ASPECTS OF
LATE ANTIQUITY AND
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Papers Read at a Colloquium Held

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Cover: Personification of *Sôtêria*, Deliverance, from the Baths of Apolausis, Antioch.
Hatay Archaeological Museum No. 977, *c.* 400 AD.
(Photo: B. Kiilerich)

Preface

Between *c.* AD 300 and *c.* AD 700 fundamental changes took place in the Eastern Mediterranean basin. At the beginning of this period Constantinople was founded, and in the following century the city assumed the appearance of a real capital, replacing Old Rome. In the sixth century the Slavs began to invade the Balkans, and in the seventh the Sasanians were defeated by Herakleios, whereupon their territory was occupied by the Arabs along with Syria, Palestine and Egypt. Of equal importance were the victory of Christianity over polytheism, the progress of monasticism and the rise of Islam. As a result social and cultural patterns changed and the townscape took on another appearance. Linguistic developments ended in a paradox: Latin produced a number of important daughter languages, whereas Greek remains only in the form of Modern Greek, although the Byzantine Empire outlived the Roman Empire in the West by a millennium.

From a European point of view some of these changes may be deplored, and partly for this reason Early Byzantine history was long a rather neglected field, church history excepted. In recent years, however, it has become increasingly apparent that this period consists not only of a series of losses and disappearances but also of new forms of civilization taking shape.[1] Even if some continue to take a negative view of what happened, nobody denies that it constitutes a fascinating spectacle.[2] Thus the study of Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages has become fashionable.[3] Last year, the time had come for a group of Scandinavian and Finnish scholars to meet and discuss this topic. The meeting, which also included visits to relevant monuments in Istanbul and an excursion to Nicaea, took place in late May and early June 1992 at the Swedish Research Institute in Istanbul, located on the premises of the Swedish Consulate-General. As the participants represented a great variety of fields, ranging from Arabic and Iranian studies to late ancient art, no particular aspect of the period under consideration was favoured, except to a certain extent that of relations with

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[1] Cf. Evelyne Patlagean, *Recherches sur les pauvres et la pauvreté dans l'empire Romain d'Orient (IVe–VIIe siècles)* (Paris, 1974), 18, "... tandis que j'écrivais, je n'avais pas sous les yeux la majesté mélancolique d'un déclin, mais la fermentation obscure et vigoureuse d'une société naissante."

[2] C. Mango, reviewing G. Bradshaw, *The Colour of Power* (London, 1989), in the *Times Literary Supplement* December 22–28 1989, characterizes the Early Christian Empire as "a period of extraordinary interest, which witnessed the extinction of traditional paganism, the perversion of Christianity, the introduction of ideology as a test of loyal citizenship, the spread of intolerance, institutionalized superstition and competitive asceticism."

[3] As G.W. Bowersock says in his review of J. Matthews, *The Roman Empire of Ammianus*, in the *Journal of Roman Studies* 80 (1990), 244, "The international revival of interest in Roman and Byzantine history between Constantine and the Arab conquest has transformed late antiquity from an exotic and neglected field into one of the most vigorous and exciting areas of current research."

neighbouring peoples. In all, seventeen papers were read (one by A. Berger of the German Archaeological Institute) and of these, fifteen are published here, two in summary form. I am confident that some of the papers will prove to be of interest also to readers outside the circle of Nordic scholars.

Uppsala, March 1993
Lennart Rydén

Contents

List of Abbreviations

ActaIRNorv	*Acta ad archaeologiam et artium historiam pertinentia, Institutum Romanum Norvegiae*
ADelt	Ἀρχαιολογικὸν Δελτίον
AE	Ἀρχαιολογικὲς Ἐφημερίδες
AJA	*American Journal of Archaeology*
AM	*Mitteilungen des Deutschen archäologischen Instituts, Athenische Abteilung*
AnalBoll	*Analecta Bollandiana*
AnatSt	*Anatolian Studies*
ANRW	*Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt*
BCH	*Bulletin de Correspondance Hellénique*
BHG	*Bibliotheca hagiographica graeca*, 3rd ed., ed. by F. Halkin, 3 vols. (Brussels, 1957); with *Novum Auctarium* (Brussels, 1984)
Bonn ed.	Corpus scriptorum historiae byzantinae (Bonn, 1828–1897)
BSR	*Papers of the British School at Rome*
BZ	*Byzantinische Zeitschrift*
CahArch	*Cahiers archéologiques*
CIG	*Corpus inscriptionum graecarum*, 4 vols. (Berlin, 1828–1877)
CorsiRav	*Corsi di cultura sull'arte ravennate e bizantina*
CSCO	Corpus scriptorum christianorum orientalium
DOP	*Dumbarton Oaks Papers*
EO	*Échos d'Orient*
GOTR	*Greek Orthodox Theological Review*
HAW	*Handbuch der Altertumswissenschaft*, ed. I. Müller, new ed. by W. Otto et al.
IstMitt	*Istanbuler Mitteilungen*
JbAChr	*Jahrbuch für Antike und Cristentum*
JdI	*Jahrbuch des Deutschen archäologischen Instituts*
JHS	*Journal of Hellenic Studies*
JÖB	*Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik*
JRS	*Journal of Roman Studies*
MélRome	*Mélanges de l'École française de Rome: Antiquité*
ÖJh	*Jahreshefte des österreichischen archäologischen Institutes in Wien*
OrChr	*Oriens Christianus*
OrSuec	*Orientalia Suecana*
PG	Patrologia Graeca
PL	Patrologia Latina
PO	Patrologia Orientalis

Preger, Scriptores	Th. Preger (ed.), *Scriptores originum Constantinopolitanarum,* I–II (Leipzig, 1901–1907)
RM	*Mitteilungen des deutschen archäologischen Instituts, römische Abteilung*
SHA	Scriptores Historiae Augustae
TM	*Travaux et Mémoires*
TRE	*Theologische Realenzyklopädie*

The Parting of the Ways:
Byzantium and Italy in the Fifth Century

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Long before Gibbon, the decline and fall of the Roman Empire in the West fascinated scholars, and it still is a great enigma in classical scholarship.[1] This historical problem is closely linked up with a question that is even more difficult to answer: Why did the Eastern part of the Empire survive under the name of the Byzantine Empire, the base of the two Late Roman states being the dominate of Diocletian and Constantine? Therefore important themes in this paper will be not only decline and fall but also the maintenance and survival of an ancient political system.

The Decline and Fall
of the Roman Empire in the West

Through a rather undramatic *coup d'état*, the last Augustus in Italy lost the few, mostly symbolic remains that were left of the once so impressive Roman Empire in the West. The man who overthrew Romulus Augustulus in 476 was his German *magister equitum*, Odoacar, who somewhat later was acclaimed Rex Italiae. Not accepting the title of Augustus, he sent the imperial paraphernalia to Constantinople, where his brother Armatus held almost the same military position, without, however, sharing the same political influence at the court of the Eastern usurper Basiliscus, their uncle.[2]

Romulus was not, however, the last Roman emperor in the West. One of his predecessors, Nepos, was still alive and had his portrait on Odoacar's Italian coins until 480, when he was murdered. Nor is it improbable that Odoacar had planned to give his own son the title of Augustus, but that the Italian invasion of Theodoric in 489 prevented him from realizing these plans. An even more serious objection to the assumed importance of the year 476 is the conviction that the military and political crisis of the Western Empire had occurred at a much earlier date. The great invasions at the beginning of the 5th century had resulted in the rise of German protectorates in France, in Spain and in Northern Africa. By this process the basis of power of the Western Empire was reduced and the resources of the state shrank. At last, what was left of the Western Empire was Southern France and Italy, and even there the authority of the emperor was mostly of symbolic value.

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[1] A. Demandt, *Der Fall Roms. Die Auflösung des römischen Reiches im Urteil der Nachwelt* (Munich, 1984).

[2] For this confusing period see A. Demandt, *Die Spätantike. Römische Geschichte von Diocletian bis Justinian 284–565 n.Chr. [HAW III.6]* (Munich, 1989), 169–182.

In his famous *The Later Roman Empire* A. H. M. Jones does not reject A. Piganiol's thesis that the German invasions had killed the Western Empire.[3] It is not a question of defeats on the battlefields only, in spite of the catastrophe at Adrianople in 378 having disastrous consequences, especially for the Western Empire. Thirty years later, in 406, the Western authorities also demonstrated their inability to defend the borders of the Empire when German tribes crossed the Rhine. It is also a question of how these barbaric peoples, who in fact had lived in the shadow of the Roman Empire for a long time, were incorporated into the state. These German tribes, which in fact were not at all so populous as scholars at first surmised, could find their place in the Roman Empire as *foederati,* federate states. During the first part of the 5th century they became adapted to the social and economic system in the provinces where they passed or settled.

As has been claimed by J. H. W. G. Liebeschuetz, these tribes, which probably got their identity in the Roman Empire, were at first armies of sorts, more or less under the emperor's command, before they settled and became farmers.[4] Their chieftains did not formally take over the ownership of Roman villas from their former owners. By concluding so-called contracts of hospitality, according to the thesis of W. Goffart, they were guaranteed the return from these agricultural units. In that way they also became responsible for paying taxes to the Roman state.[5] Thus, these German invasions had not brought with them any revolution in the agricultural economy, which formed the economic and fiscal backbone of the Empire.

The Germans also showed some respect to the authority of the central government without trying to take over the leadership. At the end of the 4th century Romanized Germans like Stilicho, who had married Theodosius' niece Serena, undoubtedly cherished some aspirations on behalf of their children of attaining the highest position in the Empire without regard for themselves.[6] A puzzling fact, which has fascinated A. Demandt, is that during the following century no German dynasty seized power formally either in the West or in the East in spite of the many opportunities for powerful generals to hold the lead.[7] To be acclaimed Augustus or Caesar does not seem to have had even a symbolic value for German chieftains!

Even though the Germans thus in many ways soon became integrated into the former social and economic system, the central government lost much of its former authority. At any rate, the influence exerted by the central government grew weaker in Gaul and later also in Spain after the Visigothic invasion, led by Euric in 462. Especially dangerous was the Vandal invasion of Northern Africa. This constituted a threat to the supply of corn to the city of Rome, which was still the capital of the Empire, even though it gradually was overshadowed by Constantinople. The Vandal sacking of Rome in 455, often seen as an evidence of the decline of the Western Empire, was a consequence of the succession struggles

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[3] A. H. M. Jones, *The Later Roman Empire 284–602*, I–III (Oxford, 1964), 1027. See also the concluding remarks in id., *The Decline of the Ancient World* (London, 1966), 370: "It was the increasing pressure of the barbarians, concentrated on the weaker western half of the empire, that caused the collapse."

[4] J. H. W. G. Liebeschuetz, *Barbarians and Bishops. Army, Church, and State in the Age of Arcadius and Chrysostom* (Oxford, 1991), 83–85.

[5] W. Goffart, *Barbarians and Romans A.D. 418–584. The Technique of Accommodation* (Princeton, NJ, 1980). He does not, however, convince Liebeschuetz, *Barbarians and Bishops*, 74–76.

[6] B. Kiilerich and H. Torp, "Hic est: hic Stilicho. The Date of a Notable Diptych", *JdI* 104 (1989), 319–371, and B. Kiilerich, "A Head of a Boy in Oslo: Theodosius' Grandson?", *IstMitt* 40 (1990), 201–206. See also A. Demandt, "Die Osmosis of Late Roman and Germanic Aristocracies", in E. Chrysos and A. Schwarcz, *Das Reich und die Barbaren* (Vienna, 1988), 75–84.

[7] Demandt, *Der Fall Roms*, 595.

after the fall of the Theodosian dynasty, Geiseric being the brother-in-law of the murdered Valentinian III. The event also showed the inability of the rulers of the Western Empire to handle the political problems caused by the German invasions.

The imperial bureaucracy in Italy, however, still had some authority after the deposition of Romulus Augustulus and was of service to Odoacar and, some years later, to Theodoric the Great. After his death in 526 it gradually lost its importance and eventually disappeared. The only authority that was left in Italy after the downfall of the imperial bureaucracy was the Church. Gregory the Great, himself a member of an old aristocratic family, had to make the Roman Church a self-sufficient organisation with great responsibility also in secular affairs.[8] From a constitutional point of view it should therefore be more useful to place the decline and fall of the Western part of the Roman Empire one hundred years later than the overthrow of poor Romulus Augustulus, who did not exert much power, if any. That the last Augustus resigned did not imply the ruin of the West Roman state.

Also in the East the political status of the imperial establishment was unstable after the death of Leo in 474 before Zeno got a firm grip of the government. The main part of the reign was, however, never split up in such semi-independent units as in the West, although the Danube frontier was a weak spot in the Empire's defence. Also the political and administrative heritage of Theodosius the Great was better preserved in the East. It is therefore impossible to draw a borderline between the late Roman Empire and the Byzantine state. To understand why the two parts of the once so powerful Roman Empire went different ways it is also important to examine their socio-political system and the constitutional basis of the imperial power.

The Theodosian System

The Theodosian dynasty was established in the turbulent years after the disastrous Roman defeat at Adrianople in 378, which provoked the dangerous Visigoth invasion, first into the Balkan region and later towards the West. Theodosius was no great administrative innovator but succeeded in adapting the Constantinian system of bureaucracy and defence to the conditions prevailing in these difficult times.[9] Most of his wars were directed against pretenders in the Western part of the Empire. He also admitted the German intruders as *foederati,* federates of the Empire, which gave them a great deal of independence but also some responsibility for the defence of the borders. Only for a very short period did he rule the Roman Empire alone.

The order of succession introduced by him also lasted well into the 450s when his last grandchildren, Theodosius II in the East and Valentinian III in the West, died. That Arcadius and Honorius according to his wish divided the rule was not a new device but a quite traditional solution of the military and administrative problems involved in the management and defence of the huge territory of the Roman Empire. As in the preceding period the legislation was made in common between the rulers, so there was never any thought of splitting up the realm into two independent parts. This model of rule however was destabilized by the fact that the male members of his dynasty lacked the capacity for leadership, this in contrast to the women of the imperial house. Honorius' half-sister Galla Placidia and Pulcheria, the powerful sister of Theodosius II, were important actors in the

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[8] W. Ullman, *A Short History of the Papacy in the Middle Ages* (London, 1972), 51–59.
[9] For the reign of Theodosius, see Demandt, *Spätantike*, 124–137.

political struggle for many decades during which their male relatives were mere puppets in the hands of German officers or influential members of the court.

Religion played an important part in the Theodosian heritage. Christianity had been introduced as the sole state religion and the pagans were prohibited by law from practising their cults. There had been pockets of resistance against the new state religion, not least among aristocratic people such as Symmachus and his circle in Rome, but pagans never constituted any great threat to the Church or the efforts of Theodosius to enforce his legislation in religious affairs. Much more dangerous for the new religious system were the enemies within the Church, heretic or schismatic movements that not even Constantine had managed to quench.[10]

That Christianity became the sole and official religion of the Empire was without doubt the most important event in the reign of Theodosius the Great, and in the Late Roman history at large. This religious change had been well prepared by the development of Christian discourse, to quote a catch-word from a book by Averil Cameron.[11] The Church had never been a harmonious organisation, however, with ready-made answers to the questions of religious and secular problems of the day. Even before Constantine's reign it had been split up not only into regional units, especially the Donatists in Africa, but also into groups according to doctrinal questions. Constantine's efforts to unite the Church with the help of councils and synods had in many ways been in vain. Theodosius followed this method of solving ecclesiastical problems in 481 by convening the Council in Constantinople, which in several respects confirmed the Creed of Nicaea.[12] The struggle in Africa between Catholics and Donatists still dominated the theological scene in the West. Doctrinal issues from yesterday were not forgotten in the East. After the death of Theodosius they developed into dissensions that even threatened the unity of the state. Christianity was well adapted in the Roman Empire, but it was not a religion that was easily governed by the political authorities.

Theodosius thus bequeathed to his young successors an Empire threatened by dangerous semi-independent German tribes within the borders and by grave dissension within the Church. For the Eastern part of the Empire the relations with the Sasanids were often strained. They seldom had friendly contacts but habitually carried on wars in which neither part could be victorious. Moreover, the Sasanids were often engaged in wars with their dangerous neighbours outside the Eastern borders. Their objective was to prevent open aggression from the Romans, and they do not seem to have nurtured plans for conquest in that direction.[13] The Visigoths, on the other hand, and soon also the Huns, were common enemies for both the Eastern and Western part of the Roman Empire, although the German invasion into Gaul in the first decade of the 5th century made the military situation in the West even more precarious than for Arcadius in Constantinople.

The presence of Attila and his people in the Danube region threatened the two Late Roman Empires. The emperor in Constantinople, Theodosius II, bought security for his realm in the usual way by sending money in large quantities to the

[10] For the church policy of Constantine, see e.g. T. Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius* (Cambridge, Mass., 1981), 224–244; R. MacMullen, *Christianizing the Roman Empire (A.D. 100–400)* (New Haven–London, 1984), 43–58; Ø. Norderval, "The Emperor Constantine and Arius: Unity in the Church and Unity in the Empire", *Studia Theologica* 42 (1988), 113–150.

[11] Av. Cameron, *Christianity and the Rhetoric of Empire. The Development of Christian Discourse* [Sather Classical Lectures, 55] (Berkeley–Los Angeles–Oxford, 1991). See also R. Markus, *The End of Ancient Christianity* (Cambridge, 1990).

[12] J. N. D. Kelly, *Early Christian Creeds*, 3rd ed. (London, 1976), 296–331.

[13] For the relations between Constantinople and the Sasanids, see the contribution of B. Utas to this volume.

leader of the Huns. The army of his successor Marcian did not participate in the battle at the Catalaunic Fields, the last successful military achievement of the West Roman forces under the leadership of Aëtius. After the death of Attila, the Huns left the borders of the Eastern Empire, to be succeeded by other dangerous tribes. The Ostrogoths soon had to be pacified with enormous gifts from the treasury of Constantinople. This method of buying peace implied a very great strain on the finances of the East Roman Empire.

The Vandal invasion of Africa also was a menace to the interests of the Empire, while pirates from Carthage were ravaging not only the Italian coastline but also the Peloponnese. The last joint expedition of the West and East was directed against the Vandals' bases but ended in failure. Thus in 466 the Emperors Leo and Anthemius had no success when they joined their naval forces against Geiseric, who allegedly managed to avert their attack by bribing the German general Basiliscus.[14] Ten years later Romulus Augustulus had to resign, and the East Roman emperor had no longer any colleague in the West.

Dangerous Discord in Church and State

The relations with the German tribes were thus a rather heavy part of the heritage left by Theodosius the Great to his young successors. The new state religion was no slight burden either. The doctrinal debate in Church and state took a dangerous turn during the patriarchate of Nestorius in Constantinople 428–431. The issue then brought into the focus of ecclesiastical debate was the question of the true nature of Jesus Christ. How human and divine natures could be reconcilable in the Son of God became a theological question raised by Nestorius, who thus revitalised an old debate in the Syriac Church, which originally was based on the doctrines preached by Paul of Samosata, the bishop who was deposed by the Emperor Aurelian in the 270s. This Paul had strongly emphasised the corporal aspect of Jesus, a view vehemently opposed almost a hundred years later by Apollinaris of Laodicaea, for whom a spiritualized Christ was the only possible solution to this theological problem.

Against this view, which, by the way, had been anathematised by the Council of Constantinople in 381, Nestorius defended the corporal part of Jesus' nature.[15] It was therefore impossible for him to characterize St Mary as Theotokos, Christotokos being the only appropriate title. This interpretation aroused fierce opposition not only in the ecclesiastical sphere but also at court. Nestorius had been patronised by Eudocia, the wife of Theodosius II, but by his proclamation he was challenged by the powerful Pulcheria, the sister of the emperor, who managed to get him deposed from his patriarchate.

The theological opposition to Nestorius' views was extremely strong in Egypt, where Cyril, the bishop of Alexandria, soon became his most dangerous antagonist. After the First Council at Ephesus in 431 Cyril managed with rather untraditional means to get Nestorius' doctrines rejected. This did not, however, put an end to the doctrinal debate about the true nature of Christ owing to the intervention of Flavian, the new patriarch in Constantinople. He, too, rejected the ideas propagated by Nestorius but did not share the Monophysitic views of the Egyptian bishops either, for whom Dioscorus was the spiritual leader. With this new phase in the doctrinal debate the orthodox Constantinopolitan version of Christianity was born, and for this interpretation of Christ's true nature the

[14] Demandt, *Spätantike*, 173–174, 187.
[15] For this doctrinal debate, see J. N. D. Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*, 5th ed. (London, 1977), 310–343.

Pope in Rome became a loyal partner against the claims of the Egyptian Church. There was in this struggle no dividing line East–West but rather North–South, a fact that was extremely dangerous for Constantinople because of the *annona* from Egypt, which was of the utmost importance for the food supply of the Eastern capital.

After the death of Theodosius II, when Attila threatened the existence of the Western Empire, the newly enthroned Marcian, who had married Pulcheria, the sister of his predecessor, summoned a council in Calchedon in order to solve the doctrinal problems of the day. He thereby followed the ancient pagan tradition of giving priority to religious issues. Eutyches, an abbot in Constantinople who followed Cyril's implacable Monophysitic line, was condemned and the document issued by Pope Leo, the so-called *Tomus Leonis,* was accepted and endorsed by the emperor, as giving the orthodox version of the two natures of Christ. After that it became impossible to compromise between the Monophysitic Egyptian bishops and the orthodox patriarchate in Constantinople, the schism being even more fierce than before. In the 480s the patriarch Acacius tried in vain to bridge the serious controversy by his tract *Henotikon.* The solutions advocated there were looked upon as treason both in Alexandria and in Rome. During the reign of Justinian this bitter controversy went on without any serious attempts from any of the hostile fronts to compromise.[16]

The Christian part of the Theodosian heritage thus was difficult to administer, especially in the East. In the West the Donatists still dominated the scene in Africa, but only there. The arrival of the Vandals and other German tribes who adhered to the Arian creed, made the ecclesiastical scene even more complex. There was no new doctrinal debate in the West, the Eastern Church being more innovative in that respect. There was, however, a difference between the two Late Roman Empires concerning the Church–State relations. Even Theodosius the Great had met with difficulties in trying to uphold his secular authority against the powerful and aristocratic Ambrose, bishop of Milan.[17] When John Chrysostom tried to censure the morals of the court in Constantinople, his attempts failed. He had challenged the ambitious Augusta Eudoxia and was banished.[18] The Church never influenced the political authorities in the East as much as in the West. After the downfall of the Theodosian dynasty the Western Catholic Church did not have a strong central government to cope with. In spite of the controversies with the Arian German states in the West it became even more independent.

Political Actors

Though Roman emperors of the 5th century, especially in the East, were sometimes involved in ecclesiastical affairs few of them took any initiatives or played important parts in questions concerning defence or administration. Their female relatives exerted much more influence without having noticeable power. In some issues patriarchs and bishops were important historical actors notwithstanding that, as we have seen, their political activity was reduced in the East. A much more resourceful group of individuals were the German generals, *magistri*

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[16] W. H. C. Frend, *The Rise of Christianity* (Philadelphia, 1984), 837–856.
[17] Still important is the contribution to this theme of H. Berkhof, *Kirche und Kaiser. Eine Untersuchung der Enststehung der byzantinischen und der theokratischen Staatsauffassung im vierten Jahrhundert* (Zurich, 1947), 143–190.
[18] Liebeschuetz, *Barbarians and Bishops*, 195–227.

equites or *patricii*.[19] As early as the latter part of the 4th century there were officers of high rank like Bauto and later Arbogast and Merobaudes during the reign of Valentinian II. At the very beginning of the 5th century Arbogast and for a short time Gainas held positions that made them not only high officials but also influential policy-makers at the imperial courts.

This Gainas however was opposed by a strong anti-German lobby in Constantinople where the late bishop Synesius and John Chrysostom aroused much hostility in the populace against the dangerous German immigrants. Consequently, Goths were lynched in the Eastern capital in the summer of 400 and their leader Gainas was forced to withdraw. Even Stilicho's days were numbered in spite of his close relations with the imperial family. The German generals in the West, however, never lost their leading position and, as has been said, after the death of Valentinian III, they gradually took over control of the imperial court in Italy and finally could do without an Augustus endowed with nothing but ceremonial duties.

The status of the German generals in the Eastern Empire was much weaker. The political balance also was much more intricate at the court of Constantinople, where powerful eunuchs and members of the bureaucracy jealously guarded their interests.[20] The Western capitals Milan and Ravenna lost much of their former importance during the 5th century. Thus in the West the control the political leaders exerted over the German army gradually dwindled. In the political culture of the Eastern Empire the armed forces did not count for much. Neither were German tribes indispensable for the defence of the Empire, as the Isaurians from Asia Minor were dangerous competitors in this field.

With Zeno (474–491) Byzantium even received an Isaurian emperor, who after a period of internal war with Basiliscus and his German *magister equitum* Armatus, succeeded in getting a rather firm grip on political developments in Constantinople. By then there was no longer any Western Empire, and in 489 the Italian kingdom of Odoacar was challenged by the Ostrogothic invasion of Theodoric, who was an independent ally of the Byzantine emperor. During this Italian monarchy of Theodoric the contacts between Italy and Byzantium gradually weakened.[21] There were however some remains of the former Western Empire, but after the death of the famous Ostrogothic king a period of regression started in Italy.

The Byzantine Empire under Zeno still had a social and economic structure that was based on the administrative reforms of Diocletian and Constantine the Great.[22] A heavy burden of taxation was thus placed on farmers, the decurions being responsible for the collection of revenues. The administrative system underwent changes during his successor Anastasius (491–518), who managed to reorganise the finances of the Byzantine state. This made it possible for Justinian to carry out his grand plans of reconquering the former Western Empire through his wars in Italy, Africa and Spain. The Western part of the Mediterranean thus became the target of Byzantine imperialism with the empire of Theodosius the Great as the model unit.

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[19] For the status and influence of German officers in the West and the East, see Liebeschuetz, *Barbarians and Bishops*, esp. 236–252.

[20] Demandt, *Spätantike*, 162, 242.

[21] For the Ostrogothic kingdom in Italy, see H. Wolfram, *Geschichte der Goten. Von den Anfängen bis zur Mitte des sechsten Jahrhunderts. Entwurf einer historischen Ethnographie* (Munich, 1979), 353–361.

[22] Jones, *Decline*, 95. See also J. Tainter, *The Collapse of Complex Societies* (Cambridge, 1988), 191: "Rome's collapse was due to the excessive costs imposed on an agricultural population to maintain a far-flung empire in a hostile environment". The same generalization can be found in M. I. Finley, *The Ancient Economy* (London, 1973), 95: "Empires, on the other hand, [i.e., in contrast to the Greek city states] drew their main revenues from the land ...".

Thus the importance of the military sector of the state was growing in the West and a correspondingly great importance was attached to the German generals. Their colleagues in the East were opposed by other forces in the political system, which preserved and perhaps furthered traits from older times. There was also a cultural gap between Byzantium and Italy. In the 5th century Latin literature still flourished in select upper class literary circles. In the following century the efforts of educated persons were directed to saving the little that was left of culture and education. The importance of Cassiodorus' work in this field is considerable. It was not, however, a question of creative activity.[23] Contemporary Christian literature prospered, and Constantinople was still a centre of culture. The great cultural decline occurred in the 7th and 8th centuries.

Why Did They Part?

By a protracted and complex process Italy was separated from the political and cultural development of the Byzantine Empire. The deposition of the poor Romulus Augustulus was neither a dramatic nor a memorable event in this political evolution. It is not easy to tell when this separation began, or when it ended. From a modern point of view the geography of the Mediterranean area, with the sea as a connecting element, gives the impression of being a self-evident political unit. This conception is influenced by the extension of the Roman state, from the days of Polybius to the beginning of the 3rd century AD. During the era of Augustus and the so-called good emperors Italy was the centre of a Mediterranean Empire with the Roman provinces situated along the shores of the sea and with the Danube and the Rhine as distant, well-defended borderlines.

Let us abandon this harmonious historical map for a moment and consider the realities of transportation, the technical standard of the Roman Empire and the severe climate. Then this alleged coherent unit suddenly looks more disparate. Fernand Braudel has emphasised the point that the Mediterranean should not be apprehended as an entity but as a succession of small seas separated by zones of emptiness.[24] Distance was, to quote Braudel, the first enemy, and seaborne transport was a risky enterprise during the winter season. In short, the Roman Empire of the first two centuries AD was a vulnerable construction. The internal wars after the fall of Nero and, in the following century, of Commodus showed how easily a large empire could dissolve. Centrifugal tendencies were even more manifest during the military emperors when Gaul and Palmyra eventually became independent states without even symbolic ties with the old capital.

As early as in the 2nd century AD it became evident that Italy was no longer the centre of the Roman Mediterranean Empire. Western provinces like Spain and France acquired much of the economic prosperity that existed earlier in Italy.[25] During the same period previously flourishing Eastern provinces steadily gained political importance as the Roman Senate by degrees was recruited also from that part of the Empire. So when Italy was governed as a province under

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[23] How the literary culture was preserved in these difficult times is the subject of L. D. Reynolds and N. G. Wilson, *Scribes and Scholars. A Guide to the Literary Transmission of Greek and Latin Literature*, 3rd ed. (Oxford, 1991), 79–121.

[24] F. Braudel, *La Méditerranée, l'espace et l'histoire* (Paris, 1990). The perilous expanse of water from the Ionian Sea down to the Syrtans was an awful obstacle to seamen during the pre-industrial period, also in the 16th century. Also the vast sea area beyond Sardinia and Corsica endangered the communications between Italy and the western provinces; F. Braudel, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II*, I (Glasgow, 1972), 109–111.

[25] This is an important theme in F. W. Walbank, *The Awful Revolution. The Decline of the Roman Empire in the West* (Liverpool, 1969).

Diocletian, this administrative reform had been prepared during at least two hundred years. The tetrarch system also showed that the administration and defence of such a huge empire could no longer be conducted from a single capital. Thus the system of two emperors after the death of Theodosius the Great was not a novelty but based on administrative and tactical procedures that had been usual during the military emperors. By placing their capitals Nicomedia and Constantinople in the Bosporus region Diocletian and Constantine the Great indicated that the Eastern part of the Empire had higher priority than the provinces in the West.

Italy thus gradually became an even less important part of the Empire from an economic and political point of view and lost the central position it had once possessed. The structure of the Western part of the Empire also underwent considerable changes because of the German invasions. It did not have any considerable importance for Byzantium that the emperor had lost a colleague in the West. Instead Italy became the object of Byzantine imperialism after the downfall of the Ostrogothic dynasty. That the Monophysite controversy of the 5th century had made Egypt more isolated from the Empire was a much more dangerous affair.

