

**BEYOND REUSE:
SPOLIA'S IMPLICATIONS IN THE EARLY CHRISTIAN CHURCH**

by

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Abstract

When Vasari used the term *spoglie* to denote marbles taken from pagan monuments for Rome's Christian churches, he related the Christians to barbarians, but noted their good taste in exotic, foreign marbles.¹ Interest in spolia and colourful heterogeneity reflects a new aesthetic interest in variation that emerged in Late Antiquity, but a lack of contemporary sources make it difficult to discuss the motives behind spolia. Some scholars have attributed its use to practicality, stating that it was more expedient and economical, but this study aims to demonstrate that just as Scripture became more powerful through multiple layers of meaning, so too could spolia be understood as having many connotations for the viewer. I will focus on two major areas in which spolia could communicate meaning within the context of the Church: power dynamics, and teachings.

I will first explore the clear ecumenical hierarchy and discourses of power that spolia delineated through its careful arrangement within the church, before turning to ideological implications for the Christian viewer. Focusing on the Lateran and St. Peter's, this study examines the religious messages that can be found within the spoliated columns of early Christian churches. By examining biblical literature and patristic works, I will argue that these vast coloured columns communicated ideas surrounding Christian doctrine. In addition to proposed ideological functions related to triumph (both in the Church's emergence as a legal religion and the luxurious benefaction of the emperor), and interiorization (the idea that architecture reflected how Christian religious experience was turning inward), I will argue that spoliated columns had the capacity to communicate three major tenets of Christian salvation to their viewers – the concepts of rebirth, the Church's mission of proselytization, and the fulfilment of salvation in an embodiment of Heavenly Jerusalem.

¹ Vasari's *Proemio delle vite* (1550), Firenze, 119-120.

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Introduction

“When you enter [the church], you will be staggered by the variety of the spectacle. Eager as you are to see everything at once, you will depart not having seen anything properly, since your gaze darts hither and thither in your attempt not to leave aught unobserved.”

– Choricus, *Laudatio Marciani*, 1.23.61 (early 6th century)

The churches of Rome are marvellous sites for any visitor to behold, but Rome’s first public churches would have been considered even more magnificent by their contemporary viewers. While pagan temples did not allow laity to enter religious structures, the church was an assembly hall, a place for worshippers to congregate within. These churches were imperially endowed and lavishly decorated. Imagine walking up to a monumental, but plain-looking, structure,² entering first a large colonnaded forecourt, and then proceeding into the structure through any of three to five doors. You do not emerge into a plain building on the inside, but one that plays with the senses. Looking around, the first thing that you notice are large, monolithic columns. They are not the standard white, typical of Classical architecture, but instead are polychrome variegated marbles in the colours of the rainbow: deep dark reds; rich yellows; light greens; white and grey with large strings of green; bright salmon pink; light grey with flecks of white and black. Gazing up at their magnitude, you linger on the large and intricately-carved column capitals, then up the painted walls to the second-storey windows that allow sunlight to filter in, illuminating the variegations and streaking within the marble. As your eyes follow the light, you notice the floor now, decorated in these same colourful and luxurious stones that have been arranged into geometric patterns.³ Upon taking in this play of light and colour, you finally move into the church, through the central nave, or one of the four side aisles. The altar at the end of the structure has caught your eye, silver, and gleaming in the sunlight, in addition to the many silver chandeliers hanging in the aisles to give off light. You take a seat on the floor in one of the aisles, feeling the cool stone beneath your legs, as others filter in through the doors to take their seats on the floor as well.⁴ As the celebrant enters, you smell the incense as it is carried in front of him, and hear the songs of the faithful being chanted. This monumental building, so plain from the outside, is different from any sort of religious

² Kinney (2001a, 128) discusses how the early monumental church carried no external decoration that would invite the passer-by in. Instead, it had the appearance of an imperial audience hall that could only be entered by invitation-only. Most churches were likely built with brick-faced concrete, and then covered in a layer of white stucco for a clean appearance (Krautheimer 1967, 136).

³ *CBCR* V, 45 states that the floor of the Lateran was decorated with a pattern of yellow, *giallo antico* marble squares, and framed by patches darker marbles.

⁴ Mathews 1962, 75; Mathews 1971, 140 tells us that during the Roman mass, the congregation and clergy took their seats prior to the bishop’s dramatic entrance.

experience that you have had; it is an interaction amongst all the senses, potentially transporting you into a mystical realm. "Colour and light more than anything else [bring] this architecture to life."⁵

The polychromy of the columns is so noticeable, because it is such a major departure from Classical idioms of architecture that feature plain, pristine, white columns. Today, these polychrome columns are referred to as *spolia*, architectural or artistic elements that are taken from other structures and reused in other compositions. While the use of *spolia* was not uncommon during the Roman imperial period, it blossomed in late Antiquity, specifically under Constantine (312-337), under whom the first Christian churches were built in Rome. These magnificent structures were built in a very specific moment in history, during a period of transition, when Rome's position as the heart of the empire was beginning to weaken, but also when Christians were enjoying new-found freedom, as they emerged into the public sphere, under the auspices of the first Christian emperor. All of these changes, political, religious, social, and economic, had affects on this emerging building type, creating multiplicities and layers of meaning.

Since using *spolia* was an intentional stylistic choice, it is important to remember that "style is a form of non-verbal communication through doing something in a certain way that communicates information about relative identity."⁶ The stylistic choice of using *spolia* has fluid meanings, depending on the audience, but Constantine's basilica churches were some of the first buildings to use *spolia* extensively, which communicates strong messages with regards to their Christian identity. As Dominic Janes states:

"Such complex visual texts were meant to be understood in a certain way. To sum up, images are symbolic, that is, found meaningful, to a greater or lesser extent; with varying degrees of implicitness and explicitness; provoking evocations of greater or lesser variety and coherence; in accordance, in subsequent periods and to varying extents, with the implicit or explicit understandings and intentions of their creators. It is with such considerations in mind that we may approach the art-historical evidence of late Rome."⁷

In approaching the subject of *spolia* in the early Christian Church, many scholars have examined the development of its use, the practical reasons behind the use of *spolia*, and the imperial connotations of Constantine's benefaction; however, little has been done with regards to religious messages that could be found within the Church's use of *spolia*.

⁵ Krautheimer 1975, 70.

⁶ Wiessner, P. 'Is There a Unity to Style?' in Conkey, M. & Hastorf, C (eds.) *The Uses of Style in Archaeology*. Cambridge: 1990, (105-112) 107, referenced in Janes, 8.

⁷ Janes, 9.

This study will focus specifically on the basilica churches of St. John the Lateran and St. Peter's, since they are the two earliest examples of monumental ecumenical architecture erected under Constantine, and because they are seen as "transformative moments in the history of the use of 'renovated stones'."⁸ Through the lens of exegesis, this study aims to demonstrate that just as Scripture became more powerful through multiple layers of meaning, so too could spolia be understood as having many connotations for the viewer. Specifically, I will first explore the clear ecumenical hierarchy that spolia delineated through its arrangement within the church, before turning to ideological implications for the Christian viewer. In addition to proposed meanings of triumphalism (a term that connotes the Church's victory) and interiorization (the idea that architecture reflected how religious experience was turning inward), I will argue that spoliated columns had the capacity to communicate three major tenets of Christian salvation to their viewers – the concepts of rebirth, the Church's mission of proselytization, and the fulfilment of salvation in an embodiment of Heavenly Jerusalem. I will trace different layers of meaning that can be found within the plans of the Church building, hegemonic implications for the emperor and clergy, and finally the religious messages found within the layout of Constantinian churches in Rome to demonstrate that a study incorporating political, economic, social, and religious contexts can lead to a more nuanced understanding of the complex meanings to be found in early Christian architecture.

Spolia's Etymology: Booty from the Past

Before delving into the various layers of meaning that can be extrapolated from the use of spolia within early Christian churches, it is important to have a basic understanding of how spolia has been examined in the past. Traditionally, the word spolia derives from the Latin *spolium*, meaning hide of an animal, or *spolia*, in the plural, literally the spoils of war, or armour stripped from a fallen enemy. Its etymology connotes victory, triumph, violence, or even legitimate succession.⁹ For Cicero, speaking in the late 1st century BCE, the source of the spolia determines whether the spoliation is acceptable, along with its status within the culture from whence it was removed, the manner in which it was removed, and its use.¹⁰ Cicero argues that spolia denotes a victory, and although anything of the foreign enemy should be fair game, noble generals seize only objects of religious function or significance.¹¹ He

⁸ Kinney 1997, 126.

⁹ Brenk 1987, 103; Kinney 1995, 53.

¹⁰ Kinney 1995, 53, referencing *C. Verrem* 2.5.127; Kinney 1997, 121.

¹¹ Kinney 1995, 53 ns.7-8, referencing *C. Verrem* 2.5. 48, 127; 2.4.54-55, 120-123 (*deos deorum spoliis ornari noluit*).

continues that spolia is to be taken selectively and with restraint, not with barbarian abandonment, and should be dedicated and displayed publicly to relive the glory of victory and to serve as a reminder of the victor's achievements.¹² This Roman understanding of spolia is visible in one of the famous panels from the interior of Arch of Titus in Rome (81 CE), as the Roman army parades through Rome's streets in a victory procession, with spoils from the destruction of Herod's temple in Jerusalem, including prisoners of war, the table for the showbread, and most notably, the menorah.

In late Antiquity, spolia's meaning seems to have continued to have these connotations of victory and booty, since the Theodosian and Justinian law codes do not use the term to describe reused architectural elements, but rather to discuss spoliated buildings (*spoliatae aedes*),¹³ which have been stripped for their ornamentation. In the legal sense, the use of the verb *spoliatio* maintains its negative connotations, focusing on the denudement of dilapidated buildings or pagan temples, as opposed to the practices of reusing architectural ornaments.¹⁴ Reused elements, however, have positive designations; the law codes refer to reused materials as *rediviva saxa* (reborn/renewed stones),¹⁵ suggesting the positive manner in which architectural elements could be reused, or reborn into a new context. These laws surrounding the use of spolia postdate the widespread Constantinian use, and were likely drawn up as a response to it due to the popularity of this new manner of construction, since lawmakers were concerned with preserving civic pride through maintaining public ornamentation.¹⁶

Today, spolia is understood as the incorporation of old monuments or architectural ornamentation into new monuments. This sense of the term is not discussed in ancient sources, because the term in that sense did not exist; rather *rediviva saxa*, was the term used. The first-known use of the term spolia is from the time of Pope Julius II (1503-1513), when a writer refers to St. Peter's as "fatta tutta de spoglie," when referring to the columns within the church.¹⁷ Among the most famous first-known uses of the term are both Raphael (1519) and Vasari (1550), when they use the term *spoglie* to discuss the second century reliefs on the Arch of Constantine, in contrast to the crude and ill-formed fourth century reliefs.¹⁸ Vasari goes on to state that the Christians took marbles from pagan temples,

¹² Kinney 1995, 53 ns.9-11, referencing C. Verrem 2.4.55, 122(suggesting that Verres is a barbarian for not acting with any self-restraint); 2.2.87 (on restoring a statue to the people for public enjoyment); 2.4.78 (*memoria virtutis, monumentum victoriae*, criticizing Verres for taking away the glory of a public victory monument).

¹³ *Cod Theo* 15.1.19, *Cod Ius* VIII.10.6; Alchermes, 167-168; Kinney 1995, 54.

¹⁴ Alchermes, 167-168; Kinney 1995, 54; Kinney 1997, 121.

¹⁵ *Cod Theo* 15.1.19, *Cod Ius* 8.10.6, referenced in Alchermes, 1994, 167; Hansen, 14.

¹⁶ Alchermes; Kinney 1995, 54; Wohl, 100.

¹⁷ *Nota d'anticaglie et spoglie et cose maravigliose et grandesono nella cipta de Roma da vederle volentieri*, ed. A. Fantozzi (Rome 1994), cited in Kinney 1997, 121 n.25; Kinney 2001b, 138.

¹⁸ Vasari 1550, 124; discussed in Alchermes, 168; Kinney 1995, 54 n.15. Raphael also discussed *spoglie* in his description of the Arch of Constantine in a 1519 letter to Pope Leo X. *Raffaello, Gli Scritti. Lettere, firme*,

Figure 1: Gagliardi, Filippo. St. John in Lateran, interior, 1650-1651.

[Image not included due to copyright law. Painting shows a reconstruction of the interior of the basilica of St. John the Lateran (312-318) from within the nave, facing the apse.]

Source: Artstor. Accessed April 14, 2011, <http://library.artstor.org.ezproxy.library.ubc.ca/library/welcome.html#3|search|1|gagliardi20lateran|Multiple20Collection20Search||type3D3126kw3Dga>

monuments, and imperial baths for St. Peter's and S. Maria Maggiore, relating them to barbarians; however he does note their good taste in using exotic, foreign marbles.¹⁹ These examples of the term's use demonstrate its accepted use within the literature by the mid-16th century.

The widespread use of spolia, in the modern sense, began in Rome during the reign of Constantine,²⁰ which is seen on his eponymous arch, and within the basilica of St. John the Lateran, and St. Peter's basilica. While the Arch of Constantine is known for its reuse of second century relief panels, spolia from the 4th century onwards generally comprised reused columns, bases, capitals, and architraves.²¹ In a mid-seventeenth century fresco of the Lateran basilica by Filippo Gagliardi (see fig 1), we can see the exotic marbles to which Vasari refers. We can see the variations in colour, noting the deep green marble along the aisles and the various shades of red along the nave. We can also see the various capitals used; some Ionic, some Corinthian, some Composite, all arranged in no particular order. The reuse of these architectural elements indiscriminately would have been shocking to the ancient viewer, since each order maintained not only specific width to height ratios, but also the types of bases, capitals, and entablature that were required of them, as laid out by Vitruvius.²² Generally, when architectural elements are reused, they are either hidden away in foundations or disguised to look like new.²³ What singles out late Antiquity and the Middle Ages is that spolia was not used to blend in; architectural elements were reused in full view, without changing or disguising them, reflecting a new

sonetti, saggi tecnici e teorici, ed. E. Camesasca (Milan 1993), 330, referenced in Kinney 1997, 122; Elsner 2000, 149; and Kinney 2001b, 138.

¹⁹ Vasari 1550, 119-120, discussed in Kinney 1995, 54n.15.

²⁰ Brenk 1987, 103; Kinney, 1995, 54; Wohl, 85. Spolia was certainly used during the Roman Imperial period, but seems to have been relegated to the private sphere (Kinney 1997, 129).

²¹ Elsner 2000, 155; Kinney 2001b, 140-141.

²² Vitruvius, *De architectura*, 3.5; 4.1, 3; Kinney 1997, 127; Brenk 1999, 105-106; Kinney 2001b, 141.

²³ Ward Perkins 1999, 225.

aesthetic interest in *variatio*, or variation, while also attempting to preserve ancient elements.²⁴ *Variatio* is derived from the Latin rhetorical term *varietas*, which “stands for qualities of variety and multiplicity in eloquence.”²⁵ Ancient authors, such as Quintilian and Cicero, recommended *varietas* when stressing something of importance, since monotony would undermine the attention of the audience.²⁶ Similarly, Augustine discusses how harmony and beauty is achieved through the oppositions of contrary and dissimilar parts, with each element contributing to a more glorious whole.²⁷ These early aesthetic concerns were usually discussed in terms of form and were thus easily transferable to discussions of art and architecture. Harmony was created by focusing on the dissimilarity of individual elements and intervals, to create a rhythmic composition that broke up the monotony of classical constructions.²⁸

Since no extant sources regarding spolia in Late Antiquity have been found that give formal descriptions of these buildings, or rationales behind their reuse, or even theoretical manifestos, Dale Kinney refers to it as “a practice without theory.”²⁹ Nonetheless, there are some sources, which are of help when discussing the use of spolia. The *Liber Pontificalis*, is an important source, compiled in the 6th century, that lists the building campaigns and restorations of the popes, as well as gifts given to the church, including precious metals, and marbles. The entry in the *Liber Pontificalis* concerning Constantine’s contemporary, Pope Sylvester, lists Constantine’s many gifts to the church, including buildings and interior decoration, but unfortunately these descriptions leave out compositional and geometric aspects, as well as their meanings.³⁰ Eusebius also gives detailed accounts of Constantinian buildings, but is reluctant to go into detail about geometric dimensions, whether the work is reused, and why this reuse might be taking place.³¹ In the *Vita Constantini*, Eusebius also includes a letter from Constantine to the bishop of Jerusalem, offering any materials needed to build the church of the Holy Sepulchre.³² Even if Constantine did not write this letter, it reflects a desire to accumulate rare and expensive materials for new Constantinian constructions. While these sources on spolia are few, they are a good starting point from which to approach this complex practice.

²⁴ Ward Perkins 1999, 225; Hansen, 7.

²⁵ Hansen, 173; Brenk 1987, 105.

²⁶ Hansen, 173-4. Cicero, *De oratore*, 2.41.177; Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria*, 8.3.52.

²⁷ *City of God* 11.18; *Of True Religion* 32.59.

²⁸ Riegl, 93; Krautheimer 1978, 129; Hansen, 126, 134, 173-4. For a discussion on the importance of rhythm within Late Antique art, see Riegl, 87ff.

²⁹ Kinney 1995, 53; Ward Perkins 1999, 226-227; Hansen, 31; Brenk 1987, 103; Wohl, 86.

³⁰ Odahl, 9-10; Hansen, 33, referencing *Liber Pontificalis* 34.16-18.

³¹ Hansen, 35.

³² Eusebius VC 3.27-31.

