick, "Exile and Death of Flavian," 26–27.

permanent features of the Constantinopolitan episcopate.⁶⁴ It was just such a threat that explains the intensity of the Alexandrian interference that occurred at instances when Antiochene-leaning bishops came to the fore at Constantinople.

It is impossible to view Alexandrian attitudes to Constantinople's rise outside of theological struggles. Once we accept that the Alexandrian bishops would have appreciated the inevitability of the bishops of Byzantium holding a position of increased influence after the emperors settled there, then the type of theological heritage that took hold at the city would have been of significant interest to the Egyptians. From this perspective, it was not the authority of Constantinople itself that the Alexandrians were rallying against but the bishop's authority becoming aligned to Antiochene theological preferences. Rather than superseding the position of Antioch as a main rival to Alexandria, Constantinople's lack of a well-established Nicene church presented a new battlefield for the conflict between Antiochene and Alexandrian theologies. That the Alexandrian interference at Constantinople is best viewed as a battle against Antiochenes for influence over Constantinople is at its most evident during the conflict between Nestorius and Cyril.

Nestorius and Cyril

The theory that jealousy of Constantinople drove Egyptian attitudes to the city's church permeates scholarship on the Nestorian controversy. The antagonism that Cyril exhibited toward Nestorius is seen as driven primarily by power politics rather than theology.⁶⁵ Cyril's reaction to Nestorius is situated firmly within Rome's and Alexandria's "aversion to the rise of the new star in the ecclesiastical firmament", with the Alexandrian bishop "determined to humble the clergy of the capital city and gain dominion over the entire Eastern Church".⁶⁶ However, a look at the contours of the struggles sparked during Nestorius' tenure reveals a far less Constantinopolitan-centric conflict.

⁶⁴ That it was under Nestorius' influence that the first liturgical commemoration of John Chrysostom occurred at Constantinople highlights the potential of an Antiochene episcopal heritage becoming entrenched at New Rome: George Bevan, "Nestorius of Constantinople," in *The Wiley Blackwell Companion to Patristics*, ed. Ken Parry (Malden: Wiley, 2015), 197–210, 198. Roger Collins, whilst still positioning Alexandrian aggression towards Constantinople as a hostility borne of the see's rising influence, recognised in Chrysostom's and Nestorius' shared Antiochene heritage the increased potential to strain the "Rome–Alexandria axis", Collins, *Early Medieval Europe*, 71–72.

⁶⁵ Kahlos, "Ditches of Destruction," 663–64.

⁶⁶ McGuckin, *Saint Cyril*, 34; Milton V. Anastos, "Nestorius Was Orthodox," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, vol. 16 (1962): 117–40, 120.

The extent to which the Constantinopolitan populace was open to Nestorius' Christological teachings is debatable. However, as Cyril's letter to Pope Celestine concedes, early in his tenure Nestorius did have the loyalty of a certain portion of his congregation.⁶⁷ This would have been of significant concern to Cyril. The dangers that Nestorius' promotion of an Antiochene tradition at Constantinople posed to Alexandria's episcopal fortunes is evident early on in Cyril's campaign against Nestorius. Alerted to the nature of Nestorius' sermons at Constantinople, the Alexandrian bishop sent a letter to the people and clergy of Constantinople in which he warned that the teachings being espoused by Nestorius had been condemned by the churches of Alexandria and Rome.⁶⁸ As we have seen, the alignment of the see of Alexandria with that of Rome had proved invaluable in preserving the Egyptian bishops' dominant status in the east, and Cyril's letter reveals the danger an Antiochene-friendly Constantinople posed to this arrangement. The notable absence in Cyril's warnings about the condemned status of Nestorius' teaching is mention of the church of Antioch. The reason for this absence is, of course, because the church at Antioch entertained no such disavowal of Nestorius' teachings.⁶⁹ If such a theological outlook took hold at Constantinople, Nestorius' evaluation that "Alexandria is distant from Constantinople, and the interests of the latter are distinct from those of the former" would take on a far more insidious meaning, with Constantinople and Antioch forming a formidable bloc in the east and Alexandria's alliance with Rome losing potency in its ability to isolate Antioch.⁷⁰

It was such broader ecclesiastical considerations that drove Cyril to interfere at Constantinople, rather than jealousy of Constantinople itself.⁷¹ If the emperor, instead of installing another bishop from Antioch, or chosen one of an Alexandrian background, or one of the many Constantinopolitans who were of an Alexandrian theological persuasion, the Alexandrians would not have had cause to view Constantinople as threatening.⁷² Far from usurping the authority of Alexandria, the establishment of an Alexandrian-friendly

⁶⁷ Cyril, *Ep.* 11 (ACO 1.1.5.144.10–12).

⁶⁸ Cyril, *Ep.* 18 (ACO 1.1.1.24.113–114).

⁶⁹ While scholarship has remained divided as to whether Nestorius' theological view can be seen as representative of the general Antiochene outlook, it is at any rate safe to say Nestorius' theology was steeped in Antiochene anti-Apollinarian rhetoric: Richard Kyle, "Nestorius: The Partial Rehabilitation of a Heretic," *JETS* 32/1 (1989): 73–83; Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, 496–504.

⁷⁰ Nestorius, *Liber Heraclidis* 1.2.158 (ed. Nau, 95).

⁷¹ At least on a geo-ecclesiastical level, Cyril was also motivated by the threat Nestorius' theology posed to Cyril's authority within his own, see Wessel, *Cyril*, 77.

⁷² Before settling on Nestorius, Theodosius had indeed offered the bishop's throne to the monk Dalmatius whose theological sensibilities were far more amenable to the Alexandrians; however, he declined the offer: Gilbert Dagron, "Les moines et la ville," 268; Gregory, *Vox Populi*, 81.

church at the capital may have even further affirmed the authoritative standing of the Egyptian bishop. There is, in fact, no reason why Alexandria could not have still been recognised as a primary spiritual authority of the east while the organs of state government were elsewhere. The see of Rome had certainly proved that. However, if Nestorius' teachings prevailed and Constantinople made a decisive shift towards the theological leanings of Antioch, Alexandria faced an ominous shift in geo-ecclesiastical politics. With so much at stake at Constantinople it was political pragmatism, not jealousy, that guaranteed the Alexandrians' inevitable involvement in the city's ecclesiastical life.

It is clear that the conflict at Constantinople should be viewed primarily as a struggle between Antiochene and Alexandrian interests, rather than an attempt to thwart Constantinople's episcopal pretensions, when we consider the participants in the long controversy triggered by Nestorius' ascension.

As the fallout from Nestorius' teachings over the *Theotokos* attracted growing dissension outside Constantinople, an increasingly besieged Nestorius complained that the conflict was a local matter that should have been dealt with as such. Nestorius was gravely mistaken. His relegation of the status of Mary cut to the core of the theological differences between the Antiochenes and the Alexandrians and the contours of the conflict quickly came to represent this. During the early stages of the conflict, ecclesiastical figures inside Constantinople did play a part in the escalation of tensions, although not in the manner that would be expected if viewed through the jealousy model. If Cyril's actions were indeed designed to "humble the clergy of the capital", he would have been disappointed to find the clergy more amenable to his own stance than loyal to their own bishop.⁷³ In any case, as the controversy progressed, members of the Constantinopolitan church played a minimal role. With the exception of the Constantinopolitan monasteries, as we will discuss in a moment, the contours and outcome of the conflict was determined by figures ensconced within the Alexandrian and Antiochene networks beyond Constantinople. In opposing Nestorius, Cyril made use of his see's powerful and far-reaching connections. In response, Nestorius engaged the help of his Antiochene support network, with John of Antioch, Andrew of Samosata, and Theodoret of Cyrus all rallying to support their embattled colleague.

The ecclesiastical flux created by Constantinople's growth and the rise of Antiochene influences there sparked an open conflict between the proponents of the two

⁷³ On clerical opposition to Nestorius from within his own clergy, see Gregory, *Vox Populi*, 88–100.

dominant Christological views of the east. The two opposing networks squared off, each attempting to establish their particular brand of theology at Constantinople. Contrary to the assumption that Constantinople was by this time the most powerful see of the east alongside Alexandria, the Syrian networks aligned to Antioch proved to be a powerful force with the condemnation of Nestorius serving only to intensify the efforts of those loyal to the Antiochene school.⁷⁴ The works of Diodore of Tarsus and Theodore of Mopsuestia were widely promoted by the Antiochene network as a check against what they saw as the excesses of Cyrilline theology. It is in this theological milieu that Theodoret of Cyrus wrote his *Eranistes*, denouncing the attacks of his Alexandrian detractors, and the bishop of Antioch petitioned the emperor to move against the influences of Apollinarianism evident at the capital. Adam Schor demonstrates the lengths to which Theodoret went in attempting to rebuild and expand his Antiochene network, damaged by the Nestorian controversy. Special attention was given to Constantinople where Theodoret courted bishops, clerics, monks, and the elite.⁷⁵

In the end, the Alexandrian position proved too strong. Gradually the supporters of Alexandrian theology gained the upper hand over their long-term rivals at Antioch.⁷⁶ With the support of imperial authority, the Alexandrian theological traditions of Athanasius and Cyril prevailed at Constantinople, while the theological pronouncements of Nestorius and his supporters were suppressed by law. The imperial law of 435, which ordered the burning of books that promoted Nestorianism, marked an outstanding success for the adherents of Alexandrian theology, and laid the groundwork for the Alexandrians' sweeping victory at Ephesus in 449.⁷⁷ It was during this period of increased tensions after Nestorius' exile that we find the Egyptian bishops working alongside Constantinople's bishops to repress Antiochene interests.⁷⁸

As the conflict between Cyril and Nestorius suggests, the Alexandrians were not rallying against the influence of the Constantinopolitan church itself but the Antiochene network's expansion at Constantinople. If the Alexandrians did indeed look toward Constantinople with envious eyes, it was not the authority of the bishops of Constantinople that they were jealous of, but that of the *Antiochene* bishops of Constantinople. That the conflict between Cyril and Nestorius at a geo-ecclesiastical level was fought between

⁷⁴ Clayton, *Christology of Theodoret*, 165–282.

⁷⁵ Schor, *Theodoret's People*, 114–15.

⁷⁶ Gregory, *Vox Populi*, 99.

⁷⁷ *CTh* 16.5.66 (*SCh* 497.336–38).

⁷⁸ Holum, *Empresses*, 198–99; Karlin-Hayter, "Activity," 195–98.

Antioch and Alexandria, not between Alexandria and Constantinople is made even more likely when considering Nestorius' relationship with the Constantinopolitan church.

One effect of viewing the controversies as a dichotomous conflict between Alexandria and Constantinople is that it has deflected attention from the extent to which the Constantinopolitan bishops under attack can be said to represent Constantinopolitan interests. A telling inconsistency in the historical treatment of the controversies is that those within Constantinople who opposed the bishops are often seen as representing Alexandrian interests, yet the bishops, Chrysostom and Nestorius, despite both being from Antioch, are treated as representative of Constantinople from the moment they ascended the episcopal throne.⁷⁹ This overlooks the fact that both bishops remained on the outer within the Constantinopolitan church. As we have already noted, the local Constantinopolitan Nicene establishment did not welcome either of these foreign import with open arms.⁸⁰ That both Chrysostom and Nestorius found themselves opposed by many within their own clergy, raises the question of to what extent we should treat these bishops as representative of the Constantinopolitan church.⁸¹ The resistance of the local Nicene establishment suggests that a significant portion of the Constantinopolitan church considered the leadership of Chrysostom and Nestorius to represent a foreign intrusion, a contention that would not have been helped by the fact that both bishops had brought their own staff with them.⁸² If Chrysostom and Nestorius cannot be considered to have represented the Constantinopolitan church, this then undermines the assumption that, by opposing these bishops, the Alexandrians were by proxy attacking the Constantinopolitan see itself. To what extent can Nestorius' removal be considered the result of Cyril desiring

⁷⁹ This is further accentuated by the fact that it was in the best interests of the bishop of Constantinople to label troubles as instigated by outside forces. For instance, Nestorius lacked local support, but by blaming Alexandrian agents, he was taking focus away from his own failures. Also we should perhaps not discount the age-old Greek feature of civic rivalry which may have been intentionally employed by the bishops to engender greater support amongst the wider populace: Maud W. Gkason, "Greek Cities Under Roman Rule," *A Companion to the Roman Empire. Blackwell Companions to the Ancient World*, ed. David S. Potter (Malden: Blackwell, 2006), 228–249, 246; Clifford Ando, *Imperial Ideology and Provincial Loyalty in the Roman Empire* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 132.

⁸⁰ Van Nuffelen has argued that the Nicenes of Constantinople, protective of their local prerogatives, developed mechanisms to resist the imposition of outside influences on the church by the imperial executive: Van Nuffelen, "Episcopal Succession," 442.

⁸¹ Such a situation would not have been helped by the fact that both bishops were appointed after contested local elections; inevitably the unsuccessful local candidates held a grudge against the foreign bishop holding a position that they would have seen as rightfully theirs. Indeed the disgruntled unsuccessful parties aligned to Philip of Side and Proclus quickly formed an alliance with Cyril, finding common-ground in their resentment of Nestorius' position: Gregory, *Vox Populi*, 100.

⁸² Nestorius' most trusted clergy member at Constantinople was the presbyter Anastasius, whom he had brought with him from Antioch: Socrates, *HE* 7.32 (*SCh* 506.114). Chrysostom also stirred up dissension by the appointment of an outsider, Serapion, as arch-deacon; a man who appears to have been widely disliked: Mayer, "Making of a Saint," 41–46.

to weaken Constantinople when Nestorius himself was opposed by many segments of Constantinopolitan society and rejected by many in his own clergy?⁸³ Given the fact that Nestorius' reign had engendered such animosity within the Constantinopolitan church, Cyril's success in removing such a divisive figure could even be viewed as having helped to stabilise the Constantinopolitan church.⁸⁴

Karlin-Hayter summed up conventional views of the relationship between Alexandria and Constantinople in her statement that between 381–451, the competing authority of the two sees was put to the test with “the weapon of choice theology, the battle-ground the ‘patriarchate’ of Antioch.”⁸⁵ However, as has been argued, this is a product of entrenched teleological perspectives of Constantinople's growth in episcopal standing. Once we remove the spectre of Constantinople's assumed primacy, we can reposition the geo-ecclesiastical conflicts leading up to 451 as played out between Antioch and Alexandria, with the battle-ground Constantinople as both networks scrambled to gain influence at the new capital. This perspective allows us to approach canon 28 from a very different angle. With the intrusion of tensions between Antiochene and Alexandrian theological and ecclesiastical interests at Constantinople having a highly disruptive effect on the see's ecclesiastical development, it is difficult to view canon 28 in the manner of a glorious conclusion of the bishop of Constantinople's rise to power. Instead, we should approach 451 as an attempt to instil an autonomous authority that was previously lacking.

