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ON THE ALLEGED REBURIAL OF JULIAN THE APOSTATE IN CONSTANTINOPLE

It is generally accepted at present that the emperor Julian (360-63) was reburied in the Church of the Holy Apostles at Constantinople at some unknown date after his initial burial outside Tarsus in Cilicia in 363 ([1]). This assumption rests on the fact that a series of late Byzantine sources describe the presence of his tomb in this church, from Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus (913-59), who included a catalogue of imperial tombs in his *De Ceremoniis*, to the epitomator Zonaras (c.1118) ([2]). Most modern commentators have tended to assume that the transfer of the tomb occurred at a relatively early date between the fourth and tenth centuries, probably within the latter half of the fourth century itself ([3]). It is my argument that Julian's tomb was never

[1] On his initial burial at Tarsus, see e.g. AMM. MARC. 25.10.5; GREG. NAZ. *Or*. 5.18; PHILOST. *HE* 8.1. Exceptionally, G. DAGRON, *Emperor and Priest: The Imperial Office in Byzantium*, Cambridge, 2003, p. 140, signifies his disbelief of this reburial thesis by using inverted commas about the name of Julian and a question mark when he locates his alleged tomb on his plan of the Church of the Holy Apostles. Unfortunately, he does not discuss this topic within his text

[2] For the text of the catalogue by Constantine Porphyrogenitus, and of two later catalogues also, see G. DOWNEY, *The Tombs of the Byzantine Emperors at the Church of the Holy Apostles in Constantinople*, in *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 79 (1959) 27-51. ZONAR. *Ann*. 13.13.23-25, does not actually mention the church, but says only that Julian's body was returned to the queen of cities, that is, Constantinople.

[3] E.g. G. KELLY, *The New Rome and the Old: Ammianus Marcellinus' Silences on Constantinople*, in *Classical Quarterly* 53 (2003), 588-607, at 594, favours dating the reburial c.395, following P. GRIERSON, *The Tombs and Obits of the Byzantine Emperors (337-1042)*, in *DOP* 16 (1962), 1-63, at 40-41, and DOWNEY (n. 2), 47. B. BLECKMANN, *Die Reichskrise des III. Jahrhunderts und der spätantiken Geschichtsschreibung*, Munich, 1992, p. 386, n. 235, favours dating it to the early reign of

removed from Tarsus, but that the tomb later identified as his had probably belonged to Crispus instead, the eldest son and Caesar of Constantine I (306-37).

There are several good reasons to doubt the accuracy of the later Byzantine claims that the tomb of Julian stood in the Church of the Holy Apostles. The first reason, of course, is that it is unthinkable that the bishop or people of Constantinople should ever have allowed a man such as Julian to be reburied in this church, whether in a structure within or attached to the main body of the church itself or in some quite separate structure within the wider church grounds ([4]). Julian had been an apostate, a persecutor of the church whose memory was never rehabilitated. The language of the relevant entry in the catalogue preserved by Constantine Porphyrogenitus speaks volumes of the depth of feeling still, even by the tenth century:

Στοὰ ἡ πρὸς ἄρκτον τοῦ αὐτοῦ ναοῦ.

᾽Εν ταύτῃ τῇ στοᾷ τῇ οὔσῃ πρὸς ἄρκτον κεῖται λάρναξ κυλινδροειδὴς, ἐν ᾧ ἀπόκειται τὸ δύστηνον καὶ παμμίαρον σῶμα τοῦ παραβάτου ᾽Ιουλιανοῦ, τὴν χροιὰν πορφυροῦν, ἤτουν ῾Ρωμαῖον. ἕτερος λάρναξ πορφυροῦς, ἤτουν ῾Ρωμαῖος, ἐν ᾧ ἀπόκειται τὸ σῶμα ᾽Ιοβιανοῦ τοῦ μετὰ ᾽Ιουλιανὸν βασιλεύσαντος.

Valens (364-78). M. DI MAIO, *The Transfer of the Remains of the Emperor Julian from Tarsus to Constantinople*, in *Byzantion* 48 (1978), 43-50, favours a date between the sixth and tenth centuries.

[4] The sources are unclear as to exact position of the northern stoa which contained the alleged tomb of Julian. DOWNEY (n. 2), 45-46, identifies the northern and southern stoas as two separate buildings independent of the main body of the church, but within the church precincts still. GRIERSON (n. 3), 36-38, argues that the northern stoa was a side-chapel of the church itself, but that the southern stoa was a separate building. This disagreement does not affect the main substance of my argument here.