A Little of This, A Little of That: A Brief Historiography

There are very few ancient sources which discuss motives behind the reuse of architectural materials, perhaps because obvious things are generally not written down, as they are taken for granted.³³ As a result, the topic of spolia has been an area of contention for many scholars. It is certain that the practice took place, but scholarship has typically catalogued instances of spolia, or focused on its provenance and the economic reasons for its use, such as the collapse of the imperial marble trade or preservation, but few, as Maria Fabricius Hansen has pointed out in *The Eloquence of Appropriation*, discuss its meaning. There has been a persistent view that late Antiquity was decadent, due to the increased interest in expensive coloured marbles, and yet it was also declining. Jacob Burckhardt, specifically, argued that architects used classical elements as a confession of inferiority, and that they stopped thinking creatively.³⁴ In modern scholarship, there is still intolerance towards spolia, as some see the combination of disparate columns and capitals as disclosing a break from ideals of rationality that did not begin again until the Renaissance.³⁵ Architecturally speaking, ancients strove for an overall harmonious and symmetrical composition, focusing on the perfection of each element, so the use of disparate parts (different colours, or different sizes) suggests to some that the classical aesthetic was failing.³⁶ For example, F.W. Deichmann argues that the two different sets of Composite capitals in the inner and outer rings of S. Constanza in Rome demonstrate that there were not enough identical pieces available for use,³⁷ rather than seeing the variety as a conscious choice. Similarly, Ferdinand Lot states that the use of spolia in Constantine's building programmes reflect "the same hasty character of improvisation as the social reforms of the emperor."³⁸

There is no evidence, however, that the use of spolia began reluctantly. If there was a continued desire for homogeneity, there would certainly have been the means for camouflaging reused elements.³⁹ It is not as if Rome had run out of white marble, especially with the Carraran Luna marble quarries only about 20 miles away.⁴⁰ Instead, there is a marked shift away from conventional white

³³ Hansen, 34; Janes, 3, 5.

³⁴ Burckhardt, 305.

³⁵ Hansen, 12.

³⁶ Hansen, 14, Saradi-Mendlovici, 52.

³⁷ F.W. Deichmann, "Die Spolien in der spätantiken Architektur," SBMünch, Heft 6 (1975), 92; Alchermes, 168 referencing Deichmann 1975, 95, cited in Hansen, 12 n.5.

³⁸ Lot, Ferdinand, *The End of the Ancient World and the Beginnings of the Middle Ages*, New York 1965, 137, cited in Brenk 1987, 104.

³⁹ Hansen, 17.

⁴⁰ The Carraran marble quarries in Northern Italy were opened in the late 1st C BCE under Julius Caesar, and were available in large quantities under Augustus (Strabo 5.2-5; Pliny *NH* 36.14).

marble, towards intricate polychrome marble revetments, and light-reflecting mosaics.⁴¹ Coloured marble was much more expensive than white marble, since most of it could not be quarried domestically. Although most quarries were imperially run, these coloured marbles were extremely expensive, not only due to their rarity, but also because of the exorbitant transport costs associated with them, especially because Romans preferred monolithic column shafts.⁴² Therefore, an interest in polychromy does not suggest necessity or hasty improvisation as Lot had charged, but instead demonstrates an intentional use. Other examples of a late Antique interest in polychromy can be found throughout Rome, at the Baths of Caracalla, the Baths of Diocletian, and the basilica of Maxentius, as well as throughout the empire, most notably at Diocletian's palace in Spalato.

Polychromy was appreciated as a new form of decoration that exuded luxury in a period of social unrest and economic instability. It seems that people wanted change and variety;⁴³ however, it is undeniable that the financial crises of the 3rd century, including system collapse of the imperial marble trade, halted quarrying, and thus played a part in the commencement of widespread architectural reuse.⁴⁴ Since coloured marbles were extremely expensive, and difficult to come by, spolia may have satiated this desire for variety by turning to the imperial stockpiles, or even plundering columns from buildings within the city that had fallen into disuse or had been demolished.⁴⁵ Due to the continuous demand, the imperially owned quarries were aimed at standardized mass production, for the creation of enormous imperial marble stocks.⁴⁶ As a result, the marble yards and stockpiles in Rome, and the nearby port of Ostia, housed many monolithic columns, waiting to be used.⁴⁷ While it is difficult to determine the original dimensions if the columns were recut, if they came from a marble yard, the shafts would likely have been just a little over 30 Roman feet, a standard size, so that they could be worked down to fit the space and finished.⁴⁸ There were five columns of this size found in St. Peter's, suggesting that they had not been trimmed down. Lex Bosman proposes that these column shafts were likely from a stockyard, due to their height, so it was new material, and not spolia, that was being used.⁴⁹ While the

⁴¹ Hansen, 2003, 123.

⁴² Kinney 2001b, 141.

⁴³ Hansen, 17; Brenk 1987, 105; Wohl, 98.

⁴⁴ Wohl, 99; Dodge 76.

⁴⁵ Kinney 1997, 124. For a comprehensive account of the history of the ancient marble trade, see Dodge.

⁴⁶ Waelkens, Paepe, Moens, 16; Dodge 68, 72; Wilson Jones, 55; Bosman, 41. Wilson Jones (155) examines column standardization at length, discussing a trend in standard dimensions in shaft lengths in multiples of 5 & 10ft, and also in multiples of 4ft.

⁴⁷ Fant, 1988a, 152; Fant 1992, 116; Ortolani 34; Kinney 1997, 124.

⁴⁸ Bosman, 41.

⁴⁹ Bosman, 46.

shafts may not have been re-used, they were not newly quarried either, demonstrating that architects were using what was available to them, including these stockpiles and dilapidated structures.

By 312, when Constantine conquered Maxentius just outside of Rome, no official emperor had lived in Rome for over twenty years. Public buildings may have begun to fall into destitution, especially confiscated lands that were owned by the emperor. Since emperors were not present, buildings on imperial land likely stood empty for years, slowly falling into decay.⁵⁰ It may have been less time consuming and more economical to reuse architectural elements from these imperially-owned structures, especially decorative elements like capitals,⁵¹ but one must be mindful that there is little evidence for the destruction of temples and synagogues, and violence towards figural statuary before the reign of Theodosian I (379-95).⁵² Although they were using what was available to them, it seems that the Church made use of these materials in a very specific way, to engage with the viewer, and also to mark out social status and communal identity.

Scholars, such as Beat Brenk, Richard Krautheimer, and Brigitta Wohl, have discussed the practical reasons behind spolia's use, not only including marble shortages,⁵³ but also citing reasons such as lack of skilled workmanship,⁵⁴ the necessity of speed,⁵⁵ or a lack of available funds.⁵⁶ While drawing from stockpiles, or destitute buildings may have been more economical, I do not agree with some scholars who argue that it was used because the emperor did not have the funds to carry out such building programmes. Constantine had a nearly endless supply of wealth, as demonstrated through his many building programmes. Not only did the emperor commission buildings in Rome, including the two monumental churches discussed in this paper, but he also commissioned multiple churches in the Holy Land, including the church of the Holy Sepulchre, as well as founding the new Roman imperial capital, Constantinople. In a letter to Jerusalem's bishop, Constantine states that he wants the Holy Sepulchre to be more magnificent than any building in the city, sparing no expense when it comes to building

⁵⁰ Alchermes, 169; Kinney 1997, 127-128. Archaeological evidence has uncovered four homes in the area surrounding the Lateran, including a house identified as the *domus Faustae*, which was given to the bishop of Rome, and two other homes SW & W of the basilica. Further E, there was another house, built in the tired quarter of the C1 CE (CBCR V, 27).

⁵¹ Capitals would have only been roughed out in quarries and would need to be properly carved and finished, after reaching their destination (Wilson Jones 155). Since so much variation has been found amongst the capitals and bases used in the Lateran and St. Peter's it is likely that these elements were specifically spolia, while the column shafts may have been previously unused.

⁵² Curran 1994, 49; Brown 1997, 49.

⁵³ Bosman, 39.

⁵⁴ Vasari 1550, 124; Berenson; Jones, 357.

⁵⁵ Krautheimer 1967, 129; Krautheimer 1978, 127; Krautheimer 1980, 21, 26; Krautheimer 1993, 542.

⁵⁶ Jones, 357; Lot, 137; Burckhardt, 305.

materials, decoration, or implements,⁵⁷ suggesting that he can procure columns from anywhere in the empire. This does not suggest that the emperor was worried about funds, but instead was lavishing his wealth on the Empire, as a good emperor should do, and focusing his attention on the glorification of the Church.

While spolia may have been a practical means of obtaining expensive polychrome building materials, its use has also been interpreted as a means of building on the prestige of imperial tradition and benefaction. Some scholars have interpreted Constantine's imperial benefaction, as seen in his funding of these structures and donations of costly coloured marbles, as representative of 'triumphalism,' a term that connotes the Church's victory as it finally emerged into the public sphere after three centuries of persecution, and did so with the benefaction and good will of the emperor.⁵⁸ Wohl argues that just as literary spolia was common and praised as bearing the prestige of rhetoric tradition, spolia may have been used in order to build on the prestigious tradition of previous Roman emperors, and to display imperial presence.⁵⁹ Other scholars agree, stating that spoliated columns and capitals were not used simply because of their valuable raw materials, but because they were symbolic of Rome and the emperor, just as borrowed words from great writers of Antiquity were symbolic of the greater, overall tradition.⁶⁰ In addition to reflecting the traditions of the past, spolia has also been thought to have been used as a means to preserve Antique fragments that were part of declining monuments, by placing them within a new context.⁶¹

Conversely, in *The Eloquence of Appropriation*, Hansen proposes that we need to think of cultural expressions as interacting with, or responding to, world views. Thus, the way that we see the world is manifest in how we construct images or buildings.⁶² She contends that style and aesthetics carry meaning, and that the style and aesthetics of spolia should be studied in terms of the messages that they communicate. Hansen understands the heterogeneity of spolia as reflecting a Christian shift in worldview, from the homogeneous classical architectural idiom to one of metaphors, internalization and variety, characteristic of early Christianity.⁶³ In *The Eloquence of Appropriation*, she details some of the many ways that spolia can be interpreted, including the translation of meanings that could take place in moving an object from pagan to Christian settings; how power or triumph could be communicated

⁵⁷ Eusebius VC 3.27-31.

⁵⁸ Onians 1988, 59; Wohl, 103; Liverani, 22; Most, 11.

⁵⁹ Wohl, 102-103.

⁶⁰ Alchermes, 170; Kinney 2001b, 140; Liverani, 22; Most, 11.

⁶¹ Brenk 1987, 105-106; Curran 1994, 46; Kinney 2001b, 140.

⁶² Hansen, 37.

⁶³ Hansen, 39, 181ff.

through the use of spolia; and how numbers were significant to the Church, to name a few. Her work has been invaluable to this study; however, despite her thorough examination, she does not explore spolia's associations with a developed hierarchy within the church building, nor with Christian teachings.

Introduction of Thesis

The many interpretations of spolia reflect how complex the topic is. As Umberto Eco argues in *The Semiotics of Architecture*, architecture is an informational media; it has the capacity to communicate both denotative and connotative ideas.⁶⁴ The communication of ideas changes depending on the context, be it political, social, economic, or religious, which suggests that the possible meanings could be virtually endless. Acknowledging these possibilities, this study seeks to examine the multiplicities of meaning that can be found in early Christian architecture, specifically focusing on the spoliated columns, since, as Lex Bosman points out, “they made up the essence of the architecture of the early Christian basilica.”⁶⁵ Due to the multivalent nature of meaning, ideas overlap, but in such a way as to demonstrate a complex intertwining of messages communicated through spolia. I am focusing on the Lateran and St. Peter's basilicas, not only because they are two of the earliest Constantinian foundations, but also due to their different uses: the Lateran as the bishop's cathedral, and St. Peter's as a martyrion and pilgrimage church, drawing pilgrims from all over the empire as a sacred space, since it was believed that a saint in Heaven could be present on earth, within his tomb.⁶⁶ While their uses and plans differ, spolia can be seen as presenting a variety of messages to the viewer, be they emperor, clergy, laity, or even a pagan who knows nothing of Christianity.

Following an examination of the emergence of public Christian architecture in relation to emerging liturgical practices, and a discussion of the Lateran and St. Peter's, I will then turn to two major areas in which spolia can use understood to communicate meaning within the context of the Church: power dynamics, and teachings. I will first examine the ideological and hegemonic messages concerning the emperor and clergy that can be found within the purposeful and carefully designed use of spolia in these two monuments. While scholarship has looked at how columns may have marked out important spaces within the church, a comprehensive look at how space is working within these basilica churches, to create messages of power and to mark out social identity, has not been discussed. Building on these meanings, I will then turn to a discussion of general religious meanings that may be elicited in spolia's materiality and its architectural position, such as the Christian concepts of triumphalism and

⁶⁴ Eco.

⁶⁵ Bosman, 18.

⁶⁶ Brown, *Cult of the Saints*, 3; Yasin 25.

interiorization. Following these broad meanings, I will then use the model of exegesis (interpreting scripture literally, figuratively, and symbolically), as an additional way to access meaning in the spoliated columns. By understanding the ideas surrounding metaphor that emerged as part of the Christian practice of exegesis, I will demonstrate that religious teachings related to salvation can also be associated with the spolia used in early Christian churches. Three major tenets of the Christian doctrine of salvation are messages about re-birth into a new Christian spiritual life, the Church's aim to evangelize throughout the earth, and the fulfilment of salvation, as understood in the book of Revelation as Heavenly Jerusalem. Although there are no extant sources that discuss the Roman liturgy in this specific transitional period, I will use biblical texts and commentaries by early Church fathers, such as Augustine, Chrysostom, and Eusebius, to propose that the spoliated columns in early Christian churches may have reminded the Christian viewer of these three important teachings.⁶⁷

The study of this period is extremely important, since the political and ideological changes that came with the growing acceptance of Christianity and Constantine formed a background for the early Christian and medieval practice of building with spolia.⁶⁸ The early fourth century marked the Church's emergence and new favour within the public sphere. In this period, the Church is moving from relative obscurity and secrecy into the public sphere; from persecution to benefaction; from relatively small numbers to large conversions. This is a rather large leap, and as a result, many changes were made to keep up, changes that become cemented in later years, and continue into the Medieval period.⁶⁹ While churches may have first used spolia to demonstrate the emperor's benefaction, and to display their new wealth, my proposed additional meanings may have been read into spolia's use rather quickly. Just as stained glass could be used as a teaching tool or reminder to the congregation, I posit that the spoliated marble columns may be working in a similar fashion, as a visual aid for the clergy and laity, with regards to the doctrine of salvation and its major teachings. The silence in contemporary sources may not mean that that it was not considered in this way; it may simply be that their meaning was taken for granted, as we have seen above with regards to the motives behind spolia's use. While spolia has certainly been discussed as a multivalent material, the idea that it could communicate ideas surrounding doctrine has been neglected. I hope to add another set of meanings to this already rich complexity.

⁶⁷ Chrysostom (b.349) discusses how the sermon comprised of three readings of the Scriptures: the Old Testament prophets, Acts or an Epistle, and a reading from the Gospels (*In epis. ad Hebraeos, Homilia 8, 4*, PG 63, 75 referenced in Mathews 1971, 148), suggesting that biblical texts would certainly have been available to bishops, especially those with a relationship with the emperor.

⁶⁸ Hansen, 112.

⁶⁹ Krautheimer 1975, 40.

Let There be Light! The Emergence of Public Christian Architecture

As discussed above, public Christian architecture emerged in a very specific moment in history. As the legend is told, on the eve of Constantine's battle against Maxentius at the Milvian Bridge, on October 28, 312, Constantine had a vision of a cross floating in the sky, with the words "*in hoc signo vinces*" (by this sign, you shall conquer).⁷⁰ After his victory, Constantine seems to have honoured the Christian god as any previous emperor would honour their chosen deity: with religious dedications.⁷¹ He lavished much wealth on the Church, commissioning at least ten monumental churches throughout the empire,⁷² because he seems to have genuinely believed that his victory at the Milvian Bridge proved Christ's existence and favour.⁷³ While traditional Roman religion took place at altars, in front of a temple, which was understood as the house of the god's physical presence within their cult statue, Christians, on the other hand, worshipped corporately, in small assembly halls and renovated homes, usually commemorating a holy spot, or incorporating the remains of private houses, which were the original meeting places of the early Church.⁷⁴ Unfortunately, our knowledge of the Mass is scanty up until the 6th century, due to regional variations, and changes that take place throughout the Church year,⁷⁵ however, a quick diachronic exploration of early Christian architecture and liturgy will give us a foundation from which to proceed, in attempting to understand the implications of Christianity's emergence into the public sphere under the emperor.

Looking Back: The Church's Liturgical and Architectural History

At its origins (c.50-150), the Christian community had neither the means, organization, or interest in building ecclesial structures. Christianity was quite public, proselytizing in markets or synagogue,⁷⁶ but communities seem to have settled down following the deaths of the apostles in the mid-40s, and Christian meetings became more private, meeting wherever the occasion suited for Sunday morning prayers, and their evening communal agape meal.⁷⁷ Meetings generally took place in

⁷⁰ Eusebius *VC* 1.29; Krautheimer 1980, 3; Curran 2000, 67.

⁷¹ Krautheimer 1967, 128; Krautheimer 1993, 509, 524.

⁷² The Lateran, St. Peter's, SS. Peter & Marcellinus, & S. Croce in Gerusalemme in Rome; Hagia Sophia and the church of the Twelve Apostles in Constantinople; the cathedral in Trier; the church at Mamre; and the Church of the Nativity & the Holy Sepulchre in the Holy Land.

⁷³ Eusebius *VC*, 1.29, 32, 40; Eusebius *HE* 10.5.15; Krautheimer 1983, 31, 35; Alföldi, 21, 38; Odahl 1. Elliott provides an in depth exploration of Constantine's religious development.

⁷⁴ Krautheimer 1983, 2.

⁷⁵ Jungmann, 33. Mathews 1962, 86.

⁷⁶ Acts 2-5, 17-18 details the Apostle's proselytization in synagogues and markets in Athens, Corinth, Thessalonica, and Berea.

