

## **From the corporate to the material: How the translation of liturgical terms shifted the emphasis in Christian worship**

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### **SUMMARY**

The development of liturgical terms within the early Church has often shifted the meaning of a word from its original to a meaning that reflects changes in the church's development. This is particularly true in the development of *ἐκκλησία*, which Paul and the Gospel writers use to designate the Christian community, literally those who have been called (*καλέω-ω*) out (*έκ*). However, with the building of physical structures to house the gathering of Christians, *ἐκκλησία* increasingly came to designate the physical structure as much as the gathering. Moreover, the attributes that early Christian writers ascribed to the *ἐκκλησία* as the gathering of Christians, such as Paul's description of the church as the "body of Christ," were projected into the meaning of the physical buildings so that the brick and mortar of the Basilica, for instance, also became the "body of Christ." In this paper, I will trace the development of the word *ἐκκλησία* and its effect upon the early Church as a body of worshippers and a physical structure.

## **Από το συλλογικό στο υλικό: Πώς η μετάφραση λειτουργικών όρων μετατόπισε την έμφαση στη Χριστιανική λατρεία**

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### **ΠΕΡΙΛΗΨΗ**

Η ανάπτυξη των λειτουργικών όρων μέσα στην πρώτη Εκκλησία συχνά μετατόπισε την αρχική σημασία της λέξης. Αυτό αληθεύει ιδιαίτερα στην ανάπτυξη της *ἐκκλησίας*, την οποία ο Παύλος και οι Ευαγγελιστές χρησιμοποιούν για να κατασημάνουν την κοινότητα των Χριστιανών, εκείνους δηλαδή που κυριολεκτικά έχουν κληθεί (*καλέω-ω*) έξω (*έκ*). Με την κατασκευή υλικών δομών για να στεγασθεί η συγκέντρωση των χριστιανών, η *ἐκκλησία* επεκτεινόμενη έφτασε να κατασημαίνει τόσο το υλικό οικοδόμημα όσο και την σύναξη των Χριστιανών. Επιπλέον, τα γνωρίσματα που οι πρώτοι Χριστιανοί συγγραφείς αποδίδουν στην *ἐκκλησία*, όπως η περιγραφή του Παύλου για την εκκλησία ως «σώμα του Χριστού», προβλήθηκαν στη σημασία των υλικών κτιρίων ώστε το τούβλο και το ασβεστοκονίαμα της Βασιλικής, για παράδειγμα, σύντομα έγινε το «σώμα του Χριστού». Στην παρούσα εργασία θα ανιχνεύσουμε την ανάπτυξη της λέξης *ἐκκλησία* και την επίδρασή της πάνω στην πρώτη Εκκλησία ως σώμα λατρευτών και ως υλική κατασκευή.

### **0 Introduction**

The relationship between the abstract spaces used for rhetorical invention and memorization, what the ancient Greeks and Romans called *τόποι* and commonplaces, respectively, and the physical spaces of architecture that too were used for memory and invention (commonly, as meditation) should not surprise us. Perhaps, it lies in the Greek

and Roman etymologies for space, *τόπος* or *τόποι* (pl) and *loci* that made their way into the language of rhetoric. Perhaps, it is because architecture itself is simply a different incarnation of the concept of text, a physical and material rendering of symbols and meanings, and, therefore, is open to the same types of rhetorical processes that other oral and written texts are exposed to. Perhaps, as Mary Carruthers seems to suggest, space is a place where one can locate, inventory, and retrieve objects, whether they are abstract concepts and images, as in the case of rhetorical *τόποι*, or material items as in the case of furniture that might be stored in a room [1]. What is interesting is when the two seem to influence each other so that the functions of the mental and physical text become blurred. When medieval monks wanted to visualize their spiritual journey, Carruthers notes, they imagined the Jewish temple described in *Ezekiel* and *1 Kings*. The seven steps leading up to the temple became the seven qualities of a good monk seeking entrance into the kingdom of heaven. As the visualizing of the temple became a common *τόπος* within monastic literature, the monastic buildings began to incorporate these meditative *τόποι* so that the same seven steps would begin to appear in the physical architecture with the purpose of physically reminding the monk of his more symbolic ascent into heaven [1]. Carruthers tells us that the purpose of these abstract and material spaces was to aid the medieval monk in locating, collecting, and creating texts. The individual *τόποι*, such as the seven steps towards the temple described in Jewish texts, become places where other ideas and texts can be located and collected, such as seven qualities of a good monk. These emerging inventories of objects can then be used to create oral and written texts as well as physical buildings or, what we might call, architectural texts [1].