Before the Arab expansion of the 7th century the Mediterranean was still a homogeneous area from a cultural and religious point of view even though distance always remained an obstacle. Travelling involved danger, also for ecclesiastical dignitaries. To send Western bishops to councils in the East was often problematic, and it happened that important letters concerning doctrinal issues were delayed because of bad weather or technical problems connected with seaborne transport. This was the reason why the important *Tomus Leonis* just missed the Second Council at Ephesus in 449, an event that had disastrous consequences. However, until the beginning of the 8th century the emperor in Constantinople still had to approve the election of a new pope in Rome, and the cultural influence of Byzantium was strong in Italy because of the expansionist policy of the Eastern Empire.[26]

Iconoclasm, initiated by the Emperor Leo III in 726, led to Italy being isolated from the Byzantine Empire, culturally and religiously. The ties were not, however, severed until the *filioque* controversy during the patriarchate of Photius in 867.[27] The great schism of 1054 made the two churches even more alienated from each other.

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[26] See e.g. P. J. Nordhagen, *The Frescoes of John VII (A.D. 705–707) in S. Maria Antiqua in Rome* (Rome, 1968).
[27] For this see Ullman, *A Short History*, 105–110, and H. D. Döpmann, *Die Ostkirchen vom Bilderstreit bis zur Kirchenspaltung von 1054* (Leipzig, 1991), 74–91, 130–134.

Byzantium Seen from Sasanian Iran

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The material about Byzantium in pre-Islamic Iranian sources is scanty. This is rather astonishing, since the contacts between the two neighbouring empires during four hundred years of confrontation and co-existence must have been manifold and in many respects intense. The information on these encounters that has been preserved is generally to be found on the Byzantine side, mainly treating war and diplomacy, the natural topics of historians like Agathias and Prokopios.[1] At the same time, the cultural exchanges that must have taken place, and the far-reaching consequences they must have had, have left few traces in the written sources, Byzantine or Sasanian. In this respect Armenian and Syriac sources probably have more to offer, since much of the exchange between the empires was mediated by these two buffer peoples. Here I shall, however, leave the treatment of this material, as well as that of the Arabic sources, to my colleagues.

Post-Sasanian Sources

The outcome of the centuries of Byzantine-Sasanian interaction is obviously mirrored in later Iranian sources, historical, quasi-historical and literary, but it is so deeply embedded in legendary lore that a critical historical analysis of the material is extremely difficult to achieve. The romantic story of the Byzantine exile of Khusrau II Parvêz (Chosroes Abarvez) in 590, elaborated upon by Firdausî[2] et al., is only one of many examples. One would wish for more precise information on cultural exchange during this period of the kind we have concerning the poet Khâqânî and his relations with the Komnenos family in the 12th century,[3] or that there would exist some cases of direct translation of literary works, such as the romance *Vâmiq u ʿAdhrâ*, an 11th-century Persian version of the Greek novel of Parthenope and Metiochos, fragments of which have been preserved by a stroke of luck.[4] The last-mentioned text raises the interesting question: where did the Persian poet, ʾUnṣurî, get hold of this story? According to a 13th-century collection of anecdotes, he visited Nasîbîn (Nusaibin/Nisibis) as a trader in his youth.[5] This city was certainly one of the most important points

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[1] For a comprehensive list of classical sources, see Nina Garsoïan, "Byzantium and the Sasanians", *Cambridge History of Iran*, 3(1) (Cambridge, 1983), 1316–1317.

[2] *Shâh-nâmah*, ed. A. E. Bertel's et al., vol. IX (Moscow, 1971), 68–114; transl. J. Mohl, *Le livre des rois*, vol. 7 (Paris, 1878), 69–125.

[3] J. Rypka, *History of Iranian Literature* (Dordrecht, 1968), 204–205.

[4] Cf. B. Utas, "Did ʿAdhrâ remain a virgin?", *OrSuec* 33–35 (1984–86), 429–441, and refs. there. The Persian form of the Greek names occurring in the poem makes a Syriac intermediary unlikely.

[5] Ḥusain b. Asʿad Dihistânî, *Faraj baʿd az shiddat*, ed. I. Ḥâkimî, II (Tehran, 1363) (a Persian adaptation of an Arabic work by at-Tanûkhî, dead 384/994); various names of the hero of the story appear in the sources: the Tehran ed. has chosen ʿAbqasî instead of ʾUnṣurî.

Aspects of Late Antiquity and Early Byzantium, ed. L. Rydén, J. O. Rosenqvist, Swedish Research Institute in Istanbul, Transactions, Vol. 4 (Stockholm, 1993)

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of contact between Byzantium and Iran in the Sasanian age, and it must have had something left of this importance as an intermediary in the early 11th century.

The indigenous written sources for Sasanian history are, on the whole, confined to some twenty inscriptions in Middle Persian and Parthian,[6] a diversified numismatic material, various seals and ostraka, and a rather voluminous religious literature in Pahlavi (originally Sasanian Middle Persian, but still written centuries after the fall of the Sasanian dynasty). The richest material is thus found in the Pahlavi books, but it is extremely difficult to use and to evaluate for historical purposes, since these texts are generally found in a poor textual shape and in late recensions. The main works, like *Dênkart* and *Bundahishn*, belong to Islamic times, and the oldest extant Pahlavi manuscript is no older than the 14th century. Besides, these texts reflect a narrowly religious tradition which betrays little interest in secular history and culture.

The Shâpûr Inscription

Among these various forms of Middle Persian texts, the royal inscriptions of the early Sasanian kings constitute our most concrete historical sources. They tell us about the life and achievements of the rulers of their time in very concrete terms, but they can do little to elucidate relations with Byzantium, since the few, more detailed royal inscriptions that we have all belong to the reign of the first Sasanians. After Shâpûr I (240–72) and his son Narseh (293–302) the royal epigraphic tradition seems to have waned. Probably the later rulers felt less need to demonstrate their political energy and proclaim their legitimacy in monumental inscriptions. Thus we have no inscription dictated by Pêrôz (459–84), Kavâd (488–531) or Khusrau (Chosroes) I Anûshirvân (531–79) to tell us about their campaigns in east and west, but the famous trilingual inscription of Shâpûr I, also presented as "Res Gestae Divi Saporis",[7] gives a general idea of the military view of the Iranians of their western neighbours. This inscription appears in parallel versions in Middle Persian, Parthian and Greek and is hewn in the walls of an enigmatic building at Naqsh-i Rustam (in the central province, Pârs or Persis) which is called Ka'ba-yi Zardusht ("the Ka'ba of Zoroaster"). It shows certain similarities to the 750 years older and equally trilingual inscription of Dareios I at Bîsutûn.

The inscription starts with a presentation of the Great King and his ancestors and a traditional list of provinces of the Empire and continues with his military exploits:[8]

And when We first came to power, Gordianos Kaisar collected an army from the whole of the Dominion of the Romans, Goths and Germans and came to Asûristân (i.e. Babylon) against the Dominion of the Iranians and Us, and on the border of Asûristân at Mishîk (Misikhe) there was a great battle. Gordianos Kaisar was killed, and the Roman army was annihilated. And the Romans made Philippos their Kaisar, and Philippos Kaisar came to Us in supplication and gave Us 500 000 denarians in ransom and became a tributary to Us. And because of this fact We gave Mishîk the name Pêrôz-Shâpûr ("The victorious Shâpûr"). And Kaisar lied again and did wrong to Armenia, and We attacked the Dominion of the Romans and destroyed a Roman army of 60 000 at Barbalissos. And in the land of Syria, and what is situated around the land of Syria, everything was burnt, devastated and plundered.

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[6] See lists of inscriptions with bibliography in Ph. Gignoux, *Glossaire des inscriptions Pehlevies et Parthes* [*Corpus Inscriptionum Iranicarum*, Suppl. Ser. 1] (London, 1972), 8–14, 42–44.
[7] A. Maricq, *Syria* 35 (1958), 295–360.
[8] For the three parallel text versions and their partial lacunas, see M. Back, *Die sassanidischen Staatsinschriften* [*Acta Iranica* 18, Textes et Mémoires, 7] (Leiden–Tehran–Liège, 1978), 284–371.

Here follows a list of thirty-seven cities that were conquered during this campaign. Then the inscription continues:

During the third campaign, when We attacked Harrân (Carrhae) and Urhâi (Edessa) and besieged Harrân and Urhâi, Valerianos Kaisar came against Us, and there was with him a force of 70 000 from the lands of Germania, Raetia, Noricum, Dacia, Pannonia, Moesia, Istria, Hispania, Africa, Thrace, Bithynia, Asia, Pamphylia, Isauria, Lycaonia, Galatia, Lycia, Cilicia, Cappadocia, Phrygia, Syria, Phoenicia, Judaea, Arabia, Mauretania, Germania (sic!), Rhodes, Osrhoene and Mesopotamia. And on the other side of Harrân and Urhâi there was a great battle with Valerianos Kaisar, and We ourselves, with Our own hands, captured Valerianos Kaisar, and the others, the commanders (eparchs) and senators and hegemones, those who led this army, all of them We made captive and brought them back to Pârs. And the lands of Syria, Cilicia and Cappadocia were burnt, devastated and plundered.

Here follows another list of thirty-six conquered cities, whereupon it is stated:

And the non-Iranian men that We brought as booty from the Dominion of the Romans We settled in the Dominion of the Iranians, in Pârs, Parthia, Khûzistân (Susiana), Asûristân and other lands, where the estates of Us, Our father and Our ancestors were.

(The rest of the inscription is concerned with domestic matters: lists of fire-temples, lists of members of the royal family and important officials etc.)

The heroic moment of the Iranian nation here described was also immortalized in various rock reliefs, showing Valerian kneeling in front of a ceremonially dressed Shâpûr on horseback, as in the victory relief at Bîshâpûr.[9] Albeit with changing victors, most of the Byzantine-Iranian history up to the 5th century AD appears like this in the official sources. One armed campaign succeeded the other. Success shifted to and fro, and the most concrete results were plundered cities and devastated provinces. However, what the two competing cultures learnt from each other remains difficult to grasp. The policy of resettlement mentioned in the last paragraph translated above was a recurring phenomenon, at least on the Iranian side, but there is little precise information on the cultural influences this must have brought in its train.

The Genesis of a Cultural Borderline

The proclamations by Shâpûr give the impression of a confrontation between two essentially different worlds, but this is hardly a fitting description of the actual situation and should rather be ascribed to the traditions of imperial rhetoric. It is obvious that Asia Minor and Iran at the beginning of the Sasanian era had much in common. The Iranian influence in Asia Minor had started already with the Achaemenian penetration eight hundred years before the Eastern Roman Empire became a centre of Christianity. In the West, Lydia was an early Iranian stronghold and in the East, Cappadocia and Pontos developed what might best be characterized as mixed Iranian-Anatolian cultures. There was a fusion of religions, with the Iranian Anâhitâ (Anaïtis) mixing with the Greek Artemis and possibly the Apollonian cult influencing the Mithra mysteries.[10] In the secular sphere, the Achaemenid post system remained and became a shared heritage for Eastern Rome and Iran. Simultaneously, Iran had been submitted to a strong Greek and Hellenistic influence since the invasion of Alexander. This hardly diminished under his Seleucid heirs and continued also under their successors, the Parthians, who did not distinguish themselves as having a strong Iranian cultural identity. There are countless Greek loan-words and Hellenistic

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[9] L. Vanden Berghe, *Archéologie de l'Irân ancien* (Leiden, 1959), 55, Pll. 77a–b, 78.
[10] L. Raditsa, "Iranians in Asia Minor", *Cambridge History of Iran*, 3(1) (Cambridge, 1983), 100–115.

elements in Iranian culture that confirm this state of affairs. The use of Greek in one version of the inscription of Shâpûr is clear evidence of the vigour of this influence.

Neither did the arrival of the Christian religion mean a sharp dividing-line between Rome and Iran. The Christians were numerous in Iran and, at times, also influential, although their situation became more insecure from the time when the Christian Eastern Rome became the main political competitor of Iran in the West. In this new religiously oriented confrontation Armenia played an important rôle. Most of the Sasanian kings probably felt inclined to repeat the words of Shâpûr: "And Kaisar lied again and did wrong to Armenia, and We attacked the Dominion of the Romans."

Armenia had been closely bound to Iran through a long shared history. Its royal dynasties and ruling class had often been Iranian or heavily Iranized. An abundance of Iranian loanwords, generally of Parthian provenience, testify to this proximity. However, things changed when Armenia was Christianized (around AD 303) and Byzantium became the main protagonist of Christianity in the Near East. At this time a political and religious borderline began to be drawn in the Caucasus and Transcaucasus that in all its weird windings is still today of crucial political importance, as may be witnessed for instance in Nagorno-Karabakh.

Later Inscriptions

There are, however, a couple of inscriptions still to be mentioned in this context. Also the son and fourth successor of Shâpûr, Narseh (293–302), had a monumental inscription made in order to underline the legitimacy of his way to power. This inscription was put up in an interesting location. It was hewn in a Middle Persian and a Parthian version on the western and eastern wall, respectively, of a mighty fortification tower that was placed at the southern foot of the Pâikûlî pass, strategically situated on the main road from Babylon/Ktesiphon north to Azerbaijan. Unfortunately, the blocks of this tower are now spread about, and it is difficult to reconstruct the inscription in its entirety. However, it is made clear that Narseh was a vassal king in Armenia, when he, during the war of succession after his nephew Varhrân II (276–293), marched this way to Babylon in order to attack the son of Varhrân, Varhrân III.[11] The importance of Armenia and Babylon as bases of power becomes clear from this. On the other hand, the Roman emperor at that time, Diocletian, obviously refrained from mixing in this war of succession. This was otherwise the usual occasion for interference in the affairs of the adversary.

There is also a more unusual testimony of Byzantine connections among the Middle Persian inscriptions. In 1964, the Turkish archaeologist Nezih Fıratlı found a sarcophagus in Byzantine style in an old Byzantine graveyard, which was supposed to have fallen in disuse before 430. Unexpectedly, this sarcophagus was found to carry an inscription in Middle Persian (of a Book Pahlavi type). A translation of this inscription starts with the following statement:

This tomb belongs to Khurdâd, son of Hurmuzd-âfarîd, upon whom God may have mercy, from the land Êrân-shahr, from the district Charagân (or Châlakân), from the village Asht (or Hisht or Khisht), who stayed in Rome (i.e. Byzantium) for one (or 60!) year(s)...

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[11] H. Humbach and P. O. Skjærvø, *The Sassanian Inscription of Paikuli*, 1–3 (Wiesbaden, 1978–1983), esp. 3.1, pp. 27–43.

From here the interpretation becomes difficult. One of the early interpreters, H. S. Nyberg, suggests the continuation: "where he, in the hope that our Saviour (B'LWKN' < Old Aram. *pârôqánâ*) the righteous Messiah (MSY'Y) should distinguish (*âvâshtârêh*) him with His seal, was a priest (*pîr-ich*)",[12] while another interpreter, Philippe Gignoux, proposes instead: "in order to fulfil a hope and a request (*xvâstârîh*) of the righteous and victorious (*pêr[ô]z*) senator (**bâlâuṭâ* < Syr. < Greek *bouleutés*) from Mysia (*mysy'*)."[13] Incidentally, this gives a good indication of the difficulties inherent in the interpretation of short pieces of Pahlavi; it should be noticed that the letters of the inscription are relatively clear.

As a matter of fact, a recent article by François De Blois gives a simpler as well as more convincing translation of the final part: "in hope and studious desire for the Lord (*bârkhudâ*) Christ (*masîh*) the just and victorious."[14] De Blois also presents good arguments against the 430 *ante quem*-dating previously suggested. The early dating was mainly based upon the fact that the graveyard, where the sarcophagus was found, is situated outside the old city walls of Constantine but inside the walls that were erected under Theodosios II around 430, and burial within the city was supposed to be prohibited at that time. According to De Blois this argument carries little weight, and on linguistic and palaeographic grounds he suggests that the inscription belongs to one of the first Islamic centuries. At any rate, we get to know that a man from Iran with an Iranian (and apparently Zoroastrian) name was buried in a Christian Byzantine graveyard some time between 300 and 900 and that there were people around who could give him an epitaph in Middle Persian. Furthermore, Nyberg maintains that the lid of the sarcophagus has been reused, since it carries an older, almost effaced inscription in south Arabic writing.[15] It would be interesting to know what kind of information Byzantine sources could yield on such foreign communities in the capital.[16]

Book Pahlavi Sources

Turning now to Middle Persian book literature (Pahlavi texts), we shall find that the Zoroastrian works are strangely silent on Byzantine matters. Although *hrôm*, i.e. both the original and the Eastern Rome, now and then appears there, it is generally a mere cliché, a label for sundry barbarian countries of the West, just like *chîn* represents the East in general, not just the Chinese Empire. This terminology lives on in the literature of Islamic times, in which Rûm under its Kaisar often appears as legendary as Chîn under its Khâqân (or *faghfûr*,[17] as was one of the more proper names of the Chinese emperor). To these two cardinal points in the universe of the Iranians can be added a northern pole, named after various hostile peoples like the *khyôn* (< Avestan *hyaona*), i.e. the White Huns or Heftalites, or the *khazar*, i.e. the Khazars, and a southern pole originally named after the South Arabians, called *himyar*. In the Third Book of the *Dênkart*,[18] we read:

The setback of those who have succumbed to a [foreign] doctrine and have come to falter is visible; thus the vigour and predominance that the creed of Jesus formerly had has retired

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[12] H. S. Nyberg, "L'inscription pehlevie d'Istanbul", *Byzantion* 38 (1968), 112–122.

[13] Ph. Gignoux, "A propos de l'inscription pehlevie d'Istanbul", *Le Muséon* 82 (1969), 443–449.

[14] F. De Blois, "The Middle Persian Inscription from Constantinople: Sasanian or post-Sasanian?", *Studia Iranica* 19 (1990), 209–218.

[15] Nyberg, "L'inscription pehlevie", 122.

[16] On a Persian physician practising in Constantinople in the 7th century, see *Miracula Artemii*, ed. A. Papadopoulos-Kerameus, in *Varia graeca sacra* (St Petersburg, 1909), 1–75, esp. 32 (ref. supplied by L. Rydén).

[17] < Iranian **baga-puthra* "son of God"; later for 'porcelain' ('china'), e.g. in Russian *farfor*.

[18] J. de Menasce, *Le troisième livre de Dênkart, traduit du pehlevi* (Paris, 1973), 47 (Ch. 29).

from 'Rome', the Mosaic faith from the land of the Khazars and that of Mani from Turkestan, and these have been delivered to the evil and meanness among the Himyarites, and furthermore the Manicheans have been repelled by the philosophy of 'Rome'.

If the superiority of the "Himyarites" is to be taken literally in this text, it must have been formulated after the Muslim conquest of Iran, "Himyarites" being used for Arabs in general. The text is, however, typical of the theological geography of the Zoroastrians before the arrival of Islam.

In this same theological perspective "Alexander the Roman" or "the cursed Alexander" is traditionally presented as the archenemy of Iran and the Zoroastrian faith. In another passage of the Third Book of *Dênkart* this is presented thus:[19]

During the catastrophes that came upon [our] religion and the Dominion of Iran through the doings of the cursed Alexander, the copy [of the Holy Book] that was kept in the State Archives[20] was destroyed by fire and the copy that was kept in the Royal Treasury fell into the hands of the 'Romans' and was translated into Greek[21] together with information that was gathered from the ancestors.

That this theological perspective on Alexander was not the sole one in Iran is shown by the fact that the quite positive view of him found in the "Alexander romance" (as of Pseudo-Kallisthenes) lived on in Iran and was incorporated as an important theme into Islamic culture, even found in the Koranic figure of Dhu'l-Qarnain ("The man with the two horns", Kor. 18.82–98).[22]

There are, however, a few minor Middle Persian texts of a more secular character. One of those is the *Shahristânihâ i Êrân*, "The provincial capitals of Iran", which essentially presents a list of these cities in geographical order with information on their alleged founders. This text, too, seems to have been edited in the presently available recension in the 9th or even 10th century, but apart from some obviously late additions it probably reflects a late-Sasanian geographic tradition.[23] Under nos. 19–33 the provincial capitals of the West are listed. This passage begins as follows:[24]

19. The five cities Khusrau-Shâd, Khusrau-Mustâbâd, Vispshâd-Khusrau, Hubôy-Khusrau and Shâdfarrukh-Khusrau were built by Khusrau [I], son of Kavâd, and he gave them their names. 20. And he ordered a wall to be built around the palace area (?) which was 180 parasangs long and 25 royal cubits high. 21. In the West the city of Ktesiphon was built on the order of Tòs Gurâzag i Gêvagân. 22. The city of Nasîbîn was built by Virâzag i Gêvagân. 23. The city of Urhâ was built by Narseh the Arsacid.

Then follows an interesting passage on Babylon and one on Hêrt, i.e. the Hîra of the Arab Lakhmids, and then the list continues to the north-east, before the section on the western provinces ends thus:

32. Nine cities were built in Gazîrag (i.e. al-Jazîra!) by Amtôs, the nephew of Kaisar. 33. 24 cities in the countries Shâm, Yaman, Frîkâ, Kûfâh, Makkâh and Madînag, some by the King of Kings, some by Kaisar.

According to the learned editor of this work, J. Markwart (p. 82), Amtôs probably refers to G. Aurelius Verus, adopted brother of and co-regent with M. Aurelius Antonius, who conducted a war against the Parthians in AD 164–166.—Otherwise the secular Book Pahlavi works, like the *Kârnâmak i*

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[19] de Menasce, ibid., 379 (Ch. 420).
[20] *diz i nipisht*, literally "the fortress of writings", the proper meaning of which is much debated.
[21] **yôyânîk*, according to an emendation suggested by de Menasce, ibid.
[22] Cf. R. N. Frye, "Two Iranian Notes", *Papers in Honour of Professor Mary Boyce* [*Acta Iranica*, Hommage et opera minora, 10], 1 (Leiden, 1985), 185–188, and refs. there.
[23] Cf. H. S. Nyberg, "Die sassanidische Westgrenze und ihre Verteidigung", *Septentrionalia et orientalia. Studia Bernardo Karlgren dedicata* (Stockholm, 1959), 316–326.
[24] According to the reconstruction of the text by J. Markwart, *A Catalogue of the Provincial Capitals of Eranshahr (Pahlavi text, version and commentary)* (Rome, 1931), 13–16.

Artakhshêr i Pâpakân, the historical romance about the rise to power of Ardashêr and the Sasanian dynasty, are more concerned with circumstances in the East than in the West.[25]

The Importance of Trade

With or without the consent of the governments of that time, Iran and Byzantium were connected through the age-old Asian trade-routes. There was one main northern transit route, running from Khorasan through Azerbaijan and Armenia to Pontos and the Caspian Sea, and there was a southern route over the Iranian plateau down to Mesopotamia, with a main juncture at Ktesiphon (the successor of Babylon and predecessor of Baghdad), from where one branch along the Tigris and one along the Euphrates led to the Syrian ports on the Mediterranean. The political powers always tried to control the transit trade and collect the customs duties they regarded as their due. At the border under discussion here, it seems that Rome and Byzantium were especially eager to regulate trade. Thus Diocletian wanted to include a clause in his treaty of peace with Narseh in 298 stipulating that all trade between the two empires must pass through Nisibis. This was, however, rejected by Narseh. Again in 410 Byzantium, under Honorios and Theodosios II, it was stipulated that trade with Iran was only to be permitted in three places, two in Mesopotamia, namely Nisibis on the Tigris in the East and Kallinikon on the Euphrates in the West, and one in Armenia, namely Artaxata on the river Araxes.[26] The lastmentioned place was situated not too far from the present border station between Iran and Turkey which is called Bâzargân ("The place of commerce"), still an important point for transit trade.

The name "Silk Road", which was given to this system of east–west trading routes as late as the 19th century by the German geographer Ferdinand von Richthofen, is particularly suitable for the period under consideration here. Silk was probably the most important commodity of the east–west trade, and control of this trade was a first priority of both empires. The endeavours of Justinian (527–565) to evade the Iranian control of the silk trade are well-known.[27] The famous story in Prokopios about the two monks who managed to smuggle some cocoons with living silkworms in their pilgrim's staffs from China to Byzantium in 552 might very well be true, at least as to its purport.[28] The enormous import of silk cloth from Iran, which in its turn generally imported the raw silk from China, had become a heavy burden for Byzantine economy, and the beginning of an indigenous silk production was, no doubt, a great success for the policy of Justinian.

The word "silk" itself tells something of the trading history of this important product. According to H. S. Nyberg this word has its etymological origin in Mongolian *shirkhag,* a derivative of a verb for "sew" meaning "thread".[29] This word was imported from Central Asia together with the product it designated, i.e. the silk thread, by the Iranians who Persianized the word as *shêrâi.*[30] The

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[25] Cf. my article "Non-religious Book Pahlavi Literature as a Source to the History of Central Asia", *Acta Antiqua Acad. Scient. Hung.* 24 (1976) [publ. 1979], 115–124; repr. in J. Harmatta (ed.), *Studies in the Sources on the History of Pre-Islamic Central Asia* (Budapest, 1979), 119–128.

[26] A. Christensen, *L'Iran sous les sassanides* (Copenhagen, 1936), 122.

[27] E.g. Prokopios, *Persian Wars,* I, 20,9–13 (Prokop, *Werke,* Griechisch-deutsch, ed. O. Veh, vol. III [Munich, 1970], 153–155).

[28] Prokopios, *Gothic Wars,* VIII, 17,1–8 (Prokop, *Werke,* Griechisch-deutsch, ed. O. Veh, vol. II [Munich, 1966], 844–847).

[29] H. S. Nyberg, "Ordet silke och dess historia", *Kungl. Vetenskaps-Societetens Årsbok* (Uppsala, 1967), 29–37 (based on W. Schuppisser, *Die Benennung der Seide im Slavischen* [Zurich, 1953]).

[30] H. S. Nyberg and B. Utas (eds.), *Frahang i Pahlavîk* (Wiesbaden, 1988), 42 (IV:11).

word and the product were brought further west by Aramaic-speaking Syrian merchants, whereby *shêr-âi* came to be comprehended as an Aramaic adjective deriving from an imagined geographic proper name, *shêr*. The Greeks borrowed this as the adjective *sêrikós*, supposed to be derived from the name of a people that never had seen the light of existence but became part of the Roman and Byzantine geographical universe. Our words "silk", Russian *sholk* etc. are obvious loans from this *sêrikós* (Latin *sericum* and Late Latin *sirico*). The other word for this material which appears in European languages, as German "Seide", French "soie", Swedish "siden" etc., comes from Latin *seta*, "thread", used in the expression *seta serica*, "Seric thread, silk thread".

Other goods that were brought from east to west included precious and semi-precious stones, for instance rubies and lapis lazuli from Badakhshan. As is clearly seen in the case of silk, this long-distance trade had a cultural importance that can hardly be underestimated. It was maintained through international networks, to a great extent held up by merchants belonging to various ethnic or religious minorities. They were people who had seen frequent changes in their fortune and knew many ways of evading the control of the political powers. Of special importance here were Jews as well as Armenian and Syrian Christians of various denominations. There were age-old Jewish communities in most cities, towns and depots along the "Silk Road" all the way to China, and with the increasing orthodoxy of Byzantine religious policies many Christian groups who had been marginalized in the West, like the Nestorians after 431 and the Monophysites after 451, found greater freedom to exercise their religion in Iran than in Byzantium. Already in 410 Nestorianism was acknowledged as the official church of Iran, although not on a par with the Zoroastrian state religion.

Between West and East

The Nestorians played an especially important rôle in the cultural exchange between Iran and Byzantium. After the closing of the theological school in Edessa by Zenon in 489, this centre of Nestorianism was moved to Nisibis, then under Iranian control. The so called Persian Schoool of Nisibis acquired central importance through its training of theologians for the whole Iranian empire and through its lively translation activities. First of all, Greek works were translated into Syriac, but it is probable that translations in the reverse direction as well as between other languages also took place there. When the Nestorians were exiled from Byzantium in greater numbers in the 6th century, they opened many other schools on Iranian territory. Of these the medical school at Gundishapur (Beth Lapat, just east of Susa) was of special importance. Through this school, which survived into Islamic times, Greek medicine was transmitted to Iran.[31] Without the intermediary role of the Nestorians an important figure in the history of medicine like Ibn Sina (Avicenna) is inconceivable.

An exile of much smaller dimensions took place when Justinian closed the Academy in Athens in 529, and seven of its philosophers found a refuge in the Sasanian capital, Ktesiphon. This incident is interesting more as a phenomenon than for its cultural impact. It indicates the tolerant atmosphere in Iran at that time, although one would suspect that the interest in Greek philosophy there was rather shallow. At any rate, the philosophers soon grew tired of a milieu they

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[31] See H. H. Schöffler, *Die Akademie von Gondischapur. Aristoteles auf dem Wege in den Orient* (Stuttgart, 1979).

regarded as barbaric, and with the active support of the Great King, Khusrau Anushirvan, they received permission to return home.[32]

The 6th century, and especially the reign of Khusrau I Anushirvan (531–579), was on the whole a period of great interest in foreign countries and foreign cultures in Iran. Much cultural material of Indian origin seems to have reached Iran during this time. This includes literary texts like the fables and narratives of *Pancatantra* and *Kathasagaritsagara* that were passed on westwards as *Kalila wa Dimna*, in Europe "The fables of Bidpai" etc., and *Thousand and one nights*. There was the version of the Buddha legend that became known in Europe under the title *Barlaam and Josaphat* etc. Here also belong the game of chess and a number of contributions to mathematics and astronomy. In many of these cases Nestorians played an important role as translators and intermediaries. It would be of interest to trace how this material found its way into Byzantine culture.

