

# MESSIANIC JERUSALEM AND THE MYTH OF AN IMPERIAL CITY IN LATE ANTIQUITY

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In a recent study, Ra'anana S. Boustán has provided a detailed analysis of the story of temple vessels in what appears to be one of the earlier redactions of 'Otot ha-Mashiah, a late antique Jewish text describing the signs of Messiah's arrival, and this story's relation to a broader literary motif of temple spoils kept in Rome<sup>1</sup>. As noted by Boustán, this redaction of 'Otot ha-Mashiah displays no knowledge of a confrontation between Christian Byzantium and Islam. Instead the eschatological struggle takes place strictly between Jews and Rome. Already in the opening sections of the text the latter is portrayed as the ultimate persecutor of Jews and Judaism. The sixth sign that contains the story about Temple vessels constitutes the culmination of the struggle between the two. A king rules in Rome for nine months, during which time he devastates numerous lands, levies heavy taxes upon Israel, and promulgates numerous decrees against it. After nine months Nehemiah son of Hushiel, the Messiah son of Joseph, is revealed. He launches a war against the king of Edom:

The Messiah son of Joseph will come and wage war against the king of Edom. He will win a victory against Edom and kill heaps and mounds of them. He will kill the king of Edom and lay waste the province of Rome. He will take out some of the Temple vessels which are hidden in the palace of Julianos Caesar<sup>2</sup> and come to Jerusalem. Israel will hear [about this] and gather to him<sup>3</sup>.

Upon entering Jerusalem, Nehemiah makes a peace treaty with "the ruler of Egypt" and slays "all the people of the regions surrounding Jerusalem up to

Damascus and Ashkelon". Then the text moves on to the seventh sign, the story of Armilos, the death of the first Messiah, and the subsequent revelation of the Davidic Messiah.

In his analysis of the story, Boustán suggests that "the distinctive emphasis on 'sacred relics' within this discourse was shaped in large measure as part of a dialogue with Byzantine Christian culture"<sup>4</sup>. I would like to take Boustán's observation one step further: the story of sacred vessels in the 'Otot engages in a dialogue with foundation legends for a newly established regal city that developed in fifth- and sixth-century Byzantine literature in connection with Constantinople. During this period the status of the City of Constantine as the New Rome became increasingly articulated and formalized through a variety of official media, including coinage and legislation<sup>5</sup>. The creation of a distinct city mythology was part of this process. The legendary history of Constantinople associated the foundation of the city by Constantine and its transformation into the capital city of the empire by subsequent emperors with a series of supernatural portents, including the transfer of imperial arcana from the Old Rome to New Rome. In my opinion, the foundation mythology proposed for messianic Jerusalem shared a number of common characteristics with the foundation mythology of New Rome. It would be worthwhile to take a closer look at some of them<sup>6</sup>.

### **Spolia of the Past in Constantinople's Myth of Origins**

The sixth-century chronicle of John Malalas supplies one of the earliest references to Constantine's transfer of the legendary Palladium of Troy from Rome to Constantinople. According to Malalas, Constantine's building projects in Byzantium, such as the hippodrome and the palace, intentionally mimicked those in Rome, thus projecting the Roman urban landscape onto a new capital city. Among other things, Constantine built a forum, in the middle of which he set up a porphyry column topped with "a statue of himself with seven rays on his head":

He had this bronze statue brought from where it had stood in Ilion, a city in Phrygia. Constantine took secretly from Rome the wooden statue known as the Palladion and placed it in the forum he built, beneath the column that supported the statue. Some of the people of Byzantium say that it is still there<sup>7</sup>.

The mythical ancestry of Constantinople thus included both Rome and Ilium or Troy<sup>8</sup>. The act of bringing sacred artifacts from both sites to Constantinople established this connection in a symbolic as well as a physically tangible way. Constantinople inherited the ancient glory of its predecessors through the transfer of their arcana to the city. The sacred topography of the new imperial capital was centered on the relics of the capital's mythical past. It was more than just a history, however. In the mind of Byzantines, New Rome meant quite literally the rejuvenated Rome: the Rome of old that went through a second birth, received a second youth, and stood ready to reclaim the past "golden age" of its imperial vitality. The transfer of the arcana that symbolized the might and energy of Rome's past to Constantinople also signified Rome's ontological renewal, achieved through the act of Constantine's will. Subsequently the list of relics hidden beneath the Column of Constantine would be expanded to include a series of items from the Christian empire's biblical past. Within the empire's myth of origins, Constantinople was a double heir to Rome as well as Jerusalem<sup>9</sup>.

Back in the sixth century Procopius of Caesarea referred to the story of the Palladium of Troy as a popular belief current in his time<sup>10</sup>. He himself, however, reserved judgment as to the story's historical veracity. Despite his apparent skepticism in this case, Procopius contributed a great deal to the further development of Constantinople's foundation mythology by including a story of the Capitoline imperial treasure in the Vandalic War. After his sack of Rome, so the story goes, the Vandal king Gizeric took off to his capital city of Carthage in North Africa with the Roman princess Eudoxia, her children, as well as:

An exceedingly great amount of gold and other imperial treasure [...] having spared neither bronze nor anything else whatsoever in the palace. He plundered also the temple of Jupiter Capitolinus and tore off half of the roof. Now this roof was of bronze of the finest quality, and since gold was laid over it exceedingly thick, it shone as a magnificent and wonderful spectacle<sup>11</sup>.