I will explore the relationship between the abstract *τόποι* used for rhetorical memory and invention and the material places found in architecture. Nowhere is this more apparent in the Byzantine and medieval period than in the word *ἐκκλησία*, a word used to designate those who gathered as Christians and the place where they gathered. The *ἐκκλησία* quickly became a commonplace of invention for early writers to designate attributes and develop an emerging theology. The Apostle Paul, for instance, argues that those who have been called (*καλῶ*) out (*ἐκ*) to spread the message and do the work of Christ are themselves the collective and living "body of Christ" imbued by the Holy Spirit. With the building of physical structures for the ecclesia to gather, sometimes called *κυριακόν*, or house(s) (*οἶκος*) of the Lord (*Κυρίου*), but more often simply called *ἡ ἐκκλησία*, a metonymic substitution of the part, the place where the gathers gather, with the whole, the gatherers, or those who have been called out (the Pauline and early Christian *ἐκκλησία*). Thus, these physical structures, which

took their original shape and function from Roman aristocratic farms where the first century church often met, became imbued with the attributes that the early Christians had assigned to the church as a collection of people. Not surprisingly, at the height of the iconoclastic controversy and after Hagia Sofia had established itself as the great Byzantine basilica, Germanus, an eighth century patriarch, begins his mystagogy or catechumenal lectures with the declaration "*Ἐκκλησία ἐστὶ ναὸς θεοῦ, τέμενος ἅγιον, οἶκος προσευχῆς, συνάθροιση λαοῦ, σῶμα Χριστοῦ*, (1984: 56 [4])" "The Church [physical structure] is the temple of God, a holy place, a house of prayer, a gathering of people, the body of Christ (1984: 57 [4])." Unlike his predecessors, Cyril of Jerusalem, Theodore of Mopseustia, or John Chrysostom, who organize their mystagogical lectures around the various acts of the liturgy, Germanus arranges his lectures around the various places within the church as well as the material objects located therein. In the same instance, Germanus uses the physical location of rooms and objects as a way to develop and generate his own lectures; he projects onto the physical building those attributes which had been assigned to the word *ecclesia* so that the building becomes a physical text wherein the clergy and laity may reflect upon Christ's life as well as generate their own texts. This paper will trace the development of this word as both an abstract and theological concept as well as a physical structure.

## 1 Rhetorical Topoi as Memory and Invention

In order for us to begin to understand how Byzantine and medieval Christians played with the abstract concept and architectural realization of *ἐκκλησία* as a rhetorical commonplace for memorization, contemplation, and invention, we must first study how ancient rhetoricians viewed memory and invention. Both memory and invention were included among the many lists of rhetorical canons that stretched from Aristotle to Cicero. While they were separated and placed at opposite ends of the spectrum with invention at the beginning of the canon and memory at its end, they were linked in the minds of Greek and Roman rhetoricians. These rhetoricians employed the spatial tropes of *τόποι* and *loci* as ways to think about memory and invention at the same time. They understood the importance and power of place to help train the mind to produce texts. Nowhere is this more evident than in the *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, where the reader is asked to visualize "the plan of a visual house, in whose rooms and recesses an orator should 'place' images that recall to him the material he intends to talk about" (1998: 7 [1]) as a mnemonic device for memorizing texts. Carruthers terms this "locational memory" and argues that medieval scholars and monks, with whom I would include most early Christian thinkers, used this form of memory as a tool to develop ideas. The medieval thinker might respond to an idea or thought by intentionally

committing it to memory, that is, by thoughtfully placing it within a visual, often spatial framework. This memory would be classified and categorized with other memories. (Carruthers reminds us that the Latin word *inventio* contains the root for both the English words "invent" and "invention" as well as the English word "inventory" [1].) In other words, the medieval scholar or monk would generate (invent) ideas and texts in part by the way that they associated images (place them within an inventory) with one another. By locating and then associating and inventorying objects, one was able to see new relationships that, in turn, allowed one to come up with new ideas. These first two stages, location and association, thus, led to the third stage of invention.