Before examining canon 28 in this context, we must first consider the view from within Constantinople. As we have already noted in this and previous chapters, the struggles between the bishops at Constantinople and Alexandria were exacerbated and supplemented by tensions that were very much internal to Constantinople. However, there is one particular local entity which played a prominent part in the controversies in the lead up to 451 that has not yet been considered – the monasteries of Constantinople.

⁸³ Including those within the Constantinopolitan clergy, monasteries, and court: Gregory, *Vox Populi*, 88–100.

⁸⁴ As was argued in the previous chapter, it was not Nestorius' particular personal traits alone that were likely central to the divisions he caused, but his Antiochene-inspired episcopal strategies and theology that was ill-fitting at Constantinople: Chapter 4, section 3.

⁸⁵ Karlin-Hayter, “Activity,” 188.

The Road to Chalcedon Part 2:

Internal Influences – The Monasteries of Constantinople

Viewing the ecclesiastical struggles that punctuated the period of 381–451 through the lens of a rivalry between Constantinople and Alexandria not only misrepresents the balance of episcopal power between the major churches of the east but serves to obscure the role that internal weaknesses within the Constantinopolitan church played in the conflicts.

Because Alexandrian interference at the capital has been assumed to have been a product of the see's growth in importance, the conflicts within Constantinople have been read by conventional scholarship as having been played out largely within the sphere of inter-patriarchal politics. Local tensions have tended to be subordinated to broad episcopal rivalry, a tendency that is most evident in the terminology used when referring to residents of Constantinople who came into conflict with the city's bishop. During the conflicts surrounding the tenures of Chrysostom, Nestorius, and Flavian, those within Constantinople who opposed the bishops and aided the Alexandrians are often termed Alexandrian "agents".⁸⁶ Such a description encourages a view that it was the Alexandrian bishops who were the primary architects of the upheavals at Constantinople, which in turn serves to distract attention from divisions that were internal to Constantinople. As we will see, those characterised as working on behalf of the Alexandrians were in fact driven by very local Constantinople-centred motivations. Placing these motivations in their local context instead of aligning them with broad geo-ecclesiastical rivalries will reveal the extent that internal divisions within Constantinople's episcopal landscape contributed to and accentuated the conflicts at the capital.

In revealing the extent to which assumptions over Constantinople's global standing and rivalry with Alexandria has obscured internal schisms at New Rome, the monks of

⁸⁶ "[W]e should not forget that behind the scenes, on the docks and in the streets and churches of Constantinople itself, the agents of Alexandria were constantly at work", Gregory, *Vox Populi*, 57 (also, see 108 and 113). See also Holum, *Empresses*, 199; Caner, *Wandering, Begging Monks*, 217; Alan Cameron, *Circus Factions: Blues and Greens at Rome and Byzantium* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976), 290. Even when elements in Constantinople are not explicitly termed as agents of Alexandria, it is commonly implied that the Alexandrians, through bribes and political influence, were the masterminds behind dissension at Constantinople. For example, see Brown, *Power and Persuasion*, 16; Tatha Wiley, *Thinking of Christ: Proclamation, Explanation, Meaning* (New York: Continuum, 2003), 59; Warren H. Carroll, *The Building of Christendom: A History of Christendom*, Vol. 2 (Front Royal, V.A.: Christendom College Press, 1987), 111. The partisan nature of the term is exposed by the fact that the term "agent" is applied only to Alexandrians at Constantinople and not to Antiochenes. This conceptualisation has some basis in the primary sources, such as Nestorius implying that those protesting against him at Constantinople were being paid by Cyril: Nestorius, *Liber Heraclidis* 2.1.384 (ed. Nau, 247). However, its use in this context necessitates caution as it was in the interest of the bishop and his supporters to blame outside forces for local dissension.

Constantinople provide an excellent case study. In the upheavals at Constantinople, it is the monks of the capital who are the ones that are most commonly cited as working on behalf of the Alexandrian bishops, portrayed as acting as episcopal saboteurs at the behest of Egyptian sponsors.⁸⁷ However, a closer examination of the role of the monasteries in the fifth-century conflicts at Constantinople will show that their involvement was very much a product of Constantinople's own political environment, as well as indicative of the ecclesiastical and theological ructions internal to the city.

Approaching from this perspective, it will become clear that Alexandrian interferences at Constantinople did not come as a result of the see's increasing strength, but as a consequence of its institutional weaknesses. As Nestorius himself remarked, such external interference would not have been suffered by the bishop of any other city.⁸⁸

The Monastic Movement at Early Constantinople

The monastic institutions in Constantinople were slow to develop in comparison with the other urban centres of the east. It was not until the 380s that organised monastic institutions began to develop in earnest within the city.⁸⁹ However, from this point onwards, the monasteries of Constantinople grew at a rapid pace. It has been estimated that by the mid-fifth century there were around 10,000 to 15,000 resident monks in the city, a number that would have seen them making up around 10% of Constantinople's overall population.⁹⁰ The role these monks played in the controversies leading up to Chalcedon cannot be over-stated. The city's most prestigious monastic institutions – the Dalmatou, the Rouphinianai, and the Akoimetai – were at the heart of opposition to the three bishops deposed in the first half of the fifth century. Archimandrites such as Isaac, Dalmatius, and Eutyches played central roles, leading local opposition to the authority of the Constantinopolitan bishops, even in the face of imperial endorsement. Yet despite the centrality of their role, the monks who agitated against the bishops have often been

⁸⁷ See previous note.

⁸⁸ "You [Cyril], as bishop of Alexandria, interfered with the Church of Constantinople – a situation which the bishop of any other city would not have had to endure", Nestorius, *Liber Heraclidis* 1.2.146 (ed. Nau, 89), translation my own.

⁸⁹ Constantinople's early monastic inhabitants were of an Arian persuasion, with the earliest mention of monasteries at Constantinople being those set up by Macedonius and his deacons Eleusius and Marathonius under the influence of Eustathius of Sebaste: Dagron, "Les moines et la ville," 239, 246–53; Millar, *Birth of the Hospital*, 79–83, 122–23; Rafał Kosiński, *Holiness and Power: Constantinopolitan Holy Men and Authority in the 5th Century* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2016), 17.

⁹⁰ Hatlie, *Monasteries of Constantinople*, 89.

regarded as accessories to the Alexandrian cause, representing the ambitions of the Alexandrians and operating outside the sphere of local Constantinopolitan interests. This is misleading as the monks of Constantinople were perhaps more thoroughly entrenched in the daily life of Constantinople than in any other city.

Of the various styles of ascetic living defined by Jerome, the monastic character of early Constantinople would perhaps have earned the monks the derisive label of *remnuoth* due to their highly urban nature and independence from clerical rule.⁹¹ The monastic leaders were deeply embedded in all levels of Constantinopolitan life. They had a close relationship with the city's general populace, providing many of their day-to-day needs both spiritual and otherwise: performing blessings and exorcisms, healings, resolution of family conflicts, and providing basic needs for the city's poor.⁹² As elsewhere, this everyday interaction with the city's population allowed the monks to fill an important social niche, acting as a voice for those who were dispossessed or unimportant.⁹³ At Constantinople the ascetics did not just represent the interests of those without a voice, however, but took on a very active role in the political and spiritual politics of the upper echelons of society. From early on in Constantinople's monastic development, the city's monks were highly politicised, with the monasteries being utilized in episcopal struggles and imperial politics from the mid-fourth century.⁹⁴ In fact, some of the earliest monks to come to the city did so with the specific aim of political engagement.⁹⁵

The monks' involvement in the city's political scene became a permanent feature of Constantinopolitan monasticism, their engagement in the lives and politics of the elite of Constantinople prompted by heavy levels of aristocratic patronage.⁹⁶ Such patronage ensured Constantinople's monastic institutions received substantial support both materially and politically. The relationship was beneficial to both parties. While aristocratic patrons lavished extravagant gifts on monastic leaders and provided political advocacy for their

⁹¹ Jerome, *Ep.* 22.34 (CSEL 54.196–197).

⁹² The renowned leaders of the most significant monasteries were all noted for their activities within the city's wider community. The *Akoimetai* monks in particular had a reputation for providing for the city's poor, Isaac, founder of the *Dalmatou* met with the emperor and blessed houses, while Hypatius, leader of the *Rouphinianai* monastery, was known for healing work, care for the poor, and exorcisms, amongst other services: Hatlie, *Monasteries of Constantinople*, 66–7, 69–71; *Vita Hypatios* (*SCh* 177).

⁹³ W. H. C. Frend, "The Monks and the Survival of the East Roman Empire in the Fifth Century," *Past and Present* 54, 1 (1972): 3–24; Peter Brown, "The Rise and Function of the Holy in Late Antiquity," *JRS* 59 (1971): 103–52.

⁹⁴ Hatlie, *Monasteries of Constantinople*, 63–65.

⁹⁵ Two of the earliest monastic figures at Constantinople arrived in the city in order to petition secular authorities: Jonas sought imperial aid for his embattled homeland while Isaac came to castigate the Emperor Valens for his promotion of the Homoian faith: Dagron, "Les moines et la ville", 233; Hatlie, *Monasteries of Constantinople*, 67.

⁹⁶ Hatlie, *Monasteries of Constantinople*, 79–81.

burgeoning institutions, what such patrons gained in return was priceless. With the prestige of holy ascetics increasing across the empire, the urban monks of Constantinople became a valuable and much sought-after spiritual resource, one that offered not only spiritual benefit but also political opportunities at a Christian court. Several of the archimandrites of Constantinople achieved a lofty reputation for spiritual authority and wisdom. Leaders such as Hypatius and Dalmatius not only attracted visits, requests for baptism, and patronage from members of the elite, but were held in equally high regard by some of the city's clergy.⁹⁷ Commanding such respect, ascetics could find themselves highly sought after by men of influence. A salient example of the reverence that ascetic figures could command at Constantinople is the alleged competition between two of Theodosius' generals to provide a monastery for the influential monk Isaac.⁹⁸ Victor and Saturninus were both great admirers of the ascetic, visiting him daily, and when Isaac was convinced to reside permanently within the city the two aristocrats competed for his favour by constructing lavish buildings on their respective properties in the hope that he would choose theirs as his residence.⁹⁹ Isaac and his Constantinopolitan colleagues not only held the loyalty of the emperor's staff but even managed to win the admiration of the emperors themselves. Theodosius and his heirs treated the city's archimandrites with high reverence and placed much credence on their opinions.¹⁰⁰

With lines of patronage and deference linking the monks of Constantinople with the city's nobility and the monasteries maintaining a strong relationship with the city's poor, it is difficult to view the monks as anything but an integral part of Constantinopolitan life and representative of many segments native to the city.¹⁰¹ Since the monks were such

⁹⁷ Regarding the integration of the monks into the ecclesiastical and aristocratic networks of Constantinople see the detailed survey by Hatlie: Hatlie, *Monasteries of Constantinople*, 67–70 and 82–86. For an analysis of Hypatius' relations with the city's imperial and aristocratic populace, see Kosiński, *Holiness and Power*, 42–53.

⁹⁸ The following account must be approached with caution as its source – the *Vita Isaacii*, originates from the seventh century. However, as Caner points out, Isaac's connections with the aristocracy is corroborated by Callinicus writing within a generation of Isaac's death: Caner, *Wandering, Begging Monks*, 191–93 esp. n.172.

⁹⁹ Saturninus won the honour of Isaac choosing to use the property he built due to its humbler construction: Matthews, *Western Aristocracies*, 120–21.

¹⁰⁰ Theodosius apparently held Isaac in very high esteem, occasionally visiting him in person: *Vita Isaacii*, 14–15 (AASS.Mai VII, 256–7) cited in, Croke, "Reinventing Constantinople," 261. As we will see, Theodosius II held the archimandrite Dalmatius in equally high regard. In addition, monastic leaders at Constantinople could also enjoy the powerful patronage of the empresses, such as Pulchria's and her sisters' loyalty to Hypatius: *Vita Hypatios* 37.1–4 (*SCh* 177.226–28).

¹⁰¹ Hatlie notes as remarkable the fact that certain monks could achieve so much success at the capital "despite their foreign origins", Hatlie, *Monasteries of Constantinople*, 74. However, treating such monks' foreign origin as potentially marking them out from other elements at Constantinople overlooks the geographical diversity of the city's exploding population. As we have seen, preachers, bishops, soldiers,

an integral feature of the city's spiritual and political life, their involvement in the rebellions against the Constantinopolitan bishops cannot be satisfactorily explained by characterising them as acting on behalf of Alexandrian sponsors. Instead, their actions must be viewed within their local Constantinopolitan-specific context.

As we will see, while the Alexandrian-friendly theological views of the monks of Constantinople made them natural bedfellows with the Alexandrian bishops, the involvement of the monks in the controversies surrounding Chrysostom, Nestorius, and Flavian was very much driven by local considerations.¹⁰² However, in order to reconsider the role of the Constantinopolitan monasteries in the controversies at Constantinople, we must first situate the monastic movement at Constantinople within the broader development of ascetic practices in the church. Only then can we perceive the particular danger that the monks of Constantinople posed to the city's episcopal institution.

Episcopal Authority and Asceticism

The growth of Constantinople's monasteries came at a time when the rise of asceticism was posing worrying questions for the established church empire-wide. As this section will show, the fifth-century conflicts between the bishop of Constantinople and the local monastic authorities were played out within a wider context that was outside geo-ecclesiastical or even theological rivalries – one in which the very function of the early church was being challenged. After considering the mounting contemporary tensions over the role of the monk in society, we will be better placed to appreciate the way in which the highly politicised and integrated nature of the monks of Constantinople exacerbated such tensions. It is this underlying context that will ultimately point us towards an alternative backdrop to the work of Chalcedon.

In a letter of 449, Theodosius II invited the archimandrite Barsauma to attend the Second Council of Ephesus and participate in proceedings.¹⁰³ This was a startling

aristocrats, and emperors from diverse geographical origins were in this period making Constantinople home: Chapter 3, section 2.

¹⁰² The Alexandrian theological leanings of the monks at Constantinople went through a shift that began just prior to Chalcedon. This shift to a critical approach to the extreme Alexandrian line of monks such as Eutyches was a significant factor in the decline of the monks' political independence from the bishopric, of which more will be said below. Hatlie, *Monks and Monasteries of Constantinople*, 122–23.