The story of Gizeric taking back to the Vandal capital the spoils of his sack of Rome was part of the larger rhetorical strategy used by Procopius to depict the sorry state of the empire on the eve of Justinian's reign, and the story was not the only one. In the first book of his Gothic War, Procopius tells a similar story, but this time about the Goths and their ruler Alaric, who brought to the city of

Carcassone in Southern France “the royal treasure [...] taken as a booty when he captured Rome” in 410:

Among these were also the treasures of Solomon, the king of the Hebrews, a most noteworthy site. For the most of them were adorned with emeralds; and they had been taken from Jerusalem by the Romans in ancient times<sup>12</sup>.

Whether manufactured or historically accurate these two stories follow the same rhetorical structure (to the point of providing similar descriptions of stolen treasures’ breathtaking beauty) and ultimately address the same goal. They both lament the disintegration of the Roman Empire by depicting its sacra, including but not limited to the treasures of Solomon, being ravished away by barbarian kings. The underlying message of both accounts is that the restorer of the empire would not only have to restore the empire’s territorial integrity, but return the empire’s symbolic relics as well. It was now up to the emperor Justinian and his great general Belisarius, on whose staff Procopius served and whose military accomplishments he lionized, to recover the empire’s former glory along with its treasures from the hands of barbarians.

The story of victory over the Vandals culminates in Procopius’ famous account of Belisarius’ triumph. As part of his triumphal procession, Belisarius displayed the recovered imperial treasure:

And there was also silver weighing many thousands of talents and all the royal treasure amounting to an exceedingly great sum (for Gizeric had despoiled the Palatium in Rome, as has been said in the preceding narrative), and among these were the treasures of the Jews, which Titus, the son of Vespasian, together with certain others, had brought to Rome after the capture of Jerusalem. And one of the Jews, seeing these things, approached one of those known to the emperor and said: “These treasures I think is inexpedient to carry into the palace in Byzantium. Indeed, it is not possible for them to be elsewhere than in the place where Solomon, the king of the Jews, formerly placed them. For it is because of these that Gizeric captured the kingdom of the Romans, and that now the Roman army has captured that of the Vandals”. When this had been brought to the ears of the emperor, he became afraid and quickly sent everything to the sanctuaries of the Christians in Jerusalem<sup>13</sup>.

Once again, whatever the historical value of this passage is, its restorationist appeal is quite evident. Procopius is careful to identify the treasure paraded by Belisarius as the royal treasure once taken by Gizeric from the Palatium in Rome. By returning it to Constantinople, Belisarius acts as the restorer of Rome's past glory, while at the same time transferring physical artifacts associated with this glory to the empire's new capital. Within Constantinople's foundational mythology the recovery of the treasure of the Palatium conveyed a message similar to that of Constantine's transfer of the Palladium of Troy. Both stories provided a sense of historical continuity that the new imperial capital badly needed. Through the New Rome the Old Rome was mysteriously reborn. The new city restored the Old Rome's past youthfulness and vigor, and recovered its universal rule along with the arcana of the Old Rome's imperial might. Both narratives functioned within a broader Byzantine ideological paradigm that perceived the rejuvenating rebirth of the empire and its capital city as the recovery of the empire's past "golden age" along with that age's symbolic attributes of power<sup>14</sup>.

The Temple spoils, singled out by Procopius from the rest of Rome's treasure on two occasions, also served to highlight the past military might of imperial Rome, which was now recovered by Justinian and Belisarius. Procopius' choice of this particular illustration of Rome's "golden age" tied together the Roman and biblical pasts of the Christian Roman Empire. Indeed, as noted by Boustán, "the vessels from the Jerusalem Temple were in many respects unique in their ability to embody simultaneously the glories of both the Solomonic and Roman pasts"<sup>15</sup>. The motif of Temple vessels allowed Procopius to tie together the classicizing description of Roman triumph possibly recalling the triumph of Titus in 70 AD. with a non-classical reference to the biblical vessels from Solomon's Temple and the omen that required the restoration of these vessels to Jerusalem<sup>16</sup>. The relationship between the two pasts was not an easy one, however. Roman military triumph over Israel and Israel's Temple was at the same time the triumph of Rome's Christian successors. By choosing to emphasize the Temple spoils, Procopius chose to construct the Byzantine past in a way that combined Rome's triumphant imperialism with biblical supersessionism<sup>17</sup>.

The sacred geography of the Christian Roman Empire, envisioned by Procopius, was different from that of the empire's pagan predecessor in at least one respect: instead of keeping the Temple spoils in the imperial palace in Constan-

tinople, Justinian sent them back to Jerusalem, where they were to be kept in local Christian churches presumably perceived as heirs to Solomon's Temple. The Temple vessels emerge from Procopius' description as another example of the allegedly Old Testament relics housed in the Christian holy sites of "New Jerusalem"<sup>18</sup>. Whereas Constantinople succeeded Rome as the city of the earthly emperor, Jerusalem, since the times of Constantine, was increasingly seen as the seat of Christ's invisible presence and universal kingship, of which the imperial rule in Constantinople was a visible manifestation. The act of dispatching vessels to the churches in Jerusalem instead of keeping them in the imperial palace along with the rest of the Roman treasure might have reflected the synergetic nature of the universal rule shared by Christ and his earthly vicar, the Christian emperor<sup>19</sup>.