Early Christians understood this and often employed architectural metaphors as a means of thinking through spiritual development. In his first letter to the Corinthians, Paul employs what Carruthers calls the language of the "master-builder" to express how the early Christian must build upon the theologically and spiritually strong foundation of Christ:

According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise master-builder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. For no other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble, every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day of the Lord shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire. Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are? (I Corinthian 6:16-23 Quoted in Carruthers, 1998: 15 [1])

Paul is responding to divisions within the Church in Corinth by stating that neither Paul nor Apollos (a leader in the Church of Corinth) should be the foundation for anyone's faith. Rather, it should only be Christ. Paul, Apollos, and the other leaders of the church are simply "master-builders" who build upon that foundation set forth and which is Christ, just as those who follow will be "master-builders" upon what has already been built. Carruthers, however, notes that the importance of the passage lies in how it "gave license to a virtual industry of exegetical metaphors" (1998: 17 [1]) that would be used for centuries to follow in order to describe that development of Church thought through the reverence and indebtedness of one generation to the previous generations. She finds the same metaphor, for instance, used in Gregory the Great's description of Biblical exegesis:

First we put in place the foundations of literal meaning [historia]; then through typological interpretation we build up the fabric of our mind in the walled city of faith; and at the end, through the grace of our moral understanding, as though with added color, we clothe the building. (Quoted in Carruthers, 1998:18 [1])

In this particular pattern, the biblical scholar builds upon previous interpretations of the Bible, either those interpretations that have been laid out before him by others or his own interpretation, beginning with a more literal and historical read and then advancing to a more allegorical and typological reading. This idea of "layering," we shall see, was eventually projected out onto the physical space of early Christian architecture.

We can begin to see this projection of mental concepts onto physical structures in the example that Carruthers uses to observe the relationship between rhetorical *τόποι* and architectural spaces. She argues that mental and literal pictures of buildings, often the Temple described in *Ezekiel* and *1Kings*, provided a visual figure for monks to mediate on the "proper" or "divine" way. For example, she cites the activity of "measuring the pattern" of the Holy City described in *Ezekiel*:

Thou son of man, show the temple to the house of Israel, that they may be ashamed of their iniquities: and let them measure the pattern, and blush from all they have done. Show them the plan of the house, and of its fabric, its exits, and entrances, and its whole description, and all of its precepts, and the rest of its ordering, and all its laws, and write [them] before their sight so that they may store away all its descriptions and its precepts, and fashion them. (Quoted in Carruthers 1998:230 [1])

Jewish mystics and early and medieval monks often associated the act of measuring the temple with acts of penitence, contrition, and return to God. The Jewish mystic *Ezekiel* sees the measuring as the penitence, contrition, and return to God of the Jewish people. In like manner, the early Church father Gregory the Great develops ten influential sermons that meditate on *Ezekiel 40* as a penitential text for Christians. Importantly, Carruthers notes, Gregory viewed the building allegorically, as a spiritual rather than a physical dwelling: the "seven levels up to the sanctuary," she observes, "are a mnemonic for the seven stages of wisdom," citing Gregory himself, "In our mind the first level of the staircase is the fear of God, the second piety, the third knowledge, the fourth perseverance, the fifth counsel, the sixth understanding, the seventh wisdom" (1998: 243 [1]). For the medieval monk, the seven steps becomes a way to meditate on the figurative "steps" he must take in order to

gain entrance into the heavenly kingdom. By "locating" and "associating" these attributes into a visual image, Gregory is able to create a pattern for himself and his audience. Importantly, Carruthers states that latter monks often attempted to actualize the plans of the temple, not in terms of the temple measurements described in the old testament, but rather in terms of visions that they had. Monks who had these visions often brought sketches before their prior, who then used those sketches as the foundation for building an actual monastery. In other words, the mental texts, which were often the result of long meditations, were in turn actualized in physical buildings that then assumed the symbolic proportions of the mental texts.