¹⁰³ ACO 2.1.1.48.71; Heinrich Bacht, "Die Rolle des orientalischen Mönchtums in den kirchenpolitischen Auseinandersetzungen um Chalkedon," in *Das Konzil von Chalkedon*, ed. Aloys Grillmeier and Heinrich Bacht. vol. 2 (Wirzburg: Echter, 1953), 193–314, 225–26; Gaddis, *There is No Crime*, 317; Caner,

development. Monks, who at that point were still outside the jurisdiction of the bishops, were being invited to attend a holy synod where they were expected to participate, shoulder-to-shoulder with bishops.¹⁰⁴ Only two years later, the situation was much changed. The Council of Chalcedon for the first time placed monks officially, and firmly, under episcopal authority.¹⁰⁵ Canon 4 of Chalcedon forbade monks from becoming involved in ecclesiastical and temporal affairs, and made the provision of monasteries strictly the prerogative of the local bishop.¹⁰⁶ At Chalcedon the same Barsauma who was so respected by Theodosius II was decried as a murderer of bishops.¹⁰⁷ This dramatic turnaround in imperial attitudes towards the role of monks is indicative of the broad social and political challenges that the rise of monasticism posed in the early fifth century.¹⁰⁸

The rise of monastic institutions and the adoption of asceticism into mainstream Christian practice is a familiar element in the evolution of the church. However, monasticism was not subsumed into broader Christian practice smoothly. Defining how the monks fit into the wider Christian society in regard to their precise role and scope of practice presented a serious challenge for both the church and secular authorities.¹⁰⁹ The challenges posed by the rise of the holy man were two-fold.

The first was that the monastic movement at the time was highly diverse and completely unregulated. Before the monastic schemas developed and refined by the likes of Basil, Augustine, and John Cassian became a measure of standard practice, a myriad of ascetic lifestyles co-existed and competed across the east.¹¹⁰ Some of the varying modes of ascetic practice found at Constantinople were those who lived in closed monastic communities, martyr-shrine monks, and itinerant bands of monks.¹¹¹ The followers of such diverse types of monastic living had equally varied customs in how they interacted with

Wandering, Begging Monks, 227. Barsauma became a much reviled figure by the time of Chalcedon. F. Nau, "Résumé de monographies syriaques," *ROC* 18 (1913): 270–76, 379; 19 (1914): 113–34, 278–89.

¹⁰⁴ Michael Gaddis calls it "an attempt to set up an alternative hierarchy in which pious and proven archimandrites substituted for corrupt and heretical bishops", Gaddis, *There is No Crime*, 298.

¹⁰⁵ Caner, *Wandering, Begging Monks*, 206–212.

¹⁰⁶ Canon 4 (ed. Tanner, 89). "...monks of each city and region are to be subject to the bishop": Translated in Tanner, *Decrees*, 89.

¹⁰⁷ Gaddis, *There is No Crime*, 307.

¹⁰⁸ Timothy S. Miller labels the period of 350 to 451 as "the most dynamic era of monastic praxis in the world", Timothy S. Miller, *The Birth of the Hospital in the Byzantine Empire*, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997), 122.

¹⁰⁹ Brown, "Rise and Function," 103–52.

¹¹⁰ On this process see: Marilyn Dunn, *The Emergence of Monasticism: From the Desert Fathers to the Early Middle Ages* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2003); Derwas Chitty, *The Desert a City: An Introduction to the Study of Egyptian and Palestinian Monasticism Under the Christian Empire* (London: Mowbrays, 1977); Phillip Rousseau, *Ascetics, Authority and the Church in the Age of Jerome and Cassian* (Oxford: OUP, 1978).

¹¹¹ Constantinople's early monastic scene was diverse and fluid, see Kosiński, *Holiness and Power*, 18.

the wider community. Some chose strict seclusion and internal personal contemplation, while others combined the cloistered life with some interaction with those around them. At the other end of the scale were the monks for whom travelling and preaching to the masses was an integral part of their lifestyle.¹¹² These ascetic preachers were often particularly zealous in their proselyting, agitating against what they saw as the shortcomings of society, even openly criticising secular and church authorities.¹¹³

It was this variety of monastic lifestyles that earned harsh criticisms from fellow Christians, and attempts at regulation.¹¹⁴ For those within the church hierarchy, the ideal monastic lifestyle was naturally one in which the monks refrained from meddling in the world beyond the monastery. Those outside this ideal were often accused of being insincere in their choice of vocation, characterised as being insincere, taking up a monastic calling for personal gain or to avoid social responsibilities.¹¹⁵ Wandering monks, in particular, were deemed by many, such as Augustine, as prone to violence and ill-discipline.¹¹⁶ A law of Valens in 375, which attempted to crack down on such ‘false’ monks, portrayed them as devotees of idleness.¹¹⁷

The reason why those within the established church were uncomfortable with the lack of regulation of the monastic movement was due to the second challenge that the church faced as a result of the rise of asceticism. Correctly applied, ascetic practices were a powerful spiritual tool, theoretically granting the monk a closer relationship with God.¹¹⁸

¹¹² For the particular dangers that itinerant monks could pose, see Caner, *Wandering, Begging Monks*.

¹¹³ As we will see below in the case of the Sleepless Monks.

¹¹⁴ Arthur Vööbus, *History of Asceticism*, vol.1 (Louvain: Secrétariat du Corpus SCO, 1958), 146–58. The church’s discomfort with the diversity of monastic practices is evident right from the movement’s inception with the Council of Gangra, convoked in the early 340s, addressing such concerns: C. F. Hefele, *Histoire des Conciles de d’Après les Documents Originaux*, vol. 1 (Paris: 1907), 1029–45.

¹¹⁵ For the dangers posed by the ‘wandering’ holy man see: Caner, *Wandering, Begging Monks*, 19–49; Gaddis discusses the established authorities’ attempts to contest this lifestyle: Gaddis, *There is No Crime*, 228–29.

¹¹⁶ Gregory, *Vox Populi*, 171; Gaddis, *There is No Crime*, 176; Such criticism was not restricted to Christian observers; Libanius was particularly outspoken in the hostility he felt towards monks, accusing the wandering “black-robed tribe” of faking an austere appearance while in reality eating “more than elephants”, Libanius, *Or.* 30.8 (ed. Norman, 106, trans. 107).

¹¹⁷ *CTh* 12.1.63. (*SCh* 531.306). For discussion of this law, see Noel Lenski, “Valens and the Monks: Cudgeling and Conscriptio as a Means of Social Control,” *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, vol. 58 (2004): 93–117.

¹¹⁸ The logic underpinning how an ascetic achieved closeness with God is complex and varied; however, the theoretical mechanics were deeply influenced by the works of Origen and his cosmological schema. This influence is seen in Evagrius and, through him, it was transferred to the west through those such as John Cassian, albeit stripped of its overt Origenist connections: John Binns, *Ascetics and Ambassadors of Christ – The Monasteries of Palestine, 314-631* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), 211–12; D. Salvatore Marsili, “Giovanni Cassiano ed Evagrio Pontico: Dottrina sulla Carità e Contemplazione,” *Studia Anselmiana* 5 (1936): 87–149; Richard J. Goodrich, *Contextualizing Cassian: Aristocrats, Asceticism, and Reformation in Fifth-Century Gaul* (Oxford: OUP, 2007), 77; Columba Stewart, *Cassian the Monk* (New York: OUP, 1998),

With monks enjoying enhanced spiritual status and *parrhesia*, whilst remaining independent of episcopal supervision, such holy man raised pressing questions about where to situate a monk's authority in relation to that of the bishop.¹¹⁹

It is misleading to view the authority of the monk and that of the bishop in terms of a sharp division. By the fifth century, ascetic practices had become an integral component of attaining holy virtues. No longer confined to the monastery or cave, practising ascetic habits had become a mainstay of those within the established church.¹²⁰ Indeed, many of those who reached the rank of bishop began their spiritual education in an ascetic setting, and it was increasingly common for bishops to maintain a modicum of ascetic habits whilst still in office.¹²¹ The interrelation between ascetic and episcopal practice was natural. Essentially, the ascetic and bishop claimed spiritual authority in much the same way, in terms of their claims to spiritual knowledge and *parrhesia*.¹²² Ideally, from the church's perspective, it was only their respective roles that differentiated bishops and monks. The role of the bishop was outward-looking – preaching and strengthening the faith of the masses, protecting their flock from heresy, and acting as a conduit between church and state – while the role of the ascetic was inward-looking; focussed on internal contemplation and prayer, removed from society, teaching only to a small group of dedicated followers.

However, the increasing popularity of the holy man in society and the proliferation of monks who actively engaged the wider community subverted this model. The blurring of the respective roles of bishop and monk meant clerical and ascetic authority could find itself in competition. Encroaching on the bishop's sphere of responsibility by preaching or engaging in politics, socially-engaged ascetics not only undermined a bishop's charismatic authority but could even rally against the local episcopal institution itself. This was a

3–26; Steven D. Driver, *John Cassian and the Reading of Egyptian Monastic Culture* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 16.

¹¹⁹ See Peter Brown's discussion of the holy man's wielding of *parrhesia*: Brown, *Power and Persuasion*, 106–108; Van Nuffelen's assertion that the *parrhesia* of a preacher was central to gaining and maintaining patronage and spiritual authority is a pertinent reminder of the challenge that popular ascetics could pose to bishops: Van Nuffelen, "A War of Words," 201–217.

¹²⁰ Sterk, *Renouncing the World*. The bishops came to subsume aspects of ascetic *parrhesia* into their office, Rapp, *Holy Bishops*, 267–73.

¹²¹ This was certainly true at Constantinople where Gregory of Nazianzus, Chrysostom, Atticus, and Nestorius all came from a monastic background.

¹²² Jaclyn Maxwell points out that, from an early fifth century lay perspective, ascetic practice was considered sacred and exclusivist in a similar vein as the priesthood: Jaclyn L. Maxwell, *Christianization and Communication in Late Antiquity: John Chrysostom and his Congregation in Antioch* (Cambridge: CUP, 2006), 129–32.

particularly dangerous proposition given the rebellious nature of the early monastic movement.

The Black-Robed Tribe

Without being bound by the defined roles of deference and responsibility inherent in positions within the official Church-State establishment, the charismatic authority of monks meant they could criticise elements of society more freely than a bishop. The authority of an ascetic allowed him to ignore normal rules of hierarchy and deference, to speak boldly and bluntly to all, even the emperor.¹²³ With their legitimacy derived directly from God, bands of monks became renowned for extreme zealotry and violence. Theodosius, himself a great admirer of the sanctity of holy monks, remarked that “monks commit many crimes”, after learning of the illegal destruction of a synagogue in Callinicum by a band of monks in 388.¹²⁴ As has been recently argued, such accounts of the destruction of religious buildings at the hands of monks – such as the devastation of the great Serapeion of Alexandria in 391– must be treated with some caution.¹²⁵ However, the many instances throughout the fifth century of monks perpetrating violent acts certainly attests to the potentially destructive nature of the monastic movement. Alan Cameron deemed the fifth century “the great age of monastic violence”.¹²⁶

It was not only religious institutions that were subject to intimidation from bands of wandering monks. Their belief that “zeal for God outweighs respect for worldly law and order” also motivated some monks to interfere in the organs of state governance, bringing

¹²³ The bishops too could claim boldness of speech, however, the nature of their position as part of a large hierarchical organisation, one closely aligned with the state’s political administration, naturally restricted to a degree their scope to express untempered opinions.

¹²⁴ Ambrose, *Ep* 41.27 (CSEL 82.3.160–61). Synagogues appear to have been a particularly popular target; Johannes Hahn, “The Challenge of Religious Violence: Imperial Ideology and Policy in the Fourth Century,” in *Contested Monarchy: Integrating the Roman Empire in the Fourth Century AD*, ed. Johannes Wienand (Oxford: OUP, 2015), 379–404, 402.

¹²⁵ Busine, “From Stones to Myth,” 325–46; Jitse Dijkstra, “The Fate of the Temples in Late Antique Egypt,” in *The Archaeology of Late Antique ‘Paganism’*, ed. Luke Lavan and Michael Mulryan (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 389–436.

¹²⁶ Cameron, *Circus Factions*, 291. It is due to the highly politicised tensions surrounding the role of the monks during the upheavals of this period that such evidence of monastic violence needs to be approached with caution. See for example, critical discussion of Libanius’ oration: H.-G. Nesselrath, et al., *Für Religionsfreiheit, Recht und Toleranz: Libanios’ Rede für den Erhalt der heidnischen Tempel*, eingeleitet, übersetzt und mit interpretierenden Essays versehen (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011). However, with violence never far from breaking out in late antique society, and monks particularly zealous figures, the monasteries did harbour a distinct potential for violence. The bishops themselves did not shy away from utilising this force of physical coercion, such as Theophilus’ arming of monks in his campaign against Origenist influences: Socrates, *HE* 6.7. (*SCh* 505.288–294).

the threat of violence to bear on the judicial system.¹²⁷ Libanius recounts an instance of the abandonment of a legal case when the governor fled on hearing the approach of monks chanting hymns.¹²⁸ While Libanius' hostile opinion of monks means that such accounts should be read with caution, a law passed during the reign of Arcadius designed to stop such religious interference in the judicial system indicates that the issue was a genuine one.¹²⁹ Despite such laws, the government had a difficult time trying to contain the excesses of monastic zealotry. As Michael Gaddis points out, in an environment where the great Christian persecutions of the Roman state were still a recent and formative memory, any attempt to crack down on holy men was a dicey proposition with the potential to backfire spectacularly. Any moves that could be read by the Christian public as a persecution of the monks could serve only to increase their prestige and convince more people of their righteousness.¹³⁰

However, despite the dangers of doing so, the imperial authorities did enact laws aimed at regulating monastic practice. That the imperial establishment struggled with how to deal with the rise of monks is evident in the contrasting nature of the legislation. After his predecessor appears to have tried to enlist monks into the army under threat of death, a law of Theodosius enacted in 390, attempted to impose desert asceticism by forcibly evicting urban monks, ordering them to dwell in the desert.¹³¹ The policy was evidently a failure, with the law being repealed two years later.¹³² In an attempt to either circumvent the power of the monks or indeed capitalise on it, an edict issued later under Arcadius encouraged bishops to make up shortfalls in their clergy by recruiting monks.¹³³ In 431 Theodosius II instructed his representative at the First Council of Ephesus to ban monks from attending proceedings, only to invite several monks to participate openly in the Second Council of Ephesus 18 years later.¹³⁴ The vacillating imperial approaches towards monks are indicative of the difficulty the imperial regime faced in forming a cohesive

¹²⁷ Shenoute, 'Letter to a Pagan Noble', translated in John Barns, "Shenoute as an Historical Source," in *Actes du Xeme Congris International des Papyrologes*, ed. Jozef Wolski (Warsaw and Cracow: 1961), 151–59.