The often close political cooperation between Iran and Byzantium is generally only described in Byzantine sources. Between the continually recurring wars, it manifested itself in frequent diplomatic missions, border commissions and treaty negotiations. Even purely military cooperation was possible, as in the case of the defence of the Caucasian passes against intruders from the North. This political exchange no doubt required a corps of interpreters and translators. A glimpse of their many-sided activities may be caught in the notice by Menander Protector on the embassies exchanged between the West-Turkish Khaghan Istämi and Justinian I (527–565). The head of the Turkish mission was a Sogdian by name of Maniakh, who brought "a Scythian letter" (certainly written in Sogdian), which the emperor read "through an interpreter". It is not stated, however, what kind of letters the Byzantine envoy, Zemarchos the Cilician, brought back to the Khaghan. These missions without doubt travelled north of the Caspian Sea, and the purpose of this Turkish/Sogdian initiative was obviously to find a way of evading Persian control of the silk trade.[33] No concrete results of this move are known, however. The two empires more often than not cooperated in the control of trade and travelling. In the peace treaty of 561, for instance, it was stipulated that a joint commission was to be established for the prevention of smuggling.[34]

A peculiar feature in the descriptions of Iranian relations found in Byzantine sources is the recurring discussion on some sort of "adoption" of a prince from the other empire, generally the crown prince, who in this way was thought to acquire the protection of the emperor of the foreign empire in case of a war of succession. In reality, this was hardly legally possible from a Byzantine point of view, which is made quite clear in the description by Prokopios of the complications surrounding the request by Kavâd that Justinian should adopt his favourite son Khusrau, the later Khusrau I Anushirvan.[35] Two generations later, however, Khusrau Parvêz was taken under Byzantine protection, when his general Bahram Chôbîn had driven him from the throne. Although Khusrau Parvêz, when back in his own country, according to Byzantine sources would call himself "son of Maurice", this was obviously not regarded as a case of formal adoption. Still, the Byzantine adventures of Khusrau Parvêz were incorporated into Iranian legendary history and turn out to be one of the few cases in which the national epic *Shâh-nâmah* touches upon Byzantine affairs.

[32] See Agathias, II, 30 (*The Histories*, transl. by J. D. Frendo [Berlin–New York, 1975], 64–67); cf. R. N. Frye, *The History of Ancient Iran* [*HAW*, III.7] (Munich, 1984), 330.

[33] Menander Protector, fragm. 10,1–5 (*The History of Menander the Guardsman*, ed. and transl. R. C. Blockley [Liverpool, 1985], 111–127).

[34] Frye, *History*, 327, with ref. to Menander Protector (fragm. 11 M).

[35] Prokopios, *Persian Wars*, I, 11,6 ff. (ed. Veh, vol. III, 69 ff.).

In summing up this survey of Byzantine-Iranian relations, there is reason to consider how far these two neighbouring imperial cultures really differed from each other. Before the Christian faith had made the border between them into a dividing-line between two different worlds, there was probably more to unite than to separate them. Politically, they were always careful to treat each other as equals, but the border between them was gradually fortified, into both a physical *limes* and a cultural barrier. The opponent beyond that border came to be regarded as a true "the other" (or "barbarian" in the terminology of the time). Behind these fortified borders, the Zoroastrian state religion froze into bigotted orthodoxy, and Iranian society seems to have become more and more closed and petrified. In the end it was hardly able to keep itself up. Perhaps the situation was less serious in Byzantium. This would be an explanation of the fact that the Christian Empire did not completely succumb to the attacks of the Arabs, while the more than one thousand year-old Iranian Empire collapsed like a house of cards.

The Road to Yarmuk: The Arabs and the Fall of the Roman Power in the Middle East

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Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to give a sketch and an interpretation of a far-reaching historical process, viz. the development leading to the Islamic conquest of the Roman eastern provinces, permanented after the battle at Yarmuk in Syria in 636, and the end of the Sasanian Empire at Qadisiyya in Iraq in 637. The historian's daily toil with sparse and ambiguous sources sometimes tends to blunt the senses to the larger perspectives in history which, after all, are the main purpose of this kind of scholarship. Being fully aware of the dangers of such an enterprise, much more vulnerable to criticism than solid philological work, we nevertheless dare to set out on a sea not often sailed.[1]

The emergence of the Muslim Arabs, according to the traditional picture, took place with frightening suddenness. The picture of the wandering bedouin, searching for centuries for pasture and booty, and then suddenly being struck by religious frenzy, inspired by an obscure prophet, and these events resulting in the conquest of most of the "civilised" world in a very short time, is indeed fascinating but, at the same time, unsatisfying.[2] If we suppose that history

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[1] Of the few attempts to give a synthesis of this process the following are worth mentioning: J. Harmatta, "The Struggle for the Possession of South Arabia Between Aksum and the Sasanians", *Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei Quaderna* 191 (1974) [= *IV Congr. Intern. di Studi Etiopici, Roma 10–15 aprile 1972*], 95–106. This article is a lucid and valuable survey and interpretation of the conditions in the southern part of the Arabian peninsula. It does not, however, deal with the northern Arabs or the whole complex of Rome–Iran–Arabia–Ethiopia. An attempt to make a synthesis of the development in Northern Arabia is W. Caskel, "Zur Beduinisierung Arabiens", *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 28 (1953), *28–*36. See also id., "Die Bedeutung der Beduinen für die Geschichte der Araber", *Arbeitsgemeinsch. f. Forsch. des Landes Nordrhein–Westfalen. Geisteswiss.*, 8 (1953), 4–24. Caskel does not pay much attention to the course of events in the surrounding empires, and his bedouins seem strangely isolated. The extensive work of F. Altheim and R. Stiehl, *Die Araber in der alten Welt*, 1–5 (Berlin, 1964–68), does not quite live up to its title. It is a rather uneven collection of articles on different historical subjects, some of which deal with Arabic matters. The older work by De Lacey O'Leary, *Arabia before Muhammad* (London, 1927), is still a useful survey, but is outdated in many views and facts.

[2] Cf. a classic description in Ph. Hitti, *The History of the Arabs*, 10th ed. (London, 1970), part I: *The pre–Islamic age*, especially ch. III: "Bedouin life" (pp. 23–29). More cautious authors include B. Lewis, *The Arabs in History*, 5th ed. (London, 1970), 21–35, and I. Shahid, "Pre–Islamic Arabia", in *The Cambridge History of Islam 1: The Central Islamic Lands*, ed. by P. M. Holt (Cambridge, 1970), 3–29; more traditional is F. M. Donner, *The Early Islamic Conquests* (Princeton, 1981), 11–50. Considering the fact that Arabs were documented continuously from 853 BC to the rise of Islam, the small space given to this period in the standard handbooks mentioned is indeed remarkable. The impression is that these 1400 years were not especially important as compared with the 1400 years that followed, a debatable standpoint to say the least. Another deficiency in most standard works on the subject is the

Aspects of Late Antiquity and Early Byzantium, ed. L. Rydén, J. O. Rosenqvist, Swedish Research Institute in Istanbul, Transactions, Vol. 4 (Stockholm, 1993)

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consists of processes, in principle comprehensible, a military conquest of this scale and with such a lasting effect, creating a new world culture that still exists 1400 years later, must have had deep underlying causes and a long prehistory. Those causes, however, have mostly been hidden or invisible. This is due, to a large extent, to the later Islamic culture itself. It is striking how short the Islamic perspective on its own prehistory is. The classic Islamic historians of the Middle Ages knew of a history that stretched approximately one century before the appearance of the Prophet. What lay before that was legend.[3] The lack of perspective in Islam's concept of its own prehistory may be the fundamental reason why the emergence of Islam and the Arab conquest have always seemed to hang at loose ends in Western scholarship as well.

Sources

There are, however, plenty of sources that shed light upon the period before Islam, more light than we usually imagine. As far as written evidence is concerned, we find continuous documentation of Arabs and other closely related groups from the year 853 BC until the seventh century AD in Akkadian, Hebrew, Greek, Latin, Syriac and Persian texts. These sources are often contemporary, and are very illuminating. The Graeco-Roman material from Late Antiquity (AD 200–600), i.e. the period which concerns us most here, has lately been subjected to comprehensive study by I. Shahid.[4] Although many of Shahid's methods and judgements merit sharp criticism, he nevertheless knows the Arabic sources well and is sometimes able to make interesting connections between Greek and Arabic testimony.[5] Unfortunately, there is no corresponding study based on the other sources and, consequently, no modern comprehensive study

systematic confusion between "South Arabians" and "North Arabians/Northern Arabs". The very terminology indicates that the differences between these two peoples are considered negligible, since they were both Arabs.

[3] For a survey of the Islamic view on the pre–Islamic period in general see M. Springberg-Hinsen, *Die Zeit vor dem Islam in arabischen Universalgeschichten des 9. bis 12. Jahrhunderts* (Würzburg, 1989). In the modern Arabic works on this subject the fairy-tale nature of pre-Islamic history is sometimes highly conspicuous, e. g. T. Barrū, *Tārīx al-ʿarab al-qadīm* (The Ancient History of the Arabs) (Damascus, 1984); A. Farrūx, *Tārīx al-ǧāhiliyya* (History of the Pre-Islamic Period) (Beirut, 1984); L. A. Yaḥyā, *Al-ʿarab fī al-ʿaṣr al-qadīm* (The Arabs in Antiquity) (Beirut, 1979); A. Sālim, *Tārīx al-ʿarab fī ʿaṣr al-ǧāhiliyya* (The History of the Arabs in the Pre-Islamic Period) (Beirut, 1971); B. Dallū, *Ǧazīrat al-ʿArab qabla l-ʾislām. at-tārīx al-iqtiṣādī al-iǧtimāʿī aṭ-ṭaqāfī wa-s-siyāsī* (The Arabian Peninsula before Islam. The economic, social, cultural and political history) (Beirut, 1989). The main work in Arabic is still G. ʿAlī, *Al-mufaṣṣal fī tārīx al-ʿarab qabla al-ʾislām* (Exposition of the History of the Arabs before Islam), I–X (Baghdad, 1950–1959). A good impression of the rather confused picture of the pre-Islamic period even among competent modern Arab historians is given by A. A. Duri, *The Historical Foundation of the Arab Nation*, transl. by L. I. Conrad (London–New York–Sydney, 1987; original Arabic ed. Beirut, 1984), 4–28.

[4] I. Shahid, *Rome and the Arabs* (Washington, DC, 1984); id., *Byzantium and the Arabs in the Fourth Century* (Washington, DC, 1984); id., *Byzantium and the Arabs in the Fifth Century* (Washington, DC, 1989). The volume dealing with the sixth century has not yet appeared. Cf. also the minor studies collected in I. Shahid, *Byzantium and the Semitic Orient before the Rise of Islam* (London, 1988). – Shahid has an inclination to overvalue the passages where "Arabs" (i. e. Arabs, Scenitae, Saracens, Ismaelites and nomads) are mentioned. On the whole, he seems to take it for granted that everything that is told about these "Arabs" is basically true. A much more cautious and skeptical (and less voluminous) study on the same subject is M. Sartre, "Les nomades et l'empire en Arabie", in *Trois études sur l'Arabie romaine et byzantine* [Collection Latomus, 178] (Brussels, 1982). An illustrative point of comparison between the two scholars is the way the story of the revolt of Mavia, Queen of the Saracens in the 370s, is analysed: Shahid, *Byzantium and the Arabs in the Fourth Century*, 138–202; Sartre, *Nomades*, 140–144. Shahid accepts the story as a rather close rendering of the actual events, Sartre is skeptical about the whole thing.

[5] An excellent survey of the Greek sources in spite of its humble title is A. A. Vasiliev, "Notes on Some Episodes Concerning the Relations between Arabs and the Byzantine Empire from the Fourth to the Sixth Century", *DOP* 9–10 (1955–56), 306–316. See also N. V. Pigulevskaja, "Vizantijskije istoriki ob arabax V v.", *Palestinskij Sbornik* 7 (70) (1962), 89–100.

of the Arabs in Antiquity as a whole, based on all the written sources.[6] Only certain periods have been studied, and not always with convincing results.[7]

The epigraphic material from Arabia and adjacent areas relevant to the problem discussed here is extensive but, as a rule, lacks historical information. From the Peninsula, there are inscriptions in local languages from at least the seventh century BC until the sixth century AD.[8] One strange detail is that the century immediately preceding the appearance of the Prophet is curiously lacking in epigraphic texts. Yemen is an exception, as far as the historical content in the epigraphical material is concerned. The bulk of inscriptions from South Arabia is now considerable, approximately 10,000 specimens, many of which contain long descriptions of military campaigns undertaken by the South Arabian kings.[9]

This material is becoming increasingly important and grows every year in connection with the ongoing archaeological investigations in Yemen. The American expedition to Yemen in 1950–51 was followed by Germans in Northern Yemen, French expeditions in both North and South Yemen in the 1970s and 1980s, and the work of Soviet archaeologists in the South.[10] A correspond-

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[6] A survey of the sources in Syriac is found in J. B. Segal, "Arabs in Syriac Literature before the Rise of Islam", *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 4 (1984), 89–123. Cf. also the older survey by N. V. Pigulevskaja, "Araby VI v. po sirijskim istočnikam", in *Trudy vtoroj sessii associacii arabistov 19–23 okt. 1936 g.* (Leningrad, 1941), 49–70.

[7] There is fairly extensive literature on the history of the Roman *limes* in the Syrian desert from the Roman viewpoint, an area which was of crucial importance for the history of the Arabs. A good survey of the research up to around 1970 is G. W. Bowersock, "A Report on Arabia Provincia", *JRS* 61 (1971), 219–242. Cf. further E. W. Gray, "The Roman Eastern Limes from Constantine to Justinian – Perspectives and Problems", *Proceedings of the African Classical Associations* 12 (1973), 24–40; G. W. Bowersock, "Limes Arabicus", *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 80 (1976), 219–229; D. Graf, "The Saracens and the Defense of the Arabian Frontier", *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 229 (1978), 1–26; F. E. Peters, "Romans and Bedouins in Southern Syria", *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 37 (1978), 315–326. A collection of papers is found in *Roman Frontier Studies* 12 (1979) [= *Papers presented to the Twelfth Int. Congr. of Roman Frontier Studies*, III]. The beginning field research on the *limes* is documented in Th. Parker, *Romans and Saracens: A History of the Arabian Frontier* (Winona Lake, 1986). Most of these studies deal with the southern part of the *limes* running through present-day Jordan. For Syria, A. Poidebard, *La trace de Rome dans le désert de Syrie*, 1–2 (Paris, 1934), is still relevant. Still fundamental, however, is R. E. Brünnow, A. v. Domaszewski, *Die Provincia Arabia*, I–III (Strassburg, 1904–09). There are few fresh attempts from the Arabic viewpoint. For the role of the Arabs in the age of Justinian (not yet treated by Shahid) see still Th. Nöldeke, *Die Ghassânischen Fürsten aus dem Hause Gafna's*, Abhandlungen der Kgl. Preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin, Phil.-hist. Kl., 1887:II. A study on the same subject which takes the contemporary Greek sources more into account is W. Smeaton, *The Ghassanids* (diss. Chicago, 1940). A general survey of the role of Arabs in Roman Syria is R. Dussaud, *La pénétration des arabes en Syrie avant l'islam* (Paris, 1955). Apart from the articles by Shahid (note 4) cf. also the collection in T. Fahd (ed.), *L'Arabie préislamique et son environment historique et culturel. Actes du colloque de Strasbourg 24–27 juin 1987* (Leiden, 1989). Cf. also N. V. Pigulevskaja, *Araby u granic Vizantii i Irana v IV–VI vv.* (Moscow – Leningrad, 1964).

[8] A good survey of the epigraphic material and some of its implications for the history of Arabia is H. P. Roschinski, "Sprachen, Schriften und Inschriften in Nordwestarabien", *Bonner Jahrbücher* 180 (1980), 155–188. For the inscriptions from the fourth to the sixth centuries in North Arabia see W. Fischer (ed.), *Grundriss der arabischen Philologie*, I (Wiesbaden, 1982), 32–34 and 167–170.

[9] The basic collections are *Corpus Inscriptionum Semiticarum*, IV:I (1889), II (1909), III (1929); *Répertoire d'épigraphie sémitique*, T. V, No. 2624–5104 (Paris, 1927–1938); the publications of G. Ryckmans in *Le Muséon* between 1949 and 1963; A. Jamme, *Sabaean Inscriptions from Maḥram Bilqîs (Mârib)* (Baltimore, 1962). An attempt to gather all the new material is *Corpus des inscriptions et antiquités sud-arabes*, T. I:1, *Inscriptions* (Louvain, 1977). A forum for South Arabian epigraphy is (was?) the journal *Raydan* 1–5 (1978–88). Unfortunately, the publication of new epigraphic material from South Arabia tends to spread into all kinds of publications which makes it difficult to follow. For a bibliography of published inscriptions see *Sabaic Dictionary*, ed. by A. F. L. Beeston, M. A. Ghul, W. W. Müller, J. Ryckmans (Louvain – Beyrouth, 1982), xxxiv–xli. A general bibliography is *Corpus des inscriptions et antiquités sud-arabes: Bibliographie générale et systématique* (Louvain, 1977).

[10] Among the older archaeological studies, the following can be mentioned: G. Caton Thompson, *The Tombs and Moon Temple of Hureidha (Hadhramaut)* (Oxford, 1944); C. Rathjens, *Sabaeica*, I–III (Hamburg, 1953–1966); for the American expedition see R. L. Bowen and F. P. Albright, *Archaeological Discoveries in South Arabia* (Baltimore, 1958); G. Van Beek, *Hajar bin Ḥumeid: Investigations at a Pre-islamic Site in South Arabia* (Baltimore, 1969); cf. also the two volumes by B. Doe, *Southern Arabia*

ingly exciting field is the Saudi kingdom, where a comprehensive archaeological survey has been made from 1975.[11] There have also been systematic excavations, the most important ones so far in Tayma in North Western Hijaz and Qaryat al-Faw in the south on the road between Riyadh and Najran.[12] The research in the Gulf area should be added to this: the Danish expedition to Bahrayn in the 1950s was followed by the French excavations on Faylaka in Kuwait and the work of the Italians in Oman.[13] In twenty-five years our knowledge has increased immensely, so we are now able to sketch the archaeological history of the Arabian Peninsula, not possible a quarter of a century ago when we knew almost nothing.

As far as the written sources in Arabic are concerned, they do indeed contain valuable historical information. Unfortunately, they are in an utterly disorganised form, which raises very complicated problems of source criticism. The oldest texts are the pieces of classical poetry ascribed to poets living in the sixth century AD. These poems, however, contain very few references to historical facts and are difficult to interpret without the commentaries and supplementary material of commentators from the Abbassid period three hundred years later.[14] There is also a large corpus of prose texts that can be gathered from the commentators mentioned above as well as from Islamic historians, dealing with the history of the tribes during the sixth century, and especially the intertribal wars. These stories, known as 'ayyām al-'arab, "the wars of the Arabs", often of very high literary quality, by and large go back to two authors: Hisham ibn al-Kalbi and Abu Ubayda, both active in Iraq and both of whom died c. AD 820. These two were mainly editors of historical material which had reached them through written and oral transmission. It is, however, very difficult to get a clear idea of how the historical memories changed during this process. The ayyām-stories should be used with caution, since they are highly literary and were codified in their present form almost three hundred years after the events depicted in them. Since the ambition of the transmitters of these stories was to

(London, 1971), and *Monuments of South Arabia* (Cambridge–New York, 1983). The French and the Soviets have not yet come forth with a final publication but it is said to be in press. For a preliminary survey of the Russian work in Hadramaut see the articles by B. B. Piotrovskij, P. A. Grjaznevič, A. V. Sedov, A. G. Lundin, G. M. Bauer and V. V. Naumkin in *Vestnik drevnej istorii* 2 (1989), 128–169. The main German publication is the periodical of the German Archaeological Institute in Sanaa: *Archäologische Berichte aus dem Yemen*, 1– (1982–).

[11] Reported in *Atlal. The Journal of Saudi Arabian Archaeology* 1 (1397/1977) and onwards. The journal published by D. T. Potts, *Arabian Archaeology and Epigraphy* 1– (1991–), is a periodical which unites epigraphy and archaeology.

[12] A. R. Ansary, *Qaryat al-Fau. A Portrait of Pre-Islamic Civilisation in Saudi Arabia* (Riyadh, 1982[?]); H. I. Abu-Duruk, *Introduction to the Archaeology of Tayma* (Riyadh, 1986/1406). For Tayma see also G. Bawden et al. in *Atlal* 4 (1400/1980), 69–106, id., *Atlal* 5 (1401/1981), 149–154; Bawden's work at Tayma has been strongly criticised e. g. by P. J. Parr in D. T. Potts (ed.), *Araby the Blest. Studies in Arabian Archaeology* (Copenhagen, 1988), 73–90.

[13] An excellent survey of the archaeology and history of the region up to the Islamic conquest is D. T. Potts, *The Arabian Gulf in Antiquity*, I–II (Oxford, 1990).

[14] For an orientation about the problems concerning the historical value of pre-Islamic poetry see F. Sezgin, *Geschichte des arabischen Schrifttums*, II (Leiden, 1975), 1–32. See also now E. Wagner, *Grundzüge der klassischen arabischen Dichtung*, I: *Die altarabische Dichtung* (Darmstadt, 1987). A good study of the historic value of the ancient Arabic poetry is N. al-'Asad, *Maṣādir aš-ši'r al-ğāhilī wa-qīmatuhā at-tārīxiyya* (The Sources of Pre-Islamic Poetry and their Historical Value) (Cairo, 1956). Both Sezgin and Asad represent a rather moderate standpoint in that they consider large parts of the poetic corpus attributed to pre-Islamic times to be genuine. Some scholars, among whom R. Blachère is the most important, have taken a radically different stance, rejecting most of pre-Islamic poetry as forgery created by scribes and scholars in the Abbassid period, see R. Blachère, *Histoire de la littérature arabe des origines à la fin du XVe siècle de J.-C.*, T. I (Paris, 1952), especially pp. 83–186. The dispute has not yet been settled and has gained fuel from the "London school" which, however, is more concerned with Islamic than pre-Islamic history. For the drastic views on the earliest Islamic history found in this school see e.g. P. Crone, M. Cook, *Hagarism: The making of the Islamic World* (Cambridge, 1977).

create good entertainment, we may suppose that the less literary a detail is the more valuable it is for the historian.[15]

The traditions stemming from Yemen, preserved in later Arabic texts, are important for the whole complex. One Arabic text which has usually been neglected is "The Book of Diadems" by Muhammad Ibn Hisham, which preserves large parts of the "Book of the Kings of Himyar" by Wahb ibn al-Munabbih, a collection of legends about the kings of Yemen written *c.* AD 710–720.[16] This makes it the oldest long prose text preserved in Arabic, and in spite of its legendary character it contains many historical facts. The other basic text about the pre-Islamic period of Yemen is al–Hamdānī's *al-'Iklīl*, "The Crown", a rich collection of data about the geography and history of Yemen written *c.* AD 940.[17] A contemporary evaluation of these texts, taking the now extensive epigraphic evidence from Yemen into account, is a desideratum.

Based on a thorough investigation of the sources mentioned, a sketch of Arabian history up to the year 622 is presented below, concentrating on the period AD 300–600.

The Empires and Arabia until the Third Century AD

During the period before the year 300 there are two geopolitical events that can be seen as milestones in the history of the Middle East: (1) the political unification of the area under the Achaemenids in *c.* 540 BC, and (2) the division of the Middle East between Iran-Parthia and the Graeco-Roman Empire, in *c.* 140 BC. The division in 140 occurred in connection with the dissolution of the Seleucid Empire and was cemented through the Roman conquest of Syria in 63 BC. The division thus established turned out to be very stable: it lasted almost seven hundred years and the border changes during the period were only cosmetic.[18]

The relationship of Arabia to the Empires at this time was mainly economic. As it does today, Arabia then possessed a natural resource without which the rest of the world could not function. Since the seventh century BC, the export of frankincense from South Arabia to the Mediterranean went through the western part of the Peninsula, and the empires showed a continuous interest in controlling the trade and also the production of the perfume.[19] It turned out, however,

[15] On the whole, the Arabic traditions of the pre-Islamic period have received far less attention than those of the life of the Prophet and the early history of Islam. For a pioneering study of the *ayyām*-literature see W. Caskel, "*Aijām al-'arab*. Studien zur altarabischen Epik", *Islamica* 4 (1931), 1–99. Cf. his preliminary "Die einheimischen Quellen zur Geschichte Nord–Arabiens vor dem Islam", *Islamica* 3 (1930), 331–341. The historical notes in his monumental edition of Hisham Ibn al–Kalbi's *Ğamharat an-nasab*, Bd. I–II (Leiden, 1966), are important. He was followed by his disciple E. Meyer, *Der historische Gehalt der Aiyām al-'arab* (Wiesbaden, 1970). An excellent introduction to medieval historical writing in Arabic is still H. A. R. Gibb, "Ta'rīkh", *Enzyklopaedie des Islam*, Ergänzungsbd. (1938), 246–263, repr. in id., *Studies on the Civilisation of Islam* (Princeton, 1962), 108–137. For Islamic historical writing in general see F. Rosenthal, *A History of Muslim Historiography*, 2nd rev. ed. (Leiden, 1968). Very useful is also D. M. Dunlop, *Arab Civilization to AD 1500* (London–Beirut, 1971), 70–149, as well as A. A. Duri, *The Rise of Historical Writing among the Arabs*, transl. by L. I. Conrad (Princeton, 1983; Arabic ed. Beirut, 1960). Cf. further J. B. Roberts, *Early Islamic Historiography. Ideology and Methodology* (Columbus, 1986).

[16] Ed. F. Krenkow (Hyderabad, 1935; corrected ed. by Abd al-Aziz al-Maqalih, Sanaa, 1979). Cf. F. Krenkow, "The two Oldest Books on Arabic Folklore", *Islamic Culture* 2 (1928).

[17] The *Iklīl* originally consisted of ten books of which only I, II, VIII and X have been preserved in manuscript. For the details see O. Löfgren, "al-Hamdānī", *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, III (1971), 124–125.

[18] For the history of the eastern frontier of the Roman empire see E. Frézouls, "Les fluctuations de la frontière orientale de l'empire romain", *La géographie administrative et politique d'Alexandre à Mahomet. Actes du colloque de Strasbourg 14–16 juin 1979* (Leiden, sine anno), 177–225.

[19] Cf. N. Groom, *Frankincense and Myrrh. A study of the Arabian Incense Trade* (London – New York – Beirut, 1981); J. Retsö, "The Domestication of the Camel and the Establishment of the Frankincense Road from South Arabia", *OrSuec* 40 (1991), 187–219.

that they did not have the means to attain either of these goals. Their inability was plainly demonstrated through the attempt by Augustus to conquer Yemen through the expedition of Aelius Gallus in 24 BC, an enterprise that nearly met with a catastrophic end.[20] This Asterixian venture was a blatant demonstration of the inability of the empires to handle the Arabian environment.

Yemen and large parts of the Peninsula were thus left in peace. Instead, the Romans tried to control the ends of the trade routes from Arabia and from the Parthian Empire by establishing a system of client kingdoms immediately adjacent to the Syrian province. Most of them were ruled by dynasties of Arabian descent.[21] This system, established by Pompey in 63 BC, turned out to be problematic. A web of oriental intrigues characterised the interior political life in these kingdoms as well as their mutual relations and their relations to Rome. The Herodians of Judaea are the most well-known of these client kings. The Roman emperors successively lost patience and incorporated the kingdoms into their provinces one by one, the last one being the Nabataean kingdom, the *Anschluss* of which took place in AD 106.[22]

Up to the beginning of the third century, the main antagonist of Rome in Middle Eastern politics was the Parthian Empire.[23] The Arsacid dynasty had its main stronghold on the Iranian plateau and its control of Mesopotamia seems to have been rather lax, allowing the existence of several more or less autonomous entities such as Edessa, Hatra and the kingdom of Charax on the Persian Gulf.[24] These were also, as a rule, governed by Arab dynasties. Their most important role was to function as transit–stations for the trade from India. Between Rome and Iran lay the fairy-tale city of Palmyra which by virtue of its position could thrive and prosper from the South Arabian trade as well as that from India.[25]

The New Empires: the Sasanians and the Himyarites

This relative idyll capsized during the third century which, as we all know, was the turning point in the history of the later Roman Empire. The upheavals had been fermenting for a long time. In South Arabia, the sea route through the Red Sea to India had been established with the beginning of the Roman supremacy in Syria and Egypt. During the following two hundred years, Yemen was torn by the struggle between different local rulers with ambitions to control not only the frankincense trade but also the shores of the Red Sea. Among these we hear

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[20] For the expedition of Gallus see H. v. Wissmann, "Die Geschichte des Sabäerreiches und der Feldzug des Aelius Gallus", *ANRW* II:9,1 (1976), 308–545.

[21] For the history of these kingdoms see *ANRW* II:8 (1977), 198–219 (Emesa), 520–686 (Nabatea), 799–906 (Hatra, Palmyra and Edessa); E. Schürer, *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ* I, rev. ed. by G. Vermes, F. Millar, M. Black (Edinburgh, 1973), 561–586 (Ituraea, Abilene, Nabataea).

[22] The literature on the Nabataeans is extensive. An excellent study of the history of the whole area from the coming of the Nabataeans until the time of Diocletian is G. W. Bowersock, *Roman Arabia* (Cambridge, Mass.–London, 1983). Cf. also A. Negev, "The Nabateans and the Provincia Arabia", *ANRW* II:8 (1977), 520–686.

[23] There is no good contemporary study of the political history of the Parthian empire. The best is probably R. N. Frye, *The History of Ancient Iran* [*HAW*, III.7] (Munich, 1984). Cf. also K. Schippmann, *Grundzüge der parthischen Geschichte* (Darmstadt, 1980).

[24] See note 21. For the history of Charax see S. A. Nodelman, "A Preliminary History of Characene", *Berytus* 13 (1959–60), 85–121.

[25] For Palmyra see J. Starcky, "Palmyre", *Dictionnaire de la Bible*, Suppl. 6 (1957–60), cols. 1066–1103. Some supplementary material can be found in J. Teixidor, *Un port romain dans le désert: Palmyre* [Semitica, 34] (Paris, 1984), and J. Starcky, M. Gawlikowski, *Palmyre* (Paris, 1985). Cf. also the article by H. J. W. Drijvers and M. J. Versteegh on Palmyra, in *ANRW* II:8 (1977), 799–906.

about the kings of the *Homeritae*, the Ḥimyar of the Arab historians, as early as in the first century AD.[26]

The decisive factor for the history of Arabia, however, was the development of the Middle East proper. A new power emerged in Iran *c.* AD 220, the Sasanian kings, who established a well–organized, ideologically tight state which took a much firmer hold of Mesopotamia than its predecessor.[27] Under Aurelian and Diocletian Rome was reinvigorated. There was no longer room for local potentates: Palmyra & Co. were swept away or ground to pieces between the two giants. At the same time, the struggle in Yemen ended in the unification of the whole of South Arabia under the king of Himyar, Shammar Yuhar'ish, at the end of the third century. The new South Arabian Empire included Hadramaut, where frankincense was produced.[28]

There is no doubt that all these events are somehow connected, although we do not yet know exactly how. The result was that the two empires, Rome and Iran, now stood face to face with no buffer between them. It is evident that the new situation made the transit trade through the Middle East more problematic from a Roman point of view. By now, silk was playing an increasingly important role, and Rome imported silk through Iranian territory. At the same time, they tried to circumvent this route by using the Red Sea and the South Arabian coast. The increased importance of Arabia after AD 300 was, however, not only attributable to economic policy. From a Roman standpoint, Arabia was a means of circumnavigating the Iranian left wing militarily. The result was a marked increase of Roman pressure against Western Arabia and the Red Sea after AD 300.[29] One aspect of this increased pressure was the Christian missionary activity which resulted in the establishment of the Christian kingdom in Aksum in Ethiopia. This kingdom often became the prolonged arm of Rome.[30]

From this point, Arabia was drawn into world politics much more definitely than before, and the protagonists embarked on the road that led straight to Yarmuk and Qadisiyya. With the increased military and political importance of Arabia, the old problem of control became acute, and, as always, highly complex.