At this point, it is important to note some of the differences between a medieval and ancient understanding of rhetorical *topoi*, an understanding that reveals an important difference in the two systems of thought. In the case of the the ancient sources, rhetorical *topoi* and commonplaces are presented as adversarial. For example, Aristotle presents one way of verbally countering an opponent by redefining important terms as one of the several *topoi* that fall under the category of definition. Redefinition becomes a way of developing an argument that can parry one's adversary in the Assembly or before the Court. In the case of early and medieval Christian sources, the relationships among writers are often seen as less adversarial, especially when one source is seen as an older, more authoritative source in which the younger writer might build his structure upon. (This is not to say that early Christian writing was not adversarial. Indeed, it often was.) When early writers discuss specific *τόποι*, they generally do so in the context of a constructive relationship, seeking to build on one another.

More importantly, the concept of memory that the church held was somewhat different from Aristotle, Cicero, and the *Rhetorica ad Herennium*. In fact, the early church's concept of memory or, what it termed, *anamnesis* hearkened back to a much older Platonic view that more directly linked memory and invention. Every activity and action of the early Church was always necessitated as a means for remembering and meditating on Christ's life, teachings, crucifixion, and resurrection. On the one hand, this meant reflecting on Christ historically. For example, during the liturgical seasons of Easter and Pentecost, Byzantine Christians recalled the historical events that led to Christ's crucifixion and resurrection as well as to the founding of the Church. With the exception of the resurrection, these events were seen as having occurred at a specific historical moment in the past and, thus, were irretrievable except as a memory in the more ordinary sense of the word. On the other

hand, both the resurrection and the presence of Christ were seen as eternal. Acts that acknowledged this, such as the saying of the Eucharistic prayer, moved beyond simply making a past event present to making the invisible visible. In other words, through the Eucharist, the Bishop made visible and tangible the reality of the resurrected Christ. We may also think of both forms of memory in terms of religious iconography. On the one hand, religious iconography depicts the lives of the saints in a manner that allowed the often illiterate congregations to learn the most salient features of the saints' life. Through an array of symbols, the laity might learn that John the Baptist was beheaded, while John the Evangelist had the divine revelation. On the other hand, the icon alerts the laity to attend to the divine presence of that saint in the physical walls of the church. This is particularly true of Christ the Pantocrator who gazes down at the laity in the nave or looks out at them from the iconostasis.

The form of memory or anamnesis which makes the invisible visible is largely Platonic. In the *Phaedrus*, Socrates describes dialectics as a way of making the invisible ideals visible, a way that at first seems to draw them out from the memory of the person until that person realizes that the ideals were always and already present. He relates the myth of the Charioteer, noting that the mortal who is by nature destined to be reborn on earth had once glimpsed the ideals, while riding an unwieldy chariot before birth. Having fallen to earth and been born in human form, the person forgets what he has glimpsed until he responds to the quality of that ideal reflected in his beloved. He might admire the beloved for her beauty, honesty, or courage before realizing that it is not the beloved's individual beauty, honesty, or courage that he has fallen in love with, but rather the reflection of those ideals in the beloved. Through careful philosophical reflection by means of defining and defining again those ideas, what we might call Socratic dialectics, the person can increasingly bring the ideals into focus and become aware of their presence. Moreover, the person can use his increased, though never perfect, understanding of the ideals in a way that any future statement or declaration grows organically from the truth rather than attempting to manipulate it, as Socrates so often sees in sophistic rhetoric [7]. In the church, the resurrected Christ takes the place of the Platonic ideal. Christ's divine presence is made known through various rituals and actions of the church.