¹²⁸ Libanius, *Or.* 45.26 (ed. Norman, 185).

¹²⁹ *CTh* 9.40.16 (*SCh* 531.202–204). This is not to suggest that monks alone were guilty of using their authority to subvert or run roughshod over state authority. In many instances bishops also acted in breach of secular authority; however, in such cases the bishops tended to depend on monks loyal to them to undertake such actions: Gaddis, *There is No Crime*, 218–19.

¹³⁰ Gaddis, *There is No Crime*, 101–102.

¹³¹ *CTh* 16.3.1 (*SCh* 497.216).

¹³² *CTh* 16.3.2 (*SCh* 497.218).

¹³³ *CTh* 16.2.32 (*SCh* 497.184).

¹³⁴ ACO 1.1.1.31.120; ACO 2.1.1.48.71.

policy towards this newly developing phenomenon. However, no institution had more reason to be wary of the rise of the monks than the established church hierarchy.

As noted above, the charismatic nature of a holy man's spiritual authority and his independence from the episcopal establishment was a troubling combination for the established church. An example of the threat such charismatic leaders could pose to episcopal authority was the case of Alexander the Sleepless. Alexander, who later founded the Akoimetos monastery near Constantinople, was the leader of a flock of particularly austere wandering monks known for their ceaseless chanting. Alexander appears to have had a particularly caustic effect on local church authorities, falling foul of the bishops of Antioch, Constantinople, and Chalcedon in turn, and escaping serious harm at Chalcedon thanks only to the intervention of Pulcheria.¹³⁵ Episcopal animosity towards Alexander was a reaction to the threat that his activities posed. At both Antioch and Constantinople, Alexander's preaching attracted increasing numbers of followers who took him as their teacher: "Simply put, he became the teacher and tutor of all".¹³⁶ While Alexander's public preaching and popularity alone was enough to indirectly damage the authority of the local bishops, the nature of Alexander's proselytizing provided a direct challenge to episcopal authority. Alexander was not only outspoken in his criticism of magistrates, the wealthy, and military commanders, but he also used his charismatic authority to criticise what he saw as the iniquities of the bishops.¹³⁷ Here we see the revolutionary nature of the threat such zealots posed, as Alexander was attacking all the institutions that sat at the heart of Roman society.

It was this aspect of the rise of the holy man that was such a concern for the established church. By claiming their authority came directly from God through their ascetic lifestyle, charismatic leaders such as Alexander were able to circumvent the normative relationships of power to not only encroach on the responsibilities of the bishop but to undermine episcopal authority itself. The potential for an ascetic to subvert the foundations of episcopal authority is summed up by Barsauma's rejoinder to the accusations made against him at Chalcedon: in response to being labelled a murderer of bishops, the monk retorted that he had never killed any *true* bishop.¹³⁸

¹³⁵ Holum, *Empresses*, 135–36; *Vita Hypatios* 41 (*SCh* 177.242–46).

¹³⁶ *Vita Alexandri* 39 (ed. De Stroop, 690); Translation from Caner, *Wandering, Begging Monks*, 272.

¹³⁷ For Alexander's tensions with local authorities both at Antioch and previously, see Kosiński, *Holiness and Power*, 101–106. Caner believes that at Constantinople Alexander practised the same outspoken criticism that had seen him forcibly removed at Antioch: Caner, *Wandering, Begging Monks*, 272.

¹³⁸ Barsauma's retort is from the *Life of Barsauma*; translated in Gaddis, *There is No Crime*, 307.

As the example of Alexander's activities in Antioch attests, concerns over the rise of the holy man were experienced across the Christian establishment of the east in the early fifth century. However, the type of monastic practice that took hold at Constantinople, combined with the local church's unique development, ensured that tensions between the church and monastery found their most destructive expression there.

Three Constantinopolitan Bishops and their Monastic Opponents

With the rise to power of the charismatic holy man presenting serious challenges for the established church hierarchy across the east, the bishops of Constantinople were in a particularly vulnerable position. The fast-paced urban growth of Constantinople and the lure of aristocratic patronage attracted holy men of various types from across the empire.¹³⁹ With bands of monks able to openly criticise bishops and gain popular acclaim, even at cities with a well-established local church hierarchy, Constantinople's lack of a well-entrenched or dominant local church naturally magnified the potential influence of the resident monks over their episcopal counterparts. It was not just the relative fragility of the Nicene church at Constantinople that saw the local monasteries pose a threat to the authority of the bishopric but the particular form of the monastic movement that had developed within the city.

Any bishop wishing to control or influence the monks of Constantinople faced a local monastic movement with three unique characteristics: it was highly urbanised and deeply implicated in the politics of the city; it united to achieve common objectives; and it was notably independent of the church.¹⁴⁰ The united monasteries of Constantinople in the early fifth century proved to be such a powerful and autonomous force that the many conflicts between the monks and bishops of the city have been described as a rivalry between two alternate spiritual hierarchies for control of the city's faithful.¹⁴¹ It is this internal rivalry, not the external one between the sees of Alexandria and Constantinople, that should be at the fore when considering the role of the monks in the controversies of the period.

¹³⁹ Dagron, *Naissance*, 521–22; Hatlie, *Monasteries of Constantinople*, 75.

¹⁴⁰ Dagron, "Les moines et la ville". Caner describes the strength of the monasteries in relation to the bishops, as constituting "a political rivalry for influence and control", Caner, *Wandering, Begging Monks*, 196.

¹⁴¹ Dagron, "Les moines et la ville," 274.

Before Chrysostom's arrival, Constantinople's monks had existed relatively peacefully alongside the city's bishop.¹⁴² However, this was to change with Chrysostom's arrival. Chrysostom's view of the correct form of monastic living was informed by his monarchical view of the bishopric.¹⁴³ In Chrysostom's opinion a monk could not be a spiritual leader and did not qualify to receive alms, and it was such convictions that would drive his episcopal policies with regard to the monasteries at Constantinople.¹⁴⁴ It is difficult to identify whether tensions between the monasteries and episcopate at Constantinople erupted at this time due exclusively to John's approach to the city's monks or whether the fact that the city's monasteries were experiencing immense growth at this time, meant that such tensions were to some extent inevitable.¹⁴⁵ In any case, with tensions over the correct position of the monk in society intensifying across the east, and Chrysostom having come to believe that only priests could act as spiritual leaders in the wider community, the situation he found at Constantinople would have disturbed him greatly.¹⁴⁶ Not only were the city's monks exceptional in their urbanisation and community engagement but the local bishopric lacked the well-established centralising authority

¹⁴² The city's earlier Macedonian monks appear to have worked in close unison with their bishop; Sozomen reports that Macedonius employed them to violently seize control of the church at Constantinople and persecute Nicenes: Sozomen, *HE* 4.2 (*SCh* 418194–96). In contrast, the Nicene monastic community that emerged at Constantinople after 381 would prove fiercely independent of the local bishop.

¹⁴³ David Rylaarsdam, *John Chrysostom on Divine Pedagogy: The Coherence of his Theology and Preaching* (Oxford: OUP, 2014), 201–204.

¹⁴⁴ Gregory, *Vox Populi*, 195.

¹⁴⁵ In addition to John's view of priesthood, it has been traditionally thought that John's reaction to Constantinople's monasteries was also a product of him hailing from an Antiochene environment in which the prevailing monastic culture was one of isolation and minimal interaction with the broader community: Kelly, *Golden Mouth*, 123–24; Dagron, "Les moines et la ville," 253–54. However, this view has been challenged, with Antioch's monastic landscape revealed to have been just as diverse as that at Constantinople, it has even been argued that John's own ascetic training was of an urban-based nature: Wendy Mayer, "Monasticism at Antioch and Constantinople in the Late Fourth Century. A Case of Exclusivity or Diversity?" in *Prayer and Spirituality in the Early Church*, I, ed. Pauline Allen et al. (Brisbane: Centre for Early Christian Studies, 1998), 275–88; Martin Illert, *Johannes Chrysostomus und das antiochenisch-syrische Mönchtum: Studien zu Theologie, Rhetorik und Kirchenpolitik im antiochenischen Schrifttum des Johannes Chrysostomus* (Zürich and Freiburg i.Br.: Pano Verlag, 2000). Indeed, previously John had himself propounded a view that ascetics were the true philosophers, advocating that monks should take an active role in church and public life; Rylaarsdam, *John Chrysostom on Divine Pedagogy*, 203–204. John's changing stance on the role of monks in society and the diversity of his ascetic background suggests that his policies at Constantinople should not be situated as an explicit reaction to Constantinople's monastic culture alone, but was indicative of the wider ongoing debates being felt across the east over the correct position of the monk, a debate that the Syrian had himself internally grappled with: Sterk, *Renouncing the World*, 147. However, this does not mean that Constantinople's unique setting did not play a significant role in determining John's approach to the city's monasteries as the city's monks were exceptionally urbanised and engaged with the community.

¹⁴⁶ Tiersch, *Johannes Chrysostomus*, 170–82.

needed to resist their influence – it was no accident that after being hounded out of Antioch, Alexander and his followers found a home on the outskirts of Constantinople.

At the forefront of the city's monastic movement at the time of John's arrival was the highly revered ascetic Isaac. Isaac was a spiritual figure of high regard, having originally come to the city to admonish Emperor Valens for his Arian tendencies.¹⁴⁷ By the time of Chrysostom's arrival, Isaac headed an influential monastery, later named the Dalmatou, and was looked up to by much of the nobility as "the city's chief spiritual master".¹⁴⁸ So well thought of and influential was this archimandrite that Chrysostom faced a serious challenge in asserting the primacy of his own spiritual authority within the city. Isaac and his network of monks were not only well-connected and supported by the nobility but, as an ordained priest, Isaac claimed alms that Chrysostom saw as rightfully his. Chrysostom's attempt to bring such monks under his authority was not a case of an overbearing bishop wantonly imposing his authority but was a genuine "rivalité de deux hierarchies".¹⁴⁹

Chrysostom attempted to lessen the influence of the monks by a three-fold policy: he encouraged those who deigned to stay within their monasteries, detached from worldly concerns, attempted to bring monks under his authority by ordaining them (sometimes forcibly), and he fiercely criticised those monks who did not conform to his coenobitic vision of the monasteries.¹⁵⁰

Chrysostom's policy towards the monks should not be considered in isolation but within the wider milieu of the time in which many in the church and secular authorities felt that the role of the monk should be confined to a life of seclusion and contemplation.¹⁵¹ A story in the Life of Hypatius, the famed leader of Constantinople's Rufiniana monastery, provides an excellent insight into local tensions over the correct role of the monk in society.¹⁵² In the account, Hypatius confronted the bishop of Chalcedon after receiving word that the prefect Leontius planned to stage an Olympic games in the city.¹⁵³ Hypatius, opposing the pagan undertones of the games, declared that he intended to attack Leontius

¹⁴⁷ Dagron "Les moines et la ville," 233; Hatlie, *Monasteries of Constantinople*, 67.

¹⁴⁸ Caner, *Wandering, Begging Monks*, 177.

¹⁴⁹ Dagron, "Les moines et la ville," 274.

¹⁵⁰ Sozomen, *HE* 8.9 (*SCh* 516.276); Rudolf Brändle, *Johannes Chrysostomus: Bischof, Reformator, Märtyrer* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1999), 477–78. He also positioned himself as the main provider to the monasteries: Caner, *Wandering, Begging Monks*, 197; Tiersch, *Johannes Chrysostomus*, 170–82.

¹⁵¹ As we shall see below, Nestorius would also follow the same line in attempting to impose a strictly coenobitic lifestyle on the city's monks.

¹⁵² *Vita Hypatios* 33 (*SCh* 177.214–18).

¹⁵³ For discussion of this incident, see Kosiński, *Holiness and Power*, 53–55.

to prevent them going ahead. The ensuing dialogue between the bishop and monk lays bare the competing conceptualisations of a monk's role. The bishop replied to Hypatius' protests by saying, "You are a monk; go back to your monastery and keep quiet and let me deal with this", to which Hypatius responded that he was compelled by a responsibility to prevent "the people being dragged back into idolatry".¹⁵⁴ It was just such conflicting visions of monastic responsibility – one of secluded internal contemplation, the other of wide social responsibility – that were at play during Chrysostom's tenure.

Chrysostom's attempt to impose his monastic vision on the monks of Constantinople and bring the monasteries firmly under his control made him enemies within powerful segments of Constantinopolitan society. Isaac was well thought of by the local clergy, and he found natural allies with those who had developed an antagonistic view of their bishop. The monasteries and disgruntled clergy formed a formidable local opposition, which was presented with an opportunity to push for Chrysostom's removal, thanks to Theophilus' dispute with the bishop.¹⁵⁵

When Theophilus orchestrated the Synod of the Oak, it was Isaac who, as a respected local spiritual authority and an eye-witness to Chrysostom's 'crimes', took centre-stage in the proceedings. He was not only the one who levelled the various accusations against the bishop, but also gave an account of his own mistreatments at the hands of Chrysostom.¹⁵⁶ The monks at Constantinople did not shrink from keeping up their opposition to the bishop after Theophilus' bid to remove Chrysostom from power ultimately failed. Even with the Syrian returned from exile, the monks continued their open opposition to his episcopate, going so far as to orchestrate a violent riot against Chrysostom's supporters in the Great Church.¹⁵⁷ These monks were not Alexandrian agents whose loyalty was bought by gold; their struggle against the bishop was very much their own, motivated by a desire to retain their way of life at Constantinople.¹⁵⁸ Rather, it was these pre-existing internal division at Constantinople that provided the Alexandrian bishop with a golden opportunity to pursue his own interests.

¹⁵⁴ *Vita Hypatios* 33.6 (*SCh* 177.216). Translation from Gaddis, *There is No Crime*, 203.

¹⁵⁵ Interestingly, the theological stance of Theophilus against Chrysostom was itself shaped by the violent coercion of monks, see the anti-Origen Nitrian monks' riot: Socrates, *HE* 6.7 (*SCh* 505.288–294); Sozomen, *HE* 8.11 (*SCh* 516.282).

¹⁵⁶ Photius, *Bibl. Cod.* 59 (*SCh* 342.108–14).

¹⁵⁷ For this incident, see Timothy E. Gregory, "Zosimus 5.23 and the People of Constantinople," *Byzantion* 43 (1973): 63–81.