⁷⁷ Krautheimer 1975, 24.

the home of a wealthy parishioner, demonstrating that there was no pressing need for architectural specialization and spatial articulation in this period.⁷⁸ The dining room (*triclinium*) was the most suitable room for gatherings, as it was the largest in the house, allowing for the performance of the Church's fundamental ritual, the Lord's Supper.⁷⁹ As communities grew, the Lord's Supper was abbreviated into a new mode of Christian ritual that could be self-contained,⁸⁰ allowing for architectural openness to perform the ritual and more space for worshippers by removing tables from the room.⁸¹ The abbreviated ritual, the Eucharist, was very direct; there was no circumstance or pomp, such as music or special garments, because the focus was on the direct communal act of partaking in the body of Christ. The congregation would process to the front, where the celebrant was seated by the altar, to bring bread for the offering, and then return to the altar for communion after the bread and wine had been blessed.⁸² A few prayers may have been said, but the entire meeting was quick and simple, since the Christian congregation was constantly in danger, due to the periodic states of imperially sanctioned persecution. Despite their lives being in danger, meeting on a weekly basis to partake in the Eucharist was "the supreme positive affirmation before God of the Christian life,"⁸³ their act of obedience to God, in recognition of Christ's sacrifice.⁸⁴

Christians at that time had a fluid concept of sacred space, and were not attached to specific buildings. Rejecting the pagan idea that the divine could be found within objects or special places, Christians believed that God was present with the community of believers, transforming an ordinary space into a sacred one through their actions.⁸⁵ God was understood as a being that could not be contained within a structure or shrine. Instead, the Church was conceived as the congregation, although many architectural metaphors were, in fact, employed, while the idea of a temple was relegated to the realm of metaphor.⁸⁶

By 150 CE, the growing Christian assembly was beginning to require more specialized spaces, and domestic buildings were adapted for strictly religious use, while maintaining their exterior

⁷⁸ White, 19, 10. White, 16, 104, discusses Paul's Aegean mission. Gregory Dix, perhaps retrojecting, proposes that the chair of the paterfamilias was turned into the bishop's throne, that heads of families became presbyters, & clansmen were laity, with women standing behind screens, and the catechumens at the back, by the door, where slaves & clients would have previously stood (19-23).

⁷⁹ 1 Cor 11:23; Jungmann, 3; White, 107-109.

⁸⁰ Jungmann, 5, 10; White, 109, 119.

⁸¹ Jungmann, 10; White, 120.

⁸² Dix, 141-142. For a hypothesized description of the early Christian liturgy, see Dix, 141-143.

⁸³ Dix, 144, 147. Being a Christian was a capital offense from the time of Nero (c.65 CE).

⁸⁴ Dix, 153.

⁸⁵ Yasin, 14.

⁸⁶ Ephesians 2:19-22; 1Cor 3:10-17; Yasin, 16-17. For early commentaries on the denial of a sacred space in early Ch'ty, see Minucius Fleix, *Oct.* 32; Clement of Alexandria, *Strom.* 7.5.

appearance.⁸⁷ This new type of structure, called the *domus ecclesia* (ecclesiastical home), was usually adapted from homes where the congregation had been meeting.⁸⁸ The *domus ecclesia* at Dura Europos provides evidence of this type of adapted architectural form, as they modified one room to be a baptistery, with a baptismal font along the back wall; knocked out the wall of the dining room to create a larger assembly space; and put benches along the courtyard, with shutters between the two rooms,⁸⁹ perhaps for catechumens to sit and listen without observing the liturgy. These types of changes suggest that liturgy was developing into something concrete, as they reflect a need for altering space for the sake of the ritual or actions of the assembly, and designate a specific space for an act.⁹⁰

By 260 CE, when the emperor Gallienus conceded that Christians could meet in their assemblies,⁹¹ dogma was becoming more clearly defined, and Church fathers began to emerge, writing on Christian exegesis and philosophy.⁹² A recognizable hierarchy within the Church grew into a professional clergy, with prominent leaders, who were singled out for attack during persecutions, as were their scriptures.⁹³ Although the Church was allowed to meet under Gallienus' edict, Christianity was still not a legal religion. Thus, while the Church had been developing, and was a semi-public institution, Christians were still in relative danger.⁹⁴ Although churches maintained a domestic exterior, having not yet turned to monumental architecture, a house building being used for assembly would not have gone unnoticed.⁹⁵ Writing during the great persecution, Lactantius reports that Diocletian's first act was ordering the destruction of Nicomedia's church building, so he could watch it burn down from his palace;⁹⁶ however, Nicomedia's church seems to have been a special case, since most edicts of toleration provided for the restoration of church properties confiscated during the persecution, implying that many churches were merely confiscated and closed instead of destroyed.⁹⁷

⁸⁷ Using a domestic space for religious use was completely common in Antiquity, as households worshipped the familial gods in a shrine in the courtyard. Additionally, White examines other religions that adapted domestic structures for ritual use, such as the sanctuary of Zeus Theos at Dura Europos c.114-120; sanctuaries to Magna Mater and Attis, mithraea, and synagogues (40ff).

⁸⁸ Krautheimer 1975, 26; White, 20, 78-79, 114.

⁸⁹ White, 110-113, 121-123; Dix, 141.

⁹⁰ White, 115-6; While the *domus ecclesia* was typical by the 3rd century, changes progressed at an uneven pace, with urban developments occurring prior to those in rural areas (White m126). See Tert, *Apol*, 39 for a discussion of what the Church does when assembled together.

⁹¹ Dix, 148.

⁹² Krautheimer 1975, 25.

⁹³ Brown 2003, 62.

⁹⁴ Dix, 148.

⁹⁵ White, 122-123.

⁹⁶ Lactantius, *De mortibus persecutorum* 12.4-5, referenced in White, 130.

⁹⁷ White, 134.

Architecturally speaking, these church structures were evolving to better suit the needs of the congregation.⁹⁸ This step in the evolution of early Christian architecture is what L. Michael White terms the *aula ecclesia* (the ecclesiastical hall), when the exterior resembles a house, but the interior was designed as a single hall with no demarcations of space.⁹⁹ In Rome, the best example of an *aula ecclesia* is S. Crisogono, built in Trastevere c.310.¹⁰⁰ Originally a rectangular hall with no side aisles or partitions, S. Crisogono resembled a warehouse with exterior porticoes, and did not take on the form of a basilica church until it was remodelled in the 5th century, with the addition of an apse, a crypt, and a partition to form a narthex.¹⁰¹ Spatially, it is clear that interior arrangements were becoming more defined, focusing longitudinally on the altar.¹⁰² Even congregational seating had evolved hierarchies of segregation. Krautheimer proposes that in Rome, men and women sat on opposite sides of the church room,¹⁰³ while in Syria, the bishop and his presbyters were seated on a platform, with men sitting in the front, followed by women, then mothers and children along the sides (presumably the back).¹⁰⁴ It is clear that as the Church grew, a formal hall developed with segregated spaces for the different types of worshippers, constructing different social identities within the Church based on gender, class, and status within the Church.

Finally, the liturgy seems to have continued to solidify after its emergence in the 4th century, due to what Jungmann terms a Roman sense of order, which encouraged the fixing of rituals.¹⁰⁵ Documents from the 4th century show that the Mass began with an oration by the priest, over the sacrificial offering, followed by lessons and then a general prayer for the Church. Once the catechumens were dismissed, the priest performed the mystery of the Eucharist (Mass of the Faithful), made another oration over the congregation, and then dismissed the congregation.¹⁰⁶

⁹⁸ Krautheimer 1975, 37; White, 20, 22.

⁹⁹ White, 129-131. White talks about late 3rd and early 4th century examples at Parentium, Italy; in Qirkbize in Coele-Syria; and Aquileia (White, 127-136). While his discussion has not received much attention, it seems like a logical step, and has been received well in print by Odahl, 8 n11 and Yasin, 22 n22.

¹⁰⁰ Krautheimer 1975, 37-9; White, 134.

¹⁰¹ White, 134. The most famous example is the cathedral at Tyre rebuilt by the bishop Paulinus in 317. Since it was built during the Constantinian period and Eusebius refers to it as a temple, it has been assumed that the structure was a basilica, but it could not have been, because it was missing the apse, the sanctuary of the church. Instead, it seems to have been an elaborated *aula ecclesia*, with a forecourt, an external portico, a triportal main entrance, and annexes for special functions, like a baptistery (Eusebius HE 10.4.1, 33-42; White, 136; Krautheimer 1967, 130; Krautheimer 1978, 125).

¹⁰² White, 137-138.

¹⁰³ Krautheimer 1977, 26.

¹⁰⁴ Tertullian, *On Repentance* 7, referenced in Krautheimer 1975, 26; Cyprian, *Didascalia Apostolorum*; White, 124, 138.

¹⁰⁵ Jungmann, 44-45.

¹⁰⁶ Jungmann, 43; Maximos, *Mystagogia*, ch14 PG 91, 692-693, referenced in Mathews 1971, 152.

Constantine's Favour: An Emerging Institution

After the Edict of Milan in 313, Christians throughout the empire were now able to meet publicly. Their new legal status created a huge shift in how Christians thought about sacrality and liturgy. As it emerged, the Church developed more ceremonial rituals and began to conceive of specific locations of sacrality, focusing on sites of the Gospels in the East, and martyrdoms in the West.¹⁰⁷ Although monumental ecumenical architecture emerged under Constantine, we must be mindful that it was still normal for congregations meet in homes or halls,¹⁰⁸ but congregations could be more open about their existence. This new freedom brought with it new challenges, as the emerging Church was finally becoming a large-scale public institution, after 300 years of developing their own independent traditions and rituals.¹⁰⁹ One major concern was space, because the Church embraced all nations and classes.¹¹⁰ One must remember the immediate appeal of a saviour god who offered eternal life, since there was so much uncertainty surrounding death in the ancient world.¹¹¹ This advantage was multiplied through Constantine's benefaction and favouring of Christian elites for administrative positions, as well as its simple style and plain language that made it accessible to the masses, especially after Christianity was legalized, and no longer a capital offense. Peter Brown agrees with Augustine in attributing Christianity's popularity to the Church's attention to the poor, and the way that it flouted upper-class culture, by evangelizing with simple, understandable words and divine authority, rather than traditional high rhetoric that very few of the lower classes could understand.¹¹² These growing numbers of converts made space a very real concern to the late Antique Church.

The conversion of a temple into a late Antique church was rare because it was not only difficult ideologically, but structurally, since the interior *cella* was usually too small for use as a congregational structure, even with its impressive exterior.¹¹³ The development of the *aula ecclesia*, reflecting the Church's growing numbers during the 3rd century, gave architects a starting point. Throughout Constantine's reign, part of his building policy was to work with local leaders. We must remember that

¹⁰⁷ Yasin, 14-15, 24.

¹⁰⁸ Brandt, 110.

¹⁰⁹ Momigliano, 13. Momigliano goes on to that that the Church was a "state within the state" (14), having developed its own beliefs, loyalties, hierarchies, and rules.

¹¹⁰ Brown 1978, 19; Brown 1992, 74.

¹¹¹ Janes, 46.

¹¹² Augustine Confessions 6.5.8; Brown 1992, 74 Brown goes on to say that people could see God's providence in all levels of Roman society, through the simplistic language of the Scriptures, the diversity of congregations, the care for the poor, and the lack of culture that Christianity's heroes exhibited (76).

¹¹³ Ward-Perkins 1999, 234; Krautheimer 1975, 41; Caseau, 38; Odahl 8. Ward-Perkins (235) goes on to say that one of the reasons that the Parthenon was maintained for so long, was because it was large enough to be converted into a Christian church with minimal alterations.

Constantine visited Rome only three times throughout his career;¹¹⁴ he would not know much about Rome's terrain, the state of the Church, the number of pilgrims expected annually, the exact rites carried out by the Church that would dictate form, and many other details. As a result, it is likely that he worked with the bishop of Rome, offering the funds and any materials needed to erect imperial churches, like the Lateran and St. Peter's.¹¹⁵ In a letter to bishop Makarios of Jerusalem, Constantine essentially designates the bishop as his representative in the church's construction, telling him that he wants the church of the Holy Sepulchre to be more magnificent than any building in the city, and that he will personally donate any materials needed to make that happen, drawing on the *fiscus* (public government revenue) as necessary, and requesting any precious extras, such as columns, or marble veneers, or precious metals of the emperor himself, who would furnish them from his private funds, the *res privata*.¹¹⁶ A similar procedure would have been followed in Rome, such that the bishop designed a church to his liking, and would then have worked with a local or imperial architect to realize this plan; however, Krautheimer posits that the largely-pagan Senate would not have allowed for churches to be charged to the *fiscus*.¹¹⁷ Instead, it seems that the Roman bishop and imperial architect would have requested workmen and materials from Constantine, charging the entire construction to his private funds, the *res privata*.¹¹⁸ Evidence of Constantine's donations of land, decorations, funding of maintenance and service are all listed in the *Liber Pontificalis*, presumably taken directly from the original deeds, demonstrating that Constantine's basilica churches in Rome were largely donated from the emperor's own coffers.¹¹⁹ Since the Roman bishop knew his community, and likely carried out the liturgy within an *aula ecclesia*, the basilica was an ideal prototype to meet Rome's congregational needs (specifically to partake in the Eucharist) on such a large, magnificent, and now public scale, because of its large open spaces, in which many people could assemble and process, and its varied functions and

¹¹⁴ Krautheimer 1983, 39; Brenk 1987, 105; Krautheimer 1993, 523. Constantine visited only three times, in 312-3, 315, and 326, & never stayed for longer than four months. Last time there was a break btw emperor & Senate, likely because they refused to allow Rome to become his Christian cap (Krautheimer 1993, 523).

¹¹⁵ Krautheimer 1967, 139; Krautheimer 1993; Bosman, 23.

¹¹⁶ Eusebius VC 3.26-31; Krautheimer 1993, 513-516, 520; Krautheimer 1967, 139. Eusebius VC 2.46 discusses how the building project was paid by the *fiscus*.

¹¹⁷ By drawing from public funds, instead of Constantine's own wealth, the emperor was raising the Church to the status of a State religion, since mystery cults, such as those to Mithras or Magna Mater, were accepted religions, but were not recognized as those falling under the jurisdiction of the State. As a result, any Mithraea or temples of Magna Mater were private dedications (Krautheimer 1993, 510).

¹¹⁸ Krautheimer 1993, 520.

¹¹⁹ *Liber Pontificalis* 34 (Loomis 47-57); Krautheimer 1993, 520-522.

forms, since it could be used as an imperial throne-room, a court of justice, or simply a covered market or money-exchange hall.¹²⁰

Specifically, builders drew on the imperial audience hall, with its singular focus; examples of which include Constantine's audience hall at Trier, and the Basilica Nova in Rome. The imperial audience hall seems to have been a logical choice, as the audience hall had been gaining ever religious overtones in the 4th century, as the emperor's faithful congregated to adore him and offer effigies to him.¹²¹ The word basilica is derived from the Greek term βασιλευς, meaning king. As a result, the use of the basilica structure, with its imperial connotations, would have alluded both to the Church's associations with the emperor, and also to the idea that the church structure functioned as the earthly throne room of Christ, the emperor of Heaven.¹²² By 314, Eusebius began to use Roman imperial terminology, such as law-giver, sovereign, and *basileus* of the universe, when discussing Christ.¹²³ In the apse mosaic at the church of S. Pudenziana (c.390), Christ is shown in gold and purple robes, flanked by apostles in senatorial dress, evoking these close ties between Church and emperor, religion and State.

Christians maintained the basilica's general structure, as an oblong, timber-roofed hall, with a longitudinal axis, placing the entrances opposite the apse. The large space allowed for movement along the longitudinal axis and the ability to enlarge the church by adding a second aisle if needed.¹²⁴ Similar to a Roman audience hall, the apse held the focus of the ritual, evolving from the site of the emperor's throne flanked by seats for courtiers, to that of the bishop's throne flanked by benches for clergy, with an altar directly in front of the apse, as the locus of the liturgy.¹²⁵ In a comparison between the Lateran and Constantine's imperial basilica in Trier, three major changes are discernable. First, there is a shift in architectural support from concrete vaults and piers, prevalent in late Antiquity,¹²⁶ likely due to the collapse of marble trade and financial feasibility of concrete,¹²⁷ to marble columns, similar to earlier basilicas, such as the Basilica Ulpia in the Roman Forum, built under Trajan in the early second century. This shift to using columns again, when the imperial quarries had largely shut down, makes the material an even more precious commodity, suggesting that there was a clear agenda at flaunting imperial wealth, or at least giving the illusion of it. Since a renewed interest in coloured marble became prevalent in the late third century, it is possible that the emperors were attempting to demonstrate

¹²⁰ Toynbee & Ward-Perkins, 211; Mathews 1971, 3; Krautheimer 1975, 41.

¹²¹ Krautheimer 1967, 123, 125; Bellinger, 288-289; Krautheimer 1978, 127; Krautheimer 1983, 18.

¹²² Krautheimer 1967, 121; Krautheimer 1975, 40; Krautheimer 1983, 18-20; Armstrong, 7.

¹²³ Eusebius *HE* 10.4, 16; Krautheimer 1978, 127; Krautheimer 1987, 23.

¹²⁴ Armstrong, 9.

¹²⁵ Odahl, 8; Mathews 1999, 94.

¹²⁶ Onians 1988, 70; Hansen, 138; Wohl, 104.

¹²⁷ Dodge, 76; Kinney 2001b, 143.

stability and security by being able to procure said marbles, as if to show that the chaos of the third century had come to an end. Secondly, these columns create a nave and two aisles, focusing the viewer's attention on the apse, while adding space for the large congregation.¹²⁸ While the nave would have received a lot of light from the clerestory windows, the aisles would have been comparatively darker, adding to the emphasis on the nave, which is especially important, because it is thought that laity gathered in the aisles, overflowing into the nave, through which the clergy would process.¹²⁹ Finally, a transept was added at the west side of the building further emphasizing the altar.¹³⁰ The transept created a symbolic floor plan of a Latin cross,¹³¹ and also allowed for what has come to be called 'triumphal arches': one on the apsidal wall, the other on the transept wall, creating a distinct focus on the altar below.