The stories in John Malalas and Procopius of Caesarea highlight several common elements in the grand myth of Constantinople's origins. The physical artifacts or relics of Rome's legendary and historical past are central to both narratives. The function of these artifacts is twofold. On the one hand, they create a sense of continuity with Old Rome's history and mythology, both of which are now internalized as the history and mythology of the New Rome. On the other, the artifacts serve as tangible manifestations of Rome's "golden age", which is now brought back through the old capital's rebirth in Constantinople. Finally, both John and Procopius stress the intimate connection between the artifacts and the emperors who bring them to the New Rome. In Byzantine political mythology, it is the act of the emperor's will (or rather the divine will in which the emperor partakes) that restores the youthful vitality of the Old Rome by building a new one. The New Rome is first and foremost the city of the emperor and the visible manifestation of the emperor's power to bring about *renovatio imperii*. In this context, the transfer of the arcana, undertaken by the ruler, serves to emphasize the ruler's connection to the city's supernatural sources of power and his ability to tap them in the renewal effort.

The story of the recovery of Temple vessels in the 'Otot envisions the messianic restoration of Jerusalem along similar lines. In this story Nehemiah son of Hushiel, the Messiah son of Joseph, acts in a way that closely resembles the imperial promotion of Byzantium as the New Rome. Only now it is Jerusalem that is reborn. The restoration of the Temple vessels in this context serves as the recovery of the arcana of Jerusalem's "golden age", the transfer of which back to

Jerusalem is essential to the restoration program. The Rebuilt Jerusalem, just like the New Rome, forms its identity around the relics of the past. In addition, it is a duty of the Messiah, just like it is a duty of Roman emperors and their generals, to recover these relics. The story in the 'Otot comes particularly close to the story of Belisarius' triumph, because in both cases the sacra of the kingdom's golden past need to be recovered from the hands of "barbarians" who have unjustly appropriated them as symbols of their own imperial reigns.

### **Imagining Messianic Jerusalem as a Late Antique Imperial City**

By bringing the spolia of historical Jerusalem from Rome and by using them to build the New Jerusalem of eschatological future, the Messiah engaged in an activity that since Constantine was practiced by a number of Byzantine emperors and rulers of the Germanic successor kingdoms in the West. Upon inaugurating Constantinople in 330, Constantine made sure that the city was lavishly adorned with statues brought there from other provinces of the empire<sup>20</sup>. The transfer of statues to Constantinople was part of a broader interest in classical collecting that characterized late antique culture and resulted in the creation of massive art collections of statues, reliefs, and building parts, assembled by wealthy individuals and imperial cities alike. The ancient statues and reliefs removed from their original settings and transferred to Constantinople and Rome constituted a ubiquitous feature of the two cities' public areas as well as private domains. Old construction parts were used to build the Lateran Basilica and the Arch of Constantine in Rome. Old statues from Rome, Greece, and Asia Minor were brought to Constantinople to adorn the Hippodrome, the baths of Zeuxippus, the forums, and other public spaces within the city. As time went on an increasing number of relics of the Christian and biblical past were also transferred to the imperial capitals. In the words of Jas Elsner, "in effect, an entire myth-historical past was manufactured through the collection, in the midst of which the populace of the Christian capital came to bathe"<sup>21</sup>.

It appears that Constantine was the first emperor to programmatically integrate spolia, the original parts from ancient buildings and works of art, into new constructions. There were both a new aesthetics and a new ideology behind this trend<sup>22</sup>. By integrating the remains of old Roman buildings into new constructions, the ruler

invoked Rome's collective past, but he also projected it into the city's collective future. To create Rome's future, Rome's past had to be atomized and selectively reused. The future thus derived its strength from the past and yet was not identical with it. Sarah G. Bassett's observation to this effect is worth quoting in full:

That the ornamentation of the Hippodrome was accomplished with spolia was probably no accident. Spoils are, by nature, Janus-like. Their value lies in their capacity to envision the future through evocation of the past. In the Hippodrome, in a clever combination of imitation and physical presence, the neat armature of obelisks so lavishly hung with antiquities captured what in the history and tradition of Rome was pertinent to the Constantinopolitan present. The imagery of victory and sport was complemented by that of history and tradition to create an environment radiant with the idea of power on the Roman model. At the same time, the construct of the Hippodrome was patently artificial. It was Rome-like, but not Roman in the sense that the particular combination of images was unknown in the old capital. Thus, even as spolia referred to the authority of the past, they created a new vision for the future. It was this distinction which gave the Hippodrome collection its vitality and force. The arrangement was no banal imitation, but a neatly crafted ensemble that described a vision of power in its past, present, and future manifestations. With spolia the Hippodrome was ornamented for its role as the didactic centerpiece of the new capital of an ancient empire<sup>23</sup>.

By using ancient spolia in new construction projects, the ruler was making a programmatic statement about the nature of a new world he was about to build. This new world derived its strength and vitality from the memories of the past reconfigured in a way that allowed them to become building blocks for the future. The future in its turn integrated scattered elements of the past into a new universe. The restored empire was thus a new text that included within its narrative phrases and sentences from past texts, even though the new text's overall meaning could be very different. To quote Elsner again, the programmatic reading of spolia "conflated past and present, and displayed the past only in so far as the past is validated by, fulfilled in and made meaningful through the present"<sup>24</sup>.

The messianic Jerusalem envisioned by the 'Otot was just such a text. It integrated within itself sacred artifacts from the biblical past, which, for this purpose,



were transported all the way back from Rome. In this sense the eschatological Jerusalem served as the restoration of the old city of King David. The eschatological Temple included in its arrangement the vessels from the old Temple just as the Arch of Constantine included Trajanic, Hadrianic, and Aurelian reliefs, and the Hippodrome incorporated ancient statues. The dynamic of engagement with the dominant discourse of spolia can be illustrated by comparing the 'Otot story with John Malalas' legendary account of Cherubim transferred by Vespasian from the Temple in Jerusalem to the city gates of Antioch in Syria:

Titus celebrated a triumph for his victory and went off to Rome. Out of the spoils from Judaea Vespasian built in Antioch the Great, outside the city gate, what are known as the Cherubim, for he fixed there the bronze Cherubim, which Titus his son had found fixed to the temple of Solomon. When he destroyed the temple, he removed them from there and brought them to Antioch with the Seraphim, celebrating a triumph for the victory over the Jews that had taken place during his reign<sup>25</sup>.