¹⁵⁸ Caner discounts the idea that the actions of the monks were bought by Theophilus: Caner, *Wandering, Begging Monks*, 198.

Isaac's crusade against Chrysostom did more than just rid the monks of one overbearing bishop; it set a precedent for political intervention by the united monasteries of Constantinople that would be repeated with increasing audacity in the decades leading up to 451.¹⁵⁹

Nestorius and Dalmatius

The power of the Constantinopolitan monks to exert dominance over the city's bishops was even more apparent in the case of Nestorius. In the years between Chrysostom's death in 407 and Nestorius' appointment to Constantinople in 428, the monasteries continued to grow in size and influence thanks to the laissez faire approach of the intervening bishops.¹⁶⁰ Nestorius' attitude towards the monks of the city was purportedly very similar to that of Chrysostom. While we are much less reliably informed of Nestorius' policies in relation to the monasteries of Constantinople, evidence suggests that Nestorius was equally perturbed about the uniquely urban and politically active nature of the city's monks and took similar measures to limit the influence of monks who refused to stay within the confines of the monastery.¹⁶¹ Such episcopal policies would again see the bishop make powerful enemies that would play a significant role in his downfall.

When Nestorius' theological views over the use of the term *Theotokos* saw him at the centre of mounting controversy, it is no surprise to find the monks of Constantinople at the forefront of the campaign against him. Several monks presented Theodosius II with a petition in which they vehemently denied that Nestorius was worthy of the title bishop.¹⁶² This letter outlined a breakdown in relations between bishop and monastery, the monks claiming to be so mistreated by the bishop that some planned to assassinate him if the emperor would not call a council to investigate his wrongdoings.¹⁶³ The monasteries' attempts to discredit Nestorius were not limited to formal complaints to the emperor but were part of a very public campaign to undermine the bishop's standing in the city. One monk denounced Nestorius in the middle of church service, while the archimandrite Hypatius publically removed Nestorius' name from the diptychs.¹⁶⁴

¹⁵⁹ For the unity exhibited by the monasteries at Constantinople, see Hatlie, *Monasteries of Constantinople*, 30–132.

¹⁶⁰ Caner, *Wandering, Begging Monks*, 212.

¹⁶¹ Gregory, *Vox Populi*, 109; Caner, *Wandering, Begging Monks*, 213–14.

¹⁶² ACO 1.1.5.143.7–10.

¹⁶³ ACO 1.1.5.143.7–10.

¹⁶⁴ ACO 1.1.1.8.73–74.

With the monks of Constantinople at the centre of the growing tensions in the city, when Cyril entered the fray the poor treatment of the monks formed a central theme in the Alexandrian's campaign to paint Nestorius as a dangerous theological subversive. His first letter to pope Celestine stated that, "Almost all the monks and their archimandrites, and many of the senate do not meet together, fearing lest they be harmed because of their faith."¹⁶⁵ Theodosius could not ignore the growing internal and external opposition to Nestorius, and finally acceded to calls for an ecumenical council in 431 that would see Nestorius removed from office. The council did not, however, go smoothly, and at a point where the outcome was in the balance, it was the united efforts of the monks at Constantinople that ensured that imperial policy did not stand in the way of Nestorius' removal.

While Nestorius faced substantial and well-organised opposition from within Constantinople, one factor that had allowed him to maintain a hold on power was the support of the emperor. After personally choosing Nestorius for the role, Theodosius II remained fiercely loyal to the bishop and very reluctant to change tack.¹⁶⁶ However, with events at the council at Ephesus reduced to a stalemate, with both the Cyrillian and Syrian factions claiming victory, it was an unequivocal show of force by Constantinople's monks at the gates of the palace that finally convinced the emperor that the time had come to abandon his bishop.¹⁶⁷

With the emperor refusing to accept Nestorius' deposition by Cyril, the monks of Constantinople engaged in an energetic and far-reaching program to sway opinions at the capital. Nestorius' own account of the monks' campaign reveals how the high spiritual regard in which the monks were held allowed them to shore up popular support.¹⁶⁸ Even more important was the way in which the monks swayed the mind of the emperor. Nestorius' approach to the monasteries had earned him the enmity of Dalmatius, an archimandrite who was in the same mould as Isaac. Dalmatius, like his predecessor, was hugely influential in the city, and was renowned for having not left his monastery for forty-eight years.¹⁶⁹ While he conformed to Chrysostom's and Nestorius' coenobitic vision of remaining in the confines of the monastery, he was by no means removed from the life of the capital. Dalmatius was so revered that the city's elite would come to him; such

¹⁶⁵ ACO 1.1.5.144.10–12; Translation from, Gregory, *Vox Populi*, 92.

¹⁶⁶ For Nestorius' appointment, see Socrates, *HE* 7.29 (*SCh* 506.106); Nestorius, *Liber Heraclidis* 2.1.376–9 (ed. F. Nau, 242–3). Theodosius' support was crucial to Nestorius: Gregory, *Vox Populi*, 81–116.

¹⁶⁷ For this episode, see Gregory, *Vox Populi*, 100–112.

¹⁶⁸ Nestorius, *Liber Heraclidis* 2.1.374–76 (ed. Nau, 240–41)

¹⁶⁹ Caner, *Wandering, Begging Monks*, 218–19; Hatlie, *Monasteries of Constantinople*, 68–69, 90–92.

visitors included even the emperor himself.¹⁷⁰ Along with these visitors came an affluent stream of gifts which Dalmatius in turn redistributed as he saw fit, making him not just a spiritual authority but a powerful patron in his own right.¹⁷¹ With Dalmatius having refused to leave his monastery even on imperial request, it was then a great boon to Cyril's cause when Dalmatius left his monastery for the first time in half a century and, accompanied by all the monks of the city, proceeded to the palace to petition the emperor.¹⁷² The emperor received Dalmatius with much reverence and, in a private audience with the monk, he was finally persuaded to hear Cyril's case. Nestorius' fate was sealed.¹⁷³

The scale and efficacy of the monastic campaign against Nestorius' episcopate highlights the conflicted nature of the Constantinopolitan episcopate. The political reach and popular appeal of Constantinople's monastic institutions was a powerful voice of protest. Despite the bishop enjoying the full support of the emperor, the monks of Constantinople, in combination with disgruntled clerics and those in the court who were allied with Pulcheria, constituted a formidable alternative religious establishment within Constantinople while the city's official episcopal establishment was under the contested authority of Nestorius. This local opposition was buoyed by the support of the bishop of Alexandria, who took full advantage of the internal divisions in order to remove Nestorius' influence at Constantinople.

Flavian and Eutyches

The controversy that led to Nestorius' exile continued to simmer well after the Syrian's exile, and led directly to the crisis that saw yet another bishop of Constantinople cast from office. Flavian's fall from grace at Constantinople, even more than those that preceded him, highlights the extent to which the bishop of Constantinople lacked authority in the face of powerful local entities, in particular Constantinople's influential monks. This time the monasteries were not only pivotal in undermining the bishop's authority but were centre-stage in the outbreak of hostilities.

¹⁷⁰ Caner, *Wandering, Begging Monks*, 218.

¹⁷¹ Hatlie, *Monasteries of Constantinople*, 90–92.

¹⁷² We are reliably informed about this demonstration, having detailed accounts from both sides of the conflict: ACO, 1.1.2.66 (ed. Schwartz, 65–66); Nestorius, *Liber Heraclidis* 2.1.374–84 (ed. Nau, 240–246).

¹⁷³ Gregory, *Vox Populi*, 111–12; Caner, *Wandering, Begging Monks*, 219; Holm, *Empresses*, 168–71.

After Dalmatius' death, the mantle of the city's leading monk went to Eutyches who, in line with his predecessors, adhered to an Alexandrian theological outlook.¹⁷⁴ At the time of Flavian's tenure, the debate surrounding Antiochene and Alexandrian Christological views remained a tinderbox. That Nestorius' teachings had overemphasised Christ's humanity had been widely accepted; however, misgivings over the extent to which Cyril's theology stressed Christ's divinity continued to seethe just below the surface.¹⁷⁵ Eutyches was a central figure in promoting Cyrillian theological thought in the post-Nestorian spiritual landscape. The archimandrite purportedly advocated an extreme Alexandrian view in which Christ's humanity was so thoroughly subsumed by his divinity that it drew the condemnation of Apollinarianism from the bishop of Antioch.¹⁷⁶ The clamour against Eutyches' teachings came to a head when the immovable Eusebius of Dorylaeum accused him of heresy. Flavian was left with little choice but to take action by calling a local synod to deal with the matter.¹⁷⁷ Eutyches' response to this turn of events is demonstrative of the level of influence that had been won by the city's monastic leaders over the preceding decades. By the time of Flavian's tenure, the monasteries of Constantinople were would have been very confident in their ability to control the ecclesiastical politics of the city, able to look back on a tradition of unseating bishops with the backing of powerful allies that included emperors and Alexandrian bishops. Eutyches encapsulates well this emboldened and self-assured attitude.¹⁷⁸ When first summoned to Flavian's synod, Eutyches refused to attend, setting monks to stand guard at the door of the monastery.¹⁷⁹ After several more attempts to summon him, Eutyches realised he needed to attend the synod to avoid being deposed in absentia. While during his defence at the synod, Eutyches presented himself as a humble monk unversed in the complexities of theology and inferior to the assembled bishops, the archimandrite's actions told a different story. Eutyches arrival at the synod made a clear statement that Flavian was up against a powerful and influential patron. Eutyches' came to the synod amidst a large entourage that included military guards, imperial officials, and a

¹⁷⁴ Eutyches followed closely the example of Dalmatius; staying within his monastery but visited by many influential figures, and enjoying a particular loyalty amongst the soldiers of the palace: Ps.-Zachariah, *Chronicle* 2.2 (ed. Hamilton and Brooks, 19); Gregory, *Vox Populi*, 130–36.

¹⁷⁵ Evidenced by the re-energised promotion of the teachings of Diodore of Tarsus and Theodore of Mopsuestia that led to Proclus' 'Tome' condemning them: ACO, 4.2.187–95; Gregory, *Vox Populi*, 130–31.

¹⁷⁶ Thomas Camelot, "De Nestorius a Eutyches: L'opposition de deux christologies," in *Das Konzil von Chalkedon*, ed. A. Grillmeier and H. Bacht, vol. 1 (Wiirzburg: Echter, 1951), 213–42; Caner, *Wandering, Begging Monks*, 224; Gregory, *Vox Populi*, 131.

¹⁷⁷ Gregory, *Vox Populi*, 131–43; Bacht, "Die Rolle des orientalischen Mönchtums," 210–17.

¹⁷⁸ Gregory, *Vox Populi*, 131–43.

¹⁷⁹ ACO 2.1.1.397.127–128.

contingent of loyal monks.¹⁸⁰ Amongst this formidable group was also a representative of the emperor bearing a letter that emphasised that the synod should be free of scandal.¹⁸¹ Facing an alliance of such powerful entities, Flavian must have felt that his authority was conspicuously flimsy.

Despite Eutyches' display of power, he was duly found guilty of denying aspects of Christ's humanity and declared a heretic.¹⁸² The Constantinopolitan church, having denounced Eutyches, censured his attempts to reach out to the city's wider population. However, as we have already seen, the church's efforts to block the monk's reach were no match for Eutyches' substantial political influence.¹⁸³ After his influential supporters within Constantinople had won the emperor's support, Eutyches' success was guaranteed.¹⁸⁴ Flavian was shunned by the emperor, and anyone who supported the bishop faced prompt censure.¹⁸⁵ The emperor was moved to call another council at Ephesus, one in which both bishops and monks stood in judgement of Flavian and various Antiochene sympathisers. The council's findings were a forgone conclusion. With the Alexandrian bishop Dioscorus presiding, the council duly deposed Flavian, reinstated Eutyches, and further asserted the orthodoxy of an Alexandrian interpretation of Christ's nature. These rulings were in no small part secured by Eutyches himself. The archimandrite brought with him to Ephesus an imposing force of about 300 Constantinopolitan monks who, through violent compulsion, ensured the council proceeded favourably for himself and his allies.¹⁸⁶ This council, later dubbed the Robber Synod, was the fruit of the preceding decades. The activities of this council highlight two important outcomes: that the Alexandrian cause had achieved an astounding victory in gagging Antiochene influences at the capital; and that the monasteries of Constantinople were at the forefront of the city's emerging theological identity.

The case of Eutyches exposed the deep in Constantinople's episcopal landscape. He was not only the primary figure in orchestrating the downfall of the city's bishop; he was at the forefront of shaping the city's theological landscape. Occurring on the eve of Chalcedon – long considered to cap decades of Constantinople's rising episcopal power –

¹⁸⁰ ACO 2.1.1.464.138.

¹⁸¹ Gaddis, *There is no Crime*, 292–93; Gregory, *Vox Populi*, 133.

¹⁸² ACO 2.1.1.143–47; Draguet, “La Christologie d'Eutyches,” 441–57.

¹⁸³ As we have seen Eutyches had powerful friends at Constantinople; his main supporters at court being the eunuch Chrysaphius and the influential patrician Nomus: Chapter 4, section 2.1.

¹⁸⁴ Holm, *Empresses*, 191–92; Caner, *Wandering, Begging Monks*, 226.

¹⁸⁵ Nestorius, *Liber Heraclidis* 2.2.469 (ed. Nau, 299).

¹⁸⁶ Nestorius, *Liber Heraclidis* 2.2.482 (ed. Nau, 308); ACO 2.1.1.58.75. These monks were joined by others, such as those led by Barsauma: Caner, *Wandering, Begging Monks*, 227–28.

this situation reveals the institutional fragility of the Constantinopolitan episcopacy. Eutyches' success in subverting local episcopal authority and promoting his theology came as a result of two interlinked processes at Constantinople: the interjection of tensions between Alexandrian and Antiochene interests into Constantinople's episcopal landscape, and the rise to prominence of Constantinople's monks. These processes came to the fore at Constantinople thanks to the see's distinct lack of theological unity and the propensity for the city's politics to disrupt local episcopal authority. If the see was to shake off the controversies of the preceding decades it needed to address these issues. The Council of Chalcedon attempted to do just that.

The Council of Chalcedon and Canon 28

The council of 451 has long been interpreted in terms of a response to the events of the preceding decades. From a theological perspective, Chalcedon is understood as a reaction to the destructive conflicts over opposing interpretations of the true nature of Christ, an attempt to put an end to the tumults of the past by producing a definitive Christological formula. From an ecclesiastical perspective also, the council is aligned with processes that were at play in the decades leading up to 451. As we have seen, canon 28 is contextualised as part of a separate historical process to the theological debates of the fifth century – the rise of the bishops of Constantinople. Within this narrative, the canon is a confirmation of Constantinople's rise to prominence over the preceding decades, as well as representing a final victory over Alexandria.