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[26] We still lack a modern synthesis of the pre-Islamic history of Yemen. The scholarly discussion is highly technical and not easily accessible to the non-expert in South Arabian epigraphy. The debate between the handful of scholars with first-hand knowledge of the material is often characterised by a strongly polemic tone which makes it difficult for outsiders to judge it. The material consists almost exclusively of undated epigraphic texts and the dating of events and rulers is very uncertain for many periods. A readable introduction is constituted by the following essays in W. Daum (ed.), *Yemen*, 2nd ed. (Innsbruck – Frankfurt/Main, 1988): J. Pirenne, "Überblick über die Lehrmeinungen zur altsüdarabischen Chronologie", pp. 122–128; W. Müller, "Skizze der Geschichte Altsüdarabiens", pp. 50–56.

[27] The basic study of the Sasanian empire is still A. Christensen, *L'empire des sassanides* (Copenhagen, 1942). For a more up-to-date viewpoint see Frye, *History of Ancient Iran* (above, note 23), 287–339. Cf. also K. Schippmann, *Grundzüge der Geschichte des Sasanidischen Reichs* (Darmstadt, 1990). The remarks by Th. Nöldeke in his translation of the relevant parts of Tabari's world history: *Geschichte der Perser und Araber zur Zeit der Sasaniden* (Leiden, 1879; repr. Graz, 1973), are still fundamental.

[28] For this process see A. Bafaqih, *L'unification du Yemen antique* (Paris, 1990).

[29] For this development see the classic study by W. Ensslin, *Zur Ostpolitik des Kaisers Diokletian* [Sitzungsberichte der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Phil.-hist. Abt., 1942:1] (Munich, 1942).

[30] For the early history of Ethiopia see J. Doresse, *Au pays de la reine de Saba: l'Éthiopie antique et moderne* (Paris, 1956), 52–63; F. Anfray, *Les anciens éthiopiens. Siècles d'histoire* (Paris, 1990). There is a fairly extensive literature on Christianity in Arabia. Fundamental is still the magnificent article by R. Agrain, "Arabie", *Dictionnaire d'histoire et de géographie ecclésiastiques*, III (1924), 1158–1339. Further F. Nau, *Les arabes chrétiens de Mésopotamie et Syrie de VI–VII siècles* (Paris, 1933); H. Charles, *Le christianisme des arabes nomades dans le désert syro-mésopotamien aux alentours de l'hégire* (Paris, 1936); R. Devreesse, "Le christianisme dans la province d'Arabie", *Vivre et Penser* 2 (1947), 110–146; J. Ryckmans, "Le christianisme en Arabie du Sud", *L'Oriente cristiano nella storia della civiltà* (Rome, Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei, 1964), 413–455; J. S. Trimingham, *Christianity Among the Arabs in Pre-Islamic Times* (London – New York – Beirut, 1979); J. Beaucamp, Ch. Robin, "Le christianisme dans la péninsule arabique d'après l'épigraphie et l'archéologie", *TM* 8 (1981), 45-61; A. Havenith, *Les arabes chrétiens nomades au temps de Mohammed* (Louvain-la-Neuve, 1988).

The military strength of Rome and Iran was based on infantry and cavalry forces, none of which were usable in Arabia. Horses demanded large quantities of fodder and water. In normally watered and inhabited regions, the generals could improvise: fodder and water were usually within reach. However, in the steppes and deserts of Arabia things were very different. The sparse resources did not allow for any margins: anyone who did not have perfect knowledge of the whereabouts of fodder and water was likely to end up like Aelius Gallus at best. The infantry and cavalry of the empires were thus completely dependent on the locals who knew where to find water and fodder, a nightmare for every general. In the long run, Arabia could only be controlled by those who knew where these things were to be found.

One solution to this dilemma was to provide oneself with allies among tribes which, hopefully, knew the local conditions. All three empires did so, Rome at least from c. AD 360 and possibly earlier.[31] They were attached to Rome by the kind of treaty called *foedus*. The *foederati*, referred to as Saracens in Roman sources and distinguished from the earlier clients who were called Arabs, dwelt along the *limes* in Syria and were used as scouts and frontier guards. The *foedus*-system was different from that of the old client-states à la Herod or the Nabataeans. The latter had settled in urban or village societies based on agriculture and trade under kings with bureaucracies. The new *foederati* were mobile, living in a pre-stage of the classical bedouin culture, organised in tribes led by professional warriors.

Through the *foedus*-system the tribes were militarised, and became more and more difficult for the Romans and Iranians to handle. At the same time, these federate tribes had a limited range: it seems that they were not useful for large-scale military ventures even in Arabia. The empire that seems to have been most successful in handling the tribes was, not unexpectedly, the Himyarite kingdom, which was "domestic" to a larger extent than Rome or Iran. The tribes hired by them, like Kinda, were effective in extending their influence among the other tribes in the southern part of the Peninsula until the early fifth century. In the inscriptions, the federates of the Himyar kings were still referred to as "Arabs". The position of the kings of Kinda is dramatically illustrated today by the excavation of their capital in Qaryat al-Faw. This town was founded in the second century AD, and flourished for three hundred years. It was a well developed society with temples, palaces and large bazaar areas. Inscriptions in South Arabian script now document kings who were previously known only through late Islamic sources.[32]

After the Roman débâcle with Iran under Julian the Apostate in 363, both Rome and Iran were involved in other problems—the Romans with the Germans and the Iranians with the Huns. In the beginning of the fifth century, the Himyaritic king Abukarib As'ad, the great hero of the royal sagas of Yemen, established his power in western Arabia at least as far as Medina. At the same time, chiefs from Kinda settled in Central Arabia and extended their power even to the tribes on the Persian Gulf. The ambitions of the rather loosely organised Himyaritic kingdom are ideologically reflected in the epigraphic material. Around 370 the inscriptions dedicated to the old pagan gods in the national

[31] For the literature on the Roman "Arabs", see the references in notes 4 and 7. For the Iranian Saracens, see G. Rothstein, *Die Dynastie der Lahmiden in al-Hira, Ein Versuch zur arabisch–persischen Geschichte zur Zeit der Sassaniden* (Berlin, 1899; repr. Hildesheim, 1968). Th. Nöldeke's remarks (see above, note 27) are also most important.

[32] Cf. note 12 for the archaeological evidence. For the history of Kinda as reflected in medieval Arabic sources see G. Olinder, *The Kings of Kinda of the Family of Ākil al-murār* [Lunds Universitets Årsskrift N.F. 1, 23:6] (Lund – Leipzig, 1927). See also id., "Āl al-Ǧaun of the Family of Ākil al-Murār", *Le Monde Oriental* 25 (1930), 208–229.

sanctuary in Marib ceased. Instead, we find inscriptions to a new god: RḤMN-N (Arabic *raḥmān*) "the Merciful", an epithet which is probably Christian or Jewish. At the same time we have epigraphic evidence of the presence of Jews in Yemen. In the early sixth century we find that the Himyaritic ruler converted to Judaism.[33]

Just before the end of the fifth century, the influence of the Himyaritic kings reached the Roman *limes* in southern Syria. Despite the fact that the Himyaritic Empire was quite a loose alliance between the kings in Yemen and the tribes on the Peninsula, its existence was obviously intolerable to Rome, which was not interested in an independent power operating in North Arabia and threatening the Roman flank. As early as under Anastasius (491–518), there were signs of a renewed expansionistic Roman *Ostpolitik* which continued under his successor Justin I. New, fresh Arabs, the Ghassanids, were imported and settled along the Syrian *limes*. The renewal of the Syrian frontier defence culminated in 527, when Justinian made the Ghassanid chief Hārith ibn Gabala supreme ruler of all the Saracens attached to Rome. This action was clearly directed against the local Saracen of the Sasanians, Mundhir III of Hira, who, at this time, was allied to the Kinda chiefs in central Arabia. But the most fateful event was the activation of the Roman ally in Ethiopia. This culminated in the Ethiopian invasion of Yemen around 520, which caused the fall of the Himyaritic Empire under its Jewish king Dhu Nuwās, and the dissolution of the alliance with the tribes.[34] In the turmoil following the disappearance of the power of Yemen in the Hijaz we may note, *en passant*, that a small clan belonging to the Kināna tribe settled in the hitherto completely insignificant hamlet of Mekka. A century later a storm arose from this clan, the Quraysh.

The fall of the Himyaritic Empire was the turning point in the pre-Islamic history of Arabia. The Ethiopians turned out to be as incapable as the Romans and Iranians of controlling the Peninsula. They could not even keep their own generals in line; one of them, Abraha, tried, like an Ethiopian Alexander the Great, to play the role of the conquered king, with disastrous results.

The Rise of the Arabs

The shaky Ethiopian rule in Yemen shattered the control of the rest of Arabia. Among the tribes, several heirs rose who, with varying degrees of success, tried to carve out mini-empires on their own. The sixth century was a period of internal upheaval and perpetual strife and anarchy among the tribes in Arabia. Thus the chaotic aftermath of the Himyaritic rule was the cradle of classical Arabian culture. The hiring of professional soldiers by the Himyaritic kings from among the tribes created a professional class of warriors all over Arabia. The term Arab was probably originally the designation for this warrior caste. Such warriors had earlier existed only along the borders of the northern empires. But the classical Arabic literary culture originated in central Arabia, not in Syria or Iraq. A close reading of the *ayyām*-stories shows that they are basically spun around some facts about the Kinda chiefs and their successors. The most famous poets who were also, as a rule, great warriors, were either closely attached to these chiefs or

[33] For the religious development in South Arabia see M. Höfner, "Die vorislamischen Religionen Arabiens: Südarabien", *Die Religionen Altsyriens, Altarabiens und der Mandäer* (Stuttgart, 1970), 237–353. The history of the Jews in Arabia has received surprisingly little attention as compared with the history of the Christians. See, however, G. D. Newby, *A History of the Jews of Arabia From Ancient Times to Their Eclipse Under Islam* (Columbia, SC, 1988).
[34] For these events see I. Shahid, *The Martyrs of Najran: New Documents* (Brussels, 1971).

direct descendants of them. The classical Arabic poetry and its language was created in this *milieu*.[35]

The anarchy in Arabia led to an Iranian intervention around AD 570. Through a general, Wahriz, a Sasanian puppet, Sayf dhū Yazan, was installed on the throne in Sanaa. The fragility of this arrangement, however, was shown in the legendary battle of Dhū Qār at the Euphrates *c.* 600, where tribes from Eastern Arabia dispersed an army of Iranian cavalry and Arab allies. The storm was now rising.

The result of one century of anarchy was thus the confirmation of a political vacuum in Arabia. Neither Rome, nor Iran, nor Ethiopia could control the Peninsula in the long term. At least the two former suffered from growing internal problems, basically economic anaemia: the whole administrative and military apparatus had become too expensive. In Arabia, the century had three fundamental results: (1) political anarchy, (2) modernisation of weaponry, and (3) insights into the importance of ideology in politics. There must have been circles where it had been realised that foreign intervention and anarchy would continue if no counterweight were created. The ambitions of the warrior caste, awakened by the Himyarite venture, needed a modern ideology if it were to handle the old established antagonists in the north, and in those days ideology was religion. The Himyar kings had tried Judaism, as did the Khazars in the north somewhat later; both attempts failed.

In this world of spiritual and military unrest and in the vacuum left by the failures of the empires, there suddenly emerged the state of Medina. From AD 622 there was, in Western Arabia, a state independent of Rome, Iran and Ethiopia, equipped with an ideology that could cope with both Christianity and Zoroastrianism on equal footing.[36] The basis of the state of Medina was an alliance of tribes in the central Hijaz and central Arabia. It is typical that Muhammad did not have to conquer the main tribes: in the year 630, "the Year of Delegations", the tribes came voluntarily. It is as though they were attracted towards a magnet. The structure of this new state was in some respects similar to the old Himyaritic Empire: a locally-based political leadership ruling allied Arabs, i.e. a choice of warriors from the main tribes. The main difference was the role of ideology: this new state was ruled not by a king and his dynasty, but by a charismatic preacher promulgating divine law.[37]

The Islamic state in Medina can be interpreted in secular terms as an attempt to avoid circumvention of Arabia by excluding foreigners from controlling Yemen and abolishing the system of tribes being hired as mercenaries by outsiders. The policy of the government in Medina was thus (1) blocking Iranian expansion from the east, (2) establishing control of Yemen from Hijaz and from nowhere else, and (3) securing the north either by drawing the Syrian tribes,

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[35] For some aspects of bedouin society see the studies in F. Gabrieli (ed.), *L'antica società beduina* (Rome, 1959). A basic bibliography for the history of Central Arabia is S. D. Ricks, *Western Languages Literature on pre-Islamic Central Arabia. An annotated bibliography* (Denver, 1991).

[36] It is beyond the scope of this paper to review the vast literature on Muhammed and the early history of Islam. For the political aspects of the Islamic movement, W. W. Watt, *Muhammed at Mecca* (Oxford, 1953), and id., *Muhammed at Medina* (Oxford, 1956) are still a good starting point. An updating of Watt's views can be found in id., *Muhammad's Mecca: History in the Quran* (Edinburgh, 1988). A moderate Marxist viewpoint is found in M. Rodinson, *Mahomet*, 2nd ed. (Paris, 1967). A radically different view on the whole problem is found in P. Crone, M. Cook, *Hagarism. The making of the Islamic World* (Cambridge, 1977). The economic structure of Muhammad's environment is tackled rather differently by P. Crone, *Meccan Trade and the Rise of Islam* (Oxford, 1987), and R. Simon, *Meccan Trade and Islam. Problems of Origin and Structure* (Budapest, 1989). The studies by M. J. Kister gathered in *Studies in Jahiliyya and Early Islam* (London, 1980), and *Society and Religion from Jahiliyya to Islam* (London, 1990), are fundamental to the whole complex.

[37] For the political structure of Medina see the basic study by J. Wellhausen, "Muhammads Gemeindeordnung von Medina", *Skizzen und Vorarbeiten*, IV (Berlin, 1889; repr. Berlin – New York, 1985).

always a potential threat since they were friends to Rome, into the sphere of Medina or by extracting their teeth through crushing them militarily. The Medinean policy thus did not seek world dominion, but rather security and independence from the empires. This striving for independence was probably an old ideal among the desert aristocrats, and must have constituted a strong impetus to unite with the new state. The submission was made more appealing by Islam: a religion claiming independence and superiority over those of the empires. It is typical and very illustrative of what has been said here that the main target of the foreign policy of the government in Medina was Syria: in 628 Rome had defeated Iran and apparently emerged as the dominant power. Rome could thus have been expected to resume her aggressive policy towards the southeast. The Muslim expedition to Syria in 629 appears to have been an attempt at a preemptive strike at least against the Syrian allies of Rome, but it had dire consequences: the battle at Mu'ta in Transjordan in 630 began a struggle that ended in Constantinople in 1453.

As we all know, the state of Medina was a total success. In twenty years' time it grew from controlling Medina and the oases around it to controlling all the lands from Egypt to Afghanistan. And after another sixty years it ruled an empire from the Atlantic to the Indus, the largest political organisation in world history to date.

Summary

In summary, the division of the Middle East in the second century BC resulted in a growing interest in the Arabian Peninsula on the part of the Roman and Iranian Empires. Their accelerated interference after AD 300 caused the revolt of the inhabitants of Arabia. By striking back with unexpected might they ultimately broke the power of the empires. Iran disappeared altogether and Rome was reduced to an Anatolian power. The result was thus the political reunification of the Middle East. The wall dividing East from West for seven hundred years was torn down for good. When this dividing line disappeared, the Peninsula lost its importance. Life there could return, if not to what it had been, then at least to the management of its inhabitants.

After AD 750 the tribes who had created the Islamic empire lost political power. It seems that when they had won their freedom, the Arabs lost interest in participating in world history. They returned to their tents, their feuds, and their poets. They left behind them two legacies of overwhelming importance: the Arabic language and the Islamic religion, both of which began independent careers among other peoples: the Syrians, Egyptians, Iranians, Turks, Berbers etc. But few peoples in world history have altered its course as the Arabs did.

The interpretation presented here is different, in many ways, from that which is usually given. The traditional view of the Arab conquest as the work of undisciplined bedouins who undertook a gigantic razzia is, in my opinion, completely erroneous. This is also true of the idea that this process was part of the perpetual waves of immigration of Semites from a presupposed home in Arabia. Instead, the conquest bears all signs of being the result of rational political considerations and—at least in the beginning—of being a well planned venture. It was directed primarily against Rome, which was seen as the main enemy after AD 629. The trigger of the Arab conquest was thus Heraclius' triumph over the Sasanian Empire.

Byzantine Egypt: Cultures in Collision

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Substrata

Egypt is a land whose inhabitants have always had to face the presence of death in their daily activities as well as in their surrounding biotope. The limited biotope forced generation after generation to occupy the same territories. Consequently present villagers also build their houses upon ancient monuments, mostly tombs, which they until recently used as unofficial "bank accounts", charging their "funds" whenever needed. On the other hand, the limit between the hot and dry desert and the flourishing agricultural region is so evident that one can practically stand with one foot in the realm of death and the other in the realm of life. The same duality is reflected by the ancient Egyptian terms for eternity, *djet* and *nekheh*. The former, perhaps, for what has been and the latter, possibly, for what will come. The past has been manifested by a creation; the future is unmanifested.

In the case of human beings, the situation is the reverse. Before birth an individual does not have a shape, nor a personal soul. At the moment of creation a soul is taken from the celestial "bank" and implanted into the body, shaped from clay. From this moment on the process of creation of the individual starts, and it comes to an end at the moment of death. In this way an unchanging image of an individual was created. In this capacity the deceased entered the future eternity.

The eternal strife between the desert and the green strip inspired the ancient Egyptian myth of Osiris, the legendary first king of Egypt. He was killed by his jealous brother Setekh, fecundated his virgin sister Isis, who bore him a child, Horus. Hawk-headed Horus defeated the murderer and was installed as pharaoh, ruler of the living. His father Osiris, in his turn, was installed as king of the dead, with whom he, being the first one to die, shared the experience of dying. Before being permitted to enter *Amentet*, the land in the west, the deceased had to undergo the Last Judgement, with Osiris presiding as main judge. This judgement is described in Chapter 125 of the *Book of the Dead*. After his heart was found in balance with a feather used as a counterweight, he was admitted to the fields of *Ialu* to take care of the fields of Osiris. There was no mischief, no grief, no problems and no shortages. Among the ancient peoples, only the Egyptians had such a positive view about eternal existence after death. The Jewish paradise was lost in the very beginning. The Mesopotamians had their *maat laataari*, the land of no return, where the deceased remained in darkness, without seeing each other and feeding on excrement. The Greeks believed in Hades, the shadowy land of the dead, guarded by Cerberos and surrounded by the river Styx. This was the opinion about the afterlife shared by Alexander the Great and his

Aspects of Late Antiquity and Early Byzantium, ed. L. Rydén, J. O. Rosenqvist, Swedish Research Institute in Istanbul, Transactions, Vol. 4 (Stockholm, 1993)

43

Fig. 1. The "Eater of the Dead" in chapter 125 of the Egyptian Book of the Dead, depicted on a linen shroud now in the Egyptian Museum in East Berlin. Graeco-Roman period.

generals, when they conquered Egypt in 332 BC. It was not too long, however, until he decided to change the destination and to start sending his deceased compatriots to the Elysian fields, a Hellenistic version of the Ialu of the Egyptians.

When the Romans took power in 30 BC they seemed to adore everything that was Egyptian: the wine, mysteries, art, riches and monuments. The pyramid tomb of Caius Cestius in Rome is a sign of this trend. So are the numerous Egyptian obelisks, canopic jars and sphinxes exported from Egypt. To this group can also be added the obelisk of Thuthmosis III which was taken to the New Rome, Constantinople, the capital of the Byzantine Empire, and re–erected in the hippodrome in the 4th–5th century AD.

As early as the first century AD a temple dedicated to Serapis, a Hellenized version of the Egyptian Osiris, was founded in Beneventum, and another one, dedicated to Isis, was established in Pompeii.

However, even during Pre-Christian times the original Egyptian population kept to itself. In the countryside, the Chora, the Egyptian-speaking population had its own schools, its own laws and court system (= *laokritai*), its own language and writing (= demotic) and its own religion. Incorporated as a part of a larger unity, Egyptian beliefs travelled to Europe. Becoming part of the Byzantine Rome after the division of the Empire, some ideas could have found their ways into Christian beliefs as well. The role of Osiris, who by his death created an eternal life for the righteous dead, touches the central teachings of the church. The resemblance between the divine Isis and the Virgin Mary is striking. St George killing a dragon has its prototype in the pictures of Horus defeating evil, represented by a crocodile. The ancient Egyptian monster, the "Eater of the dead" (Fig. 1) of Chapter 125 of the *Book of the Dead*, ready to devour a sinner whose heart was heavier than its counterweight, is also found, for example, on a 15th-century mural painting in the church of Ärentuna in central Sweden. Here, this monster is represented by the gigantic mouth of a dragon (Fig. 2), into which those declared to be sinners at the Last Judgement of our Lord are swept away by helpful angels.

44   *Rostislav Holthoer*

Fig. 2. A more recent version of the "Eater of the Dead". The monster, representing Hell, ready to devour the sinners. From Ärentuna church near Uppsala. 15th c. AD.

Who are the Copts?

In present-day Egypt, there is a minority which is called the Copts. According to official documents there are 6 million Copts in Egypt, but unofficial sources, probably with more accuracy, estimate them to be 8 million, or 14% of the entire population of the country.

Generally, the term Copts is used for the Christian inhabitants of Egypt, not taking into consideration that there are also Greek Orthodox, Roman Catholic and protestant congregations which are not Coptic.

Under the leadership of 'Amr ibn el-'As, army commander of the first caliph Abu Baqr, Arab troops invaded Egypt. The word Copt is a result of a misunderstanding. It is a derivation from the Greek *aigyptios*, 'Egyptian', a name used by the Egyptian-speaking population about themselves. The Arabs invading Egypt in AD 639/46 understood it as *el-gyptios*, 'the Gyptian, the Guptian', i.e. the Copt. On the other hand, the Greek-speaking population regarded themselves as

Romans or their successors, the Byzantines. The Arab term for them is *el-rumani*, 'the Romans'. Both terms had to do with ethnic considerations, not religious. In fact the term Copt is presently used to refer to Arab-speaking non-Arabs of Egypt. One of the Arab words meaning Christians in general is the slightly pejorative *Nasrani*, coming from the early term the Nasareans used to distinguish themselves from the orthodox Jews.

From Paganism to Christianity

In the fourth century AD the civil administration changed but little. After the division of the Roman Empire, Egypt became a part of the Eastern Empire, that is, the Byzantine one. Egypt was still ruled by two prefects, one for Alexandria and another for the Chora. The number of the ancient *nomoi* remained 42, the term, however, being changed into *pagarchia*.

One new thing was the administration of the church. Its leader was the Patriarch of Alexandria, assisted by seven bishops (after Justinian, five) each with his own episcopate. Moreover, there were titulary bishops for the countryside.

The language spoken in the Chora remained Egyptian but was written with letters taken from the Greek alphabet, complemented by some new signs to stand for sounds which did not exist in Greek. Despite the more or less common alphabet, the Egyptians did keep their distance to the Greeks. They developed a culture which strengthened their national profile. This also concerned Christianity, which obtained local character, for example, as Monophysitism, which was regarded as something national.

Christianity in Egypt has been much studied,[1] but within Byzantine Studies, it has received less attention than the study of the central parts of the Empire. It has been regarded as if Egyptian culture during the Byzantine period had been a representative of Byzantine provincialism. However, one has to distinguish between the cultures represented in Alexandria and other Greek–dominated localities, like Antinoe, Hermopolis, Tentyra and Thebais, on the one hand, and the Egyptian-inhabited territories in Upper Egypt, on the other (Fig. 3).

Such a division seems to have laid the groundwork for a certain degree of conflict between these two different cultural spheres.[2] The inhabitants of the Chora seem to have been apt to accept cultural influences from Egyptian paganism or Iran or perhaps also from India, provided that these influences did not come from or through Alexandria and were clearly Byzantine.

Ancient Egyptian influence can be traced not only in the theological thinking,[3] but also in the architectural elements. Some, lateral, central decorative elements of the Coptic pillar capitals (Fig. 4) with two protuberances, may go back to the "horns" of the so-called Hathor capitals common in ancient Egypt (Fig. 5). The representation of the sunrise in the ancient Egyptian *Book of the Dead* (Fig. 6) may have influenced the layout, and perhaps also the symbolic message of Coptic tombstones (Fig. 7). Coptic sculptural art differs from Alexandrian. The postures and facial features (Fig. 8) resemble those of the Parthians. The same possible influence is also noted in the textile art. An embroidery, now in the

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[1] Cf., *inter alia*, B. Spuler, "Die koptische Kirche", in *Die morgenländischen Kirchen* (Leiden, 1964), 188–190, with good bibliography.

[2] A. I. Jelanskaja, "Koptskaja rukopisnaja kniga", in *Kul'tura narodov vostoka. Rukopisnaja kniga v kul'ture narodov vostoka*, I (Moscow, 1987), 20.

[3] Cf. E. Hammersmith, "Altägyptische Elemente im koptischen Christentum", *Ostkirchliche Studien* 6 (1957), 233–250, and G. Lanczkowski, "Beeinflussung des Christentums durch alt-ägyptische Vorstellungen", *Zeitschrift für Religions- und Geistes-Geschichte* 8 (1956), 14–42.
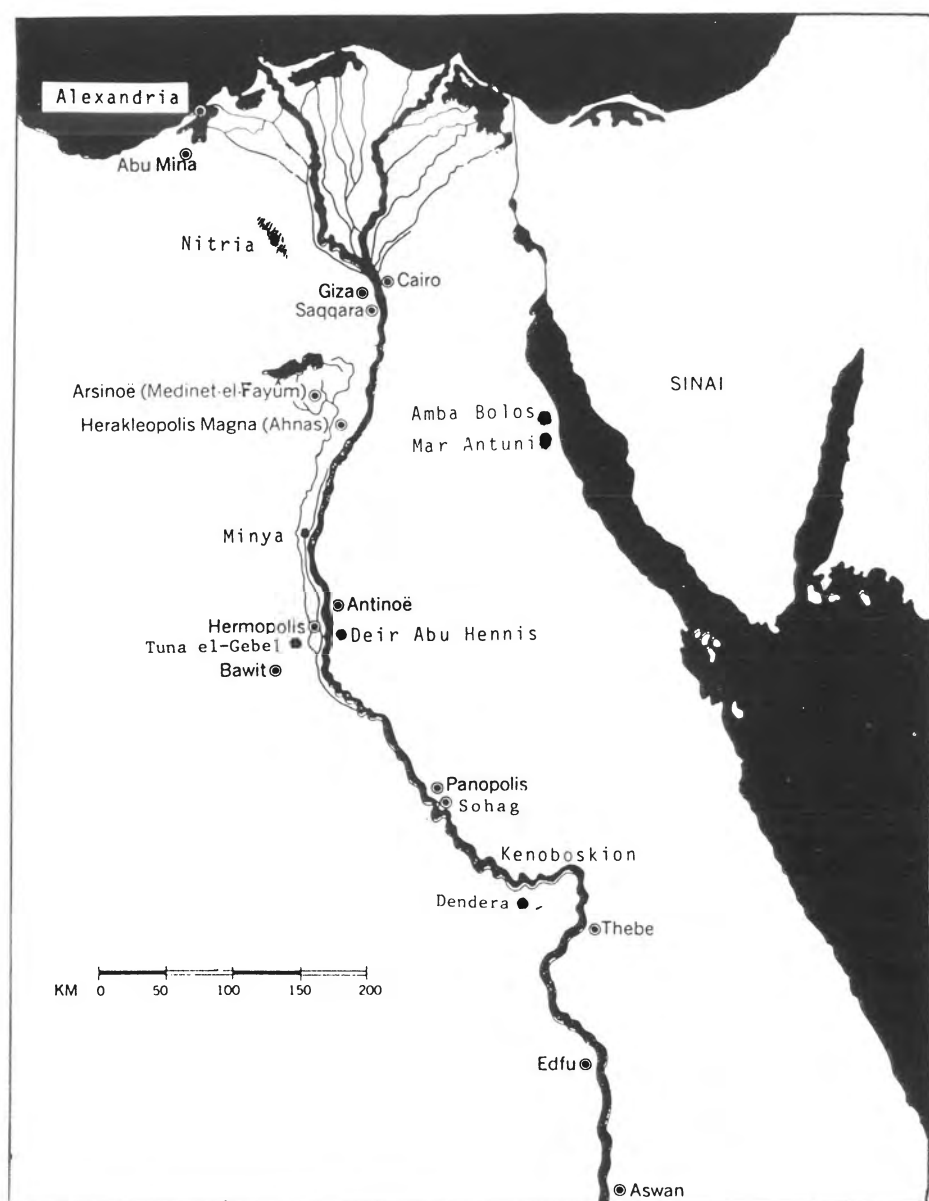
Fig. 3. A map showing the most important Graeco-Roman and Byzantine sites of Egypt.

Louvre museum of Paris (Fig. 9), shows a female dancer with evident non-Egyptian facial features. Also, some statuettes of bronze or terracotta, showing Horus in the Lotus, bear signs of eastern influence (Fig. 10), being itself perhaps a kind of prototype for the representations of Buddha, *Padisatwa*. It is also not out of the question that Buddhist ideals inspired the emergence of the idea of asceticism and monasticism in Egypt.

At the Council of Constantinople, in the year 381, Christianity was made the state religion in both Roman empires. By the Edict of Theodosius I (AD 379–395) eleven years later, in 391/2, pagan cults were officially abolished also in Egypt. Although the last purely Egyptian place of pagan worship, the temple of Serapis, was destroyed in Alexandria, the temple of Isis on the island of Philae, near Elephantine, remained in use until 582, when it was definitely closed and converted into a church.