Malalas' description is characteristic of the genre of *Patria*, which was becoming increasingly popular in the Byzantine world and included mostly legendary accounts of a particular city's origins and stories associated with city's monuments<sup>26</sup>. The description demonstrates that the theme of Jerusalem's spoils was not limited to Rome and Constantinople but constituted a stock motif in the legendary histories of the metropoleis of the Byzantine Near East. The 'Otot story represents both another application of the same literary genre, this time in order to construct the *Patria* of messianic Jerusalem, and the reversal of this genre's major theme: the assimilation of spoils captured in the Temple of Jerusalem into the architectural programs of Roman cities. The 'Otot reverses this dynamic by reclaiming Jewish ownership of Temple's spolia and using them as building blocks for the new Jerusalem of the messianic future, but it does so in (conscious?) mimicry of the dominant cultural narrative.

In line with Bassett's observation quoted earlier, rather than being a mere repository for artifacts from the past, the eschatological Temple conveys ideas never intended before. The messianic future manipulated phrases and sentences from the biblical past to create new meanings without obliterating the old ones. The story in the 'Otot changes the meaning of the restored Temple artifacts from religious to

religio-political. The vessels are recovered from “the palace of Julianos Caesar” in the wake of the Messiah’s military victory over Rome. The location is significant. The fact that the vessels are kept hidden in the imperial palace (literally, “the house of Julianos Caesar”) makes them symbols of imperial power. Indeed, the ‘Otot’s story unfolds in what appears to be a conscious dialogue with the sixth-century imperial master narrative which sought to portray the imperial palace in Constantinople as a depository of artifacts that established a sense of symbolic continuity with Roman power. Corippus in his panegyric to Justin II thought it necessary to dwell at some length on the jewels that Cleopatra once “gave in supplication” to Caesar and which now glittered with light in the innermost halls of imperial palace in Constantinople<sup>27</sup>. The ‘Otot’s story assumes a similar fate for the Temple vessels.

It is remarkable how both Procopius and the ‘Otot transform the official narrative by adding nonclassical elements to it. Procopius has Justinian transfer the vessels to churches in Jerusalem instead of keeping them in the palace, and thus underscores Jerusalem’s vital place on the map of empire’s sacred geography. Moreover, by depicting Justinian as acting out of fear, Procopius casts doubt, however subtly, on Justinian’s claims to wield absolute power. Unlike the jewels of Cleopatra, the vessels of the Temple do not quite affirm the seamless flow of power and its symbolic attributes from Rome to Constantinople. The ‘Otot is even more radical. There, the act of recovery reverses the system of power relationships between the imperial center and the provinces famously summarized by Jerome’s statement that “Constantinople was dedicated by stripping nude nearly all other cities” of the empire. These relationships, among other things, were rendered tangibly manifest by the imperial center’s right to transfer to itself whichever spolia it deemed necessary<sup>28</sup>. By bringing Temple spolia back to Jerusalem, the Messiah ends Rome’s imperial status vis-à-vis Jerusalem and takes away the imperial right, in the words of Raymond Van Dam, to steal and appropriate the histories and the memories of other cities<sup>29</sup>.

That is not all. The Messiah also claims for Jerusalem the status of the imperial center previously enjoyed by Rome. Within the context of the ‘Otot, the return of the vessels to Jerusalem marks the latter’s ascent as the new center of universal rule. Later in the story the ruins of the very Temple in Jerusalem, to which the vessels have been restored, serve as the place in which the Davidic Messiah establishes his royal throne<sup>30</sup>. In other words, the ‘Otot narrative attributes political

significance to the Temple relics. The relics now become the arcana of the new world empire, the messianic kingdom of Israel, in a way that almost perfectly mimics the imperial connotations of the arcana of the might of Rome transferred to Byzantium. Just like Constantinople, messianic Jerusalem does not merely restore the memories of its own past. The Temple vessels recovered from the palace of Julianos Caesar also conjure the memory of Rome, around which the messianic empire is born. Like Constantinople, messianic Jerusalem appropriates memories and histories of other cities to construct its own.

The messianic Jerusalem envisioned by the 'Otot was built from the spolia of the past. Its myth included sentences and phrases borrowed from the city's earlier texts, as well as from the text of imperial Rome, and integrated into a new context of messianic metropolis. The meaning of these sentences and phrases changed in the process. Temple vessels were no longer simply religious objects. Neither was the Temple to which they were restored. The vessels were transferred from the imperial palace of the Roman emperors to the Temple in Jerusalem, the ruins of which now served as the location of the Messiah's throne and thus the imperial palace on their own accord. Both the ruins of the Temple and the Temple vessels recovered from Rome were spolia of Israel's past used in the construction of Israel's messianic future. The New Jerusalem constructed as a result of this process, however, was centered on the Messiah's imperial figure and served to convey the ideas of messianic autocracy, which had little precedent in earlier Jewish tradition about the Temple. In a similar way, the urban text of Constantinople was created through the process of borrowing physical artifacts and elements of city planning from the Old Rome. The explicit goal of this process, at least since the time of the Theodosian dynasty in the late fourth and early fifth centuries AD., was to establish Constantinople as Old Rome's imperial twin, the New Rome. In reality, however, Constantinople's topography and monuments were shaped and dominated by figures of its rulers to a degree unprecedented in Old Rome. The city embodied the ideology of imperial autocracy in a way that constituted a break with Rome's political tradition<sup>31</sup>.