However, the above analysis suggests that this view of canon 28 is problematic. As we have seen, Constantinople was not the ecclesiastical powerhouse that has been assumed. In fact, the controversies that necessitated the calling of a council in 451 provide striking examples of the vulnerabilities of the Constantinopolitan bishop's authority. Furthermore, as is suggested above, viewing ecclesiastical politics as in any way detachable from the theological debates of the early fifth century is misleading. In order to counter these two shortcomings, canon 28's formulation needs to be aligned with the rest of the council as part of a reaction to the theological and episcopal upheavals of the preceding decades. By harmonising the canon with the broader aims of the council to address the rifts of recent decades, canon 28 can be read as a reaction to the endemic institutional weaknesses of the Constantinopolitan episcopate, rather than as an acknowledgement of the see's already established primacy.

New Beginnings in 451: Addressing the Problems of the Past

Marcian's reign (although it is perhaps apt to speak of it at this point as Pulcheria's) was marked as one of reform. The emperor and his empress oversaw the military and economic rehabilitation of the eastern empire after the mismanagement and misfortunes of their predecessors' reigns. The Council of Chalcedon, convoked soon after Marcian's ascendance, must be viewed in the same light – it was an attempt to overhaul the ecclesiastical system and heal theological rifts in order to prevent a repeat of the turmoil of the past. Before considering canon 28's particular place in this reformation, it is pertinent to contextualise the way in which Chalcedon's other canons were a response to past problems.

Alongside the declaration of the Chalcedonian Definition, a direct line can be traced between the majority of the canons issued at Chalcedon and the conflicts that were played out at the capital over the previous half-century. One of the most noticeable themes is the attempt to combat the 'monastic menace'. As has been noted in scholarship on the council, the prevalence of canons dealing with monastic practices was no doubt a direct consequence of the role that the monks of Constantinople had played in the upheavals at the capital.¹⁸⁷ It was at this council that the power of the united monasteries of Constantinople to impose their will on the Constantinopolitan bishop was finally broken.

The change in episcopal fortunes for the monasteries of Constantinople became apparent at the council's fourth session. It was at this session that a group of monks associated with Eutyches protested their maltreatment at the hands of Anatolius, declared their opposition to the council's deposition of Dioscorus, and objected to the issuing of the Chalcedonian Creed.¹⁸⁸ Their protests were reportedly registered with much bombast and threat: "If your holiness should oppose our proper demands and choose to exercise an authority contrary to what is beneficial, we shall call to witness Christ...then shaking off our garments break off communion with you".¹⁸⁹ The audacious nature of the monks' protests in face of imperial authority at the council has led to them being described as either foolhardy or heroic.¹⁹⁰ However, given the preceding decades, it is hardly surprising to find the monks employing such threatening tones. The supporters of Eutyches were at

¹⁸⁷ Price and Gaddis, *Council of Chalcedon*, vol. 1, 15.

¹⁸⁸ Gregory, *Vox Populi*, 135; Price and Gaddis, *Council of Chalcedon*, vol. 2, 118–20.

¹⁸⁹ The Fourth Session 88; Price and Gaddis, *Council of Chalcedon*, vol. 2, 158.

¹⁹⁰ Price and Gaddis, *Council of Chalcedon*, vol. 2, 120.

the crest of a wave in which the monks of Constantinople had successfully manipulated ecclesiastical policy at the capital for decades. From our retrospective position, it is perhaps too easy to assume that the monks should have sensed that the tide had turned and that their power to influence the politics of Constantinople was facing sudden decline.¹⁹¹

Having managed to enlist the support of some of Constantinople's monks who were dissatisfied with Eutyches' leadership, and with decisive backing from the imperial authority, the council pushed through a program of ecclesiastical reforms to re-order the relationship between monk and bishop.¹⁹² The extent to which concerns about unbridled monastic power preyed on the minds of those at the council who sought to avoid the troubles of the past, is reflected in the fact that well over one quarter of the canons issued by the council dealt either specifically with monks or included reference to them.¹⁹³ Taken together, these canons reined in the power of the monasteries, making monks not only subject to the authority of the bishop but dependent on him for their material needs, the same measure that Chrysostom and Nestorius had attempted to put in place at Constantinople.¹⁹⁴

Just as the council's pronouncements on the role of the monastery in relation to the bishop can be directly aligned with the crises in the years leading up to the council, Chalcedon's other canons can similarly be seen as products of the controversies experienced at Constantinople over the preceding decades. They range from the implied, such as canon 18, which prohibited clerics or monks from "hatching plots against bishops", to the explicit, such as canon 23, "On expelling foreign clerics or turbulent monks from Constantinople".¹⁹⁵ Almost all the canons fit neatly into a broad drive to establish a standard of practice surrounding a bishop's authority, within which we can

¹⁹¹ Perhaps the reason why the Eutychian monks had not seen such a stark imperial volte face coming was due to Marcian's relative obscurity before becoming emperor and the quick turnaround between Theodosius' death and the convocation of the council. It is possible that the monks would have been able yet again to sway ecclesiastical policy had it not been for an unusual development – the monks of Constantinople were no longer united. At the synod of 448, at which Flavian denounced Eutyches, several influential monks threw their lot in with the bishop and declared their opposition to Eutyches. This was a novel turn of events as the monks of Constantinople had previously worked in unity to great effect. The monastic opposition to Eutyches marked the end of this effective feature of Constantinople's monastic population as at the fourth session of Chalcedon the supporters of Eutyches were faced with a contingent of monks who remained loyal to the bishop and supported the council's proceedings: Price and Gaddis, *Council of Chalcedon*, vol. 2, 118–20.

¹⁹² Hatlie, *Monasteries of Constantinople*, 38–41.

¹⁹³ In particular, canons 3, 4, 7, 8, 23, and 24; (ed. Tanner, 88–91; 97–98).

¹⁹⁴ Through his examination of hagiographical sources, Kosiński traces the way in which the attitudes of Constantinople's monks to the local church progressed from independence and rebellion in the fifth century to harmonious relations in the sixth century, Kosiński, *Holiness and Power*, 18.

¹⁹⁵ Canons 18 and 23 in Tanner, *Decrees*, 95, 97.

discern the clear footprint of the controversies experienced at Constantinople. The canons sought to safeguard the bishops' authority within his own see as well as ensure that such authority remained free from outside interference – two issues that had been central to the struggles at Constantinople. Clearly, the spectre of the controversies surrounding Chrysostom, Nestorius, and Flavian loomed over the council's pronouncements, and canon 28 should be interpreted as motivated by the same concerns about past inadequacies.

Canon 28: New Authority Made Old

Arriving at Chalcedon, the bishops of Constantinople could not look back on seven decades of increasing authority. It was undeniable that the see had become increasingly important as the city had secured its position as an imperial capital. However, the increase in the city's strategic importance had merely served to highlight the see's shortcomings, as its bishops suffered increasing interference from ecclesiastical and imperial forces, both internal and external, that were keen to manipulate the Constantinopolitan episcopate for their own gains. In this context, we should approach canon 28 as an attempt to redress, rather than laud, episcopal power at Constantinople. For the church at Constantinople to survive and prosper – as was imperative now that it was such an important political hub – it had to put its house in order by establishing a more centralised and well-defined authority. The intention behind the canon was not to obtain official recognition of Constantinople's usurpation of Alexandria and Antioch as the preeminent see of the east, but rather to assert Constantinople's right to be set *alongside* such other bishoprics.

As we have seen, the bishops of Antioch and Alexandria had a strong theological legacy to unite them, as well as well-developed avenues of episcopal influence. In contrast, it was Constantinople's lack of theological alignment, as well as the absence of a well-established Constantinopolitan episcopal network (alongside the political intrigues of the court) that had made the see of Constantinople an ecclesiastical football between Alexandrian and Antiochene interests. If the bishops of Constantinople were to establish their own episcopal authority, rather than sitting between the Antiochene and Alexandrian networks of the east, the Constantinopolitan see needed to foster a defined episcopal network of its own. While it was hoped that the Chalcedonian Creed would address the Christological tensions that had informed the struggles for control over Constantinople, by granting the city's bishop episcopal responsibility over a large geographical territory that included the metropolitans of Pontus, Asia, and Thrace, canon 28 sought to endow the

bishopric with power on a tangible level, establishing for the city's bishops a clearly defined geo-ecclesiastical network.¹⁹⁶

By placing the monasteries under tighter control of the local bishop and officially recognising the bishop of Constantinople as responsible for ordaining neighbouring metropolitans, the council attempted to establish for the bishops of New Rome mechanisms of influence comparable to the likes of Alexandria. However, to avoid accusations of novelty, it was necessary to justify such elevation. As noted, novelty was to be strenuously avoided in the early Christian world. Being able to cite conciliar tradition was particularly important in ensuring new canons were accepted and incorporated into conciliar lore.¹⁹⁷ The importance of conciliar continuity had already been on show during the proceedings of 451 with the Eutychian monks protesting against the issuing of the Chalcedonian Creed on the basis that it represented an innovation of the faith put forward at Nicaea.¹⁹⁸ The need to avoid such accusations of novelty meant that, in formulating a rhetorical device to justify Constantinople's episcopal promotion in 451, the city was at a distinct disadvantage – there was no long tradition to fall back on, no apostolic heritage to cite.

However, while Constantinople could not match the other major sees by citing apostolic founders or Nicene precedent, by 451 the city could boast one unequivocally unique feature in its role as an imperial capital. Drawing on Constantinople's imperial pedigree as the theoretical basis underlying the authority of the see made it possible for the bishops of Constantinople to affirm their see's authority by drawing a parallel with the most prestigious of all sees – Rome. This was an undeniably ambitious tactic; however, Constantinople's lack of ecclesiastical pedigree left no other option. Fortunately for Anatolius, the comparative pairing of Constantinople and Rome had conciliar precedent in the form of an obscure canon from an until-recently-marginal council convoked 70 years previously in 381.¹⁹⁹

¹⁹⁶ For the advantages gained by being responsible for consecrating these metropolitan bishops, see Price and Gaddis, *Council of Chalcedon*, vol. 3, 68 n. 4.

¹⁹⁷ Chapter 1, section 3.

¹⁹⁸ The Fourth Session of the Council of Chalcedon 88: Price and Gaddis, *Council of Chalcedon*, vol. 2, 158. Instead of responding directly to the monks' charges, the bishops at the council censored the protests of the monks by also leaning on conciliar tradition, this time citing canon 5 of Antioch that pronounced deposed any monk or cleric that separated himself from his bishop: The Fourth Session of the Council of Chalcedon 89–90; Price and Gaddis, *Council of Chalcedon*, vol. 2, 158–59.

¹⁹⁹ Canon 3 of 381; For discussion of the linking of canon 28 with canon 3 and the nature of the council of 381, see Chapter 1, section 3 and Chapter 3.

Canon 28's recognition of Constantinople's increased episcopal influence was justified by leaning on the official status of the Council of Constantinople and the memory of the devout Theodosius: "Following in every way the decrees of the holy fathers...the canon of the 150 most devout bishops, who assembled in the time of the great Theodosius of pious memory, then emperor, in imperial Constantinople, new Rome – we issue the same decree".²⁰⁰ Such rhetoric was a retrospective construction: canon 28 of 451 was certainly not the "same decree" as the third canon of 381. As was argued in Chapter 3, canon 3 was an attempt to establish Constantinople's imperial and orthodox status without making any substantive changes to the Nicene politico-ecclesiastical landscape. Canon 28, on the other hand, sought to strengthen Constantinople's episcopal clout on the basis of the city's imperial status. Despite this disparity, the third canon of 381 was now ripped from its context as part of Theodosius' establishment of Constantinople as an imperial capital and replanted in a new narrative to form the basis of Constantinople's ecclesiastical power, one that would continue to take on changing significance and new meaning.²⁰¹

Despite attempts to articulate the claims of canon 28 in a way that would not offend Rome, Constantinople's assertions inevitably roused indignation.²⁰² In the following centuries, as Christological controversy and the loss of Alexandria and Antioch to Muslim forces contributed to Constantinople's self-confidence as a true beacon of the church, canon 28 became easily subsumed into the mythology of rightful dominance. However, in light of the decades leading up to 451, we can see the canon was born out of weakness and instability, not out of building confidence and attempted hegemony.

Conclusion

Peter Brown writes that Constantinople's meteoric rise in the fifth century led to a scramble between the bishops of Antioch and Alexandria to ensure their interests were represented there.²⁰³ With the backing of such a city, Brown wrote, there was a sense that the bishop of Constantinople would reach unsurpassed levels of influence.²⁰⁴ This plays

²⁰⁰ Translation from Tanner, *Decrees*, 99.

²⁰¹ The canon "apportions equal prerogatives to the most holy see of new Rome" to that of "older imperial Rome"; Translation from Tanner, *Decrees*, 99.

²⁰² Whilst giving Constantinople equal privileges to Rome, the canon maintained the assertion of 381 that the city's ecclesiastical prerogatives took second place to those of the older capital.

²⁰³ Peter Brown, *The Rise of Western Christendom: Triumph and Diversity, AD 200-1000*, 2nd ed. (Maldon: Blackwell Publishers, 2003), 115.

²⁰⁴ Brown, *Rise of Western Christendom*, 115.

into the commonly held perception that the see of Constantinople, even before 381, was on a steep trajectory to success, the primacy of Constantinople's bishops guaranteed by the city's growth. However, the ever-expanding size and imperial prestige of the city which Brown links to the potential for the bishop's power was, in fact, also the see's greatest weakness. The city's novel creation meant it lacked a theological heritage, and the influx of people led to an unstable mix of competing Christian outlooks. Alongside constant intrusions of imperial politicking, the bishops at Constantinople also faced serious challenges to their authority thanks to the presence of an alternative spiritual hierarchy at Constantinople in the form of the monasteries. It was such internal deficiencies in Constantinople's episcopal landscape that allowed outside parties to pursue their own agenda within the city. By utilising pre-existing political rivalries and religious disputes at Constantinople, interlopers such as the Alexandrian bishops were able to pursue their own agenda within the city with ruthless efficiency. The intrusions of tensions between Antiochene and Alexandrian theological and ecclesiastical interests at Constantinople had a highly disruptive effect on an already precarious establishment. Buffeted by forces from within and without, the bishopric of Constantinople was not one that inspired the jealousy of other bishops. The church at Constantinople approached the Council of Chalcedon from a position of notable weakness, not strength, and it is this weakness that should guide our interpretation of the council's pronouncements rather than a preconception of rising ecclesiastical influence. Canon 28 was an attempt to establish a firm basis of authority where there was previously was none.