The Stoa to the North of the Same Church

In this stoa, which is to the north, lies a cylindrical shaped sarcophagus, in which lies the cursed and wretched body of the apostate Julian, porphyry or Roman in colour. Another sarcophagus, porphyry, or Roman, in which lies the body of Jovian, who ruled after Julian ([5]).

If there was one thing upon which all the various bishops and emperors could agree throughout the fourth to the tenth centuries, no matter what theological faction they belonged to, it was that Julian's memory deserved to be condemned. The fact that none of his imperial successors were related to or descended from Julian renders it doubly improbable that any of them should have courted controversy by attempting to rebury him in the Church of the Holy Apostles. Furthermore, while many later emperors wanted to present themselves as the new Constantine, no-one ever wanted to be known as the new Julian ([6]). In the final analysis, the frequent modern assumption that Julian must have been reburied in the church in the end, tells us far more about the laxity of modern western discipline in such matters than it does about the early or medieval Byzantine practice.

The second reason to doubt the later Byzantine claims in this matter is their late date. In general, the later a source for any event is, the less likely it is to be true. In this case, a long series of surviving historians and chroniclers have preserved some account of Julian's reign – Rufinus (c.402), Philostorgius (c.425), Socrates (c.439), Zosimus (c.518), John Malalas (c.532), the author of the *Chronicon Paschale* (c.630),

[5] Text and translation from DOWNEY (n. 2), 31-34.

[6] See J. HALDON, *Constantine or Justinian ? Crisis and Identity in Imperial Propaganda in the Seventh Century*, in P. MAGDALINO (ed.), *New Constantines: The Rhythm of Imperial Renewal in Byzantium, 4th-13th Centuries*, Aldershot, 1994, pp. 95-107.

Theophanes Confessor (c.814), to name but a few – and it is difficult to believe that so many authors, most of them independent of one another, could all have omitted to mention the reburial of this most controversial of emperors in the capital itself had this actually occurred. In the case of the Eunomian historian Philostorgius, for example, it is difficult to believe that he would have missed an opportunity to criticize the orthodox Theodosius I had he really been responsible for the reburial of Julian at Constantinople, as most modern commentators assume, or that his epitomator Photius could then have failed to denounce such an allegation had he made it ([7]).

The third reason to doubt the claims is that the sources all appear totally ignorant as to circumstances of the alleged transfer of Julian's tomb. No-one explains who performed this transfer, when they did so, or why they felt it necessary. The absence of such corroborating detail must cause severe doubt as to the origin of their claims in a genuine historical tradition, however transmitted. Indeed, such absence suggests that the belief that the tomb of Julian could be seen in the Church of the Holy Apostles probably originated in a popular misidentification of one of the tombs within that church, much like one of the bizarre misidentifications of public monuments that can be found in the eighth-century *Parastaseis Syntomoi Chronikai* ([8]).

It is important at this point to be clear concerning the relationships between the late Byzantine sources. The similarity of their wording proves that they are related to one another, that they often share a common source at least, if they do not depend directly upon each other. So George Cedrenus (c.1057) depends on Symeon Logothete, a mid-

[7] In addition to his earlier denials of various claims by Philostorgius (e.g. *HE* 2.17, 8.12, 9.1, 10.5), Photius also reacts violently to his claim that Theodosius' immoderate lifestyle had contributed to his death (*HE* 11.2).

[8] See A. CAMERON and J. HERRIN (eds.), *Constantinople in the Early Eighth Century: The Parastaseis Syntomoi Chronikai*, Leiden, 1984.

tenth century author whose work is often known by the name of its scribe Leo Grammaticus (c.1013), and Symeon depends if not directly on the catalogue of tombs as preserved by Constantine Porphyrogenitus, then on a common source which it shares with two later anonymous lists of these tombs. All the surviving sources seem to derive ultimately from the same list of the imperial tombs that was in circulation by the mid-tenth century. It is noteworthy, therefore, that it is Symeon Logothete alone (or Leo Grammaticus as he is sometimes mistakenly identified) who declares that Julian was buried together with his wife Helena, the daughter of Constantine I (94.1-2). This is clearly an assumption on his own part based on no more than current burial practice and the knowledge that Julian had been married to Helena. The fact that a contemporary source, Ammianus Marcellinus, reports that Helena was actually buried at Rome reinforces this point (21.1.5). The key point here is that although early Byzantine sources reveal a widespread knowledge that Julian had been married to Helena, none report her place of burial, so that the situation was wide open for someone to make the assumption that Symeon did, and it is only the chance survival of Ammianus Marcellinus that proves him wrong ([9]).