Just like the collection of ancient statues in the Hippodrome of Constantinople, the restored vessels of the Temple were "no banal imitation, but a neatly crafted ensemble that described a vision of power in its past, present, and future manifestations"<sup>32</sup>. And just like late antique Rome, Constantinople, Ravenna, or

Aachen, the messianic Jerusalem was a city built according to the Constantinian and post-Constantinian aesthetic and ideological program. It seems logical that, with the arrival of Islam, the 'Otot legend about the recovery of Temple vessels from Rome was further embellished with details (including the lists of objects recovered) and incorporated into Muslim historical apocalypses. There, the legend served to present the triumph of the Muslim world empire as a restoration of biblical Israel and long-awaited revenge against Israel's old nemesis Rome. The transfer of the attributes of Israel's sacred past back to Jerusalem, now under Muslim control, created a sense of imperial legitimacy and continuity<sup>33</sup>.

The 'Otot portrays the Messiah's restorationist efforts in Jerusalem in a way that resembles the foundation legends of Constantinople. Both scenarios postulate a close bond between the ruler and his capital city. Both scenarios play out within the same religio-political paradigm that perceives the recovery of ancient relics as essential to the new city's myth of origins. These relics form a mystical center around which the rejuvenated capital city and the rejuvenated empire are then built.

### **The Ruler and His City**

I would like to conclude this article by discussing a short statement attributed to R. Levi and attested in the Midrash on Psalms and several other midrashic collections<sup>34</sup>. Within its present context, R. Levi's statement serves to elaborate an observation made as part of the midrash's main text to the effect that, in the future, both king Messiah and the city of Jerusalem will be called after God's own name. R. Levi then continues "It is good for the city when her name is the same as the name of her king, and the name of her king is the same as the name of her God". Unlike other sections of the same midrash, which focus on the participation of human rulers in the powers of God, this last section adds the city of Jerusalem to the equation. What emerges as a result is the grand vision of unity among the messianic king, his city, and God accomplished by all three of them sharing the same name<sup>35</sup>.

The place occupied by Jerusalem within this vision resembles that of Constantinople, the city known from early on as "the city that bears the name of the emperor". Brought into existence by an act of will of one man and his successors, the sacred topography of the New Rome was shaped by the monuments of imperial autocracy<sup>36</sup>. The Statue of Constantine atop the column portrayed the city's

founder in the guise of the ever-young and light-radiating Apollo Helios, who watched over his city and his empire. The palace, located at the eastern tip of the city, was the dwelling place of the emperor and the sacred ground. The Hippodrome, connected to the palace within a single architectural complex, provided open space into which the emperor emerged as the sunlike figure during popular celebrations and games. Finally, there was the Church of the Apostles built by Constantine on one of the highest points in the city, away from the palace and yet dominating the city's skyline. The church started as Constantine's mausoleum with his tomb in the middle surrounded by twelve cenotaphs commemorating the apostles. It was probably originally intended to mark the deceased emperor's special status as a participant in the universal and eternal rule of his divine comes and coruler, Christ, and to serve as the place from which Constantine, in Eusebius' words, continued "even after death to hold on to empire"<sup>37</sup>. The original meaning was quickly glossed over, however, as the church became the dynastic shrine in which emperors and empresses were laid to rest in the company of saints' relics.

The city's personality was at one with that of its founder, but because the emperor's rule was at the same time the image and reflection of heavenly rule, Constantinople was also the city of the heavenly king. As the ruler, the emperor did not belong to himself. He was a transmitter of God's power: a polished mirror that reflected the rays of divine radiance and philanthropy, directing them toward the imperial subjects. The emperor did not shine with his own light but with the light that he received through communion with God. At least this is how Eusebius and his successors interpreted the imperial solar imagery inherited from Byzantium's Hellenistic and Roman past. The imperial palace was also the place where the ongoing personal interaction between the emperor and God took place, the interaction that shaped the emperor's human will in conformity with the active will of God. To say that Constantinople was the city of the emperor implied that it was also the city of God, whose goodness, power, and glory shone through the emperor's personality. The monumental architecture of Constantinople attested not only to the greatness and megalomania of individual Byzantine rulers but also to the constant presence of divine glory made visible through their autocracy<sup>38</sup>.

According to a number of Jewish messianic texts, the Temple would serve as a place from which the joint rule of God and the Messiah radiated across the universe, the rule accomplished through a miraculous synergy of human and divine

wills<sup>39</sup>. In their essence, both Jerusalem and Constantinople represented the same type of an ideal city that served as a seat for the universal imperial rule jointly exercised by human and divine wills merged together by God and the God-chosen ruler. Messianic Jerusalem embodied some of the same religio-political principles that historical Constantinople did, and perhaps in the end the two cities' sacred topography would not be all that different.