In a discussion on spolia, Jaś Elsner states that like the Old and New Testaments, 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."¹³² This brief discussion of the development of early Christian architecture demonstrates that the imperial basilica was not used simply because it could hold large groups of people. Instead, the decision to draw on this imperial prototype suggests that the Church had deeply rooted traditions with regards to both their liturgical practice (which dictated the necessary structure of their sacred spaces), and their spatial needs. While the Church was adapting the *aula ecclesia* under Constantine, it was drawing on their religious traditions of the past 300 years, and while also adapting a Roman public building, validating it and making its existence more meaningful through its new associations with the contemporary Christian community. Another layer of meaning is added when we consider the implications of adapting an imperial audience hall for Christian use. These ideological implications will be discussed in depth below, but for now, we must realize that the structure of the new Christian basilica church was drawing both on their own rich religious traditions and those of imperial structures as well.

St. John the Lateran

The Lateran and St. Peter's basilica are prime examples of this new building style that merged the *aula ecclesia* and the imperial audience hall. The church of St. John the Lateran, constructed from

¹²⁸ Krautheimer 1983, 20.

¹²⁹ *CBCR* V 227, 250; Krautheimer 1975, 47, 60; Bosman, 26.

¹³⁰ Odahl, 11; Hansen, 129.

¹³¹ Odahl 18-19.

¹³² Elsner 2000, 176.

312-318, is Constantine's thanksgiving offering for his victory over Maxentius at the Milvian Bridge in 312.¹³³ The first known Christian edifice to use spolia extensively, the Lateran was built as the seat of the Bishopric, and was thus, the most important church in the city, with resident clergy to perform weekly Mass and celebrations at Christmas and Easter.¹³⁴ Its monumental design, almost 300 Roman feet (91m) long and 100 Roman feet (30m) tall, was designed to inspire awe and hold upwards of 3 000 worshippers, demonstrating a large Christian population in Rome in the early 4th century.¹³⁵ In Antiquity, the Lateran was also known as the *Basilica Constantiniana*¹³⁶ to denote Constantine's patronage (which was common in Antiquity), and because the church was built on his privately-owned land, at the outskirts of the city, near the Aurelian wall, since Constantine could not afford to alienate the pagan majority by building a ecumenical monument in the heart of a predominantly pagan city.¹³⁷ While the church was constructed within the city walls, it was outside of the *pomerium*, the sacred boundary of the city that was marked off by the Servian wall,¹³⁸ maintaining enough distance so as to not agitate the still pagan majority within the city of Rome. Although it was outside of the sacred boundary, Christianity was considered an easily transferable religion, in that there were very few sacred spaces until the 4th century; Christians believed that as long as there was a group of believers present, God could communicate with them, sacralising the space wherever they met.¹³⁹

This land was part of the imperial green belt, having been confiscated from the Laterani family in the 1st century,¹⁴⁰ which lends its name to the monumental structure. The land had also held the barracks of Maxentius' recently defeated imperial horse guards,¹⁴¹ making the location also significant inasmuch as it marked the building as a victory monument. Sources from the 4th and 5th centuries discuss how builders ensured that pagan sites were extirpated before Christian construction. Eusebius, for example, details how Constantine made sure that even the classical foundations, on which the

¹³³ CBCR V 1977, 89; Krautheimer 1983, 12; Brenk 1987, 104; Odahl, 5, 10; Wohl, 87.

¹³⁴ CBCR V 1977, 89; Krautheimer 1967, 121; Krautheimer 1983, 12; Brenk 1987, 104; Odahl, 5, 10; Wohl, 87.

¹³⁵ Armstrong 6; Krautheimer 1978, 125-126; Krautheimer 1983, 28. Krautheimer estimates that the Christian community in Rome reached 30-50 000 members by 250 (K 75, 25).

¹³⁶ Olof Brandt discusses in detail how the basilica took the donor's name, similar to earlier privately funded basilicas (Iulia, Aemilia), because the basilica church was not considered a temple in the Roman sense of the term (111ff).

¹³⁷ *Liber Pontificalis* 34.1 (Loomis 47); CBCR V, 15; Krautheimer 1980, 21; Krautheimer 1983, 2. When Constantine became a Christian, the civilization was largely still pagan (Bowerstock 301).

¹³⁸ Krautheimer 1983, 29.

¹³⁹ Matthew 18:20; 1 Cor 3:16; 2Cor 6:16; John 4:21ff; Augustine *Sermon*, 337; Brown 2003, 14; Caseau, 22, 41-42.

¹⁴⁰ CBCR V, 26; Krautheimer 1983, 15.

¹⁴¹ Krautheimer 1980, 21; Krautheimer 1983, 15; Odahl, 10. CBCR V, 197-203 describes an Ionic cap under the nave that was dedicated to the *Castra Equitum Singularium*.

sanctuary of Venus sat, were removed before constructing the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem.¹⁴² Perhaps the site was deliberately chosen, not only because it was imperial property, but also because it previously held the horse barracks of Maxentius' men. In this light, Constantine may have been removing all traces of his predecessor, before constructing a monument to his victory and the god whom he believed had helped him to achieve it.

Although the Lateran underwent considerable restorations in the Middle Ages,¹⁴³ Filippo Gagliardi's fresco of the Lateran basilica (see fig 1) is a helpful source in reconstructing the Lateran's interior, when corroborated with archaeological evidence, despite some details being incorrect, such as his rendering of the entablature as medieval arches, when it was actually trabeated (straight).¹⁴⁴ The Lateran's nave featured thirty-eight columns of red granite from Aswan, Egypt, two of which were reused to flank the triumphal architecture in the 15th century rebuilding.¹⁴⁵ Various capitals, including Ionic, Corinthian and Composite, seem to have been paired co-axially across the nave; this first known instance of such variation is confirmed by multiple sources, including Gagliardi's fresco, sketches made by Renaissance artists, and modern excavations.¹⁴⁶ Conversely, the arched aisles featured a series of forty-two *verde antico* columns from Thessaly, twenty-one on each side.¹⁴⁷ These green speckled columns were reused again by Borromini to flank aediculae featuring the twelve apostles in renovations that he carried out in the 17th century.¹⁴⁸ Finally, Constantine donated four bronze columns to decorate the triumphal arch, in addition to gilding the apse with an aniconic mosaic of gold tesserae, and a fastigium, a large silver sculptural screen used to separate the church from the sanctuary, which was decorated with silver sculptures of Christ and angels facing the clergy, and Christ with the twelve apostles facing the laity.¹⁴⁹ The *Liber Pontificalis* also notes that the emperor donated silver altars with gold and silver implements, and gold and silver chandeliers.¹⁵⁰ Gagliardi's fresco gives us a brief glance into the incredible luxury of the building, reconstructing for us the intricate play of coloured marbles, and shimmering light bouncing off of the many gold and silver decorations in the cathedral.

¹⁴² Eusebius VC 3.27-31; Ward-Perkins 1999, 233; Krautheimer 1983, 2.

¹⁴³ Hansen, 43 n.66.

¹⁴⁴ Wohl, 88; Hansen, 43.

¹⁴⁵ CBCR V, 83; Kinney 2001b, 144; Wohl, 89-90; Bosman, 47.

¹⁴⁶ CBCR V, 68; Pensabene 1993, 752; Hansen, 43, 124; Wohl, 90.

¹⁴⁷ CBCR V 47, 79; Kinney 2001b, 144; Wohl, 91.

¹⁴⁸ CBCR V, 47; Kinney 2001b, 144; Hansen, 43; Odahl, 11.

¹⁴⁹ *Liber Pontificalis* 34 (Loomis 47); CBCR V, 92; Krautheimer 1975, 49; Krautheimer 1978, 126; Odahl, 12; Kinney 2001a, 131. For a detailed account of the fastigium, see de Blaauw.

¹⁵⁰ *Liber Pontificalis* 34 (Loomis 48-49); Krautheimer 1980, 21; Krautheimer 1983, 2.

St. Peters Basilica

The same luxury is found in Constantine's largest Roman church, St. Peters, known at the time of its construction as *Basilica Beato Petro Apostolo*,¹⁵¹ which was constructed around a 2nd century shrine dedicated to the saint, located between the Vatican hill, on which the church sits, and Nero's circus, in which he was martyred.¹⁵² Unlike the Lateran, St. Peter's was located beyond city walls, outside of the Senate's jurisdiction.¹⁵³ Despite its large size (that could hold a population of approximately one quarter larger than the Lateran) and popularity, St. Peter's did not have resident clergy. It was a martyrdom and cemetery church, making it the focus of pilgrimage, martyr veneration, and funereal banqueting,¹⁵⁴ due to its location above a cemetery, which although dismantled for the church's construction, continued to serve as a burial site, blanketing the floor with the graves of those who wished to be buried near the saint.¹⁵⁵ Since St. Peter's did not have resident clergy, priests would come from local parishes to celebrate not only St. Peter's annual feast, on the date of his martyrdom, but also to celebrate the Mass on anniversaries of the deaths of ordinary Christians interred there.¹⁵⁶

In the third quarter of the 2nd century (c.160-170), a Roman bishop had erected a monument over the supposed grave of St. Peter.¹⁵⁷ The monument consisted of three niches built into the eastern face of a Red Wall that opened up onto a paved courtyard. The lowest niche was built into the pavement of an adjacent courtyard, and the other two were made contemporaneously with the construction of the wall.¹⁵⁸ Archaeologists speculate that the main niche was topped by a pediment and flanked with shallow pilasters.¹⁵⁹ Additionally, some human bones were found re-buried, deposited in a narrow recess on the western face of the Red Wall, directly below the main niche; these bones seem to form the basis of the shrine, despite the very real possibility that St. Peter's body was never recovered, since he was executed as a common criminal.¹⁶⁰ The shrine's awkward location, at the base of the

¹⁵¹ *Liber Pontificalis* 34 (Loomis 53).

¹⁵² Eusebius *HE* 3.1; Tertullian *Scorpiace* 10; Ward-Perkins 1952, 21; Krautheimer 1983, 25; Odahl, 15.

¹⁵³ Krautheimer 1983, 2.

¹⁵⁴ The tomb was a huge draw due to the belief that while the saint, in this case Peter, was in Heaven, he was also present on earth, within his tomb (Brown *Cult of the Saints*, 3; Yasin 25).

¹⁵⁵ Krautheimer 1967, 131; Krautheimer 1975, 55, 66; Krautheimer 1980, 26; Toynbee & Ward-Perkins, xv; Armstrong 9. Over the course of the fourth century, mausolea were built around the church's walls, including an imperial tomb in 400 (Armstrong 13), demonstrating the site's continued use as a pilgrimage and martyrdom site.

¹⁵⁶ Armstrong, 9; Krautheimer 1975, 58; Odahl 8-9.

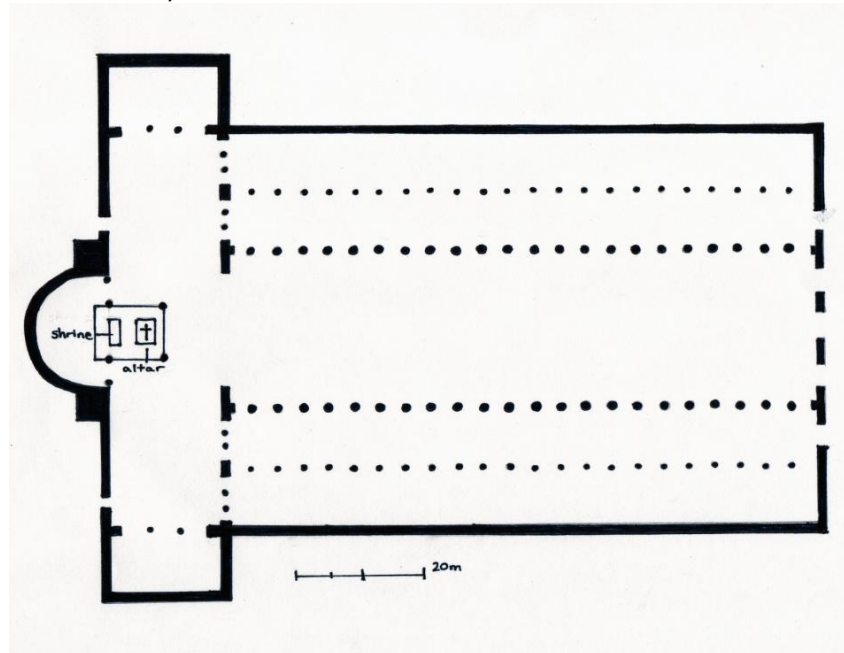
¹⁵⁷ Archaeological evidence has found two burials below the niche, one of which included a maker's stamp that can be dated to the reign of Vespasian (69-79), the successive emperor to Nero, under whom Peter was martyred (Toynbee & Ward-Perkins, 146).

¹⁵⁸ Toynbee & Ward-Perkins, 138-140, 145-6.

¹⁵⁹ Toynbee & Ward-Perkins, 141; Ward-Perkins 1952, 21.

¹⁶⁰ Toynbee & Ward-Perkins, 154-6.

Figure 2: Floorplan of Old St. Peter's, c. 337.



Source: L. Grzesiak, modified drawing based on Jürgen Christern, "Der Aurfriß von Alt-St.-Peter," *Römische Quartalschrift* 62 (1967): 173, fig.16.

Vatican hill however, suggests that this exact spot is extremely important.¹⁶¹ Constantine chose to erect the church around St. Peter's shrine, placing it at the intersection of the transept and the apse.¹⁶² Placing the shrine at the heart of the church is important in the use of a Latin cross plan, as the shrine is essentially located where the heart would be in the body, or where the head of a body would be on a cross, reminiscent of Christ's crucifixion, and St. Peter's role as the heart of the earthly Church. The tombs of the pagan necropolis that surrounded St. Peter's shrine, standing in the way of the church's longitudinal foundations, were dismantled carefully, and filled with earth,¹⁶³ to construct a huge platform to create a level work surface and strengthen the church's foundations.¹⁶⁴ Although various dates have been proposed that cannot be confirmed,¹⁶⁵ St. Peter's was likely built between 315-329, at

¹⁶¹ Toynbee & Ward-Perkins, 157.

¹⁶² Eusebius HE 2.25; Toynbee & Ward-Perkins, 13, 127, 141, 195; CBCR V, 176; Ward-Perkins 1952, 21; Odahl, 15.

¹⁶³ Some of these tombs can still be seen today, beneath the Vatican, in tours of the excavations.

¹⁶⁴ Toynbee & Ward-Perkins, 12, 197; Krautheimer 1975, 55. Krautheimer (1993, 531) suggests that the land was part of the *res privata*, and that that certain portion had merely been leased, and not sold, to private families for burial.

¹⁶⁵ Jongkees (29-34) favours a construction period of 319-350, while Hansen (46) favours a later date, during the reign of Constantine's son Constans (337-350), and Toynbee and Ward-Perkins propose that the church was not commissioned until after Licinius' defeat in 324 (196).

the request of Pope Sylvester, with the bulk of the construction taking place after 324, at which time Constantine defeated Licinius, the emperor of the Eastern Empire, to become sole ruler.¹⁶⁶

Following the basilica plan, St. Peter's features a trabeated nave with two arched aisles, separated by columns (see fig 2).¹⁶⁷ Gregory of Tours (c. 590), reportedly counted one hundred monolithic columns in St. Peter's, including four rows of twenty-two, and twelve in the transept,¹⁶⁸ which will be discussed below. Looking at another fresco by Gagliardi (see fig 3), we can see a variety of coloured column shafts, including pink *portasanta* granite from the Greek island of Chios, white proconnesian shafts from Turkey, greyish green *cippolino* shafts from the Aegean island of Euboea, and red and grey granite shafts from Aswan and Mons Claudianus Egypt respectively.¹⁶⁹ The presence of polychrome column shafts of various lengths is confirmed through drawings made by Baldassere Peruzzi during the basilica's dismantlement, which include measurements and the large variety of materials used.¹⁷⁰ Based on Peruzzi's sketches, it seems that there were very few identical columns, indicating that the shafts came from many diverse sources.¹⁷¹

Figure 3: Gagliardi, Filippo. Interior of the Basilica of St. Peter, 1649-52.

[Image not included due to copyright law. Painting shows a reconstruction of the interior of St. Peter's basilica (315-329) from within the nave, facing the apse.]

Source: Artstor. Accessed April 14, 2011, <http://library.artstor.org.ezproxy.library.ubc.ca/library/welcome.html#3|search|1|gagliardi20st2E20peter27s|Multiple20Collection20Search|||type3D3126kw3Dgagliardi20st2E20peter27s26id3DaIl26name3D>.

¹⁶⁶ *Liber Pontificalis* 34.16. referenced in Krautheimer 1975, 55; Jongkees, 29; and Odahl, 15 n.25 states that Constantine built St. Peter's at Sylvester's request. It is likely that the bulk of the construction took place after 324, because the church's endowments for its upkeep were all donated from the Eastern Empire. Since they were necessary for the upkeep, but not the commencement of construction, it was likely that the church was begun & then later dedicated as a thank offering for Constantine's victory over Licinius, similar to the Lateran's dedication for a victory over another political rival.

¹⁶⁷ Wohl, 92-3; Hansen, 46.

¹⁶⁸ Wohl, 93; Toynbee & Ward-Perkins, 212-13; Gnoli, 13.

¹⁶⁹ *CBCR* V 1977, 213; Claridge 1998, 40-2; Wohl, 95; Kinney 2001b, 142.

¹⁷⁰ *CBCR* V 1977, 232-239; Jongkees, 4, 9, 12, 26-29; Wohl, 95 n.12; Hansen, 46.

¹⁷¹ Jongkees, 12; Wohl, 93.

Despite the polychromy of the column shafts at St. Peter's, they were organized into co-axial colour pairings to create a harmonious rhythm within the church interior. Maarten van Heemskerck provides one of the best detailed drawings of the edifice during its dismantlement, aiding us in reconstructing the types of capitals used at Old St. Peter's.¹⁷² Dissimilar to the Lateran, which featured various capitals in the same rows, at St. Peter's columnar orders were used to indicate a hierarchy of sacrality within the church.¹⁷³ At St. Peter's, Ionic columns surrounded the atrium's fountain and in the portico in front of the building, while Corinthian capitals were used predominantly within the nave.¹⁷⁴ The transept, framing the area of St. Peter's burial, featured twelve Composite columns (see fig 2), as demonstrated by Heemskerck: a pair at each end of the transept and pairs at the end of each of the four aisles.