An interesting fact is the scarcity of bilingual inscriptions in Greek and Coptic from Egypt. We have some mummy tags preserved, but they are of an early date.
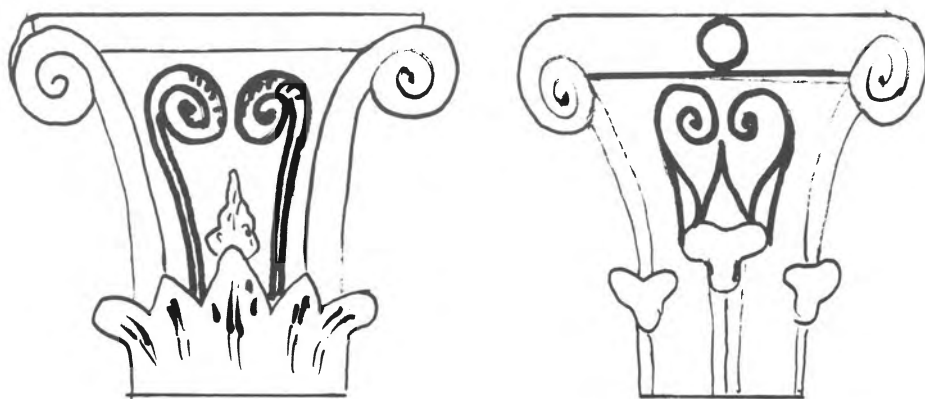
Fig. 4. Two sketches of Coptic pillar capitals from Edfu and from Elephantine. Note the internal decorative motif of double protuberances. This motif could have been influenced by the ancient Egyptian Hathor-capitals (Fig. 5). After R. Holthoer. "Kopterna och deras konst ...", Figura, Nova series 23 (Uppsala 1989), Fig. 14.

Fig. 5. A Hathoric pillar capital from the temple of Hatshepesut at Deir el-Bahri. Note the face of the goddess, placed below the symbol of her temple, surrounded on both sides by her "horns"?
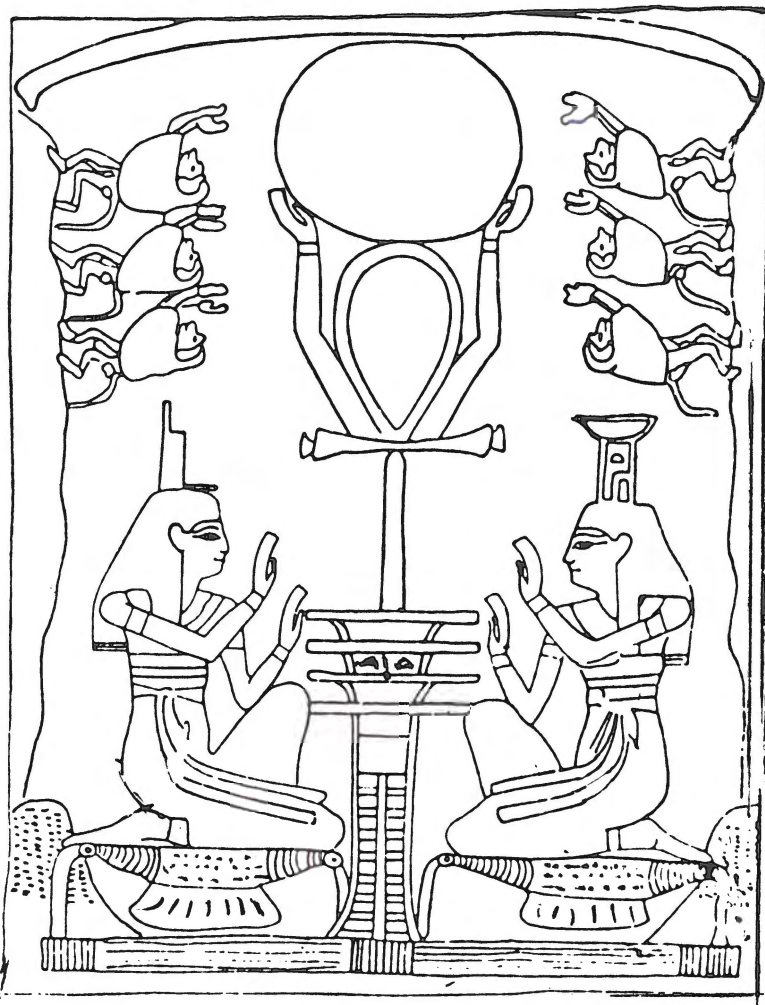
Fig. 6. The sunrise depicted in the papyrus of Ani (BM 10.470). Note the two goddesses, Isis and Nephthys, supporting the *Djed*-pillar of Osiris—a symbol of resurrection, surmounted by *ankh*—the symbol of life upholding the sun. Ankh is by the Coptic church used as a cross, i.e. the symbol of resurrection as well as the source of life. From Sir E. A. Wallis Budge. *The Book of the Dead,* vol. I, 2nd ed. (London, 1953), Pl. VII and Fig. on p. 73.

In Byzantine times the dates and the names of the addresses of letters were often written in Greek, which indicates that the officials were rather negligent of Coptic. It seems as if mainly foreigners accepted the two languages, especially in the monasteries. A bilingual monumental epitaph from Deir Abu Hennis, belonging to "Papia, son of Meliton, the Isaurian", published by De Fenouyl, is rather unique and also bears evidence of foreigners still joining Coptic monastic communities in the 6th century.[4] The ideology of monasticism was not developed in the Byzantine-influenced Alexandria but in the Chora. It must be noted that Egypt was regarded as a second Holy Land. Like the valley of Jordan, it was a place visited by the Holy Family and consequently became an object of pilgrimage. From here many ideas, including monasticism, spread to the rest of the Christian world, Asia Minor, the Balkans, Italy, France and Ireland.

[4] M. De Fenouyl, "Une inscription funéraire bilingue", *Bulletin de la Société d'Archéologie Copte* 17 (1963–1964), 57–61, Pl. I.
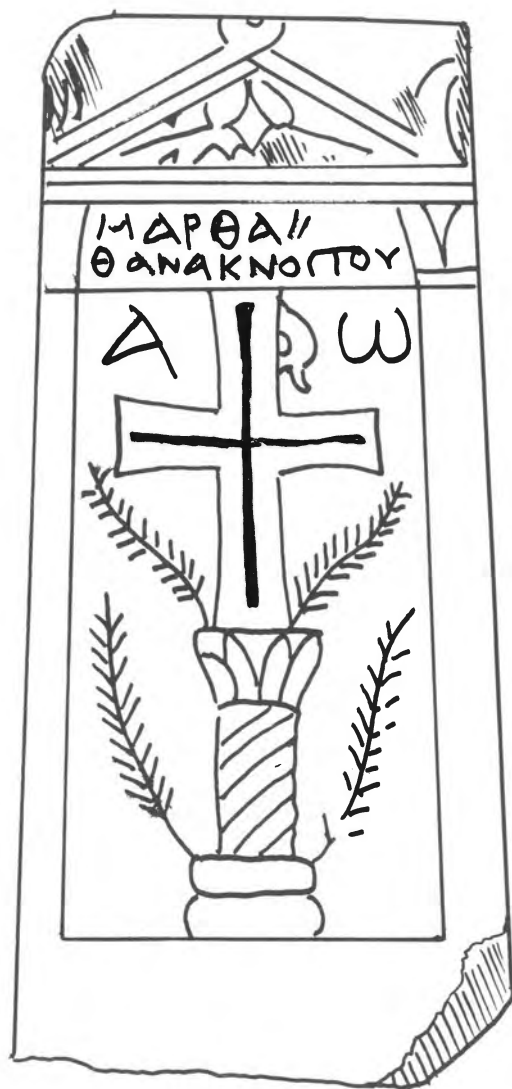
Fig. 7. Tombstone of "Martha, the lector" from Bober. Note the Cross/Khrysma standing on a pillar. Both the pillar and the cross symbolize the resurrection and life (life-giving tree), indicated by the branches at the roots of both. Infinity is symbolized by the letters *Alpha* and *Omega*. Compare with Fig. 6, perhaps rendering a prototype for this Christian monument. Date uncertain. Cairo EM 8420.

Fig. 8. A relief from Bawit showing the birth of Venus. 5th c. AD. Note the non-Alexandrinian way of execution of the bodies, faces and eyes, which brings into mind the Parthian style. Le Louvre, Paris.

Fig. 9. An example of foreign racial elements in Egypt in the 5th c. AD. This polychrome linen fabric shows a dancer with non-Egyptian facial features. The eyebrows make one think of Persia or even India. The attitude of the dancer points in the same direction. Le Louvre, Paris.

Post Chalcedon

The Council of Chalcedon in the year 451 banned definitely the Monophysitic interpretation of Egyptian Christianity, and consequently also that of Syria and Armenia, and accepted the Melkite, Dyophysite interpretation as the only right one.

Egypt got two patriarchs, an official Dyophysitic one and an unofficial Monophysitic one. Otherwise the changes were quite small. Taxation remained a heavy burden for the inhabitants of the Chora. The indiction, or the imperial declaration of the amount of the obligatory annual supply of grain to the state (*annona*), took place every year. Because of the different climatic circumstances in Egypt, the beginning of the indiction year took place there not as in Constantinople, but rather was postponed to the summer, almost one year later, to the beginning of the Nile flood.[5] Consequently, when the indiction was used for

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[5] E. J. Bikerman, *Hronologija drevnego mira* (Moscow, 1975; = *Chronology of the Ancient World* [London, 1969]), 73 f.

Fig. 10. A terracotta figurine representing "The Child, Horus in the Lotus" with an "oriental" crown. This figurine is in the collection of Victoriamuseet of Uppsala University, Sweden. A bronze figurine of the same subject in Medelhavsmuseet in Stockholm shows even more "oriental features".

dating, special rules were applied for Egypt, which to a certain extent strengthened the feelings of nationalism.

It seems as if during the period between the Council of Chalcedon and the end of the rule of Justinian, the gap between the Byzantines of Alexandria and the Copts of the Chora grew remarkably large.

By Justinian's order, the monastery of St Catherine in Sinai was enlarged by a church, which was furnished with a marvellous apse mosaic (Fig. 11). Despite large building activities in Egypt, his name is not associated with any of them in folk traditions. It puts the Empress Helen, the mother of Constantine the Great, as the founder of the churches of Egypt *par préférence*.

The reason for this is perhaps the rivalry between the Melkite emperor and his Monophysite wife Theodora. In the 6th century, the missionaries of Justinian and Theodora did compete in converting Nubia, the southern neighbour of Egypt, into Dyophysitism and Monophysitism, respectively. Here, independent states were established: Nobadia, Alodia and Makuria.

Fig. 11. The *metamorphosis* of our Lord. A Byzantine mosaic in the apse of the church of the monastery of St Catherine. 6th c. AD.

In the year 535 Theodora ordained a Monophysite, Theodosius I, Patriarch of Alexandria. A year later he was suspended by Justinian and died in 566 in Constantinople. Theodosius was disqualified as a leader for his subjects, but he continued his mission in secret. As a counterweight to the Melkite patriarchs of Alexandria he ordained the Syrian Jacūb Baradais as bishop for the Egyptians, an event which did not narrow the gap between Greeks and Egyptians.

The Epilogue

In the year 610 a man called Nicetas was installed by the Emperor Heraclius as prefect of Alexandria. He was a supporter of the Melkite, Dyophysite patriarch John. In such a way ecclesiastical power and civil power were united. The Monophysite Copts were set aside. In 619 Egypt was conquered by the Persian king Khosroes II. After ten years he was expelled from Egypt and killed. During the occupation, the Copts showed remarkable support for the conquerors.

Under the leadership of the army commander of the caliph Abu Baqr, 'Amr ibn el-'As,[6] an Arab army of 6,000 men invaded Egypt in 639/646. Immediately before this, in 631, a man called Cyrus (al-Muqauqis) was installed as prefect of Alexandria. Despite using force he did not succeed in converting the Monophysites into the Melkite faith. Because of this failure he was expelled ten years later from his position by the Emperor Heraclius. The same year the emperor died, however, and Cyrus was reinstalled. But the situation in Egypt had changed now.

As was said above, as early as 639 an Arab army of 6,000 men entered the eastern Delta of Egypt. The number of soldiers seems too small for such an enterprise. It succeeded because only the cities opposed the invaders while the Copts inhabiting the countryside remained passive. In 640 the Arabs conquered the Byzantine fortress of Babylon (in Old Cairo) which was of great strategic

[6] U. Luft, "Der Beginn der islamischen Eroberung Ägyptens im Jahre 639", *Staatlichen Museen zu Berlin. Forschungen und Berichte* 16 (1975), 123–128.

importance. The next year they stood outside Alexandria. Cyrus found himself besieged. The circumstances resulted in something which presently would have been regarded as high treason. The gates of Alexandria were opened to the besieging Arabs, probably by the Copts, who regarded them as liberators.

The period of Byzantine rule in Egypt was over in practice.

In November the same year Cyrus had to sign a contract, according to which Alexandria had to pay taxes to the conquerors and to withdraw the Byzantine troops. After his triumphal entrance into Alexandria, 'Amr ibn el-'As had to leave Egypt because of the death of the caliph. The city was retaken in 645 by the Byzantine army leader, Manuel, who kept it for one year. After having lost a battle against an Arab army of 12,000 men, he had to surrender Alexandria to the Arabs definitely in 646. In the year 706, the Greek language was replaced by Arabic as the official language. A new dating system "after Higra" replaced the dating according to the "indictions" made compulsory by Justinian. The Copts were, however, granted their old traditional system of dating "after the martyrs", which started 29 August 284, the date when Diocletian's persecutions of the Christians started.

Our Coptic heritage

Some notions of the possible Coptic heritage to the world have been mentioned above. In my article about Coptic art I have discussed whether some traits should be regarded as Byzantine or Coptic.[7] In the iconography of Coptic paintings complicated symbolism is used. This symbolism is found in the Nubian Christian paintings[8] as in the icons (Fig. 12). We may have varying opinions about Coptic church architecture, its triconchial or simple apses, decoration and pillar heads etc. It must be remembered, however, that only a small part of the original number of buildings have survived. The iconoclastic and destructive attitude of the Abbasid and Fatimid Moslems towards Christian monuments has entailed the almost total disappearance of mud brick structures, leaving in many cases only their foundations to be studied. The better preserved churches surviving till the present time were entirely or partly built of stone. Such is the case in Babylon (Cairo), Hermopolis (El-Ashmunein), Antinoe (Deir Abu Hennis), Deir el-Abyad and Deir el-Ahmar (Sohag). Also here, only the parts constructed of stone have been preserved and the rest have been destroyed.

The very large number of late Roman or early Byzantine composite pillars or Coptic pillars with protuberances (Fig. 4) re–used in the mosques indicates the large number of churches which originally existed in the cities and in the countryside.

It has already been mentioned, above, that there may be some Coptic influences on Christian culture in general.

Ancient Egyptian used a sign ☥ , *ankh*, to define the abstract notion of "life". It was taken over by the Copts by the analogy to the Cross, the "life-giving wood", alluding to the Calvary. This symbol is still in use among the Copts but not in the Byzantine world. However, we have several monuments from Egypt where this symbol is used as *muftakh el-haiyat*, or the "key of life". It was not introduced into Byzantine iconography. It was wrongly interpreted as a "tau"-cross, superimposed by a laurel which in turn included another cross or a figure

[7] R. Holthoer, "Kopterna och deras konst – nationellt eller provinsialbysantinskt", *Bysans och Norden. Akta för Nordiska forskarkursen i bysantinsk konstvetenskap 1986* [Acta Univ. Upsaliensis, Figura N.S., 23] (Uppsala–Stockholm, 1989), 167–190.
[8] Ibid., 188 f., Figs. 16 and 17.

Fig. 12. An example of a complicated pictorial language in Coptic icon-painting. The Golgotha motif is rather rare in general. In this case it receives clearly unorthodox details, angels, prophets, officers and inhabitants of Hell. The sun, Helios, and the moon, Selene, as well as the Virgin Mary to the left and St John to the right are, however, common features in similar Byzantine representations. Date uncertain. Deir es-Suriani, Wadi en-Natrun.

of the Saviour. The "tau"–cross does not occur very often unless it is together with the laurel. Could this be regarded as a Coptic heritage?

Monasticism is an indisputable contribution of Egypt to Europe. We still remember the founders of anchoretic and monastic communities, St Paul of Thebes, St Anthony the Great and St Pachomius the Great. A monastery of Egyptian style was soon established on the Lerins Islands outside Marseilles. Here St Patrick, the patron–saint of Ireland, spent his years as a novice. The rules of St Pachomius inspired St Basil of Caesarea (330–379), who visited Egypt, to elaborate them for use in the monasteries of the entire Byzantine Empire.

An astonishing detail is that there seem to be cultural influences between Coptic Egypt and Russia. Dr. N. A. Mešsjerkij, having studied the personal names occurring in the Russian synaxaria, came to the conclusion that there

И вшéдъ къ нéй а́нгелъ, рече́: ра́дꙋйсѧ, благода́тнаѧ: Госпо́дь съ Тобо́ю, благослове́нна Ты́ въ жена́хъ.—И роди́ Сы́на Своего́ пе́рвенца, и пови́тъ Его́, и положи́ Его́ въ ꙗ́слехъ.

Сла́ва въ вы́шнихъ Бо́гꙋ, и на земли́ ми́ръ, во челове́цѣхъ благоволе́ніе.—Во Іорда́нѣ креща́ющꙋсѧ Тебѣ́, Го́споди, тро́йческое ꙗви́сѧ поклоне́ніе.

[Ⲁ]ⲡⲁ ⲃⲓ̈ⲕⲧⲱⲣ ⲇⲉ
ⲁϥⲁⲡⲁⲛⲧⲁ ⲉⲡ
ⲇⲓ̈ⲁ̄ⲃⲟⲗⲟⲥ ⲉϥⲟ ⲙ̄
ⲡⲉⲥⲙⲟⲧ ⲛⲟⲩⲙⲁ
ⲧⲟⲓ̈ · ⲡⲉϫⲁϥ
ⲛⲁϥ ϫⲉ ⲉⲕⲛⲁⲉϣ
ⲙⲉⲣ ⲡⲉⲓ̈ⲛⲟϭ ⲁ̄ⲡⲉ
ⲑⲟⲟⲩ ⲉ̄ⲃⲟⲗ ϣⲁ
ⲁ ϣ ⲛⲟⲩϭⲉⲓ̈ϣ ·

Fig. 13. In the Cyrillic alphabet there are three (or four) letters possibly derived from the Coptic (Sahidic) alphabet. They are: ч < ϥ, ж < ϫ and ш / щ < ϣ. Of these the three last mentioned ones correspond to the same sound values for Ž and for Š/ŠJ. A Cyrillic text and a Coptic text are here depicted to illustrate the similarities.

have been almost forty Coptic names, such as Ammon, Anuvij, Varsanofij, Patermufij, Onufrij, Pahomij and Sennufrij, used mostly by monks but also by commoners.[9] These names are rarely used in the proper Byzantine cultural sphere.

The alphabet of the Copts is remarkably reminiscent of the Cyrillic one introduced by St Cyril (827–869) for the Bulgars in the year 863. The special, newly introduced signs not only stand for the shape, but in many cases also for some sound values (Fig. 13). If this connection is established, the heritage of the Copts encompasses all nations using the Cyrillic alphabet, starting with the Bulgarians and Russians and ending with the Mongols in the Far East.

Finally, the word *sauna* in Finnish. The dictionaries render no etymology for this Finnish word. In Coptic saints' *vitae* it occurs in the form ⲥⲓⲁⲩⲛⲉ, or ⲥⲉⲁⲩⲛⲉ and is used to represent a clean room where the ambulating doctors had their reception. It contained a big oven, into which the martyrs where threatened to be thrown. These possible contacts have been discussed earlier with Assistant Professor Maria Widnäs at the University of Helsinki. In 1972 her sudden death interrupted further investigations of these matters. Neither being a Slavist nor a Finno-Ugric scholar, I restrict myself only to giving some indications in the hope that the experts will make further investigations leading to more definite conclusions.

[9] N. A. Mešsjerkij, "Egipetskie imena v slavjano-russkih mesjatseslovah", *J. F. Champollion i dešifrovka egipetskih ieroglifov* (Moscow, 1979), 117–128.

Syrian Monophysite Propaganda in the Fifth to Seventh Centuries

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Between the fifth and the seventh centuries the Syrians of the Byzantine Empire had undergone two major changes concerning on the one hand their religious identification and on the other their political allegiance. The former change—the embracing of Monophysitism and gradual separation from the Orthodoxy of the Empire—was a protracted process, whereas the latter took place over quite a short period in 636/7, after which date the political map of the region in which they lived would have to be redrawn.

It took about sixty years before the Syrians realized that this new situation was practically irreversible and that the Muslim Arabs had come to stay.[1] This consciousness, depressing in itself, together with other factors of a social and economic nature caused some of them to convert to Islam. Certainly, biological survival and the economic standard of individuals might in this way be secured, but only at the cost of their changed identity—as members of the new Islamic nation (*'umma*) with Arabic as the vernacular.

Yet the Syrians did not disappear as a group. The sociological mechanisms which enabled them to survive have not been fully explained so far. Although this is not the place for such an explanation, I would like to stress one factor which should not be overlooked in a future discussion of the phenomenon, and this is the fact that the Syrians—Western Syrians (or Monophysites, or Jacobites) to be exact, for it is on that group I intend to concentrate—had already been accustomed to live as a dissident group before the Arabs conquered their lands. What is meant here is that the internal coherence of the group, or its reliance upon its own strength (rather than upon a hypothetical Byzantine reconquista), was higher than if this social and mental preparation had never taken place.

The Syriac-speaking community's position as a dissident group within the Roman-Byzantine Empire had its sources in the condemnation of Monophysitism at the Fourth Ecumenical Council held at Chalcedon in AD 451. For at least one and a half centuries before it the Syrians, together with other nationalities of the Empire, had enjoyed "equal opportunity" for social advancement and access to power. However, after 451 the situation changed. Many of the national exponents of the Syriac-speaking population who (for reasons beyond the scope of the present paper) had embraced Monophysitism began to alienate themselves

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[1] The appearance of Syriac apocalyptic in the end of the seventh century is a symptom of this consciousness; G. J. Reinink, "Ps.–Methodius: a concept of history in response to the rise of Islam", in *The Byzantine and Early Islamic Near East: Problems in the Literary Source Material (Papers of the First Workshop on Late Antiquity and Early Islam)*, ed. by Av. Cameron and L. I. Conrad (Princeton, NJ, 1992), 149-187.

Aspects of Late Antiquity and Early Byzantium, ed. L. Rydén, J. O. Rosenqvist, Swedish Research Institute in Istanbul, Transactions, Vol. 4 (Stockholm, 1993)

57

from what in the capital of the Empire would become Orthodoxy. At the beginning of this process we do not see any concrete "national" borders, only religious ones—as both Greek- and Syriac-speaking theologians could be found on either side of the controversy—, but a century later the pattern becomes more clear: the Syrians, as well as some other Eastern non-Greek speaking nationalities, have become predominantly Monophysite. Although the hope for the reunification of the Church was not lost during the next two centuries, the process of the separation of the Syrians continued and after the Muslim Arab conquest it became a *fait accompli*.[2]

Now the question arises: How did all this come about?

In fact, the political aspect of the process is relatively well known. We know about the imperial policy, which was not always consistent: some emperors more or less overtly supported the dissidents (like Anastasius I and the Empress Theodora), some (like Zeno, Justin II) worked for a common platform on which both parties could agree, and some (like Justin I, Tiberius II, Maurice) launched persecutions against the dissidents. We also know a certain amount about the theological development of the Monophysite doctrine itself, and also about attempts to bring unity to the Church, for instance through discussions between theologians of both sides. Moreover the organizational aspect of the nascent Monophysite church, that is, its ecclesiastical hierarchy's coming into being, may be said to be relatively well known to us.[3]

What seems to be less known, however, is, so to speak, the psycho-sociological dimension of the process, or in other words an answer to this question: how did an initially small group of theologians disappointed with the policy of the imperial Church towards the Monophysites manage to draw the whole nation with them and to bring it in opposition to the ecclesiastical establishment of the Empire even though previously hardly any animosity had existed between the Syrians and the Empire as such?[4]

I would like to launch a hypothesis that the Syrian Monophysite élite succeeded in all this thanks *inter alia* to skilful propaganda aimed at key groups within the Syriac–speaking society which resulted in the conversion of most of the population to Monophysitism and in its being motivated for the cause to the point of enduring persecutions. In this way the Jacobites developed a pattern of behaviour which turned out to be beneficial to the group also after Syria-Mesopotamia was lost to Christendom.

The usual channel of this propaganda must have been oral, yet quite a lot seems to have been put in writing. The instances of this propaganda occur either as fragments of texts which as a whole are not necessarily propagandistic, or as separate pieces devoted either mostly or totally to propagandistic aims. We find it in texts of the most varying literary genres: in epistolography, hagiography, historiography, and in monastic literature—stories about the spiritual achievements of monks.

Let us review some more or less representative examples. We may start with a text directed against Nestorius, who was treated by the Monophysites as the arch-enemy.

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[2] Cf. W. H. C. Frend, "The Monophysites and the Transition between the Ancient World and the Middle Ages", in *Convegno Internazionale: Passaggio dal mondo antico al medio evo da Teodosio a San Gregorio Magno (Roma, 25-28 maggio 1977)* [Atti dei convegni Lincei, 45] (Rome, 1980), 339-365.

[3] Let it suffice to mention here *Das Konzil von Chalkedon: Geschichte und Gegenwart*, I-II (Würzburg, 1951-53), especially the articles by J. Lebon, "La christologie du monophysisme syrien" (I, 425-580), R. Haacke, "Die kaiserliche Politik in den Auseinandersetzungen um Chalkedon (451-553)" (II, 95-177), A. van Roey, "Les débuts de l'Église jacobite" (II, 339-360); and W. H. C. Frend, *The Rise of the Monophysite Movement: chapters in the history of the Church in the fifth and sixth centuries* (Cambridge, 1972).

[4] Frend, "The Monophysites" (above, note 2), 344-46, 364.

The Story of Nestorius

Thus in the "Story of Nestorius the wicked" (*šarbā hānā 'al Nesṭor raššī'ā*),[5] unfortunately of unknown age, it is recounted that even before his Christological views became known some signs had appeared foreboding his bad intentions. We are told that "there was a custom among the Greeks, that whenever a bishop celebrated the Eucharist, the Holy Spirit would descend in the form of an eagle" (278,9-11) upon the elements (*qurbānā*), probably during the epiclesis, and stay in the church visible to everybody. However the eagle did not appear when Nestorius celebrated the Eucharistic liturgy. The emperor and the empress, who were present in the church, asked the new bishop why it was so. Nestorius answered that it was due to the sins of either the emperor or the empress, but on their assertion of innocence the patriarch, assuming a sort of anti-feministic attitude, said pointing to the empress: "Just as the Holy Spirit did not descend upon the Eucharist because of this woman, so I do not believe that God was born from a woman, but merely a man of like passions as ours" (280,5-7).

Then, we are told, Nestorius paid a prostitute to show herself naked before the emperor and all the fathers gathered at the Council of Ephesus. When she did so Nestorius exclaimed pointing to her: "Woe to me if I approve and believe that from this place God rose" (282,11 f.). But John Chrysostom (otherwise known to have been dead about twenty-five years before the council in Ephesus gathered) stepped forward, covered the womb of the woman and said: "I do believe in and confess God who rose (*dnaḥ*) and was born from a place like this, and a womb like this. Only this one is defiled with sins, whereas Mary, who is the Mother of God the Word, was a virgin, pure and holy" (280,13–16). Then Mary holding the Child appeared above the heads of the fathers, and said thrice: "O! John Chrysostom, speak, speak!", and also: "You have testified very well indeed, speaking so, O John Chrysostom!" Nestorius "of shameful name" (*da-škir šmā*), "the accursed and wicked dog" (*kalbā liṭā w-raššī'ā*), as he is called here (284,8) and elsewhere in the text, was then struck by God's wrath to the effect that his tongue fell out for seven spans (*zartä*) down, and thus remained swollen and thick on his breast—a sign to frighten everybody who saw it. The *Story* ends appropriately with the curse: "Let everybody who does not confess and say that Mary is God's mother be accursed and anathematized" (286,4).[6]

A Letter of Philoxenus of Mabbug

If this *Story of Nestorius* is anonymous, many other pieces of Monophysite propagandistic literature are not. We know for instance a *Letter* written *c*. AD 500 by Philoxenus of Mabbug († 523) *to the monks of the Monastery of Beth Gawgal*.[7] The monastery lay in Tur Abdin, within Persian territory, near Nisibis, which was the stronghold of Nestorianism, and the awareness of this fact may have mitigated Philoxenus's language.[8] The *Letter* contains an exposition of

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[5] E. Goeller, "Eine jakobitische 'vita' des Nestorius", *OrChr* 1 (1901), 276-287.

[6] This piece of Syriac Monophysite propaganda reached Ethiopia, and is retold in a reworked form by a fifteenth–century author, George of Sägla: *Giyorgis di Saglā, Il Libro del Mistero* (*Maṣḥafa Mesṭir*), ed. Y. Beyene [CSCO 515, 516, Scr. Aethiopici 89, 90] (Louvain, 1990), text, pp. 72-74, Italian transl. p. 44 f. I am obliged to Dr Ezra Gebremedhin for drawing my attention to this text. The relevant fragment was also published in a French translation by G. Colin, "La notice sur Nestorius du *Maṣḥafa Mesṭir* de George de Saglā (traduction)", *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 50 (1984), 111 f. Generally on Syriac influences in this country: W. Witakowski, "Syrian Influences in Ethiopian Culture", *OrSuec* 38-39 (1989-90), 191-202.

[7] A. de Halleux, "La deuxième lettre de Philoxène aux monastères du Beit Gaugal", *Le Muséon* 96 (1983), 5-79.

[8] Ibid., p. 14.

some christological problems preceded by a presentation of the heresiological tradition from which Nestorianism grew.[9] Philoxenus names five stages of this wicked teaching of "Two Sons" (an expression often used in the propaganda as a reference to Dyophysitism), drawing its origin from the Jews. Philoxenus distinguishes between the unbelieving Jews who crucified Christ and those who accepted Christ but did so according to "the weak thinking of the body" (32,9 f.), that is accepting him as somebody chosen by God, standing even higher than Moses, as a man bringing universal salvation (Moses having been sent only to the Jews—to rescue them from Egypt), but still only as a man, not as God (ch. 7, p. 32 f.).

This teaching, although discarded by the Apostles, reappeared—according to Philoxenus—in the views of Ebion (p. 37,12; here the bishop of Mabbug creates an unhistorical figure of the forefather of a Judaeo-Christian sect, the Ebionites, the name of which comes from Hebrew: 'ebhyōnīm, 'poor people'). Then, writes Philoxenus, "the same bitter root sprouted again" (37,15) with one Artemon. The subsequent stages of this tradition were the views of Paul of Samosata (p. 38, ch. 14), and Theodore of Mopsuestia (ch. 15). Finally, we learn that "one of many who tasted this root, namely Nestorius, ... became pregnant and gave birth to some bizarre thoughts, like bitter fruits" (39,1-4).