It is from the experience of this divine presence that the members of the church can begin to articulate and, in the words of Paul, build upon the foundation of Christ. In Plato, the ideals are first encountered through the love of the beloved. It is from this emotion or state that the

person can begin to reason, define, and describe the ideals they sense in the beloved. Although Carruthers does not address Plato in this manner, she notes that a psychology of memory developed in the middle ages, one that emphasized emotion and the experience of memory as prior to reasoned development of an argument. One only need think of the visual nature of mnemonic images. While they could not be as precise as memorizing actual text, an act that Carruthers finds impossible, they could provide a sense of the object memorized in a manner that through reflection would allow the person to recall and regenerate the text. Finally, we see this in John Chrysostom who speaks of the "awe-inspiring mysteries" and "bloodless sacrifice" as experiences within the liturgy that allow us to move from the sensual to a more abstract understanding and acknowledgement of the presence of the resurrected Christ.

## 2 Rhetorical spaces and Architectural Places

At this point, we may begin to examine the physical structure of the church and the way it became imbued with meaning from the early church's developing understanding of *ἐκκλησία*. In pointing this out, I would be remiss if I suggested that a full theology of *ἐκκλησία* shaped the planning and development of the first church's whose structures drew more immediately from the Roman aristocratic farms where early Christians gathered than from any developed sense of the church as gathering or as "those who had been called out." Gregory Dix, Hugh Wybrew, and Richard Krauthimer all argue that the rectangular shape and various functions of the different spaces of the Roman noble's house had a profound impact on the structure of the earliest Christian structures or Basilicas ([2], [5], [8]). The Roman noble house was rectangular in shape with a large, open atrium in the center. At one end of the atrium was the entrance hall or *vestibulum* where the guests were greeted, while at the opposite end was the *tablinum*, a room that functioned as a reception area and a shrine to the Roman gods. Dix notes, "when the whole patrician clan met in family conclave or for family rites, there was placed [in the *tablinum*] the great chair of the *paterfamilias*, the head of the clan, and around him sat the heads of the junior branches, while the younger members and dependents stood assembled facing them in the *atrium*" (2005:35 [2]). Dix states that with the removal of the Roman gods, the structure became a perfect place for early Christians to gather. The Bishop would occupy the great chair, the presbyters and deacons surrounding him, while the laity would be seated outside in the open area of the *atrium*. With the roofing of the atrium, the entrance hall became the narthex, the *atrium* the nave, and the *tablinum* the sanctuary where the Eucharistic rites were performed. Dix and others are quick to point out the relative speed in which these

spaces began symbols for larger theological meanings. The stone table where the family sat quickly became the altar, while the *impluvium* or large tank where guests ritualistically washed themselves almost immediately became the Baptismal font [2].

Yet, it is as the term *ta ecclesia* evolves that the various spaces of these buildings take on increased symbolic meaning.

In the Gospels and Epistles, *ta ecclesia* begins to take on the characteristic of a rhetorical commonplace and, thus, develops its own theology. The word, which dates back to ancient Greece, originally designated the assembly of elders (though it could also designate the place of assembly), appears in the Gospels as well as Epistles. In the Gospels, Christ seems to allude to the future church when *ἐκκλησία* is used. In one of the most important places, he plays with the etymology of Peter's name, telling him, "Peter (*Petrós*) on this rock (*petrá*), I will build (*oikodomeso*) my church (*ten ecclesian*)" [Matthew 16:18 [3]]. Generally, scholars focus on the play of Peter, derived from *Petros*, as the rock. Yet, Christ's use of *ta ecclesia* to designate church, a physical object that can be built as well as the gathering of followers that Peter will eventually lead, suggests an interesting play between the two meanings of *ta ecclesia* that begin to emerge over the next three centuries. Elsewhere, when the Gospels refer to a physical structure, it is most often the temple or house of God. Here the Gospel writers use *naós*, *ierós*, or *oikos kyriou*, as when Jesus is said to teach at the temple in Matthew or when he chases out the money changers, stating that the "it is written that my house [referring to the temple as God's house] will be called a house of prayer (*oikos proseuchés*)" (Matthew 21:13 [3]). However, the Gospels redefine this term. As Gregory Dix notes, the temple in ancient culture was not the place where people gathered on specific days, as the church is a place where Christians congregate on Sundays and Holy Days, but rather a place that the Gods inhabited as well as a place where one made sacrifice [2]. It is in this sense that Christ tells the Pharisees that in three days if they destroy this temple (*naós*) he will build it back up, referring not to public temple, but to his own death and resurrection (John 2:19 [3]). The temple of God resides in Christ as an individual and not in a physical place. We see this concept taken up and amplified by Paul in his letters to the various early congregations.