In addition to the spoliated columns, the *Liber Pontificalis* provides a description of how Constantine enclosed the shrine and the adjacent altar in an elaborate canopy illuminated by a golden lamp.¹⁷⁵ St. Peter's *martyrium* was positioned such that its back was in line with the chord of the apse,¹⁷⁶ thus projecting into the transept from the sanctuary and marking its importance by being situated directly in front of the apse. The canopy was formed by six white marble spiral columns, decorated with vine tendrils and Composite capitals,¹⁷⁷ which, although recalling the Temple of Solomon in Jerusalem, are thought to have been carved at the turn of the 3rd century in the Greek East.¹⁷⁸ The oldest evidence of this shrine is found on the Pola casket (see fig 4), made of ivory c. 440,¹⁷⁹ which shows the shrine, including the spindly columns, the canopy that held a golden lamp, and a 150 pound large golden cross that Constantine and his mother Helena are said to have placed on the saint's tomb.¹⁸⁰ As seen in the Pola casket, the shrine emerged through the floor level, the only monument within the pagan necropolis

¹⁷² Wohl, 93; Jongkees, 3.

¹⁷³ Onians 1988, 59-60; Kinney 2001b, 141-142; Wohl, 98; Hansen, 123. The use of column capitals to distinguish sacred spaces is not new. The Corinthian capital was introduced in the late 5th C BCE, in the interior of the Temple of Apollo at Bassae. The column stood alone, in the centre of the back of the cella, while Ionic columns were used throughout the rest of the temple. Another example is found in the Parthenon (447-432 BCE), in which Doric columns were used in the cella, but Ionic were used in the *opisthodomos* that functioned as the temple's treasury (its main purpose, since the shrine sacred to Athena was in the Erechtheion, adjacent to it).

¹⁷⁴ Onians 1988, 59-60; Wohl, 96; Hansen, 47-48.

¹⁷⁵ *Liber Pontificalis* 34 (Loomis 53); Odahl, 16 n.26, referencing *Liber Pontificalis* 34.16-17. Toynbee and Ward-Perkins assert that Cons' assertion of re-burying St. P in a bronze coffin is a legend, as no extant evidence has been acquired (Toynbee & Ward-Perkins, 204).

¹⁷⁶ Toynbee & Ward-Perkins, 201; Odahl 18.

¹⁷⁷ *Liber Pontificalis* 34 (Loomis 53); *CBCR* V, 263-265; Toynbee & Ward-Perkins, 205; Onians 1988, 59; Wohl, 96; Hansen, 47.

¹⁷⁸ Toynbee & Ward-Perkins, 204-205; Ward-Perkins 1952, 21-22; Elsner 2000, 154.

¹⁷⁹ *CBCR* V, 227; Toynbee & Ward-Perkins, 203; Ward-Perkins 1952, 22.

¹⁸⁰ *Liber Pontificalis* 34 (Loomis 54); Toynbee & Ward-Perkins, 201; Jongkees, 30; Onians 1988, 59.

Figure 4: Detail of Pola Casket, c.440.

[Image not included due to copyright law. Detail of the ivory casket shows worshippers in the *orans* pose at the shrine of St. Peter, recognizable by its canopy of winding columns.]

Source: Artstor. Accessed April 14, 2011, <http://library.artstor.org.ezproxy.library.ubc.ca/library/welcome.html#3|search|1|pola20casket|Multiple20Collection20Search||type3D3126kw3Dpola20casket26id3Dall26name3D>.

that was left standing after constructing the large terrace on which the edifice sits.¹⁸¹ Over time, the shrine was built over, such that the altar sat directly above it, in order that the bones of the saint were as close to the altar as possible.¹⁸² It was also set off by bronze railing, marking out acceptable space for clergy and laity.¹⁸³ The *Liber Pontificalis* also details that he donated a golden chandelier (seen hanging from the canopy), many silver lamps, brass candlesticks, and gold and silver liturgical implements,¹⁸⁴ indicating the richness of the interior, where we may imagine the interplay of colour and light that contributed to a feeling of wonder for the viewer.

Given the examples of the Lateran and St. Peter's, some general trends regarding the use of spolia can be discerned. There seems to be a hierarchy of material, workmanship, and columnar orders, culminating at the main altars, which were themselves highly decorated and set apart.¹⁸⁵ This is evident in the hierarchical columnar orders at St. Peter's, as well as the red Aswan granite in the nave of the Lateran, which was more expensive than the *verde antico* shafts in the aisle. A second organizing principle was co-axial pairing, which was applicable to column shafts, capitals, bases, and trabeation, as

¹⁸¹ Toynbee & Ward-Perkins, 201; Ward-Perkins 1952, 22 ; Krautheimer 1980, 27.

¹⁸² Toynbee & Ward-Perkins, 135. The altar's position above the shrine is important, since, as Hansen discusses (152, as early as 386, bishops began bringing relics to the altar at its consecration (Ambrose, *Principal Works* Letter 22, 1-4, 12-13). Elsner discusses how spolia seems to have mirrored the Christian fascination with individual parts, as relics were the only remains that Christians had from their past (just as columns were part of the Roman heritage).

¹⁸³ Krautheimer 1975, 55.

¹⁸⁴ *Liber Pontificalis* 34 (Loomis 54-5).

¹⁸⁵ Hansen, 121; Onians 1988, 66. For another example, see Hansen's discussion of the Church of S. Constanza (2003, pp 54-58), which features one lone Corinthian column, that seems to demarcate the beginning of the circumambulation around the church.

far as the available material would allow.¹⁸⁶ Let us recall the co-axial capital pairings at the Lateran and colour pairings at St. Peter's.¹⁸⁷ The heterogeneity of these disparate parts was emphasised by a rhythmical arrangement, by leaving intervals between similar parts. Focus was no longer on homogeneous composition, but on individual architectural elements, spatial divisions, and the overall affect of all of the architectural and decorative elements working in tandem. These arrangements may be seen as aestheticizing, but also worked to reflect hierarchies through spatial divisions within the new church building. These spatial divisions add another layer to the complexity of the early Christian church, as they reflect hegemonic reasons for spolia's use.

¹⁸⁶ Hansen, 124.

¹⁸⁷ Although co-axial pairing may not be evident in other church buildings, hierarchies can be seen in the use of materials. For example, when the left and right sides of the structure are different, this may indicate separate functions according to gender, with the male side decorated more elaborately (Hansen, 128).

Emperors, Bishops, and Clergy: Demarcations of Power within the Early Christian Church

Power seems to be a driving force in almost any decision; this is no different in the Church, despite Christ's call to serve others as a means of leadership.¹⁸⁸ Many hegemonic messages can be derived in the use of spolia in Constantine's Roman churches. These messages of power have not been thoroughly discussed in scholarship,¹⁸⁹ and while I will attempt to delineate some of the hegemonic discourses that appear, this subject is vast in its own right. Specifically, this section aims to show that just as spolia was organized in a rhythmic and aesthetic fashion, its arrangement and use within the Lateran and St. Peter's deliver clear messages regarding power and hierarchy, not only concerning the emperor, but also, the bishop, the clergy, and laity.

The Emperor's Benefaction: A Show of Power

My discussion begins with the emperor, since his patronage demanded an architectural vocabulary that corresponded to his munificence. The two churches were erected as thank offerings for victory in battle, and as a result, Constantine's patronage suggests his connection to Christ as the deity who brought him victory, legitimizing his position, since he believed that Christ had favoured him in battle.¹⁹⁰ The idea that a ruler would intrude into religious matters was commonplace in Antiquity, as religious practices were bound up with service and loyalty to the State,¹⁹¹ so it is not surprising that Constantine took such an active role in the growth of the 4th century Church. His blurring of politics and religion is also seen in the use of the prototype of the imperial audience hall. By making the suggestion that the church is the throne room of Christ on earth, the emperor seems to be stating that not only has God chosen him to rule, but also that his rulership mimics Christ's. It seems that Constantine did not mind sharing this ideological space with the bishop, as he saw himself as a quasi-ecclesiastical figure, having addressed the bishops as saying, "You are bishops of those inside the Church; I too am a bishop ordained by God, but of those who are outside."¹⁹² By using this prototype of an imperial structure, the

¹⁸⁸ Mark 9:35-36.

¹⁸⁹ Hansen, 130 suggests that spolia could be used to emphasize the differences between spaces for the clergy & laity, but does not elaborate. R. E. Malmstrom treats the topic in "The Colonnades of High Medieval Rome," *Gesta* 14.2 (1975): 37-45, but treats high medieval churches, as opposed to the emerging early Christian Church.

¹⁹⁰ Eusebius *VC*, 1.29, 32, 40; Eusebius *HE* 10.5.15.

¹⁹¹ Bowerstock, 298.

¹⁹² Eusebius *VC* 4.24, as referenced by Bowerstock, 302.

Church was also being endowed with imperial associations, showcasing their new status, and raising the Church to a position of power in alliance with the emperor.¹⁹³

Just as Christ had favoured Constantine, so Constantine favoured Christ's Church, through his exorbitant donations. In addition to the implications of status through Constantine's funding of these buildings, and donating the land and prototype of their structures, the Christian community also showcased their new position through the use of luxurious marbles, which were imperial property. In Rome, coloured stones were synonymous with the power of the emperor. The use of 100 monolithic columns in St. Peter's demonstrated not only Constantine's power, in that he could amass these commodities,¹⁹⁴ but also the Church's favour in that he was donating them to this new public institution. Coloured marble had a long tradition in the city of Rome, and its incorporation into the Lateran and St. Peter's maintained its status as part of the inheritance of that Roman tradition.

Coloured stone was introduced into Rome in the early 1st century BCE, when Marcus Lepidus, consul in 78 BCE, used Numidian marble to decorate his home's threshold.¹⁹⁵ Other powerful patricians soon followed,¹⁹⁶ and by the 40s BCE, various colours began to be imported from the eastern Mediterranean.¹⁹⁷ When Rome took over Egypt in 31 BCE, the emperor took possession of their quarries, and Egyptian stone started pouring in. The Nile valley and the eastern desert were particularly rich in this natural resource, being home to granites, basalts, alabasters, and most importantly, dark red porphyry, that became the symbol of imperial power in the late 3rd century.¹⁹⁸ Rome had a love of coloured stone that far surpassed any passion for it in the past, using marble veneers and tesserae to decorate almost every type of interior in aristocratic homes.¹⁹⁹ In Rome, marble was a marker of wealth because it was expensive, imported, and completely unnecessary.²⁰⁰ It signalled power as no other material had been capable of doing.

As Rome, and this love of coloured stone, grew in the early 1st century CE, most major quarries became imperial property, operating under the emperor's direct control, and being run by his own officials and specialist workmen, rather than having the work contracted out.²⁰¹ Though they were

¹⁹³ Liverani, 22.

¹⁹⁴ Jongkees, 13.

¹⁹⁵ Pliny, *NH* 36.8; Claridge, 39-40; Dodge, 66.

¹⁹⁶ Claridge (40) details how in 74 BCE, Lucius Lucullus imported a red and black marble from Asia Minor (which later took his name), and later, in 58 BCE, M. Aemilius Scaurus erected 38 ft monolithic columns in his home.

¹⁹⁷ Claridge, 40.

¹⁹⁸ Claridge, 40; Gnoli, 13; Dodge, 68; Hansen, 122.

¹⁹⁹ Claridge, 39, 50; Gnoli, 13-14; Ortolani, 32; Dodge 66, 68.

²⁰⁰ Fant 1988a, 149; Pensabene, 43.

²⁰¹ Suetonius *Tib.* 49 referenced in Ortolani, 33; Claridge, 38; Dodge, 68, 72; Fant, 1988a, 147. Fant states

originally used for imperial building projects, by the late 1st century, the marble trade was reorganized to also become available for cities and individuals through imperial beneficence only, resulting in partly standardized mass produced architectural elements, for streamlined planning and excavation, that could also be shipped and kept in imperial marble stocks.²⁰² Coloured stone became a hallmark of the capital city and the embodiment of the empire's (and by extension the emperor's) power, in being able to literally move mountains.²⁰³ While the Greeks used column drums, Romans preferred monolithic shafts,²⁰⁴ demonstrating their ingenuity in being able to quarry and transport such massive commodities, despite their increased risk of breakage,²⁰⁵ and their wealth, in that they could afford not only the marble, but also its transport. As Amanda Claridge puts it, "where [the stones] came from was as important as their colouring – and (at least for the emperor's projects) long-distance transport was no object."²⁰⁶ Transportation was extremely expensive, sometimes costing more than the commodity itself,²⁰⁷ as an added show of wealth, both in public imperial constructions, like the Forum of Trajan or the Baths of Diocletian, but also in wealthy private homes.

Since coloured marble was an imperial commodity, the emperor could do what he desired with it, as evidenced in the rise of polychrome decoration in the late 3rd century. While the economy was chaotic, and the marble trade failing, emperors like Diocletian and Maxentius were continuing to draw on the imperial stockpiles, as evidenced at Spalato and Rome respectively. Constantine followed suit, taking full advantage of the materials available to him. In a letter to the bishop Makarios at Jerusalem, Constantine volunteers whatever marbles the bishop would need to build the church of the Holy Sepulchre.²⁰⁸ Additionally, Eusebius talks about Constantine moving statues from all over the empire to Constantinople in the 330s, indicating that the power of the emperor allowed him to practically denude all other cities of their ornamentation in the name of a new capital.²⁰⁹

The type of luxury and largesse expressed in Constantine's imperial donation gave imperial status to the Church under his patronage,²¹⁰ as any large-scale use of coloured stone was immediately

that this type of control of the marble trade was a marked difference from the Republic, when everything was contracted out (Fant 1998a, 147-148).

²⁰² Waelkens, de Paepe, and Moens, 16, 19; Fant 1988a, 150-151; Dodge, 68, 72; Wilson Jones, 155; Kinney 1997, 124.

²⁰³ Claridge, 38; Dodge, 68; Kinney 2001b, 142-143.

²⁰⁴ Waelkens, de Paepe, and Moens, 19; Wilson Jones, 155; Kinney 2001b, 141.

²⁰⁵ Fant 1992, 116; Kinney 2001b, 143; Bosman, 41.

²⁰⁶ Claridge, 38.

²⁰⁷ Diodorus 4.80.5-6; Dodge, 68.

²⁰⁸ Eusebius VC 3.27-31; Krautheimer 1993, 532-3; Hansen, 48-52.

²⁰⁹ Eusebius VC 54-8; Curran 1994, 47-48; Kinney 1997, 141; Elsner 2000, 154-155.

²¹⁰ Krautheimer 1983, 20; Janes, 2-3.

associated with the emperor, and these churches were made to look like imperial monuments,²¹¹ due to their monumentality, and their forum-like resemblance, with colonnaded atria, tripartite entrances, and large, brightly decorated basilica structures. Surely this type of elevation within the public sphere would have eased the Church's role in proselytization, now that it was no longer a capital offence to be a Christian, but was instead becoming more popular, especially with the emperor's endorsement. Any pagan coming into an imperial church would be able to grasp the new power of the Church, through the buildings' monumentality, the structural prototypes, and materials used, which all display not only of the emperor's benefaction, and wealth that enabled it, but also the power of the Church as a rising institution.

Everything in its Place: Bishops, Clergy, and Laity

Although Constantine saw himself as a thirteenth apostle, the bishop of Rome was considered the successor of St. Peter, the head of the earthly Church. His position is clearly delineated through his throne in the apse of the Lateran. Due to its new status, leaders in the Church seemed anxious to register their position in society,²¹² and elevating the bishop to associations with the emperor, through the use of a throne, and with Christ, as the church represented his throne room on earth, was certainly a show of newly-found and recognized power within Rome's community. As the first monumental church basilica, the Lateran publicly declared the new importance of the bishop of Rome, making him the *de facto* ruler over his flock.²¹³ The bishops' need for power seems to have grown with the Church. By 390, bishop Ambrose of Milan used the power of the Church to manipulate the emperor Theodosius, refusing communion until the emperor changed his policies.²¹⁴ This establishment of power eventually led to the bishop being seen as an heir to the emperor, taking over some of the emperor's duties in his absence, especially the care of the poor and reconstruction duties in Rome following the Visigoth sack of 410.²¹⁵

²¹¹ Krautheimer 1983, 23.

²¹² Brown 1978, 19.

²¹³ Mathews 1962, 81; Armstrong, 6. Mathews details how bishops were given the power of praetorians in 318, essentially raising them to the status of the second position to the emperor (Mathews 1962, 80).

²¹⁴ Bowerstock discusses this topic at length, describing the changing power struggles between bishop and emperor in the 4th century. One of the most notable instances is when Ambrose refused to give Theodosius communion after the emperor had commanded that the Church pay for the re-erection of a synagogue that a Christian community had burned down. Theodosius was not granted communion until he reversed his orders.

²¹⁵ Brenk 1987, 106.

Clergy were also set apart due to their sanctity. Sitting on benches around the apse, they were extremely close to the bishop and the altar.²¹⁶ A 7th century source, the *Ordo Romanus*, details how bishops and priests sat on the right and left sides of the pope, respectively.²¹⁷ While the Church did not yet have a pope in the 4th century, it is possible that clergy were also arranged spatially within the apse, with the most important members in the position of power, to the right of the bishop. Let us recall the hierarchy of columns used at St. Peter's and the hierarchy of materials used in the Lateran that marked the apse off as an important and sacred space. This space is further set apart from laity due to screens. While St. Peter's featured only a bronze railing around the saint's martyrrium, the sanctuary of the Lateran was separated from the rest of the church with a fastigium, a monumental screen separating the clergy from the laity. The Lateran's fastigium was decorated on both sides, with Christ and angels facing the clergy, and Christ with the apostles, symbols of humanity, facing the laity. Not only does it demarcate space, it gives impression that clergy are closer to God because heavenly angels faced only them. Maximus the Confessor, writing in the early 7th century, discusses the difference in theological terms, describing the church building as a microcosm of the universe, with the apse representing the invisible spiritual world, while the rest of the church represents the corporeal world of man and the flesh.²¹⁸ Thus, while the clergy did not sit on thrones, they were set apart from the congregation to delineate a higher social position within the Church, and a closer connection to God.