If we were to imagine the messianic Jerusalem of Byzantine Judaism, its skyline would probably be dominated by the restored Temple, the ultimate House of God. This Temple, however, would also double, at least according to some views, as the seat of the royal power of the Davidic Messiah and the place where the Messiah's throne was established into eternity. It has been argued that the choice of the basilica-form building by Christian architects served to model churches on the grandeur of imperial throne chambers and reception halls. Could the restored Temple building also be envisioned as a basilica, or could it, perhaps, have a centrally planned design mimicking that of the Chrysotriklinos, the golden audience chamber of Constantinople's Great Palace, but also of centrally planned cathedrals such as the Hagia Sophia? More likely, the restored Temple could be imagined as a combination of basilicas and centrally planned structures within a single ecclesia-palatial complex akin in its spatial organization to what Thomas F. Mathews has dubbed the "novel planning unit of imperial palace, plaza, and church" designed to project the idea of symphonious rule between God and the emperor<sup>40</sup>. Incidentally, one such unit was constructed by the Umayyad caliphs in the late seventh and early eighth centuries precisely on the Temple Mount. It included the Dome of the Rock, the Aqsa Mosque and the palace complex south and southwest of the mount.

The Midrashic references to the Hippodrome and the throne of Solomon indicate that Jerusalem of the past was sometimes imagined as a standard late Roman and Byzantine capital city centered on a palace/circus complex<sup>41</sup>. Would the Jerusalem of the Davidic Messiah also feature the Hippodrome and the throne chamber(s) of the kind ascribed to the historical Jerusalem of David and Solomon? In general, could the Jerusalem of the eschatological future be modeled on Rome/Constantinople of the historical present, just as many of the royal and ecclesiastical residencies of early medieval Europe were?<sup>42</sup> These are tantalizing questions that cannot be fully answered but which certainly deserve further study.

- <sup>1</sup> See Boustan R. S. *The Spoils of the Jerusalem Temple at Rome and Constantinople: Jewish Counter-Geography in a Christianizing Empire / Antiquity in Antiquity: Jewish and Christian Pasts in the Greco-Roman World* / Ed. by G. Gardner, K. Osterloh. Tübingen, 2007. Pp. 327–72.
- <sup>2</sup> For possible identifications of Julianos Caesar, see Boustan R. S. *The Spoils of the Jerusalem Temple at Rome and Constantinople: Jewish Counter-Geography in a Christianizing Empire*. P. 365, n. 108.
- <sup>3</sup> Even-Shemuel Y. *Midreshe Geulah: pirke ha-apokalipsah ha-Yehudit me-hatimat ha-Talmud ha-Bavli we-ad reshit ha-elef ha-shishi*. Jerusalem, 1953. P. 320, lines 68–71. The translation is mine. Cf. Reeves J. C. *Trajectories in Near Eastern Apocalyptic: A Postrabbinic Jewish Apocalypse Reader*. Atlanta, 2005. P. 124; and Boustan R. S. *The Spoils of the Jerusalem Temple at Rome and Constantinople: Jewish Counter-Geography in a Christianizing Empire*. Pp. 365–66.
- <sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* P. 363.
- <sup>5</sup> See Dagron G. *Naissance d'une capitale: Constantinople et ses institutions de 330 à 451*. Paris, 1974. Pp. 49–55; Dölger F. *Byzanz und die europäische Staatenwelt: ausgewählte Vorträge und Aufsätze*. Ettal, 1953. Pp. 93–111; Irmscher J. ‚Neurom‘ oder ‚zweites Rom‘ – *Renovatio* oder *Translatio* // *Klio*. 1983. № 65. Pp. 431–39.
- <sup>6</sup> For further analysis of topics discussed in this article, see Sivertsev A. *Judaism and Imperial Ideology in Late Antiquity*. New York, 2011.
- <sup>7</sup> *Malal. 13.7* (Dindorf, 320). The translation is from *The Chronicle of John Malalas* / Trans. by E. Jeffreys, et al. Melbourne, 1986. P. 174. On Malalas and his work, see articles collected in *Studies in John Malalas* / Ed. by Jeffreys E., Croke B., Scott R. Sydney, 1990.
- <sup>8</sup> On the significance of the Palladium of Troy in Rome's mythical history, see Virgil, *Aeneid* 2.162–70. On the application of this mythology to Constantinople, see Alföldi A. *On the Foundation of Constantinople: A Few Notes* // *Journal of Roman Studies*. 1947. № 37. P. 11; and Bassett S. G. *The Urban Image of Late Antique Constantinople*. New York, 2004. Pp. 68–71, 188–92. On the translation of Rome's monuments to Constantinople, see also Bassett S. G. *The Antiquities in the Hippodrome of Constantinople*. *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*. 1991. № 45. Pp. 93–94.
- <sup>9</sup> See Dagron G. *Naissance d'une capitale: Constantinople et ses institutions de 330 à 451*. Pp. 37–41; Lathoud D. *La consécration et la dédicace de Constantinople* // *Échos d'Orient*. 1924. № 23. Pp. 299–305; Frolow A. *La dédicace de Constantinople dans la tradition Byzantine* // *Revue de l'histoire des religions*. 1944. № 127. Pp. 76–78.
- <sup>10</sup> Procopius. *History of the Wars*. 5.15.11–14. Here and below the translation is from H. B. Dewing in the Loeb Classical Library.
- <sup>11</sup> *Ibid.* 3.5.3–4.
- <sup>12</sup> *Ibid.* 5.12.41–42.
- <sup>13</sup> *Ibid.* 4.9.5–9 (Dewing's translation with slight revisions). For the most recent analysis of Pro-

copius' account along with the review of earlier scholarship, see Boustan R. S. *The Spoils of the Jerusalem Temple at Rome and Constantinople: Jewish Counter-Geography in a Christianizing Empire*. Pp. 356–62. Boustan correctly emphasizes the legendary nature of the account and dismisses earlier attempts to link the story to the fate of the actual Temple vessels looted in 70 CE.