Yet, to discover the concepts that were associated with the gathering that would later be associated with the physical structure that contained that gathering, we need to look at Paul. Paul expands the definition of *ἐκκλησία*, among other things, to label the early church as the collective body of Christ. It is in Paul that we first become aware of *ἐκκλησία* in its more

etymological sense of those who are called (*kaleō*) out (*ek*). In order for Paul to identify the early church, which included both Gentiles and Jews, he had to move away from notions of divine inheritance based on tribal affiliation and ethnicity. In other words, because the Jews and the largely Greek, African, and Roman gentiles were not of the same race, he had to develop a way to identify them as the chosen people without relying on traditional means. For Paul, the early church are granted salvation and divine inheritance because they have individually heard and responded to God's call to do good works and spread the good news in the name of his son, Jesus Christ. It is in this regard that Paul further amplifies the meaning of *ta ecclesia* or those who have gathered and been called out to include the body of Christ. In the passage quoted above from first Corinthians, Paul asks, "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God (*naós theou*), and that the spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple (*naós*) ye are?" (1 Corinthians 6: 17 [2]). Paul addresses both the individuals of the church and the church as a whole as "the temple of God." Because they responded to God's call, often within Christ's absence, the one and the many that make up the early gathering of Christians have been blessed with the Holy Spirit and thus have, individually and collectively, become "the temple of God," which Christ, also attributes to as "my father's house" and "a house of prayer."

Paul's most complicated articulation and expansion of *ἐκκλησία* seems to occur in his letter to the early church in Ephesus. What Paul then does is to transfer the *topoi* that Christ uses when discussing the individual to the of the church as a whole. For example, Paul compares the church (*ta ekklesia*) to the body, stating the Christ and its leaders function as its head which guide the rest into making good choices. He amplifies this comparison then by noting that the church is at once the body of Christ, while at the same time, the bride of Christ. In one of the most complicated, if not difficult passages, for modern readers,

<sup>22</sup>Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord. <sup>23</sup>For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. <sup>24</sup>Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything. <sup>25</sup>Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her <sup>26</sup>to make her holy, cleansing <sup>[b]</sup> her by the washing with water through the word, <sup>27</sup>and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. <sup>28</sup>In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who

loves his wife loves himself. <sup>29</sup>After all, no one ever hated his own body, but he feeds and cares for it, just as Christ does the church— <sup>30</sup>for we are members of his body. <sup>31</sup>"For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh."<sup>[c]</sup> <sup>32</sup>This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church. <sup>33</sup>However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband. (Ephesians 5:22-33 [3])

This passage quoted from Ephesians takes marriage as its controlling metaphor. Paul then extends the metaphor to say that in marriage two individuals become one body. He does this by first imploring the one to look after the other as though the other was himself or herself, literally his or her body. In similar manner, we are also joined to the Body of Christ, while also being a part of that body of Christ. In speaking in this manner, Paul builds upon Christ's own idea that the body is the temple by making the body mean the body of the individual, that is, to use Paul's analogy, the individual body of the bride and the bridegroom, the body of the collective, that is, the married couple, and the body of Christ.