While it is unclear where exactly the laity sat within the 4th century Roman church, whether it be in the nave, with space for a central aisle, or the flanking aisles,²¹⁹ catechumens were segregated from the sanctuary. In the early 5th century, Chrysostom notes the presence of catechumens, but states that during the liturgy of the Eucharist, they stand far off, unable to hear what is said.²²⁰ Catechumens would have to withdraw to a separate part of the church during the performance of the Eucharist, such as the atrium, entrance, outer aisles, or rooms in an adjacent structure,²²¹ because they were not permitted to know the mysteries of the faith until they had been baptised. This segregation is marked out spatially within St. Peter's, as the column capitals were progressively less ornate as they moved outwards from the altar. It is possible that these column capitals signalled acceptable spaces for each member of the congregation, even if they were pilgrims, based on their status within the Church, with full members

²¹⁶ Caseau, 42.

²¹⁷ *Ordo* 1.24, referenced in Mathews 1962, 75-76.

²¹⁸ Maximus, *Mystagogia*, ch. 2, PG 91 referenced in Mathews 1971, 121.

²¹⁹ Mathews 1962, 83.

²²⁰ Chrysostom *In epist II ad Cor. Homilia*, 2.5, PG 61, 400, referenced in Mathews 1971, 127.

²²¹ Krautheimer 1975, 41; Caseau, 41-42.

allowed to sit within the nave, where Corinthian columns were used, while the catechumenate would likely have been relegated to the atrium, adorned with those in the Ionic order.

It is clear, therefore, that despite its grass roots, as a movement following a prophet from Judea, Christianity had developed strict hierarchies of power. The use of spolia in the new ecumenical structures allowed for these hierarchies of power to be visually demarcated, placing emphasis on the sanctuary, and using less ornate materials in areas where laity would congregate for weekly Mass. Spolia's materiality and ability to delineate space suggests that it was used for a specific purpose: to elevate those in power. So far, we have talked about how the structure of these spaces drew on both religious and imperial tradition, and how it was used to distinguish a strict social hierarchy for those involved. Next, we will move to how spolia may have had messages or teachings for the Christian viewer.

A Pillar in the Lord's House: Christian Teachings and the Use of Spolia

Evidence reveals many and varied connotations for the use of spoliated columns in the early Church. In addition to alluding to tradition and power within the Church, I argue that it also may have functioned within religious thought as a metaphor for major teachings of the Christian faith: the idea of triumph over the grave, the shift to internal worship of deities, and the doctrine of salvation. Examining the Bible and commentaries by theologians from the 4th through 7th centuries, it becomes evident that the spoliated columns in church interiors may have held additional religious messages concerning one's rebirth into Christianity; the Church's cardinal mission of evangelism; and the fulfilment of salvation embodied in Heavenly Jerusalem, where the soul of the believer would go following divine judgment.

Triumphalism in the Early Christian Church

Let us recall spolia's etymology, with its violent associations of victory. By the late 4th century, pagan temples were stripped of their materials for new churches. Just as the Republican general Sulla stripped the Athenian Olympeum of its columns, and brought them back as spolia to adorn Rome's Capitolium, in order to appropriate the power of Greece, Christians may have also seen the appropriation of columns as commandeering their Roman heritage, transferring the power of the pagan gods to their Christian deity.²²² In *his Life of Bishop Porphyry*, Mark the Deacon, tells of how during the construction of the church at Marneion in 402, Christians deliberately took marbles from a previous sanctuary, and used them to pave the square in front of the church so that it might be trampled by the feet of men, women, and animals.²²³ Although this incident took place almost 100 years after the construction of the Lateran, it is evident that some small groups of Christians were aggressive at eradicating paganism from their cultural landscapes. While Constantine seems not to have partaken in this practice of plundering,²²⁴ it seems to have become a concern by the late 4th century, as the law codes express anxieties about denuding public buildings, be they pagan temples or other structures that had fallen into disuse. Since benefaction is a much more visual sign of support, rather than any imperial

²²² Onians 1988, 59; Hansen, 48, 148. Hansen (165) and Brenk 1987 further discuss how in the Medieval period, spolia continued to represent the power of Rome, and was used for that purpose within both palatial and church complexes.

²²³ *Life of Porphyry* 76; referenced in Saradi-Mendelovici, 53-54; Ward-Perkins 1999, 233; and Hansen, 231.

²²⁴ Kinney 1997, 127.

edict or command that simply states a proclamation, the use of these luxurious imperial marbles visually suggests legitimization from the emperor and his personal support of the Church.²²⁵

While the idea of triumphalism is reflected in the Church's imperial benefaction, it also seems to be a product of the 4th century and opening decades of the 5th that was constructed by a generation of Christian historians, preachers, and apologists.²²⁶ Inherent in triumphalism is the idea that Christ conquered paganism at his resurrection, centuries before, and that Christianity was simply following through.²²⁷ From the clergy's point of view, the Church was in danger of falling back into the past, since many new converts had grown up within the pagan tradition and Christianization was a long and slow spiritual struggle.²²⁸ Therefore, the idea of the triumphant Church seems to have been a construction to bolster enthusiasm among new converts and Christians who were growing stagnant in their faith.

Structurally, triumphalism is demonstrated in the triumphal arches that mark the walls in which the apses sit. Borrowed from the imagery of the imperial triumphal arch,²²⁹ the arch singles out the importance of the space architecturally. The Christian triumphal arch combines the shape of a free standing triumphal arch, with glorifying Christian images in brightly coloured mosaics, rather than imperial images of martial triumph in relief sculpture. The motif is repeated in the transept wall, creating a second arch, closer to the laity (see figs 1 and 4). Even if one cannot see the altar, these two walls of arches focus one's attention on the western apse of the church and connote victory through their form, reminiscent of an imperial triumphal arch, despite its lack of traditional triumphant imagery. The connection with imperial triumphal arches is strengthened, however, by the Composite capitals that flank it, because of their status as emblems of Roman superiority and victory, as they appear frequently on imperial victory monuments.²³⁰ This is keenly demonstrated in the Lateran, where spoliated bronze columns marked out the triumphal arch. The Composite order's connotations of victory, in combination with their position adjacent to the triumphal arch and altar, where one receives the Eucharist, reinforce the idea of Christ's triumph over the grave, and his promise of salvation to the Christian viewer through their receipt of the Eucharist. Being mindful that the reuse of architectural elements and the breakthrough of Christianity happened under Constantine contemporaneously is telling when considering the change in use of the Composite order. While the order was not used on the Arch of

²²⁵ Brown 2003, 77.

²²⁶ Brown 1997, 4. Brenk (1978, 49) asserts that triumphal imagery in Christian art does not appear until after 313, when the Church is legalized and becomes a more important institution within the Empire.

²²⁷ Brown 1997, 5.

²²⁸ Brown 1997, 26.

²²⁹ Brenk 1978, 47.

²³⁰ Onians 1988, 59.

Constantine, which is the first known instance that it was not used on a triumphal arch in 250 years, it was used in the most sacred areas of the church, perhaps reflecting the triumphant nature of this new deity.²³¹ John Onians goes as far as to state, “It is as if Constantine, in gratitude for Christ's aid at the Milvian Bridge, decided to surrender the order to Him. The victory was Christ's not the emperor's.”²³² Here, Onians clearly suggests that Constantine transferred the use of the Composite order to the Church, as a sign of the triumphant Church.²³³ While I do not agree that Constantine would have wholeheartedly given the victory to Christ, transferring an order with triumphant connotations from the secular realm to Christian purposes would be a strong statement. Constantine’s decision that his own arch should not bear the Composite order implies that he believed that Christ was stronger than himself – a surprising idea in a time when the reigning emperors were still considered as divine. As the emperor, Constantine had no shortage of access to Composite capitals, and could have used the order in both his triumphal monuments and his ecumenical constructions, but he did not. Just as the juxtaposition between second-century and fourth-century reliefs on the Arch of Constantine was a deliberate stylistic choice, I submit that this decision was thoughtfully carried out. If ceding precedence of the Composite order to Christianity were the case, it would indicate that Constantine may have been a convert to Christianity as early as 312.

Although Wohl rejects the idea that Constantine was already declaring the triumph of Christianity, because he was still the *pontifex maximus* (protector of cults) until his death,²³⁴ I disagree since it seems that Constantine may have built the Lateran and St. Peter’s to honour the Christ for his victories over Maxentius and Licinus, respectively. Let us remember that the Lateran was constructed on top of the horse barracks of Maxentius’ men. Additionally, a mosaic within the apse of St. Peter’s featured an image of a standard surrounded by a victor's laurel wreath, with an image of Constantine dedicating a model of the church to the saint, and a dedication that read: “Because under your leadership the world rose up triumphant to the skies, Constantine, himself victorious, has founded this hall in your honour.”²³⁵ In this light, these basilicas functioned not only as churches, but as victory monuments to Constantine’s chosen deity, similar to temples erected by emperors as thank offerings to their favoured gods. Moreover, Constantine seems to have shied away from his responsibilities as *pontifex maximus*. There is evidence that he refused to sacrifice to the Capitoline gods; that he gave

²³¹ Onians 1988, 59; Hansen, 121.

²³² Onians 1988, 59.

²³³ Onians 1988, 59; Hansen, 121 n.186.

²³⁴ Wohl, 100.

²³⁵ QUOD DUCE TE MUNDUS SURREXIT AS ASTRA TRIUMPHANS HANC CONSTANTINUS VICTOR TIBI CONDIDIT AULAM, referenced in Toynbee & Ward-Perkins, 195-196, and Onians 1988, 59.

permission to towns to build temples in his honour, but not to sacrifice to him; and that Constantine stuck to public buildings in his construction programmes.²³⁶ I do not know of any official imperial temples built under him, other than finishing the restoration of the temple of Venus and Roma, begun under Maxentius, so that he could rededicate it to Roma and the *gens Flavia*, his fictional ancestral line. While Constantine may have distanced himself from traditional paganism, this is not simply a matter of him abandoning it for Christianity; however, the Christian community may have felt triumphant in their newfound legal status and benefaction. Therefore, triumphalism is another important layer of meaning that can be read into the spoliated columns of the early Christian Church. Through the structure of triumphant arches, the use of Composite capitals, and ancient associations with spolia more generally, the Church referenced overt traditional signals of triumph. That triumph is further enriched through their new-found legal status and the benefaction of the emperor, who donated the polychrome marbles as evidence of his imperial favour.

Change from the Inside Out: The Interiorization of the Christian Faith

Secondly, the new concentration of decoration within the building, as opposed to the exterior, reflects a change in religious experience, since each physical step taken in a church could involve psychological or spiritual transformations, and the realization of such concepts as rebirth or salvation.²³⁷ Christian worship did not partake in exterior rituals like their pagan predecessors, and this is reflected in the lack of exterior decoration in opposition to the church's lush interior. Let us recall how the Church had no need of specialized architecture in the 1st and 2nd centuries, because they believed that God's presence sanctified a space whenever two or more were gathered together.²³⁸ Instead of focusing on exterior constructions, the Church focused on turning their minds inward, indicating a new awareness of interior or mental space. Gregory the Great charges Christians "to incline their minds to inward [rather than outward] joys."²³⁹ While the Eucharist was performed weekly in Rome,²⁴⁰ The majority of a Christian's worship took place internally, in prayer, and thoughtful meditation on God's Word, and is reflected in the Church's focus on elaborate interior decoration, and a decisive break away from classical architecture.²⁴¹

²³⁶ Brown 1992, 19; Brown 2003, 60-1; Caseau, 29.

²³⁷ Onians 1988, 60; Hansen, 138, 186ff; Caseau, 41.

²³⁸ Matt 18:20.

²³⁹ Gregory the Great, *Selected Epistles* 11.86.85, referenced in Hansen, 142.

²⁴⁰ Jungmann, 363; Mathews 1962, 92.

²⁴¹ Hansen, 139.

One of the other ways that spolia diverged from classical architecture was through the focus and isolation of individual parts, coming together to form a complex and harmonious composition. These disparate parts could mimic the early Christian community that was comprised of, and preached equality for, various people groups, including men and women, rich and poor, free and slave.²⁴² (While paganism comprised these groups, they were in no way considered equals.) Just as there was a focus on disparate architectural elements, so too did liturgy focus on the individual's soul as the means of that person's salvation in the afterlife, through Christ.

We must remember that the Antique world was full of notions of a metaphorical and spiritual world. People conceived of the world as being inhabited by good spirits and evil demons, and this conception of one's world would have presumably had an effect on architecture as well.²⁴³ In a Christian worldview this was especially true, as they believed in angels, demons, miraculous signs and healings. As Meyer describes it, the sensible world was structured through symbolism, as a reflection of, and an invitation to experience, the sacred, immaterial realm.²⁴⁴ Since the physical and spiritual worlds were understood as linked in Antiquity, architecture could have deeper significance, relating the realm of the unseen to its audience. Just as the temple acts as a house for the spirit of a pagan deity through a cult statue, so too, the Christian conception of the spiritual realm could be translated architecturally to their place of worship, which is reflected in their focus on interior decoration and plain facades in contrast to the elaborate facades of pagan temples. Within the early Church, we can see the blurring of physical and spiritual as the faithful would literally soul-search within these physical structures. Marbles are known for their variegation, and the organic patterns that are visible within the stone. Hansen describes how seeing images in polished marble's variegations was similar to understanding of Christ's miraculous figuration without a human father.²⁴⁵ Although her idea might be a stretch, it is helpful in considering ideas of meditation and contemplation. Both full members of the Church and catechumens could see abstract forms in the different patterns within the stone and contemplate their meaning, as Didi-Huberman has suggested for the early modern period.²⁴⁶ Thus the materiality of the columns themselves could serve as a means of meditation, looking for the divine in the natural lines of the stone.

²⁴² Galatians 3:27-29; Ephesians 2:19 discusses how diverse groups of people come together to form God's temple.

²⁴³ Hansen, 34; Caseau, 24,34- 35; Brown 1997, 8.

²⁴⁴ Meyer, 73; Bowerstock, 300.

²⁴⁵ Hansen, 203; Kessler 2004, 29.

²⁴⁶ For an in-depth look at how panels of colour can be representative of many images, see Georges Didi-Huberman's *Fra-Angelico: Dissemblance and Figuration*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995.

This seems especially striking at the Lateran, where the columns of the nave were all dark red granite, which could recall Christ's blood, and his sacrifice for the salvation of mankind.²⁴⁷

The blurring of physical and immaterial worlds was heightened in the late 3rd century. Due to political and economic chaos, people began to turn to Eastern spirituality and mystery cults, which stressed nature's dualism – whereby the spiritual or mystic co-exists with the material.²⁴⁸ In art, there was a breakdown in Classical ideals of corporeality, naturalism, and rationality, which instead favoured an awareness of two-dimensionality, and mystical qualities.²⁴⁹ In the Christian community, this view was stressed exegetically, in various interpretations of the Scriptures; some church fathers read the text literally, while others focused on allegorical meanings.²⁵⁰ It was acknowledged that Scripture could be understood in a variety of ways, including literal, figural, typological (inter-scriptural reference), and allegorical, and that these varied interpretations were necessary for a deeper understanding.²⁵¹ Augustine especially stressed metaphorical readings for passages that were difficult to understand literally, admonishing that the reader gets greater pleasure from a passage that is understood with much effort.²⁵² As Janes points out, symbolism is a form of non-verbal communication, and it is a bad idea to separate symbolism from its aesthetics of artistic production.²⁵³ The spoliated columns within early Christian churches, while maintaining a heterogeneous aesthetic, were also expressing other non-verbal messages. The remainder of this paper will focus on the materiality of these spoliated column shafts, and the kinds of meanings that can be drawn from them, in relation to major Christian teachings. As discussed above, Christianity was popular for rejecting high rhetoric, in order to make their teachings more accessible to the general public. This type of colloquial language was helpful in getting the Christian message across, since the message was more important than eloquent language.²⁵⁴ However, Christian concepts were very different from the pagan tradition, and abstract concepts are usually difficult to grasp unless they take some kind of physical appearance. As a result, the Church developed visual arts such that worshippers listening to a sermon could usually see a parallel visual discourse in a

²⁴⁷ Janes, 8; Kessler (2004, 29) notes how dark red stones were used in altar pieces because of their symbolic associations with Christ's blood.

²⁴⁸ Riegl, 91; Weitzmann, 1; Hansen, 197. As Weitzmann states (1), this new spiritual element was reflected in representational arts of all religions, but the difference was in the subject matter depicted.

²⁴⁹ Hansen, 185; Onians 1980, 20ff.

²⁵⁰ Janes, 10 referencing Theodore of Mopsuestia and Origen of Alexandria, who are known for their literal and allegorical interpretations respectively.

²⁵¹ Janes, 68; Hansen, 197ff.

²⁵² Augustine, *On Christian Doctrine* 3.10.14, discussed in Hansen, 198; Augustine, *On Christian Doctrine* 4.8.15 discussed in Hansen, 215.

²⁵³ Janes, 6.

²⁵⁴ Hansen, 192-193.

wall painting or mosaic within monumental churches, even though they could be interpreted literally.²⁵⁵ Following this line of reasoning, column shafts could certainly have been used to teach new converts, or remind seasoned Christians about tenets of their faith. I will be proposing that the disposition of the spoliated columns could suggest Christian rebirth, their call to evangelize, and their salvation, as embodied in Heavenly Jerusalem.