Let us turn now to the real identity of the owner of the tomb that had come to be identified as that of Julian by the mid-tenth century. What factors contributed to its misidentification as the tomb of Julian ? By the tenth century, the imperial tombs associated with the Church of the Holy Apostles lay in four different structures, the mausoleum of Constantine I, the mausoleum of Justinian I (527-65), a stoa to the south of the church, and a stoa to the north of the church. Probably the key factor that led to the identification of the so-called tomb of Julian as such was that it was the only

[9] On the marriage of Julian and Helena, see e.g. SOC. *HE* 3.1.25 (some manuscripts); *Chron. Pasch.* s.a. 355; THEOPH. *Chron.* AM 5849.

occupant, together with the tomb of Jovian, of the northern stoa. People may have expected to find the tombs of successive emperors in close association with one another, so that the presence of Jovian's tomb in the stoa immediately suggested the identification of its companion as an emperor of similar date. A second factor, perhaps, may have been that Julian appeared to be the only obvious candidate for identification as the owner of this tomb. A systematic check of the names of the various emperors since Constantine I who had enjoyed either sole rule or rule of the eastern half of the empire alone, against the names of those whose tombs were already identifiable within the church, would have left Julian as the prime candidate for ownership of this tomb. Hence it is possible that the identification owes a great deal to a rather simplistic calculation.

It is unfortunate that we do not have a firm date for the construction of the northern stoa, but let us assume that no tomb was ever removed from the structure in which it had originally been placed. Certainly, there is no evidence to support such a suggestion. This requires that the northern stoa had either been purpose-built to receive Jovian's tomb or was already in existence by the time that his tomb was set there. At Jovian's death, the mausoleum of Constantine I contained only two burials, that of Constantine I, against the east side and facing the entrance, and that of Constantius II, against the north side. Hence the mausoleum had plenty of room still, particularly on its south side. Given that the mausoleum does not seem to have had a distinctly 'family' feel at this point, as proven by the fact that several members of the Constantinian dynasty had preferred to be buried at Rome instead, ([10]) and that

[10] Constantina (d. 354) and Helena (d. 360), daughters of Constantine I, were both buried at a villa on the Via Nomentana just outside Rome, while Helen (d. c.328), the mother of Constantine I, was laid to

previous mausolea in Rome itself had quickly attained imperial rather than purely dynastic status, ([11]) thereby providing a model for the burial of unrelated emperors within the same mausoleum, the only reasonable explanation for the failure to set Jovian's tomb within the mausoleum of Constantine I, was that the northern stoa was already in existence at that point and in current use as a mausoleum also, so that the new emperors Valentinian I (364-75) and Valens (364-78) had a choice when they came to decide the final location of Jovian's tomb. It seems that they chose to set in it the northern stoa rather in the main mausoleum with an eye to the future, so that one of their tombs could enjoy the prime position against the southern side, so that their dynasties alone should be associated with the prestigious Constantinian dynasty. For these reasons, the tomb of Jovian, an emperor of brief and undistinguished reign, was hidden in the northern stoa.

So whose tomb was it in this stoa already whose presence there provided Valentinian and Valens with this opportunity to hide their unlamented predecessor's tomb out of the main view ? A forgotten name suggests itself, Crispus. Crispus was Constantine I's eldest son, had acted as his Caesar since 317, and played a prominent part in the final civil-war against Licinius in 324. He was disgraced in 326, sent into exile at or near Pola in Histria, and either committed suicide or was killed ([12]). The key point here, however, is that his reputation seems to have been quickly restored in

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rest in a mausoleum on the Via Labicana. See J.W. DRIJVERS, *Helena Augusta*, Leiden, 1992, pp. 73-75.

[11] The mausoleum of Augustus (31BC-AD14) seems to have been regarded as an imperial mausoleum by the time it received the ashes of Nerva (96-98), while the mausoleum of Hadrian (117-38) continued in that role until the death of Caracalla (210-17). See S.B. PLATNER, *A Topographical Dictionary of Ancient Rome*, Oxford, 1926, 332-38.