6

Conclusion

Constantinople's medieval prominence as a Christian capital and epicentre of Byzantine culture has had a significant impact on the way in which scholars have viewed the city's ecclesiastical development in the period between 381 to 451. The two ecumenical councils that sit at either end of this timespan are seen as bookending seven decades in which the Constantinopolitan see experienced an exponential increase in standing. The council of Constantinople's pronouncement that the city's bishop enjoyed honour second to the bishop of Rome, is commonly assumed to have been indicative of the fact that Constantine's city was "more important ecclesiastically as well as politically, than Antioch."¹ Not only that, but the pronouncements of 381 are thought to have exhibited a clear intention for Constantinople to challenge Alexandria for the mantle of the preeminent see east of Rome. This desire to establish the Constantinopolitan see at the summit of the episcopal hierarchy, is seen as reflected in the many upheavals at the capital in the decades leading up to Chalcedon. The intrusions of the Alexandrians are viewed as motivated by deep-seated jealousy of Constantinople's elevated status. This perspective has informed modern interpretations of the council of 451, which is depicted as a final confirmation of Constantinople's primacy and victory against Alexandria. Canon 28, in the eyes of the majority of scholars, officially confirmed a reality that had already been evident decades previous: that Constantinople was "an ecclesiastical and imperial centre of unmatched importance".²

As outlined in Chapter 1, the view that the bishops of New Rome from very early on challenged the empire's ecclesiastical status quo, is in line with the wider historical approach to Constantinople's development. The historiography of Constantinople has traditionally placed concerted emphasis on tracing the origins of the city's claims to primacy and schism with the west. The desire to uncover the seeds of the city's later position has seen Constantinople's medieval incarnation being read back into its earliest moments. As we saw in Chapter 2, many scholars go as far as to perceive Constantinople's later pre-eminence, and competition with Rome, as the

¹ Kelly, *Golden Mouth*, 106–107.

² Hatlie, *Monasteries of Constantinople*, 82 (on the Constantinople between 350–430).

manifestation of a mission statement that was explicit in the city's foundation. Approaching Constantinople's earliest decades with an eye to the city's final destination, serves to confirm teleological perspectives of early Constantinople's evolution that are both ancient and modern in origin. This establishes a perceived inevitability of New Rome's rise to power that not only obscures the agency of events, but distorts the available evidence. Moments that confirm the image of a see undergoing a dramatic increase in episcopal authority are ensconced within the narrative of Constantinople's rise, while instances that do not fit this narrative are marginalised as unique one-off moments, accidents of circumstance.

Once we strip away such entrenched assumptions over Constantinople's rise, a very different picture emerges. As demonstrated in Chapter 2, a growing number of scholars, by eschewing themes of institutional continuity, have repositioned the story of Constantinople's pre-381 decades as one of piecemeal progress and uncertainty over the city's future. While such a nuanced reconsideration of early Constantinople has bled over to some studies that involve the city in its post-381 incarnations, broad views of the Constantinopolitan episcopate and the councils of 381 and 451 remain deeply entrenched within a teleological perspective. It is this deficit that this thesis has endeavoured to rectify.

From 381 to 451, rather than experiencing a period of rising episcopal fortunes, the church at Constantinople lurched from one crisis to another. The bishopric struggled to establish its authority in the face challenges from within the church, from the many Constantinopolitans who stood outside of the Nicene church, as well as from the imperial court itself. At the heart of these problems was Constantinople's novel creation. Constantine's decision to establish his namesake city at Byzantium – a small city without significant Christian lineage – would have repercussions throughout the period examined in this thesis. Constantinople's bishops would struggle with the episcopate's lack of established geo-ecclesiastical identity as well as the lack of spiritual homogeneity exhibited by a city populace enlarged by mass influx of people that from across the empire. As the main chapters of this thesis have shown, the bishops of New Rome did not grapple with these issues in a vacuum. These formative years in Constantinople's episcopal development coincided with a period in which the church and state were wrestling with broad institutional and ideological crises. Conflict over the nature of the Godhead, debate over the authority of the bishop in relation to the monasteries, and the struggle to define the parameters of the relationship between the

emperor and church all came to the fore at this time. These crises in authority exacerbated the challenges faced at Constantinople.

The city's theologically sectarian environment presented an ongoing challenge for the episcopate's development throughout this period. Even by the time we reach the Council of Chalcedon, the city was still barely a century old and, with periods of large population growth happening throughout the preceding decades, a large proportion of Constantinopolitans would have only been resident for a few generations at the most. This lack of a geo-cultural or religious homogeneity in the city's population led to a particularly spiritually divided environment – even by fifth-century standards.

From the perspectives of the Nicenes that assembled in the city in 381, this lack of spiritual unity was made all the worse by the city's Arian past. While spiritually multifarious, one theological tradition had been dominant at New Rome prior to 381. As demonstrated in Chapter 3, thanks to the initiatives of Constantius II and Valens, Constantinople was the capital city of the empire's Arian communities. If it can be argued that Constantinople was a leading see in the east prior to Chalcedon, then it was in its Homoian incarnation that the city's bishops reached the peak of their influence. When Theodosius pulled the rug from under the Arians' feet, and established Nicaea as the new measure of orthodoxy, this period of influence came to an abrupt end. Constantinople was on the back foot. Tarnished with its Arian past and lacking any substantial Nicene community, the council convened in 381, rather than a statement of rising authority, was an attempt to scrub clean Constantinople's Arian past.

It was the city's Arian past and lack of Nicene tradition that not only provides an alternative backdrop to the council of 381 but also enables a re-reading of the struggles that led to four of Constantinople's bishops being ousted from office during this period. The opposition that Gregory of Nazianzus faced before and during the council, is viewed as a product of Alexandrian jealousy of Constantinople's rise to power. This is a prominent theme in the historiography of the period, with John Chrysostom, Nestorius, and Flavian all being depicted as victims of the Alexandrian bishops' desire to undermine Constantinople's authority. However, as argued in Chapters 3 and 5, this view is predicated on a false assumption of Constantinople's standing. The interferences are in fact a product of the city's lack of established authority. Before the reign of Theodosius, Constantinople's overtly Homoian nature and lack of a Nicene movement had seen it left out of the Nicene network dominated by Rome, Alexandria, and Antioch. However, now suddenly an officially Nicene see, this city with a booming

population and growing political significance became an important strategic location. The lack of a Nicene tradition there left a vacuum that the representatives of the old- and neo-Nicene networks rushed to fill. It was this rivalry between external parties attempting to coerce New Rome's Nicene development, that would underpin many of the conflicts played out in the city. Gregory of Nazianzus' clash with Maximus the Cynic, Theophilus' conflict with Chrysostom, Cyril's campaign against Nestorius, and Dioscorus' opposition to Flavian need to be viewed as driven not by the rising authority of the Constantinopolitan bishopric itself, but the desire of the Alexandrian's to prevent Constantinople's episcopal star becoming aligned to an Antiochene theological and ecclesiastical tradition.

In addition to the different Nicene parties that came into conflict at Constantinople in the early fifth century, the city's non-Nicene communities continued to have a heavy presence in the city. Despite the assumption that the Constantinopolitan bishops were undergoing a period of rapid growth in influence, New Rome remained the capital city not just for the Homoians but for several other Christians outside of the imperial church, such as the Novatians and Eunomians. As was explored in Chapter 4, the reason why these dissenting group were able to persist at the capital, whilst coming under increasing pressure elsewhere, is due to a characteristic of the city that is usually thought of as strengthening the Nicene bishop's position – the location of the imperial court at Constantinople.

The pre-eminence of the bishop of Constantinople and the city's status as the residence of the emperor, are inseparably entwined in the minds of modern viewers. In the fifth century, access to the imperial court was everything and, as we saw in Chapter 4, this has led to a commonly held assumption that the proximity of the Constantinopolitan bishop to the mechanisms of state government was a fundamental component in the growth of Constantinople's episcopal authority. However, this view overlooks the extent to which imperial prerogatives often had a detrimental influence on the development of the Constantinopolitan see.

At the heart of the assumption that the proximity of the Constantinopolitan church to the imperial court was of a fundamental advantage to its episcopal development is the idea that the aims of the imperial government and that of Constantinople's bishop were naturally aligned. However, the emperor's desire to facilitate the needs of the local bishop, competed with many other facets of imperial governance. Promoting the most broadly inclusive interpretation of the Nicene faith

empire-wide, ensuring the support of the court and senate, maintaining the military security of the empire, and keeping the taxes flowing from all Roman subjects irrespective of religion, moderated imperial policy towards the local church. It was just such political considerations that kept the persecuting zeal of the local bishops in check when interacting with those outside of the imperial church.

The imperial politics of the capital also destabilised episcopal authority at Constantinople on a more fundamental level. The bedrock of a bishop's practical authority was his efficacy as an ecclesiastical patron and his position at the top of the local ecclesiastical hierarchy. However, unfortunately for the bishops of New Rome, the high politics of the capital worked to undermine and disrupt these pathways to power. As highlighted in Chapter 4, the powerful imperial and aristocratic patronage available at the capital not only attracted self-interested and potentially rebellious clerics to Constantinople, but such patronage could be used to subvert and decentralise the authority of the bishop. In addition, imperial patronage of the Constantinopolitan bishop came with a hefty price, as the appropriation of themes of Christian piety into imperial politics saw the bishops of the capital caught up in the many political rivalries of the capital.

The potential of receiving imperial patronage not only brought an influx of ambitious preachers to the city, but it also saw a steady stream of ecclesiastical petitioners arriving with the hope of gaining the court's ear on ecclesiastical disputes. Again, this characteristic of the city proved highly disruptive to the local bishop. The task of formulating a response to petitions of an ecclesiastical nature often fell to the local bishop. While at face value, sitting in judgement of such cases would appear to grant the bishop expanded influence, as explored in Chapters 4 and 5, this was certainly not the case for the Constantinopolitan bishops of this period.

Firstly, as we saw in chapter 4, the fact that petitioners were able to skip the local ecclesiastical hierarchy and appeal directly to the court, undermined the bishop's autonomy in how he responded to such petitions. Secondly, as explored in Chapter 5, without an established ecclesiastical network, episcopal heritage, or entrenched theological tradition, the bishopric was woefully ill-equipped to deal with the broader ecclesiastical disputes in which it became embroiled. The bishop's lack the ecclesiastical standing not only obviated his ability to rule authoritatively on such matters, but the city's fractious internal politics meant that the bishop was in a particularly vulnerable position. As we have seen, the hostility that the Alexandrians

exhibited towards John Chrysostom, Nestorius, and Flavian, was in each case supplemented by political enmities that were internal to Constantinople. That the bishops of Constantinople were periodically undermined from within their own episcopate is unsurprising. Aside from the fact that the city's ecclesiastical life was riven by political rivalries, the bishops of Constantinople also faced challenges to their spiritual standing from Nicene elements within the city.

Far from being a preeminent Christian authority in the east, the pre-Chalcedonian bishops of Constantinople were at times not even the leading Nicene authority within their own city. This was thanks to the rise of Constantinople's powerful monasteries. As noted in Chapter 5, it was in the first half of the fifth century that tensions over the correct position of monks in relation to the established church bubbled to the surface. The popularity of holy ascetics, and the spiritual authority that they could claim, posed a direct challenge to the standing of the bishops. The danger that ascetic authority posed to the episcopal authority in the first half of the fifth century was at its most evident at Constantinople. The opportunities for powerful patronage and political participation available at Constantinople saw a monastic movement develop in the city that was fiercely independent of the local episcopal institution and politically influential. Such influence led to the establishment of an alternative Nicene institution within Constantinople, one that not only consistently resisted local episcopal authority but delivered a critical blow to the standing of several of the city's bishops.

With the bishops at Constantinople facing such significant internal and external challenges, the picture that emerges from this period is not one of a see increasingly growing in episcopal confidence. Once we strip away the assumption that the moment Constantine re-founded Byzantium, its bishop began to grow in authority and influence, the image that comes to the fore is one in which the church at Constantinople struggled with the city's explosive growth and imperial symbolism. The impact that Constantinople's unique environment had on the city's episcopal institution is evident in the type of bishops that flourished in the city at this time. As shown in Chapter 4, contrary to the assumption that the bishops of early Constantinople were figures of increasing influence, who sought vigorously to assert their leadership on the geo-ecclesiastical stage, the bishops who prospered at Constantinople were those who exhibited a markedly mild approach to episcopal office. In contrast, bishops such as Chrysostom and Nestorius – who sought to advance Constantinople's prerogatives,

centralise episcopal infrastructure, and strike out against non-Nicenes – quickly fell victim to the political pressures of the capital.

Having surveyed the trends that unite the long and complex upheavals at Constantinople between 381 and 451, this thesis has shown that the strength of the bishopric at Constantinople was not one that inspired the jealousy of other sees, showing no sign of threatening to eclipse the authority of the more ancient ecclesiastical institutions of Antioch and Alexandria. The four bishops deposed in this period were not victims of outside interference alone, but fell as a result of internal dissension which allowed outside parties to pursue their own agenda within the city. The internal weakness of the church at Constantinople had complex roots: it lay in the independence of the monastic movement, the ill-advised interferences of the resident secular authority, the lack of popular Nicene traditions, and the city's position in the middle of the heated theological wrangling between the proponents of an Antiochene theology and those of an Alexandrian inclination. Having been buffeted from forces from within and without, the bishopric of Constantinople approached the Council of Chalcedon not from a position of strength but one of weakness. It is such weakness that served to guide a reinterpretation of Chalcedon's canon 28. Just as in the case of canon 3 of 381, canon 28 was not a product of Constantinople's rising ecclesiastical authority, but was a response to its shortcomings.

Viewing this pivotal period in Constantinople's episcopal development outside of preconceived notions of the see's rise to power, challenges modern perspectives of 381–451 on several levels. Stripping away teleological assumptions of the see's evolution allows for a substantial repositioning of the ecumenical councils that sit at either end of this period. Rather than presaging Constantinople's subsequent pre-eminence, the geo-ecclesiastical pronouncements of both these councils can be reinterpreted as attempts to address the see's deep-seated failings. Such an approach also challenges us to rethink long-held assumptions over the geo-ecclesiastical rivalries and Christological conflicts of the late fourth and early fifth centuries. Finally, viewing the Constantinopolitan bishopric outside of an anticipation of the city's later position, enables the tenures of Gregory of Nazianzus, Chrysostom, Nestorius, and Flavian to be re-read in closer context with the city's unique episcopal landscape, in particular the way in which the *sacerdotium* and *regnum* interacted at Constantinople.