In the hands of the Gospel writers and Paul, *ta ecclesia* becomes a rhetorical commonplace where similar ideas begin to congregate and gather. If we paraphrase Paul's use of the architectural and foundational metaphor, we might even say that *ἐκκλησία* becomes the foundation upon which is built an entire theology. Ironically, since *ἐκκλησία*, even in its ancient and early Christian writings, implies both a gathering of people and the place where they gather, we have an architectural metaphor that helps to lay the foundation and interpretation for the buildings that the early Christians would later build. Having said this, however, we cannot say with complete certainty when various parts of the physical building were provided certain designations, as when Germanus, the eighth century Patriarch of Constantinople, writes that the sanctuary surrounding the altar represents the cave where Christ was born and the cave where he was placed after the crucifixion [4]. We do know, as Carruthers notes, that early Christians imposed the meaning of the temple onto the physical buildings so that the three part structure of a Basilica like Hagia Sofia with a narthex, nave, and sanctuary drew upon the three divisions of the temple, the last of which was the Holy of Holy's [1]. In addition, we know that the organization and interpretation of the church as building developed as an understanding of the liturgies that were performed in the church as it evolved. The table that existed in the *tablinum*, for instance, immediately became identified with the altar. With this identification, the sanctuary surrounding the altar was

quickly associated with Golgotha where Christ was sacrificed and crucified [2]. In the early mystagogical or catechumenal texts of Cyril of Jerusalem, Theodore of Mopseuestia, and John Chrysostom, the physical space of the church, when it is identified and explicated often takes on significance in its relation to liturgical acts. Indeed, we can hear this in the fifth century *Ecclesiastical Hierarchy*, which is often attributed to Pseudo-Dionysius:

. . . By bringing Jesus Christ before our eyes, the bishop thus shows in sensible fashion and in image that which is the very life of our soul: he reveals to us how Christ Himself came out of His mysterious, divine sanctuary out of love for man and took on human form, becoming totally incarnate but without any confusion; how Christ descended to our divided condition without any change in His essential unity to and called the human race to association with Himself and His own good gifts, provided that we unite ourselves to His most divine life by imitating it insofar as we can, that we become sufficiently perfect to enter truly into communion with God and the divine mysteries. (quoted in Meyendorf 1984:15 [6])

While the author of the *Ecclesiastical Hierarchy* clearly has the anaphora, or offering of Christ through the elements of bread and wine, in mind, he alludes to the physical sanctuary where Eucharistic prayer takes place, suggesting that it is "His mysterious, divine sanctuary" where Christ emerged to take human form. A few centuries later, Germanus will develop this idea in his suggestion that the sanctuary represents the cave where Christ was born.

What we can do, however, is appreciate the dialogue and dialectic taking place between these mystagogical texts and the physical structure of the church, even if we cannot fully know which came first. Germanus' mystagogical lectures provide one of the best examples in terms of what they say and how they are organized. Unlike his predecessors, the lectures themselves are organized around the various physical spaces of the church as a building. Thus, for instance, Germanus begins his discussion of the physical sanctuary with an identification of it with the caves where Christ was born and buried. He then proceeds to discuss the liturgical acts, namely the saying of the Eucharistic prayer, which take place in the sanctuary. Indeed, it is almost the reversal of the passage from *Ecclesiastical Hierarchy* that was quoted above. In his lectures, we can almost see the Patriarch as he leads us around Hagia Sofia, pointing out the various places and material artifacts used for the liturgy. Paul Meyendorf argues that Germanus' organization has much to do with the iconoclastic controversies that Germanus found himself embroiled in [6]. In an attempt to demonstrate the benefit of visual representations of Christ, Germanus is at pains to show

how these material representations can aide in a person's contemplation and ascent into the spiritual. In many ways, the physical church becomes the mneumonic devices described by the Greek and Roman rhetoricians. In this case, the Roman noble house that the author of the *Rhetorica ad Herennium* asks the student to visualize in order to locate and situate his ideas and text becomes the physical building of the church where the text or story of Christ is now inseparable from the material of the building.