<sup>14</sup> See Dölger F. *Byzanz und die europäische Staatenwelt: ausgewählte Vorträge und Aufsätze*. Pp. 93–98; Alexander P. J. *The Strength of Empire and Capital as Seen through Byzantine Eyes // Speculum*. 1962. № 37. Pp. 348–54. On problems with Procopius' restorationist rhetoric, see Cameron A. *Procopius and the Sixth Century*. Berkeley, 1985. Pp. 19–32.

<sup>15</sup> Boustan R. S. *The Spoils of the Jerusalem Temple at Rome and Constantinople: Jewish Counter-Geography in a Christianizing Empire*. Pp. 362. Cf. Van Dam R. *Rome and Constantinople: Rewriting Roman History during Late Antiquity*. Waco, 2010. Pp. 62–67.

<sup>16</sup> On the combination of classicizing and non-classical motifs in Procopius' discourse, see Cameron A. *Procopius and the Sixth Century*. Pp. 29–32.

<sup>17</sup> For the literary and cultural context, see Cameron A. *Remaking the Past / Late Antiquity: A Guide to the Postclassical World / Ed. by G. W. Bowersock, P. Brown, O. Grabar*. Cambridge, 1999. Pp. 1–20. For a similar combination of Roman triumphalism and biblical supersessionism, see *The Apocalypse of Ps.-Methodius*, 9.4.

<sup>18</sup> On the transfer of relics and narratives associated with the Temple to the Christian holy sites in Jerusalem, and in particular to the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, see Busse H., Kretschmar G. *Jerusalem Heiligtumstraditionen in altkirchlicher und frühislamischer Zeit*. Wiesbaden, 1987. Pp. 81–111. Cf. Schwartz J. *The Encaenia of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, the Temple of Solomon and the Jews // Theologische Zeitschrift*. 1987. № 43. Pp. 265–81; Kühnel B. *From the Earthly to Heavenly Jerusalem: Representations of the Holy City in Christian Art of the First Millennium*. Freiburg im Breisgau, 1987. Pp. 83–84; Wilken R. L. *The Land Called Holy: Palestine in Christian History and Thought*. New Haven, 1992. Pp. 93–100.

<sup>19</sup> The New Jerusalem of Constantine was designed as the city of Christ, the heavenly king and Constantine's comes, just like the New Rome of Constantine was designed as the city of the emperor. In that sense the two cities worked as mirror images of each other. See Heisenberg A. *Grabeskirche und Apostelkirche, zwei Basiliken Konstantins: Untersuchungen zur Kunst und Literatur des ausgehenden Altertums*. Leipzig, 1908. Vol. 2. Pp. 115; Grabar A. *Martyrium: Recherches sur le culte des reliques et l'art chrétien antique*. Paris, 1943–1946. Vol. 1. Pp. 234–44; Leeb R. *Konstantin und Christus: die Verchristlichung der imperialen Repräsentation unter Konstantin dem Grossen als Spiegel seiner Kirchenpolitik*. Berlin, 1992. Pp. 93–120; Van Dam R. *The Roman Revolution of Constantine*. Cambridge, 2007. Pp. 293–309. On Justinian as God's representative on earth in the writings of Procopius, see Cameron A. *Procopius and the Sixth Century*. Pp. 87–88.

<sup>20</sup> Eusebius V. Const. 3.54.2–3. See commentary in Cameron A., Hall S. G. *Eusebius, Life of Constantine*. Oxford, 1999. Pp. 301–02, and Bassett S. G. *The Urban Image of Late Antique Constantinople*. Pp. 50–78.