What is important here from the propagandistic point of view is, besides the hostile tone, the connecting of Nestorianism with the Jews, which to the readers of the *Letter* must have seemed compromising. Whether a real historical connection between the Judaeo-Christian views and Nestorianism[10] exists or not is of lesser importance here since it does not change the intention and function of the view presented in the *Letter*. In other words: propaganda does not need to be totally false in order to be mere propaganda.

Simeon of Beth Arsham

A line of argumentation similar to Philoxenus's was taken by Simeon of Beth Arsham († c. 540), the champion of Monophysitism in Persian territory, in his *Letter on BarSauma and the Heresy of the Nestorians showing where it took its beginning and when it came to the land of the Persians*,[11] written some time at the beginning of the sixth century.[12] According to the *Letter* "the Nestorian error had its beginning with Annas and Caiaphas, the Jewish archpriests" (346,9-11), for whom Jesus was no more than a man. Unlike Philoxenus, Simeon is less of a theologian and more of a polemist and therefore even when using similar arguments as the former he pushes them *à outrance* to gain maximal force. From his way of putting it his readers could feel no sympathy at all with a doctrine originating with the people who had put Christ to death. Then, when the point has been scored, Simeon can go on to admit that "some Jews at that time called Christ 'just', 'a prophet', 'a good teacher' and even 'the king of Israel'" (346,16-347,1), but of course never 'God'.

In general the parentage of Nestorianism according to Simeon's *Letter* is quite similar to that indicated by Philoxenus, and follows this line: the Jews - Simon Magus - Ebion - Artemon - Paul of Samosata. The latter, says Simeon (347), lived in the epoch when the Roman emperors were pagans and thus he could blas-

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[9] A. de Halleux, "Die Genealogie des Nestorianismus nach der frühmonophysitischen Theologie", *OrChr* 66 (1982), 1-14.

[10] Ibid., p. 14; see also S. Hidal, "Den antiokeniska exegetikskolan och judisk skriftlärdom", in *Judendom och kristendom under de första århundradena: Nordisk patristikerprojekt 1982-85*, vol. 2 (Stavanger, 1986), 199; B. Drewery, "Antiochien, II", *TRE* 3 (1978), 107.

[11] J. S. Assemanus, *Bibliotheca Orientalis Clementino-Vaticana ...*, I (Rome, 1719), 346-358.

[12] A. de Halleux, *Philoxène de Mabbog: sa vie, ses écrits, sa théologie* (Louvain, 1963), 4, note 9.

pheme without fear of the emperor, saying for instance about Mary that she had given birth to a mere (*šḥimā*, 347,24) man, Jesus, and that she did not remain a virgin. Paul—still according to Simeon of Beth Arsham—even said about himself: "If I want I can be Christ too, because I and Christ are of one (scil. the same) nature (*kyānā*)" (347,28 f.). This could never be taken as anything but a blasphemy.

The heresy was then continued by Diodorus of Tarsus and after him by Theodore of Mopsuestia. The latter confirmed and extended it by saying that Christ had been "a man, created and made, mortal, 'con-natural' with us (*bar--kyānan*), the Son by grace, and the temple of the Eternal Son" (348,22-24). Feeling perhaps that these terms could be used in a more technical theological discussion, but are not sufficiently strong for his purpose, Simeon adds that all Theodore's writings were "full of other *blasphemies* (*guddāfaw[hy]*)" (348,25).

Then Simeon continues his history of the heresy by demonstrating subsequent stages: after Nestorius Theodoret of Cyrrhus, and then Ibas who, as Simeon puts it, "extended the blasphemy" saying: "I Ibas do not envy Christ who became (*hwā*) God, in that he was called God, because he was a man like myself and of the same nature as I" (350,13-16).[13]

Thereafter Simeon starts to list the teachers of the School of Edessa, the institution of learning well-known for continuing the theological line of the School of Antioch, i.e. in the Nestorian tradition. If no new hideous heretical invention could be attributed to them, at least they could be called names. So Acacius, we learn, was called in the School "The Strangler of Farthings" (*ḥāneq lūmä*, 351,8), perhaps a hint about his exaggerated parsimony; BarSauma - "The Bather in the Nests" (*sāḥä bēt qennä*, 352,2), perhaps implying a disregard for cleanliness; Ma'na of Ardashir - "The Drinker of Ashes" (*šātä qeṭmā*, 352,3), unfortunately the point here is unclear today, at least to the present writer; John of Garmaq - "The Young Pig" (*ḥānūṣā*, 352,6); whereas of 'Abshoṭa of Nineveh we learn that his nickname was not sufficiently decent to be put in writing (352,5). Fair enough, we may think, for this may at least suggest that the names were real, being simply of the type any pupils would give their teachers in any school in any epoch. But the nicknames Simeon lists apply only to the Nestorian teachers, for we learn that there were others in the School who did not agree with Ibas, such as Papa of Beth Lapat, or Aksenaya of Tahel in Beth Garmay—the future bishop of Mabbug, Philoxenus—, but we are not told the nicknames of any of them.

Emotionally conditioned in this way the reader will agree that the destruction of the School of the Persians in Edessa by the Emperor Zeno and Cyrus, the bishop of the city (in 489), an event related thereafter (353,11-13), was the only right thing to do. It turns out however that most of the professors of the School moved to Persia, where they became bishops of important sees. In the list of Nestorian bishops which follows, it is in fact only one, BarSauma, who is given a pejorative epithet: *msayybā*, 'unclean, abominable' (353,20). In accordance with the emotions so far evoked in readers the *Letter* ends with proper anathemas against all who adhere to the opinions presented in its previous parts, which are simply repeated here in quite a sober tone.

Simeon of Beth Arsham was known to his contemporaries as "The Persian Debater", a nickname he earned by participating in numerous theological disputes with Nestorians in Persia. We know about this from Simeon's *vita* written

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[13] This accusation was used against Ibas as early as at the Second Council of Ephesus in 449: *Akten der ephesinischen Synode vom Jahre 449*, ed. J. Flemming [Abhandlungen der Kgl. Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen, Phil.-hist. Kl., N.F., 15] (Göttingen, 1917), 41; W. C. H. Frend, *The Rise* (above, note 3), 31.

by John of Ephesus, his younger contemporary (507-586), which is preserved in the latter's collection of the *Lives of the Eastern Saints*.[14] In Simeon's *vita* the author has given an example of such debate, no doubt following Simeon's own account. The Nestorian adversary in the debate is the catholicus Babai (497-502), whereas a Persian *marzban* is the judge. Babai opens the discussion with the statement about Jesus, "a certain man like us, who was born from a woman as we were, and upon whom the Word of God came down on account of his uprightness and his righteousness" (p. 148). Simeon asks Babai whether that man has a natural father and this seems to be a fatal question for the Nestorians, for the catholicus and all his bishops "closed their lips and hung their heads and could not utter a word." Urged by the *marzban* "they confessed that he was born from God and without copulation", whereupon the Persian judge concludes: "Therefore, if God was his father, his son also is God", and adds: "By the words that you have spoken you have refuted and condemned yourself" (p. 151).

The technique used here (and elsewhere, as we shall see) reveals a higher level of propagandistic sophistication. The reader's impression is enhanced by the fact that the actual message is put into the mouth of the "impartial" judge who by his not being a Christian has, so to speak, no "vested interests" in either of the sides. Yet he gives sentence in favour of the Monophysites and puts the Nestorians to shame—certainly the reader's impression that the Monophysite side is right and the Nestorian wrong would be enhanced by such an "objective" verdict. In fact John of Ephesus, the author of the *vita*, regards it as the work of providence and expresses his understanding of it as follows: "... this was brought about by divine dispensation, that even through the heathen the true mystery of the right faith might be proclaimed" (147). John seems to be an example of a perfect recipient of this sort of propaganda: intelligent enough to detect what the inventor of the trick wished him to detect, but nothing more.

John Rufus, Plerophories

Let us turn now to the anti-Chalcedonian propaganda and to one of its best and most comprehensive examples: the *Plerophories*, a composition adequately described in the subtitle as: "the testimonies and revelations given by God to the saints (i.e. monks) about the heresy of two natures, and (about) the transgression which took place in Chalcedon." The *Plerophories* were written in Greek during the pontificate of Severus of Antioch (512-518) by John Rufus who was bishop of Mayuma (near Gaza) after Peter the Iberian, from whom, we may add, many of the *plerophories* originate. They were written during Anastasius's reign, which for the Monophysites was the period of highest advancement within the structure of the imperial Church, and thus reflect their triumphant mood. The work, the Greek original of which is lost, is known only from a Syriac translation and fragments in Coptic.[15]

The first story or *plerophory* starts with Nestorius: since the Monophysites would always treat the Chalcedonian doctrine as pure Nestorianism, his presence here is propagandistically important: it sets the whole collection in a proper context. So we are told that after refusing to glorify Mary, as being the mother of

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[14] *John of Ephesus, Lives of the Eastern Saints*, ed. E. W. Brooks [PO 17:1 = fasc. 82] (Paris, 1923; repr. Turnhout, 1983), 137-158 (Syr. and Engl.).

[15] *Jean Rufus, évêque de Maïouma, Plérophories: témoignages et révélations contre le concile de Chalcédoine*. Version syr. et trad. franç. ed. F. Nau [PO 8:1 = fasc. 36] (Paris, 1911; repr. Turnhout, 1982); on the fragments in Coptic see T. Orlandi, "John of Mayuma", *The Coptic Encyclopedia*, ed. A. S. Atiya, vol. 5 (New York, 1991), 1366; see also a recent article by L. Perrone, "Dissenso dottrinale e propaganda visionaria: le *Pleroforie* di Giovanni di Maiuma", *Augustinianum* 29 (1989), 451-495.

one who, though the tool of God, was a mere man, Nestorius was possessed by a demon with symptoms such as spasms in his face and right hand (p. 12).

Then, in the fourth "testimony", we are told that long before Chalcedon one Abba Pelagius, who was a prophet, had a vision (*pler.* 4, p. 15 f.) which caused him to cry through his tears: "Juvenal, Juvenal, Juvenal!" Asked by a deacon what was the object of his vision, he explained that Juvenal (and he meant of course the future patriarch of Jerusalem, who would accept the faith of Chalcedon), whom they had seen being carried in triumph by monks and clerics, would later be carried by Roman soldiers and by demons.

The same Pelagius had another vision (*pler.* 3, p. 14 f.) during which he exclaimed three times through his tears: "*Woe to Pulcheria!*" To a surprised *synkellos* he explained that the sister of the Emperor Theodosius, who had long remained a virgin, would "break her vows of purity made to Christ and marry Marcian, to take part in his imperial power and also in his wickedness and his future tortures" (15,1-3). Since Marcian and Pulcheria, who had summoned the Council of Chalcedon, were held responsible by the Monophysites for the evils resulting from it, they became natural targets of the propaganda.

The latter "testimony and prophecy" is not the only one directed against Marcian: in another *plerophory* (7; p. 19) one Abba Elladius prophecies the persecution which will strike the Church, not at the hands of pagans but of "the wicked emperor named Marcian, who will induce the bishops to subscribe to (the opinion) that it was not God who was crucified" (19,3), but the man Jesus. Only the bishop of Alexandria, Dioscorus, will not submit and will therefore be persecuted and exiled. In order totally to convince the readers about the tragedy caused to the Church by the Council, Abba Elladius ends his prophecy with the prediction that Antichrist will come soon thereafter (20,5 f.).

In another prophecy (*pler.* 10) we are told that on the day of the coronation of the "wicked Marcian darkness and gloom, like those of Egypt, will suddenly cover the whole earth and sand will descend from the sky" (25,4 f.).

The council itself is announced to another monk, Abba Innocent of Pamphylia, by a demon. He orders the monk to fall on his knees and pay homage to him. When the monk refuses and rebukes him, the demon does depart, but asks the monk why he would not comply, for he, the demon, would organize a synod and all the bishops gathered there would pay homage (*nesgdūn*) to him. (*pler.* 9; 21 f.).

Also one Abba Andrew had a vision (*pler.* 14) in which he saw bishops throwing a beautiful child into a burning furnace. After three days the child left the furnace unharmed, and, not quite surprisingly, Abba Andrew recognized the Lord in the child, who explained to the monk that the bishops crucified Him for the second time and wished to deprive him of His glory. "That was true— comments the author—, for the Nestorians (i.e. the Chalcedonians) are sick with the sickness of the Jews saying that He who was crucified was a simple (*šḥimā*) man and not incarnate God" (30,11 f.).

Sometimes the propagandists use "proofs" (*taḥwitā*) of ordeal character, as for instance in *plerophories* 46 and 47. In the former we are told of monks of Pamphylia who were divided into two groups: those adhering to local bishops who were pro-Chalcedonian, and the "Orthodox", i.e. the Monophysites. Finally they decided to make a "trial of fire" (*nesyōnā b-nūrā,* 98,7), that is to put copies of the two credos—the Chalcedonian and the *Encyclical Letter* (of Basiliscus) with the text of the Monophysite Credo—on to a fire. Whereas the Chalcedonian document burned, the *Encyclical Letter* did not, and the proof convinced the oppponent monks to the point that, as we are told, "they distanced themselves from the error and, filled with zeal of fear of God, joined the Orthodox (i.e. Monophysite) fold" (98,13).

The following *plerophory* (47) is the story of a similar trial of fire, in which, in order to achieve a better effect, the competing parts are presented as not equal: the Chalcedonian side is represented by the priest of a village and the Monophysite - by a peasant who is ignorant (*hedyōṭā* < ἰδιώτης, 99,5) but zealous (*ṭannānā*) in faith. In order to prove whose faith is correct the two had to put their hands in fire. It goes without saying that while the priest's hand burnt up, the peasant's remained uninjured. John Rufus heard this story from a monk, Basilides, who knew the confessor personally and whose words John Rufus quotes: "I was glad together with him, rejoiced and received assurance (*'eštarrar*)" (100,6). This comment of the joyful monk seems to present in a nutshell the psychological effect which this propaganda aimed at achieving: having read or listened to such "proofs" the people should rejoice and be confirmed in their faith.

Sometimes the message of the propaganda is given in a pure form, as in the case of one Abba Romanus (*pler.* 25) who by ascetic practices and prayers asked God for "a clear and certain" (*glītā wa-d-lā puššākā*, 61,3) answer as to whether the Council of Chalcedon was right or wrong. And so in the middle of the day he saw a large letter descending from the sky on which it was written: "Those in Chalcedon apostatized and deserted (the faith). Woe to them and anathema!" (61,5).

Let us come back for a moment to Nestorius, for in another *plerophory* (33) it is said that while in exile (in Thebais) he learned about the Chalcedonian decisions and reacted with joy: "What? So after all I was not wrong saying that Christ was not God, and Mary not the Mother of God!" (76,6). But then, according to the pattern of the punishment of the blasphemers, which is already known to us, his tongue fell out of his mouth; he bit it and died—only one day before an imperial courier would arrive, supposedly to release him from his exile.

Here we find how the anti-Chalcedonian point was intensified by putting an allegedly Chalcedonian utterance in the mouth of a person or a group already sufficiently corrupt in the eyes of a potential reader of the propaganda. By association with a corrupt person (like Nestorius), or a group (like Jews), the utterance would be utterly compromised and made absurd.

Other Examples

In connection with a group of such character the same trick can be found in the *Letter* of the Jews to the Emperor Marcian,[16] which is extant in an anti-Chalcedonian dossier[17] as well as in the *Chronicle* of Ps.-Dionysius,[18] and that of Michael the Syrian.[19] In the *Letter* the Jews ask the emperor to be freed from the accusation of having crucified God. Since now, they argue, the Council of Chalcedon has established that it was not God who was crucified but a man, they wish to be acquitted from their alleged guilt. In the eyes of an average Monophy-

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[16] L. Van Rompay, "A Letter of the Jews to the Emperor Marcian Concerning the Council of Chalcedon", *Orientalia Lovaniensia Periodica* 12 (1981), 215-224.

[17] A. de Halleux, "Un fragment philoxénien inédit de polémique anti-chalcédonienne", in *Von Kanaan bis Kerala: Festschrift für J. P. M. van der Ploeg*, ed. W. C. Delsman (Kevelaer, 1982), 431 f.

[18] *Incerti auctoris Chronicon Pseudo-Dionysianum vulgo dictum*, I, ed. I.-B. Chabot [CSCO SS, 3:2] (Paris, 1927), 226,10-19; transl. Lovanii 1949, 168.

[19] *Chronique de Michel le Syrien patriarche jacobite d'Antioche (1166-1199)*, éd. et trad. en franç. par J.-B. Chabot (Paris, 1899-1924), Syriac text p. 218, col. c, 10-24, transl. II, p. 91.

site reader the claim must look preposterous, and this is exactly the effect which the anonymous author of this counterfeit letter wanted to achieve.

We take one more example of this clever method from hagiography, namely from the martyrdom of the Najranite Christians put to death by the Jewish king of Himyar in 523.[20] The martyrdom is narrated in a letter of the already mentioned Simeon of Beth Arsham.[21] It has a complicated literary box-within-a-box structure, and contains *inter alia* a letter of the persecuting Jewish king to the Arab king of Hira, in which the former boasts of his achievements in the persecution of the Christians in his kingdom, and urges the latter to do the same in Hira. The letter of the Jewish king (known from elsewhere as Yūsuf DhuNuwās or Masruq) is in itself a hagiographical forgery, but contains a second layer of fabrication consisting of Monophysite propaganda. In the king's speech to the Christians (given just before he put them to death) we read the following: "Lo! Now the Romans recognize that Christ was a man, why do you go astray after Him? Ye surely are not better than the Romans?" and further: "We are not demanding of you that you deny God, the maker of heaven and earth, nor that you worship the sun or the moon or other luminous bodies, or any creature but that you deny Jesus, He who considered himself as God, and say only that He is man and not God." Disappointed, Masruq continues: "... but they were not willing to deny Christ, nor were they willing to say that He was man; but in their foolishness they were saying: 'He is God, and the son of the Merciful.' And they elected to die for Him."[22]

From the propagandistic point of view this is a masterpiece. What Masruq wants the Najranite Christians to do is simply to accept the alleged Roman, i.e. Chalcedonian, credo, which has been simplified to the point of equivalence with the Jewish opinion concerning Jesus, but which in this way is "exposed" and discredited. Simultaneously the refusal of the martyrs to do so is used as an example of the ideal behaviour with which the author wants to imbue his readers.

Let these examples suffice as evidence of the nature of Monophysite propaganda.[23] We have seen texts of varying character, both anonymous and attributed, the latter coming sometimes from the pen of important and renowned Monophysite theologians like Philoxenus of Mabbug. The texts reviewed range from the sheer slandering of adversaries to something approaching theologico-historical description. The picture we have obtained shows quite a well–developed and broad front of propagandistic arguments aimed at a diverse public ranging from the uneducated—who could be influenced by straightforward slander, by calling the adversaries names and even by simple emotionally loaded language—, to a more sophisticated and demanding group, which had to be influenced by a more delicate, more qualified argumentation, containing a good deal of truth, but seldom nothing but the truth and never the whole truth.

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[20] Its propagandistic character was first noted by L. Van Rompay, "The Martyrs of Najran: some remarks on the nature of the sources", in *Studia Paolo Naster oblata*, II: *Orientalia antiqua*, ed. J. Quaegebeur [Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta, 13] (Leuven, 1982), 301-309.

[21] Ed. and transl. by I. Guidi, "La lettera di Simeone di Beth-Arsam sopra i martiri omeriti", *Atti della Reale Accademia dei Lincei: Memorie di Classe di scienze morali, storiche e filologiche*, ser. 3, vol. 7 (1881), 471-515.

[22] The translation is by A. Jeffery, "Christianity in South Arabia", *The Moslem World* 36 (1946), 205.

[23] For other examples of Syriac texts of similar character see C. C. Torrey, "The Letters of Simeon the Stylite", *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 20 (1899), 253-276 (one of his letters to the Emperor Leo in favour of Monophysitism is a forgery); P. Harb, "Lettre de Philoxène de Mabbūg au phylarque Abū Ya'fūr de Hīrtā de Bētna'man", *Melto* 3 (1967), 183-222; F. Haase, "Patriarch Dioskur I. von Alexandria nach monophysitischen Quellen", *Kirchengeschichtliche Abhandlungen* 6 (Breslau, 1908), 141-233; cf. however the approach of W. H. C. Frend, "Popular religion and Christological controversy in the fifth century", *Studies in Church History* 8 (1972), 19-29, for whom the *Plerophories* and some of the other texts treated above are manifestations of popular religion.

One thing seems to be certain: this propaganda was not intended to be read by the actual adversary—Nestorians, Chalcedonians or Julianists,[24] whatever the case might be. It is hardly probable that any Nestorian or Chalcedonian, even a simple-minded one, could ever be convinced that his belief was wrong just by hearing or reading about some opposing monk's lamentations or by the image of Nestorius's swollen tongue. Such arguments would rather have a counter-productive effect, confirming for the Nestorian or Chalcedonian readers that their Monophysite adversaries were really wicked people, since they dared to use such expressions or tell such stories about persons the readers esteemed and cherished. Also their theologians would certainly know better concerning the origins of their own confession, and would certainly disagree with its being derived from the Jews.

This propaganda must therefore have been aimed at its own side—at those who had already opted for Monophysitism, or at a group of not *yet* quite convinced sympathisers, who would respond more positively to the propagandistic efforts,[25] or, lastly, at those indifferent to theological issues, who were to be indoctrinated, so to speak, in the desired direction in order not to be laid open to similar efforts from the other side.

It seems also that monks formed the most important group for which the propaganda was produced. In the epoch concerned the socio-political importance of the monks was growing strong.[26] Both as individual so-called "holy men" as well as in groups, they could influence the development of any religious idea (or any other kind of idea, for that matter). The decisive factors were on the one hand that they could draw the people with them towards any goal they liked, and on the other hand, that as followers of this or that theological opinion they could appear at a synod where theological issues were to be discussed and by their support (not necessarily expressed only in the oral exchange of arguments) for either of the opinions were able to influence the result of the synod. Therefore they could in no way be ignored; on the contrary, any part wishing to spread a religious idea had to gain their support.

Finally we should ask whether this propaganda succeeded.

One measure among others of the success of propaganda is whether it is taken not as propaganda but as the truth. Usually it is impossible to know whether this was achieved, unless it be by pointing to the results, in this case to the preservation of the Syrian Monophysites as a nation. That would however be begging the question since this is exactly the hypothesis we have advanced. Yet we do have another sort of evidence, namely the presence of propagandistic material in historiography. If we find, say, the *Plerophories* of John Rufus copied by a historian such as Michael the Syrian,[27] otherwise known as a very learned and quite intelligent author, then we can understand that an average Jacobite would not have any suspicion whatsoever about the veracity of such a text.

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[24] The propaganda against this sect (within Monophysitism itself) used other arguments: the episcopal line of the Julianists was allegedly non-canonical; see R. Draguet, "Pièces de polémique antijulianiste, 3: L'ordination frauduleuse des julianistes", *Le Muséon* 54 (1941), 59-89.
[25] Cf. B. L. Smith, "Propaganda", in *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*, ed. D. L. Sills, vol. 12 (New York, 1968), 586.
[26] On the rôle of the monks in the epoch concerned, see H. Bacht, "Die Rolle des orientalischen Mönchtums in den kirchenpolitischen Auseinandersetzungen um Chalkedon (431-519)", in *Das Konzil von Chalkedon* (above, note 3), II, 193-314.
[27] *Chronique de Michel* (above, note 19), Syriac text, 203-215, transl., II, 69-88.

Armenia in Change and Crisis: The Byzantine Impact

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Introduction

Due to its geographical position, Armenia has always been exposed to strong cross cultural influences, and tribes and peoples have passed through or settled in its territory. During most of its history Armenia has been an object of rivalry between eastern and western empires, at first Romans against Parthians and Sasanians, then Byzantines against Sasanians and Arabs.

When first attested as an ethnic and political entity in the 6th century BC Armenia belongs to the Persian Empire, and the names of the land *Armina-* and the people *Arminiya-* occur in the Old Persian cuneiform inscriptions of the Achaemenian dynasty. An early western witness is the geographer Hekataios of Miletus (*c.* 500 BC) who reports the presence of *Armenoi* in eastern Anatolia.

The origins of the Armenians are obscure, and different theories have been proposed to explain their emergence as an ethnic group in the borderlands between eastern Asia Minor and Transcaucasus. What we know for sure is that the Armenians speak an Indo-European language attested only from the 5th century AD. The most plausible explanation of their origin is still the one already suggested by Herodotus, who reported that the Armenian were Phrygian settlers (ἐόντες Φρυγῶν ἄποικοι), and that the Phrygians came from Europe, where they had lived close to the Macedonians (*Historiae* VII, 73). Hekataios notes that the Armenians speak like the Phrygians (Fragm. 9). However, this cannot be the whole ethnogenesis. In all probability it was not until the assimilation of the Indo-European incomers with the autochthonous population, be they Hurrians, Chatti or Urartians, that Armenians emerged as a distinct ethnic group.

Long-lasting cultural influences from Iran in the east and from the Graeco-Roman world in the west made their way into Armenia from an early period. Since Achaemenian times the Iranian impact exerted itself strongly in the fields of politics, social organization, language and religion. In the Hellenistic era Greek art and architecture, education and life style spread deep into Armenia and the ruling classes were largely Hellenized.

The Christianization of Armenia during the 4th and 5th centuries added another important element to the Armenian identity. During long periods of oppression by foreign powers and isolation from western culture Christianity in its national Armenian form became, and still is, a strong bond linking the Armenians together. With the introduction of Christianity they felt a strong need to write in their own language. In the early 5th century an Armenian alphabet was invented by a learned cleric named Mashtots', later also known as Mesrop. Intensive translation activity developed, combined with the creation of original works in Armenian. The 5th century stands out as the formative period of Armenian literacy.

The Christianization of Armenia coincided with the formation of the Byzan-

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67

tine Empire, which from then on constituted a decisive factor in the political and cultural history of the Armenians. The aim of this paper is to focus on two crucial periods in the history of Armenia and try to assess the relationship with Byzantium through the mirror of two literary works reflecting great changes in the situation of the Armenians. The first work deals with the introduction of Christianity into Armenia in the 4th century, and has become the standard version of that event for generations of Armenians down to the present. The other work ponders over the expansion of Islam and the Arabs in the 7th century and the fate of the Byzantine Empire, and represents the apocalyptic tradition of Armenia.

Agathangelos and the Christianization of Armenia

The main description of the way in which Christianity became the official religion of Armenia is contained in an extensive compilation called Agathangelos. The popularity of the work is proved by the various recensions in Greek, Coptic, Arabic, Georgian, Karshuni, and Ethiopian which all directly or by the intermediary of the Greek translation depend on the above-mentioned Armenian text. However, a different version of Agathangelos preserved in some Greek and Arabic manuscripts reveals the existence of another early Armenian text independent of the final Armenian redaction from the middle of the 5th century.

Agathangelos is an odd mixture of history, hagiography, novel, preaching and catechism. The narrative structure running through the first part of Agathangelos recalls both the plot of a Hellenistic novel and the conventions of a saint's Life. The work opens with a description of the collapse of the Parthian dynasty in Iran and the wars of the Armenian king Khosrov, himself of Parthian descent, against the first Sasanian ruler Artashir. This account serves the purpose of introducing the family background of the hero in Agathangelos, who is Gregory, the apostle of the Armenians. The Persian king, being unable to resist the invanding forces of Khosrov, seeks another way to get rid of his enemy. He orders a Parthian nobleman named Anak to join the retinue of Khosrov and then try to kill him at a propitious moment. The evil plan is successful, the Armenian king is murdered, but the assassin is slain by Armenians loyal to Khosrov. Anak's two infant sons are rescued, however, and one of them, Gregory, is brought over into "Greek territory", where he gets a Christian education. The Persian king now captures Armenia, but the supporters of the Armenian cause manage to bring Khosrov's son Tirdat into safety and take him to the emperor in Rome.

The two main characters in Agathangelos have thus been introduced. When Tirdat has later regained the Armenian throne with Roman support, Gregory returns to Armenia and enters the service of Tirdat in order to atone for his father's crime. Upon his refusal to worship the goddess Anahit, Gregory's identity is disclosed and he is tortured in twelve different ways, any one of which would kill any other person involved. Still refusing to renounce his Christian faith Gregory is cast into the deep pit of the fortress of Artashat and left to die. At this point another theme is introduced. We learn that the Emperor Diocletian is seeking a wife and for that purpose painters are sent out to all parts of his Empire in order to paint portraits of the most beautiful women they can find. In Rome they come upon a convent of nuns led by the pious abbess Gaiane. Having entered the convent by force they find there her young protégée Rhipsime. Struck by the beauty of the girl they paint her portrait and send it to the emperor. When Diocletian sees it, "he went mad with licentious desire", as the text puts it. Before the men of Diocletian arrive, the nuns flee to hide in "a distant land", which happens to be Armenia. They are discovered in the capital Valarshapat by

the Armenians, who have received an edict from the emperor demanding help in searching for Christian refugees. Rhipsime is brought to the court and King Tirdat falls in love at once. She successfully resists his attempts to have sex with her and after several hours of wrestling Rhipsime walks out of the palace, leaving the defeated Tirdat behind, completely exhausted. Gaiane, Rhipsime and the other nuns are put to death and became the first martyrs of Armenia.

The punishment of the Lord now falls upon Tirdat, his household and the populace of the capital; they are possessed by demons and go mad; Tirdat is changed into the "form of a wallowing pig". After having received a vision, the king's sister claims that Gregory is still alive in his pit. Nobody believes her, but a nobleman is sent to Artashat to inquire about the matter. It turns out that Gregory has miraculously survived the fifteen years in the pit. He is brought to Valarshapat and Tirdat together with the noblemen approach him and, kneeling, beg him to forgive their crimes and to heal them. Only after having listened to an extremely long sermon—filling more than half of the present compilation—are the king, his magnates and the populace of the capital finally cured, and they accept Christianity. In a vision Gregory sees the conversion of all Armenia prefigured with Christ descending from heaven in a stream of light and marking the place where the future main cathedral of Armenia will be built. The place was—and still is—called Edjmiadzin, meaning where "the Only-Begotten descended".