“You must be born of water and Spirit”: Rebirth into the Christian Community

One of the ways that spolia can contribute to an understanding of the Christian doctrine of salvation is through the metaphor of rebirth, and the Christian association of its believers with columns or pillars within the metaphorical temple of the Lord. Spiritual rebirth was imperative to salvation and becoming one of these pillars within the Church, as Christ stated, “no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit;”²⁵⁶ one had to be spiritually reborn through the physical sacrament of water baptism, which signalled one’s repentance from evil doing, and their commitment to leave their old life behind them, in favour of a new life in the Christian community.²⁵⁷ Augustine charged that while Heaven embraced those born in all nations, in his mind, the distinction was between the saved and the unsaved, a difference created only through baptism into the community of the Church.²⁵⁸ Even Jesus submitted himself to water baptism, by his cousin John, which marked the beginning of his ministry as an evangelist.²⁵⁹ Although John the Baptist refuses at first, Christ coerces him by reminding him that all righteousness must be fulfilled,²⁶⁰ suggesting that Jesus could not advance into evangelism until he had submitted himself to be baptised. Ideas surrounding water baptism would have had direct significance to the Christians in Rome. Tertullian writes that it makes no difference if one is baptised in the sea, or a stream, or a lake;²⁶¹ however, Rome was a city that relied heavily on the Tiber River. Water baptisms certainly took place in the Tiber, prior to the construction of a baptistery at the Lateran in the early 5th century, usually performed by the bishop at Easter.²⁶² But water had another strong significance in Rome: it was how columns were generally transported. Rome’s marble yards were

²⁵⁵ Janes, 16. By the Middle Ages it was common for the congregation to learn through images, or text and images (Janes, 16 n74).

²⁵⁶ John 3:5.

²⁵⁷ Romans 6:3-10; 1 Peter 3:21; Tertullian, *On Repentance*, 6.

²⁵⁸ Augustine, *City of God*, 14.1, referenced in Brown 2003, 92. Augustine refers to the two groups as two cities: one that lives after the flesh, and the other after the spirit.

²⁵⁹ Luke 3: 21-23; Matt 3:13-16; Mark 1:9.

²⁶⁰ Matt 3: 15.

²⁶¹ Tertullian, *On Baptism* 4.

²⁶² Tertullian, *On Baptism* 4; Krautheimer 1983, 28.

located along the river for easier transport. Therefore, just as the Tiber was used to transport columns from old contexts to their new one within the Church, so too, would the Tiber be used by the early Church to transform their congregation into a Christian flock.

This rebirth, which symbolically marked the beginning of the Christian life, suggests one's removal from their previous life. As a result, baptism was closely associated with concepts of life and death, as early baptisteries borrowed their central plan from funereal architecture.²⁶³ In Paul's discussion of baptism, he characterizes it as being baptised into Christ's death, in order to gain eternal spiritual life, and be raised with Christ into a new life.²⁶⁴ Whereas the Jews offered sacrifices to appease their God, Christians were radically different because they believed that Christ had been martyred as a final blood sacrifice, likening him to the Passover lamb.²⁶⁵ As a result, as the believer died to their past in baptism, Paul argued that they were also baptised into Christ's death, which would remove all need for further sacrifice.

Baptism into the Christian community was just a physical undertaking, but a metaphysical one as well. In addition to being baptised physically within the water, early Christians also believed that they would be spiritually reborn when they received the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Just as the dove of the Holy Spirit descended to Christ at his baptism,²⁶⁶ it was believed that in baptism the believer was reborn spiritually and would receive the gifts of the Holy Spirit. In Acts, Christ admonishes the apostles to remain in Jerusalem to receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit,²⁶⁷ which he described as the second part of baptism, when one is reborn of both water and the spirit.²⁶⁸ The author of Acts describes the difference between the physical and spiritual baptism as such:

"John's baptism was a baptism of repentance. He told the people to believe in the one coming after him, that is, in Jesus."⁵ On hearing this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.⁶ When Paul placed his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied."²⁶⁹

Thus, baptism was not simply a physical emergence from the water, but was also a metaphysical transformation, that endowed the believer with spiritual gifts, such as prophecy and speaking in tongues. This spiritual birth was considered a return from the grave, since it renewed one's soul as it

²⁶³ Hansen, 210.

²⁶⁴ Romans 6:3-6.

²⁶⁵ John 1:29.

²⁶⁶ Matt 3:13-16; Luke 3:21-22; Mark 1:9.

²⁶⁷ Acts 1:5.

²⁶⁸ John 3:5.

²⁶⁹ Acts 19:4.

was resurrected with Christ.²⁷⁰ The individual was transformed on the inside as well as the outside. This rebirth, after training as a catechumen for a year, made the believer part of the Christian community, as evidenced through the writings of Justin Martyr, when he states that those who have undertaken baptism are now his brethren.²⁷¹

Concepts of rebirth are reflected in the law codes concerning spoliated buildings, because they use the positive term, *rediviva saxa* (reborn/renewed stones) when discussing reused materials.²⁷² The term could imply the positive aspects of preserving elements of Roman architecture, as Beat Brenk has asserted,²⁷³ but in the context of the 5th and 6th centuries, when the law codes were assembled, it is possible that Christian connotations are present. Just as spolia was translated or reborn from pagan to Christian settings, so too were new Christians translated from their old way of life to one of salvation through Christ in the ritual of baptism.²⁷⁴ Although the stone maintained its former appearance, it was used for a new purpose. The terminology of reborn stones suggests a metaphysical shift as well. So, as Christians transformed physically and spiritually, so too was the spoliated column physically transformed by its new context; it was also endowed with new meanings because of this new context and the positive terminology used.

The idea that columns could be representative of the believer is not new. In the late Roman period, columns were no longer popular as architectural supports, as vaults and concrete piers took precedence, likely due to their financial feasibility, as discussed above. The renewed interest in columns that was concurrent with the rise of Christianity may reflect architectural imagery in the New Testament, and its material realization in the early 4th century. In the Church's beginnings, God's temple was not understood as a physical place, but as inherent in the souls of believers. In his first letter to the Corinthians, Paul states:

“¹⁶Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in your midst? ¹⁷If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy that person; for God's temple is sacred, and you together are that temple.”²⁷⁵

Additionally, Peter describes the Church as being constructed of 'living stones', drawing a connection between the congregation of the faithful, and the building in which they worship. He urged the congregation to:

²⁷⁰ Col 2:12; 1 Peter 3:21

²⁷¹ Justin 1st *Apology* 61, referenced in Jungmann 14.

²⁷² *Cod Theo* 15.1.19; and *Cod Ius* 8.10.6 referenced in Alchermes, 167 n.2; Hansen, 14.

²⁷³ Brenk 1987, 105-106

²⁷⁴ John 3:1-15.

²⁷⁵ 1 Cor 3:16-17.

⁴ . . . come to him, the living Stone—rejected by humans but chosen by God and precious to him—⁵you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.”²⁷⁶

Paul builds on these ideas, stating that the Church is

²⁰ . . . built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. ²¹In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. ²²And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.”²⁷⁷

These passages indicate how the early Christian community was conceiving of itself in terms of architecture, with Christ as *the* living stone, the cornerstone of the faith, and the prophets and apostles as additional foundations from which the Church would grow. Peter and Paul were, therefore, both conceiving of the Christian community as a living, breathing piece of architecture, with each individual block or column representing a member of the community of believers.²⁷⁸

Furthermore, in Galatians 2:9, James, Peter, and John are called columns, alluding to their strong support of the Church. They are characterized as structural pillars, maintaining the building’s integrity. Similarly, Revelation 3:12 calls the believer a permanent pillar in God’s temple, who will be inscribed with the name of God and Heavenly Jerusalem, suggesting that once accepted and reborn spiritually into the Christian community, the believer achieves salvation forever, and becomes a support in the Church. Spoliated columns could thus function synecdochially for the rest of the edifice, and for the congregation itself. While a column was an individual element, it was part of the overall structure, and was needed for support, as a vital part of the whole. Individual elements maintained their physical appearance, but were endowed with new meaning within their new context. The columns and capitals that were translated from pagan to Christian settings mirrored the way that the soul was reborn to a new purpose in Christianity. Although catechumens were segregated during the Mass of the Eucharist, they could marvel at the coloured marbles, and be reminded that they could be cleansed from their past life and reborn into a new purpose and spiritual life, just as these renewed stones were washed in the Tiber’s rivers on their journey. Similarly, full members of the church could be assured of their salvation through their baptism, and could stand tall as a metaphoric column in the church. Thus, both spolia and the soul of the new believer were reborn into new purposes.

²⁷⁶ 1 Peter 2:4-5.

²⁷⁷ Eph 2: 20-22.

²⁷⁸ This type of understanding of the Christian community comprising different and diverse parts of a larger composition is also seen in Romans 12: 3-8, which discusses the Church as the Body of Christ, with Christ at the head.

Constantine and the bishops in charge of his Christian building programmes seem to have been influenced by the New Testament associations between disciples and architecture, as twelve columns or pedestals representing the twelve apostles were erected around the most important churches in the empire, including the twelve columns around the tomb of Christ in Jerusalem, the tomb of St. Peter in Rome, and the tomb of Constantine in the church of the Twelve Apostles in Constantinople.²⁷⁹ Each group of twelve could not only recall the twelve tribes of Israel in the Old Testament, but could also represent the Church, through the twelve apostles, while anticipating the coming of golden Heavenly Jerusalem, featuring twelve foundations and twelve pearly gates.²⁸⁰ Thus, groupings of twelve columns functioned symbolically to conceptualize the Church's history diachronically, building on the promises of Judaism, and the teaching of the apostles, to look forward to their future salvation. These examples show us that Christians were conceptualizing the Church not only as a congregation, but also in relation to its architecture from as early as the first century, when Galatians and Revelation were written.²⁸¹ Under Constantine, these metaphors from the era of the apostles were realized in their materiality, as the Church gained the financial support of the emperor, and reverted back to building programs that featured columns instead of the concrete vaulting that was popular at the time.

Therefore, the spoliated columns within the new Roman basilica churches could be seen as demonstrating the doctrine of rebirth, not only through baptism's connections with water, which was imperative for transporting these columns, and legal terminology used to discuss spolia, but also through the New Testament writings that describe the Church congregation so often in architectural terms, calling apostles both foundations and pillars, and the believers, pillars and living stones within the temple of the Lord. The transference of architectural metaphor onto the congregation likely stems from the early belief that God sanctified wherever two or more Christians gathered in his name, negating the need of a specific structure; however, with the institution's growth from the 1st through 3rd centuries and then the subsequent rise into the public sphere under Constantine's benefactions, this belief in rebirth, now had the opportunity to be made visible and tangible to catechumens and church members alike.

²⁷⁹ Onians 1988, 70 n.8; Eusebius, *VC* 3. 37. Other instances occur at Constantine's tomb, in the church of the Twelve Apostles, which was surrounded by twelve pedestals, each inscribed with a name of an apostle (Eusebius *VCi*, 4.60); at Constantine's basilica at Trier; and the church of S. Constanza, which features twelve pairs of columns around her tomb, and twelve windows in the dome, that are said to have been decorated with an image of Heavenly Jerusalem (Onians 1988, 70). Krautheimer 1975, 39 discusses how Constantine saw himself as the 13th apostle.

²⁸⁰ Onians 1988, 70.

²⁸¹ The idea that apostles could be represented architecturally, as columns, is continued in the Middle Ages. Sometimes, relics were enclosed within columns, so that the saint could literally be seen as one of the pillars of the church (Hansen, 160).

Go Forth and Conquer! The Great Commission

Another way that the polychrome shafts recall the Christian doctrine of salvation is through reminding the Christian audience of Christ's call to proselytize, by recalling the places from whence these marbles had been quarried. In both the Lateran and St. Peter's basilicas, the interior featured different types of stone that could be found throughout, such as the recurring red granite and green marble colonnades at the Lateran, or the rhythmic polychromy of the many co-axial colour pairings at St. Peter's. These polychrome shafts not only connote imperial associations, but also bespoke their origins. In the Roman period, various marbles signalled Rome's position of power over the empire.²⁸² Patrizio Pensabene asserts that barbarians were associated with coloured marbles as early as the Augustan period, when sculptures of barbarian captives began to be carved in coloured marble; examples of such statuary is seen in the *pavonazetto* and *giallo antico* barbarian sculptures on the Basilica Aemelia, or the *pavonazetto* barbarians that graced the Trajanic Forum.²⁸³ That barbarians were carved in coloured marbles suggests implicit associations of the exotic or far-off lands with both coloured stone and barbarian peoples. Marble, be it white or coloured, was a social and political sign of prestige, symbolizing all of the territories that Rome had subsumed into her vast Empire. In this way, it reflected the power of the emperor to conquer,²⁸⁴ and its use in the church may have suggested the Church's power to conquer by proxy.

Christ's commission to the Church is stated explicitly twice in the Gospels. Matthew 28, states:

"Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."²⁸⁵

Additionally, Mark 16 admonishes the disciples to "[g]o into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation."²⁸⁶ Although Jesus focused his ministry within Israel, his command before his ascension is not simply a call to preach locally, but to convert people of every ethnicity, such that they are baptized into the Christian community.²⁸⁷ As I discussed above, baptism was not taken lightly. To convert an individual meant a large investment of time, as is demonstrated in this passage from Matthew, which implies that the apostles are to instruct converts in all of the tenets of Christ's teachings and the Faith (including the

²⁸² Kinney 2001b, 143.

²⁸³ Pensabene, 43.

²⁸⁴ Pensabene, 43.

²⁸⁵ Matt 28:19-20. Tertullian discusses the Great Commission in *The Prescription Against Heretics* 8, and 20, when discussing the growth of the Church, and church plantings, and again in *On Baptism* 13, when he admonishes his audience to follow Christ's command (Thomas, 41).

²⁸⁶ Mark 16:15.

²⁸⁷ Matt 28:19; Plummer, 4.

trinity, to which Christ refers), prior to their entry into the Christian community, where the new believers would be expected to continue growing spiritually after the apostles had left.

Christ's command to evangelize is also implied in the Gospel of Luke, when he states, "repentance for the forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. ⁴⁸You are witnesses of these things."²⁸⁸ This phrase is not a direct command, but appears more as a prediction, or prophecy, that the story of Christianity will be preached to all nations.²⁸⁹ In this instance, evangelism is spoken of in geographical terms, which is repeated by Luke's author in Acts, in Christ's last speech to the apostles prior to his ascension, saying "⁸ But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."²⁹⁰ Similar to the passage in Luke, the apostles are not commanded, but the commission to proselytize to regions in Israel and throughout the earth is clear. It is clear then, that the gospels contain both explicit and implicit commands from Christ that his Church is to evangelize to the world.

Although there are no explicit references in these gospel passages to the Roman Empire, in Antiquity, it would not be surprising for citizens of Rome to conceive of the world as not much larger than the empire, because it seemed so vast. Proselytizing throughout the Roman Empire would certainly be a good start in evangelising to all of humanity, and this is how Sts. Peter and Paul, the two leaders of the Church after Christ, began their independent ministries. Acts details how both of the saints began preaching in Asia Minor before moving westwards to Rome, where they were both martyred in the 1st century. Before his martyrdom in Rome, Peter had travelled throughout Israel, to Lydda, Joppa, and Caesarea,²⁹¹ settled in Antioch (in Turkey) for some time to build a Christian community,²⁹² and had written epistles to the churches in the provinces of Pontus, Galatia, Bithynia, Asia, and Cappadocia.²⁹³ Although there is no extant evidence that can tie Peter to these churches, his farewell at the conclusion of 1 Peter suggests personal relationships with these people, as he writes, "¹³She who is in Babylon . . . sends you her greetings, and so does my son Mark."²⁹⁴ It is very possible that he travelled throughout what is now Turkey, during his time in Antioch. Paul seems to have travelled much more extensively. He speaks explicitly of preaching from Jerusalem all the way to Illyricum (modern day

²⁸⁸ Luke 24:47.

²⁸⁹ Plummer, 6.

²⁹⁰ Acts 1:8; Plummer, 6.

²⁹¹ Acts 9:32-10:2.

²⁹² Galatians 2:11-20; Eusebius, *HE* 3.36.2.

²⁹³ 1 and 2 Peter. He addresses the churches in 1 Peter 1:1. Eusebius *HE* 3.4.2.

²⁹⁴ 1 Peter 5:15.

Yugoslavia),²⁹⁵ Macedonia and Achaia,²⁹⁶ and his plans to stop in Rome on his way to Spain.²⁹⁷ His epistles, with personal greetings, also suggest connections to Christian communities in Rome, Greece (Corinth, Thessalonica), Turkey (Galatia, Ephesus, Colossae), and Syria (Philippi). In Paul's writings, he does not believe that evangelism should stop with the apostles, but frequently encourages Christian communities to have courage, and preach the gospel wherever they can,²⁹⁸ while also asking for their support as he continued to preach, and spread the gospels.²⁹⁹ Church fathers took Christ's command at face value, never questioning the statement's historic validity,³⁰⁰

Looking at the spoliated columns found in the Lateran and St. Peter's, within a culture that seemed aware of the provenance of these polychrome marbles, if only for their prestige value as commodities from exotic lands, would surely remind the viewer of the distant locations to which Christ had commanded the Church to go. This is especially poignant in Rome, since, Sts. Peter and Paul, were both martyred in the city after travelling there to preach. Concepts of travel from distant lands rung true both for the apostles, who had heeded Christ's command, but also for these column shafts that had been brought to Rome at the command of the emperor. Concurrently, the exotic coloured marbles could also represent the conversion taking place all over the Roman Empire in the early 4th century, as Christianity was becoming increasingly popular with its new-found legal status and imperial promotion.

The ideas discussed above, with regards to Christians being pillars in the church is especially noteworthy then, within Rome's Christian community, as yet another tie is drawn between the apostles and the spoliated columns used in early ecumenical architecture. Moreover, as a martyrium, St. Peter's drew pilgrims from all over the empire, and the Church could send these pilgrims back out to preach. It is feasible that the builders of St. Peter's intentionally used multiple types of varied marble columns to recall as many places as possible. Within St. Peter's the marbles used for the columns alone recall Egypt, Turkey, and the Greek islands of Euboea and Chios. While they reflect the immense wealth needed to accumulate these precious stones, these columns also reminded the pilgrim of other places that they could visit to proselytize, in order to carry out Christ's command to the Church, and to emulate the actions of the saints interred in Rome. The Church's mission was to strive to convert the entire known

²⁹⁵ Romans 15:19, referenced in Plummer, 6.

²⁹⁶ 1 Thess 1:8.

²⁹⁷ Romans 15: 23-24.

²⁹⁸ Phil 1:14; Colossians 4:5-6.

²⁹⁹ Eph 6:19-20 states "¹⁹Pray also for me, that whenever I speak, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel, ²⁰for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it fearlessly, as I should."