It is important to note that the interpretation that Germanus does bring is one that surprisingly synthesizes the development and interpretation of *ἐκκλησία* in the Gospels and Epistles with history and development of the church as gathering and as place where the gathering gathers. We only need read Germanus' very first line, where he declares "*Ecclesia estí naós theou, témenos ágion, oikos proseuches, sunáthrois laou, soma christou*" (1984: 56 [4]). As I noted earlier, the Apostle Paul identifies *ἐκκλησία* as those who have been called out of the masses by responding to the voice of God. Paul amplifies Jesus command that the body is the living temple of God to include both the individual members of the church and the church as a whole. Moreover, because the church is the temple of God, it is also holy and is a house of prayer. Finally, and most importantly, the church whose body is the temple of God is also the body of Christ. Germanus clearly picks up on Paul's theology; however, he integrates it with a more literal reading of *naós* which identifies it with the physical temple. Thus, *ta ecclesia* becomes both the gathering of individuals and the place where those individuals gather, the physical *naós* or temple of God. Because these individuals by virtue of the fact that they have bodies and by the Holy Spirit having entered them are the temples or dwelling places of God, the physical structure where they gather too becomes a temple of God. This new temple, which draws upon the older Jewish temples, is by nature holy and, like the older Jewish temple, a house of prayer and, we may add, of sacrifice. Yet, it cannot be completely identified with the older Jewish temples because it is also a place where the elect gather for study and instruction, a function that the Jewish tradition reserves for a different structure, the synagogue. Finally, by assuming the characteristics that Paul ascribes to the gathering who has been called out, the physical structure of the church, like its congregation, becomes the body of Christ. In this manner, Germanus projects the *τόποι* which had gathered and become associated with the Pauline concept of *ta ecclesia* onto the physical structure of the church. The physical structure now becomes a material place where these *τόποι* are represented for the clergy and laity to reflect, meditate, and develop.

### 3 Conclusion

We might conclude this paper with a short discussion of the physical structure of the church. In his landmark study on hypermedia, J. David Bolter wryly notes that the medieval cathedrals might properly be considered the first types of hypertext. His argument is that the cathedrals themselves were a type of text or even a series of text projected onto a physical structure. By moving about them from room to room without any particular order, a person is able to experience them in the same way that he or she would a webpage or other form of hypermedia. Carruthers makes a similar observation, though one not directly related to hypermedia, when she observes the cognitive effect that figurative spaces used in memory had on early Christians:

The shape or foundation of a composition must be thought of as a place-where-one-invents. Everything is fitted onto it. And as the composer, acting like a master builder or *architectus*, fits his tropes onto the foundation stones of a text, he must smooth, scrape, chip off, and in other ways adapt and "translate" the *dicta et facta memorabilia* he is using as his materials. So the edifice of one's life (so to speak), although created from stories available to all citizens, is also a fully personal creation, an expression (and creation) of one's character. This is plain in St. Paul's injunction to be like a wise master-builder: the fire will try the quality of your work. (2006: 16 [1])

While these figurative spaces represented various aspects of a text, Carruthers reminds us that they were somewhat incomplete and thus capable of functioning as a heuristic when brought into contact with the unique text of the individual. We may say the same of the church as a material representation of the architectural *τόποι*. Because of the visual quality of church buildings, the spaces themselves always elude easy translation. In other words, there is nowhere within the physical sanctuary that says that it is the cave where Christ was born or where he was laid to rest. In order to arrive at this interpretation that sees the physical sanctuary as representative of an important part of the story or text of Christ, Germanus must draw upon earlier writers, such as the author of the *Ecclesiastical Hierarchy*, as well as the sacrificial function of the room. In short, the sanctuary as text is open for interpretation, though it does have parameters. In many ways, this is consistent with cathedral architects who made every building gesture grand in order to accentuate the sublimity and ultimate unknowability of God. Like the ancient Greek temples with their imposing statues of the Gods, they were designed to convey a sense of awe that

communicated to the ancient priest and suppliant that only so much could be known and understood. Had the cathedrals been constructed in such a way that their symbolic nature could easily be understood, I imagine that Carruthers would argue that they would evolve into text simply meant to be memorized in a rote manner, as though one set upon the impossible task of memorizing the *Illiad* word for word. By becoming grand and sublime, they overpower us with a sense of awe that can then lead us towards textual invention in the same manner that Hagia Sofia must have led Germanus to produce his series of lectures.

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