Moving beyond Chalcedon, the Constantinopolitan see was certainly in a stronger position. The council of 451 had addressed several of the weaknesses that had

plagued the episcopate; the issuing of the Chalcedonian Creed saw the bishopric clearly aligned to a particular theological position, the monks had been placed under episcopal authority, and the see had been given an official geo-ecclesiastical network. However, one of the most disruptive influences on the bishopric's development between 381 and 451 still remained. As this thesis has shown, the coercive effect of imperial politics of the capital was a central component in the struggles experienced by the bishops of New Rome in the lead up to Chalcedon and this feature of the city was not about to lessen any time soon. Moving into the second half of the fifth century it was this aspect of Constantinople's episcopal development that requires rethinking outside of teleological assumptions of Constantinople's power.

Appendix I: Bishops

Bishops of Constantinople

Paul I	337–339, 341–342, and 346–350
Eusebius of Nicomedia	339–341
Macedonius	342–346 and 351–360
Eudoxius	360–370
Demophilus	370–380
Gregory of Nazianzus	380–381
Nectarius	381–397
John Chrysostom	398–404
Arsacius	404–405
Atticus	406–425
Sisinnius	426–427
Nestorius	428–431
Maximian	431–434
Proclus	434–446
Flavian	446–449
Anatolius	449–458

Bishops of Antioch

Meletius	360—361 and 362–381	Paulinus II 362–388
Flavian	381–404	Evagrius 388–393
Porphyry	404–412	
Alexander	412–417	
Theodotus	417–428	
John	428–442	
Domnus II	442–449	
Maximus II	449–455	

Bishops of Alexandria

Alexander	313–326
Athanasius	328–339 and 346–373
Gregory of Cappadocia	339–346
Peter II	373–380
Timothy	380–385
Theophilus	385–412
Cyril	412–444
Dioscorus	444–451

Bishops of Rome

Damasus I	366–384
Siricius	384–399
Anastasius I	399–401
Innocent I	401–417
Zosimus	417–418

Boniface I	418–422
Celestine I	422–432
Sixtus III	432–440
Leo I	440–461

Appendix II: Emperors

West

Constantine II 337–340
Constans 337–350

Valentinian I 364–375

Maximus 383–387
Valentinian II 383–392

Honorius 395–423
Constantius III 421
Valentinian III 425–455

Constantine 324–337

Constantius II 351–361
Julian 360–363
Jovian 363–364

Gratian 367–383

Theodosius I 394–395

East

Constantius II 337–361

Gallus 350–354

Valens 364–378

Theodosius I 379–395

Arcadius 395–408
Theodosius II 408–450
Marcian 450–457

Appendix III: Councils

A. Synods and Councils

The First Council of Nicaea	325
Council of Antioch	379
The First Council of Constantinople	381
The Council of Ephesus	431
The Second Council of Ephesus	449
The Council of Chalcedon	451

B. Canons

The Council of Nicaea (325) Canon 15³

ιε'. Διὰ τὸν πολλὸν ταραχὸν καὶ τὰς στάσεις τὰς γινομένας, ἔδοξε παντάπασι περὶ αἰρεθῆναι τὴν συνήθειαν τὴν παρὰ τὸν κανόνα εὐρεθεῖσαν ἔν τισι μέρεσιν, ὥστε ἀπὸ πόλεως εἰς πόλιν μὴ μεταβαίνειν μήτε ἐπισκοπὸν, μήτε πρεσβύτερον, μήτε διάκονον. Εἰ δέ τις μετὰ τὸν τῆς ἁγίας καὶ μεγάλης συνόδου ὄρον τοιούτῳ τινὶ ἐπιχειρήσειεν, ἢ ἐπιδοίῃ ἑαυτὸν πράγματι τοιούτῳ, ἀκυρωθήσεται ἐξάπαντος τὸ κατασκευάσμα, καὶ ἀποκατασταθήσεται τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ, ἧς ὁ ἐπίσκοπος ἢ ὁ πρεσβύτερος ἐχειροτονήθη.

On account of the great disturbance and the factions which are caused, it is decreed that the custom, if it is found to exist in some parts contrary to the canon, shall be totally suppressed, so that neither bishops nor presbyters nor deacons shall transfer from city to city. If after this decision of this holy and great synod anyone shall attempt such a thing, or shall lend himself to such a proceeding, the arrangement shall be totally annulled, and he shall be restored to the church of which he was ordained bishop or presbyter or deacon.

³ Text and translation from Tanner, *Decrees*, 13.

The First Council of Constantinople (381) Canons 1–4⁴

α'. Μη ἀθετεῖσθαι τὴν πίστιν τῶν πατέρων τῶν τριακοσίων δέκαοκτῶ τῶν ἐν Νικαίᾳ τῆς Βιθυνίας συνελθόντων, ἀλλὰ μένειν ἐκείνην κυρίαν· καὶ ἀναθεματισθῆναι πᾶσαν αἵρεσιν· καὶ ἰδικῶς τὴν τῶν Εὐνομιανῶν, εἴτουν Ἄνομοίων, καὶ τὴν τῶν Ἀρειανῶν, εἴτουν Εὐδοξιανῶν, καὶ τὴν τῶν Ἡμιαρειάνων, εἴτουν Πνευματομάχων, καὶ τὴν τῶν Σαβελλιανῶν, καὶ τὴν τῶν Μαρκελλιανῶν, καὶ τὴν τῶν Φωτεινιανῶν, καὶ τὴν τῶν Ἀπολλιναριστῶν.

β'. Τοὺς ὑπὲρ διοικήσιν ἐπισκόπους ταῖς ὑπερορίοις ἐκκλησίαις μὴ ἐπιέναι, μηδὲ συγγέειν τὰς ἐκκλησίας· ἀλλὰ κατὰ τοὺς κανόνας, τὸν μὲν Ἀλεξανδρείας ἐπίσκοπον, τὰ ἐν Αἰγύπτῳ μόνον οἰκονομεῖν, τοὺς δὲ τῆς ἀνατολῆς ἐπισκόπους, τὴν ἀνατολὴν μόνην διοικεῖν, φυλαττομένων τῶν ἐν τοῖς κανόσι τοῖς κατὰ Νίκαιαν πρεσβείων τῆ Ἀντιοχέων ἐκκλησία· καὶ τοὺς τῆς Ἀσιανῆς διοικήσεως ἐπισκόπους τὰ κατὰ τὴν Ἀσίαν μόνον οἰκονομεῖν· καὶ τοὺς τῆς Ποντικῆς τὰ τῆς Ποντικῆς μόνον· καὶ τοὺς τῆς Θράκης τὰ τῆς Θρακικῆς μόνον οἰκονομεῖν· ἀκλήτους δὲ ἐπισκόπους ὑπὲρ διοικήσιν μὴ ἐπιβαίνειν ἐπὶ χειροτονία ἢ τισιν ἄλλαις οἰκονομίαις ἐκκλησιαστικαῖς. Φυλαττομένου δὲ τοῦ προγεγραμμένου περὶ τῶν διοικήσεων κανόνος, εὐδὴλον ὡς τὰ καθ' ἑκάστην ἐπαρχίαν ἢ τῆς ἐπαρχίας σύνοδος διοικήσει, κατὰ τὰ ἐν Νικαίᾳ ὠρισμένα· τὰς δὲ ἐν τοῖς βαρβαρικοῖς ἔθνεσι τοῦ Θεοῦ ἐκκλησίας οἰκονομεῖσθαι χρὴ κατὰ τὴν κρατήσασαν συνήθειαν τῶν πατέρων.

1. The profession of faith of the holy fathers who gathered in Nicaea in Bithynia is not to be abrogated, but it is to remain in force. Every heresy is to be anathematised and in particular that of the Eunomians or Anomoeans, that of the Arians or Eudoxians, that of the Semi-Arians or Pneumatomachi, that of the Sabellians that of the Marcellians, that of the Photinians and that of the Apollinarians.

2. Diocesan bishops are not to intrude in churches beyond their own boundaries nor are they to confuse the churches: but in accordance with the canons, the bishop of Alexandria is to administer affairs in Egypt only; the bishops of the East are to manage the East alone (whilst safeguarding the privileges granted to the church of the Antiochenes in the Nicene canons); and the bishops of the Asian diocese are to manage only Asian affairs; and those in Pontus only the affairs of Pontus; and those in Thrace only Thracian affairs. Unless invited bishops are not to go outside their diocese to perform an ordination or any other ecclesiastical business. If the letter of the canon about dioceses is kept, it is clear that the provincial synod will manage affairs in each province, as was decreed at Nicaea. But the churches of God among barbarian peoples must be administered in accordance with the custom in force at the time of the fathers.

⁴ Text and translation from Tanner, *Decrees*, 31–32.

γ' . Τὸν μὲν τοὶ Κωνσταντινουπόλεως ἐπίσκοπον ἔχειν τὰ πρεσβεία τῆς τιμῆς μετὰ τὸν τῆς Ῥώμης ἐπίσκοπον, διὰ τὸ εἶναι αὐτὴν νέαν Ῥώμην.
bishop of Rome.

δ' . Περὶ Μαξίμου τοῦ Κυνικοῦ καὶ τῆς κατ' αὐτὸν ἀταξίας τῆς ἐν Κωνσταντινουπόλει γενομένης· ὥστε μήτε τὸν Μάξιμον ἐπίσκοπον ἢ γενέσθαι ἢ εἶναι, μήτε τοὺς παρ' αὐτοῦ χειροτονηθέντας ἐν οἰωδῆποτε βαθμῶ κλήρου, πάντων καὶ τῶν περὶ αὐτὸν, καὶ τῶν παρ' αὐτοῦ γενομένων ἀκυρωθέντων.

3. Because it is new Rome, the bishop of Constantinople is to enjoy the privileges of honour after the

4. Regarding Maximus the Cynic and the disorder which surrounded him in Constantinople: he never became, nor is he, a bishop; nor are those ordained by him clerics of any rank whatsoever. Everything that was done both to him and by him is to be held invalid.

The Council of Chalcedon (451)
Canon 28⁵

Πανταχοῦ τοῖς τῶν ἁγίων πατέρων ὄροις ἐπόμενοι, καὶ τὸν ἀρτίως ἀναγνωσθέντα κανόνα τῶν ἑκατὸν πενήκοντα θεοφιλεστάτων ἐπισκόπων, τῶν συναχθέντων ἐπὶ τοῦ τῆς εὐσεβοῦς μνήμης μεγάλου Θεοδοσίου τοῦ γενομένου βασιλέως ἐν τῇ βασιλίδι Κωνσταντινουπόλει, νέα Ῥώμη, γνωρίζοντες, τὰ αὐτὰ καὶ ἡμεῖς ὀρίζομεν τε καὶ ψηφίζομεθα περὶ τῶν πρεσβείων τῆς ἁγιωτάτης ἐκκλησίας τῆς αὐτῆς Κωνσταντινουπόλεως, νέας Ῥώμης. Καὶ γὰρ τῷ θρόνῳ τῆς πρεσβυτέρας Ῥώμης, διὰ τὸ βασιλεύειν τὴν πόλιν ἐκείνην, οἱ πατέρες εἰκότως ἀποδεδώκασι τὰ πρεσβεῖα· καὶ τῷ αὐτῷ σκοπῷ κινούμενοι οἱ ἑκατὸν πενήκοντα θεοφιλέστατοι ἐπίσκοποι, τὰ ἴσα πρεσβεῖα ἀπένειμαν τῷ τῆς νέας Ῥώμης ἁγιωτάτῳ θρόνῳ, εὐλόγως κρίναντες τὴν βασιλεία καὶ συγκλήτῳ τιμηθεῖσαν πόλιν, καὶ τῶν ἴσων ἀπολαύουσαν πρεσβείων τῇ πρεσβυτέρῃ βασιλίδι Ῥώμη, καὶ ἐν τοῖς ἐκκλησιαστικοῖς ὡς ἐκείνην μεγαλύνεσθαι πράγμασι, δευτέραν μετ' ἐκείνην ὑπάρχουσαν· καὶ ὅστε τοὺς τῆς Ποντικῆς καὶ τῆς Ἀσιανῆς καὶ τῆς Θρακικῆς διοικήσεως μητροπολίτας μόνους, ἔτι δὲ καὶ τοὺς ἐν τοῖς βαρβαρικοῖς ἐπισκόπους τῶν προειρημένων διοικήσεων, χειροτονεῖσθαι ὑπὸ τοῦ προειρημένου ἁγιωτάτου θρόνου τῆς κατὰ Κωνσταντινούπολιν ἁγιωτάτης ἐκκλησίας, δηλαδὴ ἐκάστου μητροπολίτου τῶν προειρημένων διοικήσεων μετὰ τῶν τῆς ἐπαρχίας ἐπισκόπων χειροτονούντος τοὺς τῆς ἐπαρχίας ἐπισκόπους, καθὼς τοῖς θείοις κανόσι διηγόρευται· χειροτονεῖσθαι δὲ, καθὼς εἴρηται, τοὺς μητροπολίτας τῶν προειρημένων διοικήσεων παρὰ τοῦ Κωνσταντινουπόλεως ἀρχιεπισκόπου, ψηφισμάτων συμφώνων κατὰ τὸ ἔθος γενομένων, καὶ ἐπ' αὐτὸν ἀναφερομένων.

28. Following in every way the decrees of the holy fathers and recognising the canon which has recently been read out – the canon of the 150 most devout bishops who assembled in the time of the great Theodosius of pious memory, then emperor, in imperial Constantinople, new Rome – we issue the same decree and resolution concerning the prerogatives of the most holy church of the same Constantinople, new Rome. The fathers rightly accorded prerogatives to the see of older Rome, since that is an imperial city; and moved by the same purpose the 150 most devout bishops apportioned equal prerogatives to the most holy see of new Rome, reasonably judging that the city which is honoured by the imperial power and senate and enjoying privileges equalling older imperial Rome, should also be elevated to her level in ecclesiastical affairs and take second place after her. The metropolitans of the dioceses of Pontus, Asia and Thrace, but only these, as well as the bishops of these dioceses who work among non-Greeks, are to be ordained by the aforesaid most holy see of the most holy church in Constantinople. That is, each metropolitan of the aforesaid dioceses along with the bishops of the province ordain the bishops of the province, as has been declared in the divine canons; but the metropolitans of the aforesaid

⁵ Text and translation from Tanner, *Decrees*, 99–100.

dioceses, as has been said, are to be ordained by the archbishop of Constantinople, once agreement has been reached by vote in the usual way and has been reported to him.

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