³⁰⁰ Thomas, 43. See Tertullian, *The Prescription Against Heretics* 8, 20; Tertullian, *Against Praxeas* 26; Tertullian, *On Baptism* 13; Hippolytus, *Against the Heresy of One Noetus* 14; and Cyprian, *The Epistles of Cyprian* 24:2, 62.18, 72.5 discussed in Thomas, 40-43.

world, just as their Roman emperor had conquered it, and these brightly coloured columns from around the empire certainly could have been used to remind the Christian community of the Church's purpose and the accomplishments of its proselytization thus far.

The Bride of Christ: Heavenly Jerusalem

Just as the emperor had conquered the vast Roman Empire, Christians held the eschatological view that Heavenly Jerusalem would one day come to reign over the entire earth. While there was a belief that God's city would one day come, Christianity was an "otherworldly" religion for most monks and some clergy.³⁰¹ The rest were men of the world or flesh, and while it was not the job of the clergy to give their congregation a more Christian version of their worldly life; they could offer an antithesis that focused on the world to come. Heavenly Jerusalem is a reflection of that other world that they were yearning for; a manifestation of the belief of the fulfilment of salvation through the golden city of apocalyptic Heavenly Jerusalem, or Heaven on earth. Through baptism, the Christian community embraced all nations, setting them apart for a new spiritual purpose and for more importantly, for salvation at the end of time.³⁰²

Recalling the connotations of the imperial audience hall, the church came to symbolize the throne room of God on earth, who was represented through the Roman bishop. With each step that worshippers took towards the bishop's throne, they were thought to come closer to God. This conception of the church building representing Heavenly Jerusalem on earth is evident in Eusebius' writings, when he describes the gateway of a church as a place of transformation, bringing the soul from desolation to salvation as they entered.³⁰³ As Christians stepped into the church, and participated in the orderly procession to the altar for communion,³⁰⁴ they stepped closer to the most sacred part of the church; they arguably physically came closer to their salvation. For the Christians and Jews, the coming of Heavenly Jerusalem signalled God's final victory over Hell, and evil forces in the world. Their procession towards the apse, and the triumphal arch, would arguably be reminiscent of a victory procession, recalling how most spolia, in the ancient sense, entered into the city. The Eucharist is

³⁰¹ Brown 1978, 23.

³⁰² Augustine, *City of God*, 14.1.

³⁰³ Eusebius *HE* 10.4.38. Four centuries later, Maximus the Confessor also writes that entrance into the church building marked the transformation from wandering ignorance to recognition of God (*Mystagogia*, ch.9, PG91, 688-689, referenced in Mathews 1971, 140).

³⁰⁴ Dix, 120, 142, Mathews 1971, 172 (on Byzantine liturgy). While Mathews (1962, 90-93) points out that the *Ordo* states that communion was brought to the congregation in Rome, citing Jungmann (299), he charges its practical impossibility, since it would be improper for the bishop and his entourage to move throughout the church, and bring communion to those of lesser status within the congregation.

symbolic of the body of Christ that would bring salvation,³⁰⁵ and victory over death, to the believer. Thus, as the believer processed towards the altar to receive the material Eucharist, he or she was concurrently coming closer to salvation as it was spatially embodied in the apse that contained the bishop's throne and altar.

Salvation's embodiment in the apse is also reflected in church decoration, as Onians suggests that most churches featured mosaics of Heaven in the apse, such that the pilgrim came closer to salvation figuratively as they approached it.³⁰⁶ Many writers saw the Church as an embodiment of the Kingdom of Heaven.³⁰⁷ The book of Revelation describes it as such:

⁹Then came one of the seven angels who . . . spoke to me, saying, "Come, I will show you the Bride, the wife of the Lamb." ¹⁰And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great, high mountain, and showed me the holy city Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God, ¹¹having the glory of God, its radiance like a most rare jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal. ¹²It had a great, high wall, with twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and on the gates the names of the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel were inscribed . . . ¹⁴And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. . . . ¹⁸ The wall was made of jasper, and the city of pure gold, as pure as glass. ¹⁹The foundations of the city walls were decorated with every kind of precious stone. The first foundation was jasper, the second sapphire, the third agate, the fourth emerald, ²⁰the fifth onyx, the sixth ruby, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth turquoise, the eleventh jacinth, and the twelfth amethyst.²¹ The twelve gates were twelve pearls, each gate made of a single pearl. The great street of the city was of gold, as pure as transparent glass."³⁰⁸

This passage describes the Bride of Christ (the Church) as Heavenly Jerusalem,³⁰⁹ similar to how the Church is both the Christian community and the building itself. The Bride of Christ is understood as both the congregation of the faithful that makes up the global Christian community, but also the material, and physical, although imagined, space of Heavenly Jerusalem. It is clear that the writers of the New Testament had many conceptions of the Christian community, as Heavenly Jerusalem, the Bride of Christ, and the living stones that make up the metaphorical building of the Church. Drawing on the metaphors discussed above, let us remember that believers were called pillars of the Church. These believers were also considered the Bride of Christ, as discussed in the passage above, so by extension, these 'living stones' of the Church were also to be adorned with jewels, such as jasper, emerald, and

³⁰⁵ Matt 26:26; Mark 14:22; Luke 22:19.

³⁰⁶ Onians 1988, 60, 69-70; Mathews 1999, 94-95.

³⁰⁷ Onians 1988, 69-70.

³⁰⁸ Rev 21:9-21.

³⁰⁹ Augustine, *On Christian Doctrine*, 3.31.

topaz. By examining Revelation, the metaphor becomes much deeper, as these brightly coloured marbles also find their associations with Heavenly Jerusalem through colour.

The passage above, Revelation 21:9-21, describes the city as enrobed in pure gold, and surrounded by a high wall adorned with pearls and every type of jewel, including jasper, emerald, and sapphire.³¹⁰ As early as the 5th century, Christians tried to depict Heavenly Jerusalem literally, as is seen in the mosaics on the triumphal arch in the church of S. Maria Maggiore (432-440). The mosaic's depiction of Jerusalem shows a gold city, covered in jewels of blue, green, white.³¹¹ While the city is shown with only six towers (perhaps due to the small space available), the six buildings inside make up a requisite twelve buildings to represent the twelve apostles, and the sheep below suggest the entrance of the faithful into *the* holy city Heavenly Jerusalem, at the end of time. This mosaic demonstrates a yearning to understand what Heavenly Jerusalem looked like, but I think that as early as the beginnings of public Christian architecture, we can see how the Church was trying to access concepts of Heavenly Jerusalem visually. Returning to the description of Heavenly Jerusalem as enrobed in gold, while it may have been implied in the deep, warm yellows of *giallo antico* marble, we must remember the many gold and silver implements and furniture that Constantine donated to the churches of the Lateran and St. Peter's. The reflection of light off of such rich and obdurate materials within the church, such as the gold and silver implements, chandeliers, and altars contributed not only to an ethereal and immaterial atmosphere, but also to ideas of eternity, as gold and jewels were incorruptible and metaphors for the eternal.³¹² The use of gold is also important in its associations to deities; in pagan antiquity, gold was a material associated with the gods, as it was constantly used in cult statues.³¹³ Its use in a Christian context focuses on Christ's supremacy and divinity, as with previous godly associations,³¹⁴ and within an ancient context, may have certainly contributed to an implication of the victorious Church, as a new, and legally accepted, religious institution.

In addition to the significance of gold, the large, brightly coloured, marble columns could easily recall the polychrome symphony that is so elaborately described within Revelation. Revelation describes Heavenly Jerusalem as brightly coloured, as it is adorned with rubies (deep red), onyx (black), beryl (polychrome crystals), jasper (red with variegations), amethyst (lavender), jacinth (bright orange), agate

³¹⁰ Rev 21:18-21.

³¹¹ Hansen, 153.

³¹² Hansen, 140-142, 167.

³¹³ Janes, 19; Mathews 1999, 101. Examples of the most notable cult statues that use large quantities of gold are the statues of Zeus at Olympia (c.432 BCE) and of Athena Parthenos (c.432 BCE) by Phidias. Other golden attributes comprise Apollo's cloak, lyre and bow, Helios' chariot & bed, Diana's bow, Cupid's arrow, and Juno's sceptre).

³¹⁴ Janes, 91; Mathews 1999, 101.

(polychrome), emerald (deep green), sapphire (deep blue), topaz (bright blue), turquoise (light bluish green), and chrysolite (light green).³¹⁵ Outlining all of the colours described in Heavenly Jerusalem is important in understanding just how much the Church relied on colour. This polychromy is replicated especially within St. Peter's. While colour can be found on the marble veneers and paintings on the walls, or marble floors, I will focus on the columns. The spoliated columns in St. Peter's are much more varied than those used at the Lateran, and resembling Heavenly Jerusalem may have been a reason for this variety, instead of a lack of supplies. The majority of the column shafts in St. Peter's were white and red granite, and *cippolino*, *portasanta*, and africano marbles. They range from a light, speckled grey (white granite); to a dark black and brown with specks of red (africano), recalling both onyx and jasper; to *cippolino* is a veiny green and beige marble that could resemble chrysolite and emerald. Gold and jewels embodied both the physical world, through their rich materiality, but also the world beyond, due to their translucent and light reflecting qualities, that reflected the presence of God.³¹⁶ It seems as though the architects could have been using such varied stones, in combination with the precious metal decorations, to resemble God's heavenly throne room in appearance. Therefore, the *variatio* of elaborately coloured marble floors and columns, a coffered or gilded ceiling, metal decorations, and mosaics in the clerestory and apse all contributed to the concept of Heavenly Jerusalem, decorated with jewels and precious stones.

The concept of the twelve gates are also of interest, because of the prevalence of twelve columns surrounding the altar of St. Peter's, Constantine's tomb at the church of the Twelve Apostles, and the funereal chapel of St. Constanza. Just as the columns could be understood as symbolizing the twelve apostles, here the connection is explicit: the twelve gates of Heavenly Jerusalem represent the twelve apostles, while looking forward to Christ's return.³¹⁷ Although this concept of the Church as Heavenly Jerusalem becomes more current later in the Medieval period, I would suggest that we may be seeing the beginnings of this concept from the very inception of public Christian architecture.

Moreover, the luxurious and exotic marbles suggested the concept of the adorned bride of Christ, who is a symbol of Heavenly Jerusalem. Isaiah 61:10-11 prophesied how Christ (the bridegroom) would adorn his bride with jewels. Eusebius praises Constantine as fulfilling this prophecy through his use of precious stones and metals in his building programmes, writing:

“⁴⁷But for the present, she [the bride] that was formerly widowed and desolate is clothed by the grace of God with these flowers, and has become truly like a lily, as the

³¹⁵ Rev 21:19-20.

³¹⁶ Hansen, 167.

³¹⁷ Onians 1988, 70; Wohl, 106; Hansen, 207.

prophecy says, and having received the bridal garment and the crown of beauty, she is taught by Isaiah to dance, and to present her thank-offerings unto God the King in reverent words. ⁴⁸Let us hear her saying, 'My soul shall rejoice in the Lord; for he has clothed me with a garment of salvation and with a robe of gladness; he has bedecked me like a bridegroom with a garland, and he has adorned me like a bride with jewels; and like the earth which brings forth her bud, and like a garden which causes the things that are sown in it to spring forth, thus the Lord God has caused righteousness and praise to spring forth before all the nations.'³¹⁸

In this passage, Eusebius rejoices for the Bride of Christ, the Christian community that was once desolate (perhaps referring to Great Persecution under Diocletian), and how she is finally adorned with flowers and garlands as a bride. Recalling how Christians often related the Christian community to the actual church building, we can see how Eusebius draws a correlation, describing how Constantine has clothed the Church like a bride adorned with jewels. This may be one of the only passages from late antiquity that makes the connection between the jewelled Bride and the polychrome columns that adorned the imperial churches' interiors.

A connection between jewels and coloured stones can be made when we consider the great costs incurred in order to procure said marbles. The price edict of Diocletian, issued in 301, lists the expense of veneers of the most precious coloured marbles within the empire, including Egyptian red porphyry, Greek green porphyry, Numidian *giallo antico*, and Turkish *pavonazetto*. Kinney points out that column shafts of this sort would have been virtually unobtainable on the market at this time, making the materials all the more precious,³¹⁹ perhaps as much as jewels. Thus, the spoliated columns were not acting simply as architectural supports, or decoration that was hastily erected, but may have been replicating the brightly coloured jewels described as adorning both the city of Heavenly Jerusalem, and also her counterpart, the Bride of Christ. These precious materials were mirrored in the rise of reliquaries that developed as an important genre of religious art as early as the 4th century. The relics of the saints were encased in lavish shrines made of gold and precious jewels. Sometimes these gems or jewels were spolia, taken from an ancient source, an example of which is the Desiderius Cross (757-774) that features ancient gems.³²⁰ The same incrustation of jewels is seen on the cross and throne of Christ in the mosaic of S. Pudenziana (c.400). In both small-scale reliquaries and architecture, the same governing principles of composition are evident,³²¹ as both were adorned and ornamented with

³¹⁸ Eusebius, *HE* 10.4.47-48.

³¹⁹ Kinney 2001b, 142.

³²⁰ Hansen, 153-155.

³²¹ Hansen, 124, 167; Krautheimer 1975, 65-67; Kessler 1988, 171.

luxurious materials, much in the same way that a bride wears jewellery to adorn herself for her wedding. Thus, the polychromy seen in the late Antique use of spolia was not simply due to an interest in variation. Instead, it may have also functioned to remind the viewer of their future salvation by embodying Heavenly Jerusalem, bedecked with precious stones. Not only would this imply that a worshipper could physically get closer to salvation as they approached the altar, but it also functioned as the literal embodiment of the global Christian community, the Bride of Christ.

Conclusions

Although Christianity has been a dominant world religion for almost 1,700 years, this was not always so. After 300 years of oppression and persecution, the Christian Church was finally recognized under Constantine. Although they met in homes at its outset, the Church began to grow, adapting these homes to their needs, first with the *domus ecclesia*, and then with the *aula ecclesia*. By the time that Constantine intervened, the Church had already concretized many of their teachings, and had full established hierarchies. As the Church became a public institution, it was rising in a problematic and complex time; the spoliated columns used in Constantine's basilica churches are evidence of this complex multi-dimensionality, not only in the circumstances surrounding their use, but also the many layers of meaning that they carried.

While scholarship in the past had characterized the use of spolia as reflecting expediency, practicality, or a decrease in skilled workmanship and rich materials in Rome in the early 4th century, these conceptions regarding architectural reuse began to be thought of in different ways over the past four decades. It is finally understood by most that spolia was an intentional stylistic choice, not simply a means to erect monumental buildings in an economic way, during a period of fiscal chaos. This stylistic choice, however, was not simply due a shift in worldview, where people desired variety and rhythmic dissimilarity to please the eye. Within the early Christian Church at Rome, specific messages could be communicated through their context within the church building. This paper has sought to demonstrate how messages of both power and Christian doctrine could have been communicated through spolia's specific reuse within the Church.

As I discussed in the introduction of public ecumenical architecture, the very use of an imperial building type associated with the emperor's throne room implies ideas of grandeur, and imperial benefaction within the Church. By drawing on this particular prototype, in combination with the emperor's exorbitant donations of land, precious stones, and implements, Constantine was trying to demonstrate his power in a religious institution that would not allow him to take leadership, as he could within the Roman pantheon. Concurrently, the Church welcomed the emperor's aid to bring them into a public position of power and authority. Additionally, discourses of hegemony are evident in the hierarchies of materials and the elaborateness of column capitals used, in the Lateran and St. Peter's respectively, marking off the apse as the most sacred part of the structure. These spatial demarcations were used within the basilica churches to mark out the strict social hierarchy that had developed over the Church's 300 year history. The bishop of Rome, seated on an imperial-looking throne, seems to have reigned over his congregation from the church's most sacred space, marked out by Composite columns

and comparatively more expensive marbles than elsewhere in the church. From there hierarchies of space were arranged according to membership status within the community and gender, marking out clear social identity within the group. Spolia was therefore used in a very strategic way, delineating status and power through gradations of expensive materials, based on their craftsmanship and colour.

The rich multiplicity of meanings did not stop with delineating hierarchies of power. The spoliated columns themselves are pregnant with positive semiological meanings within the context of the Church. There are both general and more specific meanings that could be communicated through spolia's use. I have argued that in addition to already proposed meanings of the triumphant Church and the internal nature of the Christian faith, other symbolic layers of understanding can be found in these spoliated columns, especially in the Bible's architectural allusions to Christian believers. The metaphors of Christians being pillars within the Church found their realization under Constantine, as polychrome marble columns became feasible architectural elements. These columns could be used to reflect the Church's teachings in relation to the doctrine of salvation. First, the columns were 'reborn' or translated from secular uses to those of the Church, reflecting the transition of the soul to salvation, and acceptance into the Christian community, as a pillar in the Lord's temple. Secondly, the bright colours reminded Christian viewers of Christ's calling to proselytize to the world, just as Peter and Paul strove to do. Finally, the many colours of marble can be seen as an embodiment of Heavenly Jerusalem, or the Bride of Christ, bedecked with precious stones, which was the goal of the Christian's salvation.

The subject of spolia is a rich and contestable one. This study has aimed to contribute other layers of meaning that were specific to spolia's Christian context within Rome, by considering the spatial hierarchy and religious teachings that may have been read into their use. My focus on the Lateran and St. Peter's basilicas, as two of the earliest imperial churches built under Constantine, has allowed for a richer understanding of the material, due to their varied functions, a cathedral, and martyrion respectively. I chose to concentrate on the city of Rome, not only because it was the location of these two churches, but also because of its rich history, and the wealth of spoliata material available there for reuse. With that said, this study has also explored broad concepts, with regards to the early Church's teachings. These can certainly be applied more broadly, not only to later periods, but also to different geographical regions. This type of semiological reading can aid us in the ways that we think about late Antique spolia, and its subsequent position within Medieval art and architecture, not just in terms of its historical context, or practical factors, but how they may have carried exegetical meanings to their viewers in the past, as they continue to carry meaning today.

The end.

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