- <sup>21</sup> Elsner J. *Imperial Rome and Christian Triumph: The Art of the Roman Empire AD 100–450*. Oxford, 1998. Pp. 190. See further Mango C. A. *Antique Statuary and the Byzantine Beholder // Dumbarton Oaks Papers*. 1963. № 17. Pp. 55–59; James L. “Pray not to Fall into Temptation and Be on Your Guard”: Pagan Statues in Christian Constantinople // *Gesta*. 1996. № 35.1. Pp. 12–20; Elsner J. *Imperial Rome and Christian Triumph: The Art of the Roman Empire AD 100–450*. Pp. 186–97. On individual collections of statues in Constantinople, see Cameron A., Herrin J. *Constantinople in the Early Eighth Century: The Parastaseis Syntomoi Chronikai*. Leiden, 1984; and Bassett S. G. *The Urban Image of Late Antique Constantinople*. On similar practices in Rome, see Curran J. *Moving Statues in Late Antique Rome: Problems of Perspective // Art History*. 1994. № 17. Pp. 46–58.
- <sup>22</sup> See Kinney D. *Rape or Restitution of the Past? Interpreting Spolia / The Art of Interpreting / Ed. by Scott S. C. University Park, 1995*. Pp. 53–62; Brenk B. *Spolia from Constantine to Charlemagne: Aesthetics versus Ideology // Dumbarton Oaks Papers*. 1987. № 41. Pp. 103–09; Elsner J. *From the Culture of Spolia to the Cult of Relics // Papers of the British School at Rome*. 2000. № 68. Pp. 149–84.
- <sup>23</sup> Bassett S. G. *The Antiquities in the Hippodrome of Constantinople*. Pp. 95–96.
- <sup>24</sup> Elsner J. *From the Culture of Spolia to the Cult of Relics*. Pp. 176.
- <sup>25</sup> Malal. 10.45 (Dindorf, 260–61). Translation follows Jeffreys, 138.
- <sup>26</sup> Despite often valid critique by later scholars, Dagron G. *Constantinople imaginaire: études sur le recueil des Patria* (Paris, 1984) remains a classical work on this genre of Byzantine literature. Cf. Cameron A., Herrin J. *Constantinople in the Early Eighth Century: The Parastaseis Syntomoi Chronikai*.
- <sup>27</sup> Corippus, *In laud. Iust.*, III, 8–21. I follow Cameron’s translation in Corippus, *Flavius Crsconius, In laudem Iustini Augusti minoris / Ed. by A. Cameron*. London, 1976.
- <sup>28</sup> Jerome, *Chron.* s. a. 330. See Bassett S. G. *The Urban Image of Late Antique Constantinople*. Pp. 47–49.
- <sup>29</sup> See Van Dam R. *Rome and Constantinople: Rewriting Roman History during Late Antiquity*. Pp. 62–67.
- <sup>30</sup> Even-Shemuel Y. *Midreshe Geulah: pirke ha-apokalipsah ha-Yehudit me-hatimat ha-Talmud ha-Bavli we-ad reshit ha-elef ha-shishi*. Pp. 322, line 136.
- <sup>31</sup> See Mayer E. *Rom ist dort, wo der Kaiser ist: Untersuchungen zu den Staatsdenkmälern des dezentralisierten Reiches von Diocletian bis zu Theodosius II*. Mainz, 2002. Pp. 105–74.
- <sup>32</sup> See Bassett’s quote above.
- <sup>33</sup> See Cook D. *Studies in Muslim Apocalyptic*. Princeton, 2002. Pp. 54–66.
- <sup>34</sup> *MidPs* 21 (Buber, 89b). Versions of this midrash appear also in *Lamentations Rabbah* 1.16, and some manuscripts of *Pesikta de Rav Kahana* 22 (Mandelbaum, 330–31). See Goldberg A. *Die Namen des Messias in der rabbinischen Traditionsliteratur: Ein Beitrag zur Messianologie des rabbinischen Judentums / Goldberg A. Mystik und Theologie des rabbinischen Judentums*. Tübingen, 1997. Vol. 1. 250–53.

<sup>35</sup> Cf. Eusebius, *V. Const.* 4.46.

<sup>36</sup> See Dagron G. *Naissance d'une capitale: Constantinople et ses institutions de 330 à 451*. Pp. 51–55, 77, 86–92, 320–47; Krautheimer R. *Three Christian Capitals: Topography and Politics*. Berkeley, 1983. Pp. 41–67; Bauer F. A. *Urban Space and Ritual: Constantinople in Late Antiquity* / Brandt J. R., Steen O. *Imperial Art as Christian Art – Christian Art as Imperial Art: Expression and Meaning in Art and Architecture from Constantine to Justinian*. Rome, 2001. Pp. 28–50; Mathews T. F. *Byzantium: From Antiquity to the Renaissance*. New York, 1998. Pp. 17–32; Bassett S. G. *The Urban Image of Late Antique Constantinople*. Pp. 17–97, 121–36; Kolb F. *Herrscherideologie in der Spätantike*. Berlin, 2001. Pp. 80–84.

<sup>37</sup> Eusebius, *V. Const.* 4.71.2. See also, *V. Const.* 1.1.2.

<sup>38</sup> See Frolov A. *La dédicace de Constantinople dans la tradition Byzantine*. Pp. 63–69, 86–88. Cf. Leeb R. *Konstantin und Christus: die Verchristlichung der imperialen Repräsentation unter Konstantin dem Grossen als Spiegel seiner Kirchenpolitik*. Pp. 9–28; Van Dam R. *The Roman Revolution of Constantine*. Pp. 305–09.

<sup>39</sup> See Sivertsev A. *Judaism and Imperial Ideology in Late Antiquity*. Pp. 172–212, for a detailed discussion.

<sup>40</sup> Matthews, *Byzantium*, 21.

<sup>41</sup> See Cameron A. *Circus Factions: Blues and Greens at Rome and Byzantium*. Oxford, 1976. Pp. 180–83.

<sup>42</sup> See Luchterhandt M. *Stolz und Vorurteil: Der Westen und die byzantinische Hofkultur im Frühmittelalter / Visualisierungen von Herrschaft: frühmittelalterliche Residenzen: Gestalt und Zeremoniell: internationales Kolloquium 3/4. Juni 2004 in Istanbul* / Ed. by F. A. Bauer. Istanbul, 2006. Pp. 171–211.

### **Abstract (Russian)**

В статье исследуется влияние образов имперской столицы в литературе и искусстве поздней античности на текст мессианского Иерусалима, который сформировался в еврейской эсхатологии того времени. Особое внимание уделяется сравнительному анализу мифов об основании Константинополя и мессианского Иерусалима. В статье, в частности, анализируется позднеантичный эсхатологический текст “Отот ха-Машиах”. В нем описывается возрождение Иерусалима во времена Мессии, и это описание обнаруживает родство этого текста с легендами об основании Константинополя. В обоих случаях декларируется тесная связь между правителем и имперской столицей. Оба сценария рассматривают обретение и перенос реликвий как важный

элемент в формировании текста города. В обоих случаях реликвии и связанные с ними ритуалы формируют своего рода смысловой и семиотический центр, вокруг которого строится обновленная столица империи. Подобно позднеантичным Риму, Константинополю, Равенне и Аахену, мессианский Иерусалим был городом, построенным в соответствии с константиновской и постконстантиновской эстетической и идеологической программой.