Now Gregory, the king and the noblemen launch a campaign to destroy the pagan shrines of Armenia. After having successfully eradicated the pagan temples and chased away the hords of screaming demons, Tirdat summons a council in Valarshapat where it is decided to have Gregory consecrated as "high priest" of the Armenians, so that he can give them baptism. Gregory is sent with a large following to Caesarea in Cappadocia, where he is ordained by Archbishop Leontios. The king, his household and a great number of the people are shortly afterwards baptised in the River Euphrates. Gregory now develops intensive missionary activity, travelling around in Armenia, building churches and installing priests, many of them sons of the pagan priests. The work ends with a description of Gregory's last years, including a mention of the Council of Nicaea, as well as the visit of Gregory and Tirdat to the Emperor Constantine in Rome where they receive great honours.

Who was the author and when was the work composed? The prologue relates that King Tirdat ordered a certain Agathangelos to write a history of the conversion of Armenia to Christianity. The name Agathangelos is of course Greek and appears to be a suitable pseudonym for someone writing about the good message which came to the Armenians with Christianity. The introduction presents Agathangelos as an eyewitness, and the work should consequently have been written not long after the events described, that is to say in the first half of the 4th century. However, this can by no means be the case, since Agathangelos presupposes the Armenian script and a Bible translation made in the early 5th century. In addition, he models his description of Gregory on the work of Koriun, who wrote a biography of Mashtots shortly after 440. On the other hand, Agathangelos cannot be later than the history of Lazar from the end of the 5th century, in which the contents of Agathangelos is summarized. The dramatic events of the Armenian revolt against Iran in 450–451 are also reflected in Agathangelos' History.[1] The available evidence thus points to a redaction of Agathangelos in the second half of the 5th century, probably around 460.[2]

[1] Cf. *Agathangelos' History of the Armenians*. Transl. and comm. by R. W. Thomson (Albany, 1976), xc.
[2] Thomson, op. cit.

The true author reveals nevertheless something of his cultural background when he denotes himself in the prologue as

"one Agathangelos from the great city of Roma, trained in the arts of the ancients, proficient in Latin and Greek and not unskilled in literary composition" (Agath. Hist. § 12).[3]

According to the fiction of the narrative the expression "the great city of Rome" refers to ancient Rome, but it certainly has the underlying meaning of Constantinople. At the time of the compilation of Agathangelos (*c.* 460) Constantinople had been the capital of the Byzantine Empire for over a hundred years. The words *hrom* and *hromk'* in old Armenian, as *hrōm* and *hrōmāyik* in Middle Iranian, are used with reference to Rome and Romans, as well as Byzantium and Byzantines. We have to imagine the author as a learned Armenian cleric who has lived in Constantinople and is well versed in Greek and in the art of writing. At the same time he is clearly aware of the pre-Christian heritage of the Armenians. Agathangelos is the oldest and most reliable source for the names and the holy places of the deities worshipped in Armenia before the introduction of Christianity. In the vision where Gregory sees the conversion of all Armenia the author of Agathangelos has made use of pre-Christian imagery which alludes to the importance of Edjmiadzin as a pre-Christian cult place.[4]

As it was a composition commissioned by the royal family of Armenia, it is not surprising to find the History of Agathangelos tendentious in many respects. The glorification of the ruling Arsacid dynasty is apparent, and their political perspectives are dominant. The tendency in Agathangelos with respect to the conversion of Armenia is clear. Armenia was converted from the west under Roman-Byzantine influence and Cappadocia was the main gate of the Greek and Christian impact. The missionary work is ascribed to one man, Gregory the Illuminator, who had strong connections with Cappadocia. The conversion of Armenia appears as a sudden and thorough change affecting the whole country. We know that in reality Christianization was a complex process stretching over centuries and in which the first influences came from Syria, particularly Edessa. Faustos, whose History predates that of Agathangelos, is historically more correct in emphasizing the role played by the Syriac-speaking Christians in northern Mesopotamia for the Christianization of Armenia. It should be noted that some central religious terms in Armenian are borrowings from Syriac, e.g. the word for priest, *k'ahanay,* and the terms for saviour and save, *prk'ic'* and *prk'em*, are derived from Syriac *kahen* "priest" and *peraq* "save" respectively. The baptismal ritual of the Armenian church, of which Agathangelos is the earliest attestation, is modelled on that of the Syrian Church and not on that of the Byzantine Church.[5]

The changes which transformed Armenia into a Christian state are in Agathangelos viewed from one dominant perspective, that of a western Byzantine origin for Armenian Christianity. The official version of the conversion history thus emphasizes the connections of Armenia with the Byzantine sphere. This emphasis can also be understood as a reaction to the tragic events immediately preceding the compilation of Agathangelos. In 387 Armenia had been divided between

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[3] English citations from *Agathangelos' History* are taken from Thomson's edition as is the division of the work into paragraphs.
[4] See A. Hultgård, "Change and Continuity in the Religion of Ancient Armenia with Particular Reference to the Vision of St. Gregory (Agathangelos §§ 731–755)", *Classical Armenian Culture*, ed. by T. J. Samuelian [Armenian Texts and Studies, 4] (University Park, Pa., 1982), 8–26.
[5] Cf. G. Winkler, "Our Present Knowledge of the History of Agat'angelos and its Oriental Versions", *Revue des Études Arméniennes* N.S. 14 (1980), 125–141; id., *Das armenische Initiationsrituale. Entwicklungsgeschichtliche und liturgievergleichende Untersuchung der Quellen des 3. bis 10. Jahrhunderts* [Orientalia Christiana Analecta, 217] (Rome, 1982).

Byzantium and Iran into two vassal states, the larger part of the country coming under Iranian dominance. The rule of the Sasanian kings gradually became more oppressive and culminated during Yazdagird II, who tried to impose Zoroastrianism as the official religion of Armenia. The revolt of the Armenians under their leader Vardan Mamikonian was crushed in the battle of Avarayr in 451, but the strong Armenian resistance made the Sasanian king refrain from further attempts at forcing the Armenians to abandon Christianity. The memory of Avarayr where Vardan Mamikonian and the flower of the nobility fell on the battlefield is still celebrated by Armenians all over the world.

The Vision of Enoch and the Expansion of the Arabs and Islam

The rejection of the Council of Chalcedon in 451 by the Armenian Church as by other Oriental churches implied an increasing pressure from Byzantium on the Armenians to accept the Greek Orthodox form of Christianity. Through persuasion, threats, persecutions and mass deportations Byzantium tried to force the Armenians into the Orthodox faith. On the other hand Armenians came to play an increasingly important role in the administration and defence of the Byzantine Empire.[6] As to foreign policy the Byzantine Empire gradually strengthened its position towards Sasanian Iran, and the wars of the 6th century finally led to a new division of Armenia in 591. This time Byzantium received the greater part.

A new and more difficult situation for the Armenians and in a wider perspective also for Byzantium was the expansion of the Arabs and of Islam in the 7th century. The struggle between West and East to control Armenia continued, albeit with a new actor, the Ummayyid and Abbasid khalifates. Arab armies made several incursions between 640 and 652, and the Armenians were forced to acknowledge the suzerainty of the khalif in spite of strong resistance. From this time and two centuries onwards Armenia became the scene of repeated invasions of Byzantine and Arab armies which ravaged the country and made the population suffer sorely. The division of the feudal nobility, the *nakharar*, some preferring Byzantine, others Arab suzerainty, turned out to be the greatest weakness of the Armenians in trying to preserve their unity and independence.

Sometime during this troubled period an apocalypse entitled "The Vision of Enoch the Just" (*tesil enovkay ardaroyn*) was composed. The work is preserved only in Armenian, and the problem of its origin is still open. It clearly belongs to the genre of historical apocalypses in which events in the past are cast in the future and put into the mouth of a pseudonymous prophet. The main theme is the vicissitudes of the Roman-Byzantine Empire and the eschatological role that the empire will play. The transition to eschatology proper, which describes the end of world history, is usually discernible without difficulty and constitutes an important aid in determining the time of the final redaction of a particular apocalypse.

Although its origins lie in early Jewish and Christian apocalypticism, the genre of historical apocalypses received a fresh impetus through the composition of the Syriac apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius in the 7th century. The Greek redaction, which in all probability was made shortly after the original work had been composed, paved the way for a spread and development of historical apocalypses

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[6] The role of the Armenians in the Byzantine Empire has been described by P. Charanis, *The Armenians in the Byzantine Empire* (Lisbon, 1963), emphasizing the importance of the Armenians in the imperial army.

all over the Byzantine Empire.[7] In later reworkings of the first Greek adaptation, the apocalypse was attributed to Daniel, and under the name "Visions of Daniel" several versions of this work circulated in the Greek-speaking world.

The Vision of Enoch is part of that Byzantine apocalyptic tradition and it may be dated between the first Greek redaction of the Pseudo-Methodius apocalypse and the Visions of Daniel. The vision of Enoch has come down to us in three manuscripts, one being the important Erevan MS 1500, an encyclopedic collection of the Old and New Testaments, apocrypha and Church Fathers. The text of this manuscript was reproduced in the collection of Armenian apocrypha published in 1896 by Yovsep'eanc', but no critical edition has appeared. An English translation is offered by Issaverdens.[8] The Vision of Enoch is briefly commented upon in a publication of Milik in 1970,[9] but no detailed treatment of the apocalypse has so far been published. The present author is preparing a critical edition together with an English translation and a detailed commentary.

The preamble of the Vision of Enoch has no clear counterpart in other medieval apocalypses:

"A man appeared to me in front of the mountain of Lebanon at the sixth hour of the day and his appearance was like flames of fire. And he said to me: 'You man, consider what I tell you, that which I have heard from the Lord of hosts'. As for me, I was standing the whole night long before the eastern side of the mountain in front of the angel with my face turned to the sea of the west".

The revelatory situation recalls that of the Jewish apocalypse of Enoch (1 Enoch) where Enoch receives his vision at the mountain of Hermon in the borderland between northernmost Palestine and southern Lebanon. The title of the Armenian apocalypse seems to derive from the association of the introduction cited and the setting of the Jewish apocalypse of Enoch. Curiously enough the identity of the visionary is nowhere disclosed in the text proper of the Armenian composition, the name Enoch being found only in the title.

The contents of the apocalypse are briefly as follows. Turned with his face towards the "sea of the west", the visionary sees an eagle with eight wings and four heads soaring high above the sea and looking towards the south. A storm blows up, the waves run high and beat against the wings of the eagle. Suddenly a terrifying dragon appears who threatens to devour the eagle. The eagle cries to the Most High and flees towards the north. The dragon devours all nations until he cannot find more for his belly. When the time of the dragon is consumed, the eagle returns standing on a chariot drawn by white horses, and attacks the dragon, who dwells in a place called the Heap of ashes. The dragon is defeated and the Heap of ashes is destroyed. Now another type of imagery is introduced. Six kings sit down each on his own throne, three are ugly and black, two are handsome and white, the sixth looks sad, mourning for his wife and children. All six kings distrust the dragon saying, "fire shall come out of that dragon and burn the earth".

Here the vision ends, but its explanation is given to the visionary in much detail by the interpreting angel. The eagle, we are told, represents the "king of the Romans and the Greeks", who in the beginning prevails over the "peoples of the South". The storm and the waves which threaten the eagle are the rising power of the southern race, the sons of Ishmael, and the devouring dragon represents the rage of the southern people, which is kindled against the earth. The return of the

[7] Cf. P. J. Alexander, *The Byzantine Apocalyptic Tradition.* Ed. with an Introduction by D. deF. Abrahamse (Berkeley – Los Angeles – London, 1985).

[8] J. Issaverdens, *The Uncanonical Writings of the Old Testament found in the Armenian MSS. of the Library of St. Lazarus* (Venice, 1934).

[9] J. T. Milik, *The Books of Enoch. Aramaic Fragments of Qumran Cave 4* (Oxford, 1976), 116–117.

eagle with the white horses is the advance of the king of the North and his Roman army to destroy the sons of Ishmael. They will be crushed and dispersed, and they will suffer two-fold because of the iniquities they committed against the people of God. The three ugly and black men denote the time of the southern people and their tribal princes who will rule for ninety-six years. The increasing calamities of this period consist in a deterioration of nature and mankind. The suppression of the dominion of the southern people and the period of peace and happiness which follws are represented by the two handsome and white kings. Under the first king the Romans will smite the southern people first on sea and then six times on land and chase the remnant back to their own land. Afterwards this king will live peacefully for twelve years, and will be succeeded by another peaceful king, whose "name is Phouviv, which is translated Tiber" (*anun nora p'uviv, or t'argmani tiber*).[10] In the days of these kings there shall be peace, prosperity and fertility. The sixth king who was mourning for his wife and children represents the end of the world. A king of low birth shall arise and the empire shall be divided into ten kingdoms and all sorts of calamities shall strike the world: famine, drought, incessant wars. The rivers dwindle, the sea stinks, animals perish and in the towns men fall down and die without anybody to bury them. Gold and silver will be despised and, almost as the worst thing, "even the beauty of women will be disdained". The fire which shall come out from the dragon in the end means the appearance of Antichrist, here called "the Rebel" (*apstambn*), who will tyrannize the world for 1 265 days and kill the saints of the Most High. After this a pious king shall arise in Rome and fight against the Rebel. The Lord will cast fire upon the Rebel and the sinners and the fire shall consume all the earth, but the servants of the Most High shall be spared. After seven days the sign of the cross shall appear in the East. The Lord shall come with his angels to reward the faithful, but punish the impious. The Rebel and his followers will be definitely eliminated. The just and the angels will rejoice and praise God for ever and ever.

Compared to this vision proper, the explanation is far more detailed and also introduces material not found in the vision. The description of the end of time is much more developed than would be expected from the corresponding part of the vision itself. The explanation reproduces the traditional eschatological doctrine of medieval Christianity. However, the passages announcing the signs of the end are an exception. Here an original note can be heard, which now and then echoes Iranian and Indian prophecies.

For our present theme the historical part of the apocalypse is more important. In general apocalypses are created to serve as consolation in times of trouble and crisis; they reflect the hopes and despairs of contemporaries in concrete historical situations.[11] Some features of the text indicate that the apocalypse was composed in the eastern marginal areas of the Byzantine Empire, where the population was more exposed to invasions, wars and political instability. The preamble clearly points to the Christian Orient, and the absence of any reference to Constantinople, characteristic of most Byzantine apocalypses, is striking. The designation of Anti-Christ as the "Rebel" may point to Armenia or Syria. A detailed analysis of the Vision of Enoch may shed more light on its localization, but this has to await further study.

The central event underlying the historical part is clearly the rise and expansion of the Arabs in the 7th century. Although the description in the Vision of Enoch is not so vivid and close to the events as in the Syriac apocalypse of

[10] The Jerusalem manuscript reads *p'usvev* for the name of the king.
[11] Cf. P. J. Alexander, "Medieval Apocalypses as Historical Sources", *American Historical Review* 73 (1968), 998–1000 and Abrahamse in Alexander, *The Byzantine Apocalyptic Tradition*.

Pseudo-Methodius,[12] it nevertheless fits in best with the perspectives of an eastern Christian milieu, where the threat of Arab invasions was constantly felt. Such was the situation of the Armenians and Syriac-speaking Christians of northern Mesopotamia in the 7th and 8th centuries. The Vision of Enoch refers to the loss of Byzantine territories through the Arab conquests in the 7th century in stating that the Empire of the Romans will diminish because of its own faults. There are, as it seems, more precise allusions to Byzantine victories. The apocalypse tells us that the Romans will smite the Ishmaelites first at sea and that the Lord will cause a storm to rise that shall drown them. Again the Romans shall defeat the Ishmaelites six times on land and drive the remnant away to their own country. This may be an allusion to the events of 677 when the Arab fleet, having failed to conquer Constantinople, perished off the southern coast of Asia Minor in a heavy storm, coming also under attack by the Byzantine fleet. At the same time the forces of Byzantium repelled the Arab armies from the territories of Asia Minor. However, the events are repeated in the early 8th century. The Arabs advance and threaten Constantinople on land as well as at sea. The capital is defended with great energy by the Emperor Leo III. In 718 the Arabs retire, and the Byzantine victory of Acroinon in 740 put an end to Arab invasions into central Byzantine territory for a long time. The two series of events might have been compressed into one in the perspective of the apocalypse as is often the case with apocalyptic prophecies. It may be tempting to see, as Milik suggests,[13] in the ninetysix years during which the southern people shall dominate, a reference to the period from the Islamic hidjra in 622 up to the victory of the Byzantines in 718.

The Vision of Enoch clearly shows the role played by Byzantium in the apocalyptic traditions of Armenia. Even if the Byzantine rule was felt to be oppressive in some respects, it was nonetheless a Christian empire to which the Armenians looked for eschatological victory.

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[12] Cf. Alexander, *The Byzantine Apocalyptic Tradition*, 36–51.
[13] Milik, *The Books of Enoch*, 116.

The Icon and its Origin in Graeco-Roman Portraiture

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The subject of this paper is the type of icon which represents a saint. This is the original icon; feast-day icons and other icons illustrating episodes in the lives of Christ and the Saints appear later.[1] These later icons are thematically connected with narrative scenes in manuscripts and church decorations such as frescoes and mosaics.

Archetype and Image

The icon has its roots in the Graeco-Roman portrait (in Antiquity, *eikôn* is the Greek term for portrait, as no specific word existed), and its significance lies in its power to represent the archetype directly, since the icon retains something of the archetype.[2] This idea does not pertain solely to the icon; it characterizes the ancient portrait in general. As an example of the concept of identity between image and model, we may mention a story told by Pausanias: this concerns a statue of the Thasian athlete Theagenes, which was treated like the man himself, to the extent of being prosecuted for murder. Or we might refer to the conduct of the inhabitants of Syracuse when, during their struggle against Carthage (344–339 BC), they had to melt down portrait statues in order to utilize the metal: they dared not do so until they had "prosecuted" every statue and found it "guilty".[3]

The identity between model and image did not necessarily reside in physical similarity between the two: to the Greeks it seems, in fact, to have been more important that the image should convincingly represent the category to which the model belonged (for instance, general, poet or philosopher).

The early Roman portraits are also types rather than individuals. In what may be termed the precursors of the Roman portrait—Etruscan cinerary urns of the seventh-sixth century BC with human heads—,[4] the link between image and archetype is forged by direct contact. The heads on the urns bear no resemblance to the deceased, but represent them by virtue of enclosing their ashes.

As Roman portraiture developed, the image's resemblance to the archetype became more important. This trend reached its climax in the "verism" which

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[1] H. Torp, *The Integrating System of Proportion in Byzantine Art* [*ActaIRNorv*, 4] (Rome, 1984), 114.
[2] For the relationship between archetype and icon, see Torp, *Integrating System*, 114–120; id., "Icons and Icon-Painters", *Arte Medievale* 2 (1984), 18–19.
[3] Pausanias, *Description of Greece*, 6,11; Plutarch, *Timoleon*, 24; Dion of Prusa, *Or.* 37,21.
[4] For these, see esp. R. D. Gempeler, *Die etruskischen Kanopen: Herstellung, Typologie, Entwicklungsgeschichte* (Einsiedeln, 1974).

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75

characterized the style of the late Republic. The *imagines maiorum*, wax masks of the ancestors, must have been highly realistic. They were worn in the funerary processions of members of the aristocracy, and care was taken that those who wore them—either members of the family or professional actors—resembled the deceased in height and build.[5] They were, moreover, dressed in the official costume of the deceased, and sat on their curule chairs during the funerary oration. In these funerary ceremonies two ways of representation are combined: one was represented either by one's clothes (or some other characteristic, personal object which one had touched) or by one's image. But these means of representation were not confined to the dead, but could be employed also by the living: a magistrate might, for instance, be represented by his curule chair, or an emperor by his image.

The best documented examples of identity between image and model occur in imperial portraiture, the most spectacular manifestation being the destruction of images following a *damnatio memoriae*. According to Methodius of Olympos, who wrote around AD 300, imperial portraits must be honoured because of the form they held.[6] This conception of the imperial form may explain why marble busts and statues of emperors like Caligula, Nero and Domitian could be recut into portraits of their successors—even the most unworthy emperor's image possessed the imperial form, and could thus be transformed into another emperor's likeness.[7] Because there was something of the form and the essence of the archetype not only in the image, but also in the name, the *damnatio memoriae* is something more than merely ridding oneself of reminiscences of an unpopular ruler—it is his very presence in images and inscriptions that is being obliterated.

In his account of the end of Vitellus, Dio Cassius gives an interesting instance of identical treatment being meted out to image and archetype: the wounded emperor *and* his statues are dragged off to prison.[8] When Tiberius' favourite Sejanus fell from power, the mob pulled down his statues as though they were inflicting outrage on the man himself, and thus he became a spectator to the fate which he was to suffer.[9] Sejanus' body was denied burial and was thrown into the Tiber; just as his body disappeared from the face of the earth, his portraits were obliterated by being melted down. Frying-pans and chamber-pots were made from the metal—a final insult.[10]

Conversely, positive treatment may be conferred on the image by those who wish to honour the archetype. When the Roman people thought that Nero was going to restore his repudiated wife Octavia to favour, they fetched her statues (which had been put aside when she went into exile), carried them on their shoulders, strewed them with flowers and erected them in central places, such as the Forum and temples.[11] As in the case of Sejanus, the image is accorded precisely the treatment the archetype is thought to merit.

The more or less pronounced identity of the image to the archetype is ultimate-

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[5] Polybius, 5,53–54.
[6] E. Kitzinger, "The Cult of Images before Iconoclasm", *DOP* 8 (1954), 91, n. 20.
[7] For reworked portraits, see esp. H. Blanck, *Wiederverwendung alter Statuen als Ehrendenkmäler bei Griechen und Römern* (Rome, 1969); H. Jucker, "Julisch-claudische Kaiser- und Prinzenporträts als 'Palimpseste' ", *JdI* 96 (1981), 236–316; M. Bergmann and P. Zanker, " 'Damnatio memoriae'. Umarbeitete Nero- und Domitiansporträts", *JdI* 96 (1981), 317–412. Apart from the political and practical reasons given as explanations for the practice of reworking imperial portraits, one may wonder if the idea of the immutable imperial form alluded to by Methodius could have been operative. This is especially relevant with regard to Late Antiquity, when reworked portraits generally did not represent emperors who had suffered *damnatio memoriae*.
[8] Dio Cassius, 64,21,2.
[9] Dio Cassius, 58,11,3.
[10] Juvenal, *Satire* 10, 58–64.
[11] Tacitus, *Ann.* 14,6.

ly based on a magic which is as old as art itself. The intensity of the concept, however, varies from one epoch—and one art form—to another. It is particularly strongly marked in the Graeco-Roman portrait and its offshoot, the icon. Here it manifests itself not only in the extreme cases of a public personage falling into disgrace, when his portraits were either destroyed or concealed; it is apparent also in daily life, in the sense that improper conduct towards the image is equal to an insult to the archetype. To beat a slave, or to change one's clothes, in the presence of the emperor's portrait, could lead to capital punishment.[12] During the reign of Caracalla, some men were executed for having urinated in a place where imperial portraits had been erected.[13] Just as an emperor must not seek the company of *inhonesti*, so his portrait must be spared the proximity of their images; according to the Codex of Theodosius, statues of actors, charioteers and the like must not be erected near an imperial statue.[14] This is reminiscent of the traditional conduct accorded to icons by Orthodox Christians: undressing, sexual activities, smoking and other unseemly acts are not tolerated in their presence, and one must behave towards them with decency and decorum. They are not worshipped, but honoured and venerated, in much the same manner as the images of ancestors, rulers, benefactors and other deserving persons were honoured in Antiquity.

Being portrayed was in itself a mark of honour, but the substance or the degree of honour accorded to the portrait varied with the importance of the model. Most people's portraits were venerated only by those who were close to them, and generally by such means as garlands, flowers or incense. These private acts of veneration formed part of the *pietas* towards ancestors, patrons and benefactors.

Lycomedes' Portrait of St John

In the apocryphal Acts of St John we find an example of spontaneous veneration of a popular character. This is an early source (the text is generally dated to the second century), and therefore interesting as testimony to the veneration of images among the early Christians.

The text tells us that St John the Evangelist lodges in the house of Lycomedes and Cleopatra, whom he has raised from the dead. Lycomedes invites a friend, a painter, and asks him to paint a portrait of St John without the latter being aware of this. The painter, able to study St John from an adjacent room, paints his portrait in the course of a few days, and presents it to Lycomedes, who places it in his bedroom and honours it with garlands. St John, who happens to enter the room, sees the garlanded picture of an old man, with candles and an altar before it. He reproaches Lycomedes for having lapsed into idolatrous practices, but Lycomedes replies: "My only God is he who raised me up from death with my wife: but if, next to that God, it be right that the men who have benefited us should be called gods—it is thou, father, whom I have had painted in that portrait, whom I crown and love and reverence as having become my good guide."

St John, who is unfamiliar with portraits, realizes that he himself is depicted

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[12] Suetonius, *Tiberius*, 58.
[13] SHA, *Caracalla*, 5,7–8.
[14] Cod. Theod. 15,17,12. P. Brown, *A Dark Age Crisis: Aspects of the Iconoclastic Controversy, Society and the Holy in Late Antiquity* (London, 1982), 267, takes the prohibition to mean that the imperial portraits were in danger of being obscured by the images of these popular heroes of the day if the latters' statues were put up next to them, but R. H. W. Stichel, *Die römische Kaiserstatue am Ausgang der Antike* (Rome, 1982), 6, n. 16, has correctly pointed out that such proximity was seen as an affront to the imperial majesty.

only when he has been given a mirror, so that he may compare his own features to those of the image. He then exhorts Lycomedes to become a painter, one who instead of pigments uses fear of God, learning, charity and other virtues that may grace his soul. He does not approve of his painted portrait, which is merely his worldly image, "a dead picture of the dead".[15]

This narrative contains the arguments of the iconoclasts as well as those of the iconodules: on the one hand, we have a man who sees the image as something negative, a delusion, the subject of concealed idolatry; on the other, we have a man who regards the icon in a positive light. For Lycomedes it is natural to love and venerate the image of his guide and benefactor in the same way as he loves and venerates the man himself.

Why has Lycomedes a portrait painted of St John, and honours it, all the while benefactor and recipient are living under the same roof? Since Lycomedes sees St John daily, one would not expect him to need his painted features as well. By his actions Lycomedes shows that he regards St John as his patron, and himself as client, since having one's patron's portrait painted was a common way of honouring him. Groups of clients who were connected to a patron through family ties or membership in an association often collaborated in erecting a statue in honour of their patron; however, simple, private images like that ordered by Lycomedes from his friend the painter must also have been widespread.

St John is not, of course, a patron in the legal sense of the word, but rather an *euergetês*, a benefactor, which is in fact one of the terms used by Lycomedes to describe him. The ancient Roman republican hereditary relationship between patron and client was in the Imperial period gradually replaced by a relationship to one or more benefactors, whom one could, to some extent, choose. It is often difficult to discern between "patron" and "benefactor" or, rather, the benefactor aspect becomes more prominent in the relationship between patron and client.

The custom of having one's benefactor's portrait made lingers on until fairly late. The Acts of the younger St Symeon the Stylite give an account of a man who, in the Saint's lifetime, had been healed by him. He placed an image of St Symeon above the door of his workshop, and adorned it with curtains and candles to make the honour all the greater.[16] In the Acts of St Symeon the traditional Graeco-Roman belief in the identity between archetype and image is still alive. The Saint heals people by means of *eulogiae*, small tokens made from water and clay from the area around his column. They bear his image, and he says to a priest who is about to take one with him in the hope of healing his son: "... when you see our image, it is us you see".[17]

The Importance of the Patron-Client Relationship

St John and St Symeon are benefactors rather than patrons, while other saints, especially bishops, retained more of the character proper to traditional patrons. The importance of the patron–client relationship to the development of the institutions of the early Church forms the subject of studies by scholars such as Peter Brown and, in Scandinavia, Hugo Montgomery. In his works on the martyrdom of St Cyprian of Carthage, the latter rightly stresses the patron aspect

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[15] *Acts of St John*, 26–29.

[16] Kitzinger, "Cult of Images", 97. The date of the *Acts of St Symeon* has been disputed. They have often been thought to have been written shortly after the saint's death in 592, but more recently a date in the second half of the 7th century has been suggested: G. Vikan, "Art, Medicine and Magic in Early Byzantium", *DOP* 38 (1984), 67, n. 18.

[17] Ch. 23, quoted by Vikan, "Art, Medicine and Magic", 73.

of the Saint's sacrifice.[18] The relationship between patron and client was sacred, and surpassed even that between blood relations; the topos of the patron who sacrifices himself for his client is not unknown in Roman history and literature.

In a case such as that of St Cyprian, the patron–client relationship must have lasted throughout his earthly life and into the next, for contrary to the secular patrons, who were useless after death, the Christian patron assumed a new and greater importance. One of the most important functions of a patron was that of advocating his clients' cause in court. Since Christianity was a forbidden religion during the first centuries of its existence, Christian patrons carried less weight in legal matters than patrons of officially recognized associations, but after death their importance as advocates before God's tribunal increased greatly. The many allusions in Christian hagiography to the saints' support and intercession show how important this aspect was.

A man who could not gain his right by ordinary means in the secular sphere could seek refuge with the emperor's image. This concept, *ad statuam confugere*, existed at least up to the age of Justinian.[19] If one had no personal patron, one could approach the image of the patron of all, the emperor, to have one's case tried before a court. It was natural for people who were used to such ideas to seek refuge with the images of their sanctified patrons when they needed a defensor before the heavenly tribunal. Successful patrons, who came to people's aid from the heavenly sphere, could attract large numbers of clients after their death. Some of the most important reasons for the increasing veneration of saints (and especially martyrs, who were thought to go directly to Heaven) in Late Antiquity are doubtless to be found in their exercise of the heavenly patronate.

The Veneration of Icons an Early Phenomenon

Contrary to the commonly accepted view, according to which the veneration of icons did not become widespread until rather late,[20] I consider it to be an early phenomenon, which appeared spontaneously among non–Jewish Christians. Their background made it natural for them to venerate the images of patrons and benefactors, as implied by the second–century Acts of St John. The images of these groups were not the only ones to be venerated—spiritual teachers, such as pagan philosophers and poets were honoured in the same way.

Marcus Aurelius, we are told, had golden portraits of his teachers of philosophy in his *lararium*, and he showed their tombs his respect by personal visits, sacrifices and flowers.[21] Alexander Severus had two *lararia*, one large and one small. In the smaller one he had images of philosophers and poets, such as Cicero and Vergil, together with those of Achilles and other famous men, but he had given the place of honour in the large *lararium* to Alexander the Great, as one of the benefactors of mankind. There he also had the images of deified emperors (but only a selection of the best of them, as emphasized in the text) and other benefactors, the images of his ancestors, and "*animae sanctiores*" like Apollonius of Tyana, Orpheus, Abraham and Christ.[22] It was in the large *lararium* that Alexander Severus performed his morning prayers.