[12] See H. POHLSANDER, *Crispus: Brilliant Career and Tragic End*, in *Historia* 33 (1984), 79-106.

circumstances which resulted in the death of his principal accuser previously, his step-mother Fausta. So what happened to his body ? No source records the location of his tomb, but it hardly seems likely that Constantine should have left him in an obscure grave at Pola. Since Constantine had already chosen Byzantium as the site of his new capital by 8 November 324 when he marked out a new perimeter for his foundation, the obvious suggestion is that he would have wanted to arrange for his reburial there, where he intended to spend much of the rest of his life ([13]). Since his own mausoleum was not quite finished at the time of his death in 337, so that his son Constantius II attempted to claim the credit for its construction, it seems hardly likely that it would have been in a fit state to receive the tomb of Crispus as early as 326 ([14]). My suggestion, therefore, is that Constantine built a small mausoleum for Crispus near the site that he had already marked out for his own mausoleum, and that Constantius II incorporated this into the Church of the Holy Apostles subsequently. Since Constantius II was only a half-brother to Crispus, and probably blamed him for the circumstances that led to the death of his mother Fausta, it is perfectly understandable that he should not have removed this small structure altogether and transferred Crispus' tomb into the main mausoleum.

The final piece of evidence in support of the above reconstruction lies in the full name of Crispus, Flavius Iulius Crispus ([15]). Some brief inscription recording the identity of the deceased at least may be presumed to have accompanied most imperial tombs, whether on the tomb itself or on an associated plaque. The fact that none of the

[13] THEMIST. *Or*. 4.63a; *Cons. Constant*. s.a. 324.

[14] PHILOST. *HE* 3.2; ZONAR. *Ann*. 13.4.28. Cf. EUS. *VC* 4.58-60.

[15] As attested by coins and inscriptions. See e.g. P. BRUUN, *Roman Imperial Coinage VII: Constantine and Licinius AD313-337*, London, 1966, passim.

surviving imperial sarcophagi bear such a dedicatory inscription supports the latter possibility ([16]). Furthermore, although it has not survived until the present, it seems probable that the tomb identified as that of Julian in the late Byzantine sources was excavated in 1750, and it does not seem to have borne an inscription ([17]). Two points are important here. The first is that any inscription associated with the tomb of Crispus would have been in Latin at that early date, but that knowledge of Latin was relatively rare by the tenth century. Latin inscriptions would have been unintelligible for the most part except to a tiny minority. The second is that Byzantine historians seldom record the full names of their subjects. Hence the inhabitants of tenth-century Constantinople would have known Crispus by that name alone, if they had heard of him at all. Similarly, they would have known of Julian only by that name, and not as Flavius Claudius Iulianus ([18]). It is my suggestion, therefore, that the misidentification of the tomb of Crispus as that of Julian results primarily from a faulty reading by a Greek-speaker of an inscription recording the name Flavius Iulius Crispus – probably abbreviated as Fl. Iul. Crispus – as Flavius Iulianus.

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[16] See C. MANGO, *Three Imperial Byzantine Sarcophagi Discovered in 1750*, in *DOP* 16 (1962), 397-402; idem, *A Newly Discovered Byzantine Imperial Sarcophagus*, in *Annual of the Archaeological Museums of Istanbul* 15-16 (1969), 307-09.

[17] Mango, *Three Imperial Byzantine Sarcophagi*, 401. Since Julian's original tomb at Tarsus seems to have borne a metrical epitaph, the fact that the tomb discovered at Constantinople which best fits the late Byzantine description of his 'cylindrical' tomb, does not bear such an inscription, ought in itself to cause us to doubt whether this tomb had in fact been transferred from Tarsus to Constantinople. For the epitaph, see ZOS. *HN* 3.34.3; ZONAR. *Ann*. 13.13.24; CEDRENUS, 1.539.6-9; *Anth. Pal*. 7.747.

[18] For Julian's full name see e.g. J.P.C. KENT, *Roman Imperial Coinage VIII: The Family of Constantine I AD337-364*, London 1981, passim.

In conclusion, there are strong reasons to doubt the late Byzantine tradition that the tomb of Julian the Apostate was preserved in the Church of the Holy Apostles. The explanation for the origin of this tradition probably lies in the popular misidentification of the tomb of Crispus Caesar as that of Julian, due both to its position next to the tomb of Jovian and a misreading of the associated Latin inscription.

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