[18] H. Montgomery, "Saint Cyprian's Postponed Martyrdom. A Study of Motives", *Symbolae Osloenses* 63 (1988), 123–132; id., "St. Cyprian's Secular Heritage", in *Studies in Ancient History and Numismatics presented to R. Thomsen* (Aarhus, 1988), 214–223.

[19] Kitzinger, "Cult of Images", 122–123.

[20] Kitzinger, "Cult of Images"; Av. Cameron, "Images of Authority: Élites and Icons in Late Sixth-Century Byzantium", *Byzantium and the Classical Tradition*, ed. by M. Mullett and R. Scott (Birmingham, 1981), 205–234; Brown, *A Dark Age Crisis*. The 6th century is generally regarded as the crucial period.

[21] SHA, *Marcus Aurelius*, 5–6.

[22] SHA, *Severus Alexander*, 29,3; 31,4.

This account of the *lararia* of Alexander Severus gives us an idea of what kind of images a syncretistically inclined man of Late Antiquity might venerate and surround himself with when performing his prayers. In addition to images of great rulers like Alexander (whose name Alexander Severus bore, and who might almost be compared to the name–saint in the icon corner of an Orthodox Christian home) and deified emperors, we find those of spiritual personalities with supernatural gifts. It has been maintained that the references to Abraham and Christ are later interpolations in the text;[23] someone like Apollonius of Tyana, on the other hand, fits perfectly into Alexander Severus' *lararium*, since Philostratos' biography of Apollonius had in all probability been commissioned by Julia Domna, Alexander Severus' great–aunt.

Apollonius of Tyana recalls a Christian saint in many respects. He worked miracles in life as well as after death, and well into the Byzantine period one hears of pillars and other talismans erected to him.[24] They could avert disasters, for instance by stilling storms (the same thing was said of the *eulogia* of the Younger Symeon the Stylite).[25]

An account in the Scriptores Historiae Augustae describes how Apollonius revealed himself to the emperor Aurelian "in the shape in which he was commonly seen" (*ea forma quae videtur*), just as Christian saints appear to the faithful in the shape familiar from their icons. Aurelian recognized Apollonius, as he had seen statues of him in pagan sanctuaries. Not only does Apollonius appear to Aurelian in a recognizable guise, but he also takes care to speak Latin, so that a man from Pannonia may understand him.[26] The emperor pays heed to his words: on Apollonius' request, Aurelian spares the citizens of the sage's native Tyana, which is under siege.

The Icon's Supernatural Powers

A Christian text from the fourth or the fifth century mentions a statue of Apollonius endowed with oracular powers, which exhorted people to venerate its archetype—Apollonius himself—as a god.[27] Although the True God deprived the statue of the power of speech, He seems to have tolerated others of Apollonius' talismans—their magic powers are referred to at a still later date.[28]

Supernatural powers were not confined to statues of spiritual personages; people who were physically outstanding could transmit their strength to their *eikones*. A statue of the athlete Polydamus, in Olympia, cured the ague.[29] Polydamus, who appears to have been a kind of professional strongman, was victorious in the Olympic games of 408 BC. Pausanias mentions his statue without, however, referring to its miraculous power; he states that Polydamus was the largest and tallest of all men, except the heroes,[30] so his statue obviously shared his strength.

Rulers, who possessed exceptional powers by virtue of their position, could also heal. It is said of Vespasian that he, during a visit to Alexandria, healed a

[23] E. Hohl, E. Marten and A. Rösger, *Historia Augusta*, I (transl. and comm.) (Zürich, 1975), 507–508, n. 170.
[24] W. Speyer, "Zum Bild des Apollonius von Tyana bei Heiden und Christen", *JbAChr* 17 (1974), 56–57.
[25] Vikan, "Art, Medicine and Magic", 69.
[26] SHA, *Aurelian*, 24.
[27] Speyer, "Bild des Apollonius", 56.
[28] Speyer, "Bild des Apollonius", 56–57.
[29] Lucian, *Deorum concilium*, 12.
[30] Pausanias, *Description of Greece*, 6,5,1. Cf. also the statue of Theagenes mentioned above. It, too, possessed healing powers (Pausanias, 6,11,9).

man with a withered hand, and another who was blind.[31] Like Christ, Vespasian used his own spittle. The portraits of the emperors could have exceptional powers, just like their archetypes. As late as the end of the fifth century, one hears of prodigia in connection with imperial statues: in 496 a statue of Constantine the Great in Edessa refused to hold a cross in its hand, because the people had celebrated deliverance from drought in an unseemly manner.[32] But not only the portraits of Christian emperors like Constantine possessed magic powers; the same also holds true of portraits of pagan emperors. A cryptic passage in the Scriptores Historiae Augustae relates that some men were condemned to death for having removed garlands from imperial portraits in order to wear them around their necks, as protection against quartan and tertian fever. These garlands had evidently crowned busts or statues of members of the imperial house, and it seems that the mere contact with objects that had touched the imperial images was efficacious as a prophylactic.[33] We should here mention that the ancients' preoccupation with remedies which might heal or prevent illness was gradually transferred to Christian objects, not only to amulets, but also to icons. A Nestorian pamphlet of the eleventh century accuses the Orthodox of erecting images of Christ and the Virgin in "unclean" places, such as baths.[34] There they evidently assumed the function of the earlier images of Fortuna, which had guarded baths and latrines during the Roman period.

Coins with the image of Alexander the Great were worn as amulets as late as in the days of St John Chrysostom, who alluded to this practice in one of his sermons.[35] Many images of saints, but by no means all, had a characteristic, talismanic quality. Since literature has so many references to miraculous icons, one might conclude that they all worked wonders, but in fact only a few icons possessed this faculty. This is also the case with portraits of rulers: only the most exceptional of men were able to make their personal magic live on, to be transmitted to future generations. Since there are many parallels between the veneration of rulers' portraits and that of the images of saints, some have maintained that the latter has developed from the former,[36] but I am inclined to regard them as parallel phenomena: in both cases the spiritual or "propitious" qualities of the archetype work through his or her images, and this is why they are venerated.

The story of Christ and the haemorhoissa has an interesting parallel in Plutarch's *Life of Sulla*: here the dictator, just like Christ, is approached from behind by a woman who touches his garment.[37] Both women wanted some of the

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[31] Dio Cassius, 65,8,1.

[32] Kitzinger, "Cult of Images", 123.

[33] SHA, *Caracalla*, 5,7. The text runs: "damnati sunt eo tempore qui urinam in eo loco fecerunt in quo statuae aut imagines erant principis, et qui coronas imaginibus eius detraxerunt, ut alias ponerent, damnati et qui remedia quartanis tertianisque collo adnexas gestarent." With D. Magie, the translator of the SHA in the Loeb Classical Library (SHA II, p. 15), I take it to mean that the garlands worn as protection against fever were those removed from the imperial images. Professor E. Kraggerud, whom I have consulted in this matter, has suggested that *alias* in this context does not mean "other" (garlands), but "elsewhere", and this gives the most logical explanation for the men's crime. They had stolen the garlands not to replace them with others, but to place them elsewhere, that is, around their own necks.

[34] G. Strohmaier, "Hunain Ibn Ishaq und die Bilder", *Klio* 43–45 (1965), 527, n. 2. A case of transfer is perhaps also furnished by an account from the 5th century by Theodoretus, who tells about the popularity of the images of the elder Symeon the Stylite, which Roman artisans and shopkeepers placed as *phylacteria* at the entrance of their *tabernae* (Kitzinger, "Cult of Images", 94). I strongly suspect that the reason for this is that the image of the stylite on his column, in the form in which it is represented in popular art (Vikan, "Art, Medicine and Magic", Figs. 2–3), in outline resembles a phallos, the traditional *phylacterium* outside Roman *tabernae*.

[35] *Homil. ad illumin. catech.* 2,5 (PG 49, col. 240).

[36] Both Kitzinger ("Cult of Images", 121–125) and A. Grabar (*L'iconoclasme byzantin* [Paris, 1957], 82) stress the importance of the imperial image for the development of the veneration of icons.

[37] Matthew 9,20–22; Mark 5,25–35; Luke 8,43–49; Plutarch, *Sulla*, 35.

power which resided in these two exceptional men: in the one case, the haemor-hoissa, the spiritual power which healed, in the other, Sulla's *eutychia*. This was also a quality that could heal: it is significant that Vespasian, when he healed the two men in Alexandria, had just arrived from his victory over the Jews. The men who, during the reign of Caracalla, used garlands from imperial portraits (most probably portraits of Caracalla himself) as a protection against fever, must have done so because they needed the emperor's Fortuna, since Caracalla, like Sulla, was by no means a benefactor of mankind.

Julian Apostata comes closer to the traditional concept of a benefactor of mankind. According to Libanius, there were statues of him in the temples of many cities, and the desires of pious pagans who prayed to them were fulfilled.[38] Here Julian resembles a Christian saint, and Libanius was probably influenced by Christian concepts in his presentation of the emperor.

Peter Brown writes: "Byzantines of the sixth, seventh and eighth centuries were getting from the icons what they never expected to get from an imperial image, they got the miracle of healing and the even greater miracle of a flood of tears of repentance for their sins."[39] This statement may be correct with regard to the later periods, but as I have shown above, there was a traditional belief in the healing powers of the emperor and his images; among the masses, at least, such a belief may have been more widespread than the few mentions of it in literary sources might lead one to believe. But this tradition probably never took root in Christian circles, because the emperors before Constantine tended to be hostile—or at least indifferent—to Christianity. And thus for the early Christians there would have been no point in seeking favour from the emperor or his image.

As to the second part of Peter Brown's statement it is, of course, perfectly true that the emperor's image did not produce tears in the suppliant, nor was it meant to do so. The emperor and his images were thought to evoke optimism, strength, and a sense of security. Other portraits seem, however, to have played on more sentimental strings, notably the images of the deceased. Quintilian tells of a woman who took her late husband's image into court, in order to soften the judges,[40] and in *de lege agraria*, Cicero says: "Nulla sunt imagines, quae me a vobis deprecentur."[41] The images thought to intercede, in this context, are those of the ancestors, and the judges are human; the images of the saints evoked by the Christians were to plead the latters' case before the heavenly tribunal. But even so, the notion of the pleading image is much the same.

As indicated in this outline, the primitive icon is, in many respects, merely a Christianized version of the Graeco–Roman portrait. The icons differ from the secular portraits by virtue of the special qualities of the archetype, reflected by his or her images. The majority of secular portraits represented ordinary people, who were later venerated merely as a matter of form, and by a restricted circle; the saints, on the other hand—to return to the patron/client model proposed above—all represent what we might term super-patrons.

From Portrait to Icon

An example of gradual transition from portrait to icon is furnished by the story of the image of Pulcheria, sister of Theodosius II. One of the predecessors of the patriarch Nestorius had placed it above the altar of Hagia Sophia, evidently to

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[38] Libanius, *Or.* 18, 304.
[39] Brown, *A Dark Age Crisis*, 266.
[40] Quintilian, *Inst.* 6,1,40.
[41] *De lege agraria*, 2,100.

serve as an example of virginity and Christian conduct.[42] Pulcheria, like her image, was allowed inside the sanctuary of the Great Church when she received communion at Easter, and her robe was used as an altar cloth during communion.[43] This "participation by proxy", i.e. by something which had been in contact with someone, thus representing the person in question, is attested by other cases of women's robes being used as altar cloths.[44] A paragraph in a letter from St Ambrose to Theodosius I contains a parallel: it transpires that the emperor, represented by a letter signed by him, had taken part in a thanks–offering officiated by St Ambrose, who placed the letter on the altar, and held it in his hand when he offered the Sacrifice.[45]

Pulcheria's privileges came to an end in the year 428, with the accession to the patriarchate by Nestorius, who doubted her virginity. Consequently he barred her entrance to the sanctuary when she wanted to take communion (probably at Easter 428), her robe was removed from the altar, and her portrait above it effaced.[46] The sources do not give the sequence of these events, but since Nestorius had been elevated to the patriarchate only a few days before Easter, and thus would have had no time to consider the decoration of the Great Church, it seems likely that Pulcheria was first denied access to the sanctuary, and that her image and her robe were removed afterwards. Here again we see the close connection between the archetype and inanimate objects representing it: when Pulcheria is no longer allowed inside the sanctuary, her robe and her image, which contain something of her essence, are also removed.

Since the painting of Pulcheria was not simply taken away, but had to be effaced, it follows that it was not an easel–piece, but a fresco, and since its place was above the altar, one can hardly avoid the conclusion that it is likely to have been painted in the apse. This is the place which in later Byzantine church decoration was reserved for the Virgin with whom, incidentally, Pulcheria identified herself so closely that she, according to one source, claimed to have "given birth to God", when Nestorius refused to let her enter the sanctuary.[47] The clash between Pulcheria and the patriarch may be said to have heralded the great Theotokos controversy, which ended with the fall of Nestorius and the rehabilitation of Pulcheria as a saint. One cannot but wonder whether her portrait was repainted above the altar of the Great Church after her victory.

The painting of Pulcheria probably represented her in court dress as Augusta, and a comparison with the figure of St Agnes in the apse mosaic of her church in Rome, created about two hundred years later, comes to mind.[48] Allowing for stylistic differences, and detracting the instruments of St Agnes' martyrdom, which are depicted below her feet, the representation of Pulcheria may in general features have resembled that of St Agnes; the latter is depicted as a Byzantine court lady with resplendent robes, her face thick with make-up.[49] Appearances

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[42] K. Holum, *Theodosian Empresses* (Berkeley–Los Angeles–London, 1982), 144–145.

[43] Holum, *Empresses*, 144.

[44] Ibid., with n. 128, p. 187.

[45] *Ep.* 61,5 (PL 16, col. 1187).

[46] Holum, *Empresses*, 152–154.

[47] Holum, *Empresses*, 153.

[48] W. Oakeshott, *The Mosaics of Rome from the third to the fourteenth centuries* (London, 1967), 148–149; G. Matthiae, *Mosaici medioevali delle chiese di Roma* (Rome, 1967), 169–179, Pls. 21–22, Figs. 98–100; id., *Pittura romana nel medioevo. Secoli IV–X*, rev. by M. Andaloro (Rome, 1987), 87–88, 246–247, Figs. 57–58; E. Kitzinger, *Byzantine Art in the Making* (London, 1977), 103–106, Fig. 187.

[49] The saint's white face, which gives her a diaphanous look, may, in fact, represent a realistic touch, the artist's efforts to render the lead-white with which Byzantine ladies, following the Graeco-Roman tradition, used to cover their faces. This excessive use of make-up, which must have given them an unnatural appearance comparable to that of Japanese geishas, was deplored by the Church Fathers, but seems to have characterized the ideal of female beauty up to the end of Byzantium (cf. S. Runciman, *The Fall of Constantinople 1453* [Cambridge, 1969], 51).

apart, the accounts of Pulcheria's image (assuming that the sources reflect historical fact) indicate that, as early as in the fifth century, saints could be represented (even during their lifetime, although this was certainly exceptional) in prominent positions in churches, and not only in mausolea and martyria, as is commonly held.[50] This would seem to support my above statement to the effect that the importance accorded to icons in people's minds appears well before the Justinianic period, as part of a larger spectre comprising images of non-Christians. The scarcity of early written sources for the veneration of images may perhaps be partly due to the fact that such practices were so widespread in the Graeco–Roman world that they did not invite much comment (several Church fathers accepted the homage paid to imperial portraits as a matter of course, for instance), and because the images were so common, the early Christian *eikôn* must have had many rivals. This may have led to a certain reticence among the Christian authorities to express an opinion in this matter. There would be no point in pronouncing against the use of Christian images as amulets if they were to be replaced with coins of Alexander the Great. And why should one deprive the Roman shopkeeper of his stylite on the door-post if one risked his replacing it with a representation of Apollonius from Tyana, or even with a phallos?[51]

The Disappearance of the Portrait and Its Consequences

It is not without significance that the marked increase in written sources concerning icons and their veneration, which is noticeable after the middle of the sixth century, coincides with the decline and gradual disappearance of the traditional Graeco–Roman portrait. Private portraits were the first to go, official portraits of public figures are still found in the sixth century, while imperial portrait statues continue into the early seventh century.[52] Portraits in mosaic and painting were still made but, it seems, subordinated to the sacred area as donors' portraits, such as those found in St Demetrius in Thessaloniki.[53] Piety, veneration, hope, superstition—in short, all the feelings traditionally associated with portraits—would then concentrate on the icons, and this may also have contributed to the increasing interest in them which we may observe after the Justinianic period. This must also have led to an intensification of the dispute between the supporters and the opponents of icons, a dispute which, I suspect, may have been postponed as long as the icon was only one of several categories of images, but which had to be taken up as the other categories disappeared or dwindled into insignificance.

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[50] A. Grabar, *Martyrium*, II (Paris, 1946), Ch. 1–3, esp. pp. 29–38, 105–117; Kitzinger, *Art in the Making*, 107; Matthiae and Andaloro, *Pittura romana*, 87.

[51] Cf. above, n. 34.

[52] S. Sande, "Zur Porträtplastik des sechsten nachchristlichen Jahrhunderts", *ActaIRNorv* 6 (1975), 65–106; J. Inan and E. Alföldi-Rosenbaum, *Römische und frühbyzantinische Porträtplastik aus der Türkei. Neue Funde* (Mainz, 1979), 24–38; Stichel, *Kaiserstatue*, 34–35.

[53] Different explanations for the increasing interest in icons have been proposed. Kitzinger, while emphasizing the role of the emperors ("Cult of Images", 125–126), seems to favour the idea of a concession to popular beliefs from the ecclesiastic and secular authorities (ibid., 119–120, 146). Others have stressed the role of the elite (Brown, *A Dark Age Crisis*, 274–275; Cameron, "Images of Authority", esp. 224–228). My aim is not to refute any of the current explanations for the veneration of icons, but to point out that this practice, deeply rooted in Graeco-Roman traditions, did not emerge suddenly, but was the result of a long development which started quite early. Furthermore, it was my purpose to stress the parallelism between the icon and the non-Christian image, in that both could be venerated and show supernatural powers, provided that the archetype had the necessary qualifications.

Sculpture in the Round in the Early Byzantine Period: Constantinople and the East

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As is well known the manufacture of sculpture in the round gradually declined during the early Byzantine period. This decrease does not happen simultaneously within all kinds of sculpture, it is to some degree dependent upon the different roles played by mythological representations, religious sculpture, profane statues, and imperial portraits.

Re-use of Antique Statuary

When Constantine the Great chose Byzantion for his new capital, he intended to create a Christian counterpart to Rome. As part of a decoration programme old pagan sculptures, spolia from various parts of the Empire, were set up in important public places.[1] These works were hardly chosen from aesthetic considerations, but served mainly a propagandistic function: antique art should help to create a genealogy for *Nea Roma*. Constantinople appropriated the glorious past, power and prestige of Rome. One impressive collection was the eighty bronze statues of gods, heroes, poets and philosophers in the Baths of Zeuxippos near the hippodrome. The baths were destroyed in the riots of 532, but the art works are known from the descriptions by Christodoros of Koptos (*c.* 500).[2] The circumstance that Constantine was a Christian emperor and the monuments were pagan involved contradictions, but did not as yet present a major problem. In fact Constantine succeeded in striking a sound balance between Christianity and paganism—compare his use of the Chrismon, sign of both Sol and Christ. Some of the bronzes were melted down and re–used to fashion a colossal likeness of the Emperor Anastasius around 500.[3] However, this may not have been on account of their offensive nature, but simply because of lack of bronze.[4]

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[1] C. Mango, "Antique Statuary and the Byzantine Beholder", *DOP* 17 (1963), 55–75; S. G. Bassett, "The Antiquities in the Hippodrome of Constantinople", *DOP* 45 (1991), 87–96.

[2] R. Stupperich, "Das Statuenprogramm in den Zeuxippos-Thermen. Überlegungen zur Beschreibung durch Christodoros von Koptos", *IstMitt* 32 (1982), 210–235.

[3] Malalas, Bonn ed., 400–401: "The same John (= John the Paphlagonian, *comes sacrarum largitionum*, appointed in 498) melted down the bronze statues in the main street (*plateia*) of Constantinople which Constantine had collected for their excellence from all other cities and brought to Constantinople to serve as decoration. Having melted these the said John made a statue of extraordinary size of the Emperor Anastasius and erected it upon the great column that stood vacant at the Forum Tauri, as it is called. This column previously carried a statue of the elder Theodosius, but the statue alone was thrown down by earthquake (i.e. in 480)."; C. Mango, *The Art of the Byzantine Empire 312–1453. Sources and Documents* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ, 1972), 46.

[4] See also H. Saradi-Mendelovici, "Christian Attitudes toward Pagan Monuments in Late Antiquity and Their Legacy in Later Byzantine Centuries", *DOP* 44 (1990), 47–61.

Aspects of Late Antiquity and Early Byzantium, ed. L. Rydén, J. O. Rosenqvist, Swedish Research Institute in Istanbul, Transactions, Vol. 4 (Stockholm, 1993)

85

Constantius II likewise brought antiquities to Constantinople, as did Valentinian and Theodosius (II?).[5] Lausus, *praepositus sacri cubiculi* in the reign of Theodosius II, possessed an excellent collection of statuary including, allegedly (Kedrenos, Bonn ed., I, 564), one of the seven wonders of the world, the Olympic Zeus, removed from Olympia at the closing of the Olympic games in 394. Lausus' palace burned down in 475 and the statues were destroyed.[6] Quite a number of the antiquities in the city, however, survived until the sack by the crusaders in 1204.[7]

The plastic arts created in the early Byzantine period in Nea Roma must be seen against this traditional background. Far from rejecting the past, the glorious past was used as a cultural backdrop and taken as a point of departure for new artistic endeavour.

Mythological and Historical Sculpture

The old pagan gods and heroes were still represented in Late Antiquity. The majority of the mythological sculptures have been found in private houses, and serving chiefly a decorative function they were acceptable along the line of mythological subject matter in silver plate.

In Copenhagen there are remains of five life-size statues—Heracles, Satyr with Dionysus child, Poseidon, Zeus, and Helios—from the Esquiline hill, Rome.[8] In spite of their provenance they represent eastern craftsmanship, as inscriptions on the plinths name two artists, Fl. Zeno and Fl. Chryseros from Aphrodisias in Caria, a site of no small importance to Constantinople.[9] The statues were acquired as works of the second century. Recent study of the inscriptions on the plinths combined with epigraphical material from Rome and Aphrodisias has shown that the inscriptions were made in the fourth century, perhaps *c.* 325–350: either older statues had been re-used, or the group was the outcome of a late antique retrospective attitude.[10]

In my opinion the stylistic analysis confirms a fourth-century date, and perhaps rather after than before 350. One may compare the rendering of the facial features of Helios (Fig. 1) with those of the emperor from Aphrodisias in the Archaeological Museum, Istanbul, *c.* 390 (Fig. 2).[11] The Esquiline group thus acquires a new importance as an illustration of the continuing manufacture of full scale three-dimensional mythological figures in a classicistic style. Two more replicas of the Satyr have been recovered at Aphrodisias, an indication of a sort

[5] Preger, *Scriptores*, II, 195, para. 85: Constantius; I, 64, para. 64; II, 192 f., para. 82: Valentinian; II, 182, para. 58; 190, para. 75: Theodosius; Mango, "Statuary", 58.

[6] R. Naumann, "Vorbericht über die Ausgrabungen zwischen Mese und Antiochus-Palast 1964 in Istanbul", *IstMitt* 15 (1965), 135 ff.; S. B. Clucas, "The Collection of Statuary in the Palace of Lausus", *17th Int. Byz. Congr., Abstracts* (Washington, DC, 1986), 67 f.

[7] Niketas Choniates, *De signis Constantinopolitanis*, describes some twenty of the statues destroyed in 1204. *Nicetae Choniatae Historia*, ed. J. L. van Dieten (Berlin, 1975), I, 647–655; E. Degani, "Il 'De signis Constantinopolitanis' di Niceta di Chone", *CorsiRav* 26 (1979), 29–40.

[8] F. Poulsen, *Katalog over skulptur i Ny Carlsberg Glyptothek* (Copenhagen, 1940), nos. 521–527; C. Roueché, K. T. Erim (eds.), *Aphrodisias Papers* (Ann Arbor, 1990), 133–146; B. Kiilerich, "Aphrodisias og den senantikke idealplastik", *Klassisk Forum* 1992:1, 78–84; B. Kiilerich-H. Torp, "Mythological Sculpture in the fourth Century A.D.: The Esquiline Group and the Silahtarağa Statues", *IstMitt* (forthcoming).

[9] Aphrodisian sculptors worked in Constantinople in the 380s and 390s on official court monuments of Theodosius; B. Kiilerich, *Late Fourth Century Classicism in the Plastic Art. Studies in the So-called Theodosian Renaissance* (Odense, 1993), 79 f., 213.

[10] C. Roueché and K. T. Erim, "Sculptors from Aphrodisias: some new inscriptions", *BSR* 50 (1982), 102–115.

[11] N. Fıratlı, *La sculpture byzantine figurée au Musée Archéologique d'Istanbul* (Paris, 1990), no. 4.

Fig. 1. Helios, Esquiline group. Copenhagen, Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek (B. Kiilerich).
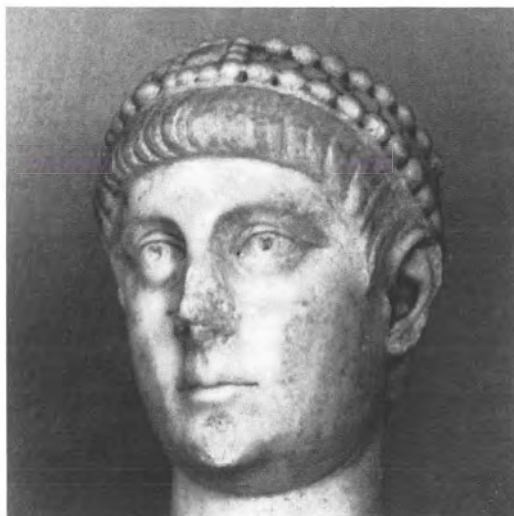

Fig. 2. Emperor from Aphrodisias. Istanbul, Archaeological Museum (H. Torp).

of mass production. The Esquiline sculptures decorated a private villa of an affluent owner and may be designated genre sculpture.

In the vicinity of Constantinople, at Silahtarağa, a number of mythological figures have been found, which may also belong to the decorative *Idealplastik* category.[12] Their date unfortunately is uncertain, but some of the pieces are reminiscent of the output of late Aphrodisian workshops. So much, in fact, that they could be the products of an Aphrodisian workshop active in Constantinople in the fourth century.

Small scale mythological figures, statuettes of Aphrodite, Artemis and others, were commissioned in the Eastern as well as the Western part of the Empire: Constantinople, Asia Minor, Syria, Romania, Rome, Carthage, and Southern France. Precise dating on stylistic grounds is difficult given the retrospective attitude. A Hekateion from a Mithraeum in Sidon is dated from its inscription to

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[12] N. de Chaisemartin and E. Örgen, *Les documents sculptés de Silahtarağa* (Paris, 1984): 2nd-century Aphrodisias; Kiilerich-Torp, "Mythological Sculpture".
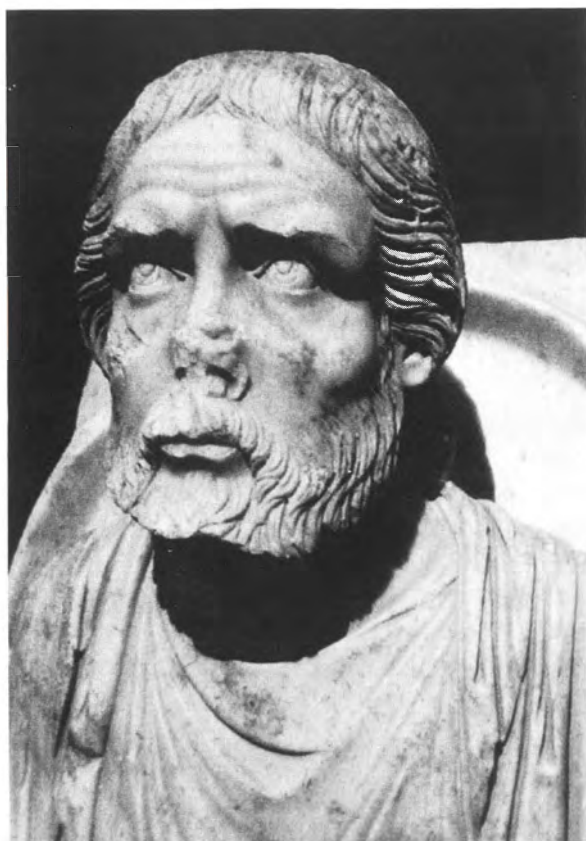
Fig. 3. Marble tondo. Aphrodisias
Museum (A. Dögenci).

the year 389.[13] A few years ago a divine couple was found in an early Byzantine
residential house at Aphrodisias.[14] There is reason to believe that they were the
object of cultic ritual. If the statuettes are contemporary with the building,
mythological sculpture was still fabricated in the fifth century at Aphrodisias.

Since any kind of pagan practice had become illegal after the antipagan laws of
Theodosius (391, West: *Cod. Theod.* XVI, 10,10: prohibition against offerings in
the temples. 393, East: *Cod. Theod.* XVI, 10,12: houses in which pagan rites had
taken place were to be confiscated), it is to be assumed that pagan images were
manufactured and venerated clandestinely. However, according to Theodoret,
bishop of Cyrrhus in Syria (423–466), representations of pagan gods were still
made and admired in his days, e.g. sculptures showing Zeus in the shape of the
eagle approaching Ganymede.[15] Whether the function was one of adoration or
merely decorative is difficult to determine today. In some places pagan cult
continued for long, thus, for instance, the temple of Isis on the island of Philae,
Egypt, was actively pagan until it was converted into a church by Justinian.[16]

The antique heritage included historical figures as well. In the Baths of Zeuxip-
pos Caesar was standing next to Aristotle, Achilles and Apollo. The function of
mythological and historical figures was related: all were regarded as *animae
sanctiores*. As may be gathered from the description of Alexander Severus'

[13] E. Will, "La date du Mithréum de Sidon", *Syria* 27 (1950), 261.
[14] Rouéché and Erim, *Aphrodisias Papers*, 29, fig. 30. The statuettes were found in 1986; the building in
1984: *AnatSt* 35 (1985), 178–179; 36 (1986), 180–181.
[15] For the type, compare a small ivory relief of 4th-century date from Egypt, K. Weitzmann (ed.), *Age of
Spirituality. Late Antique and Early Christian Art* (Princeton, 1979), no. 148.
[16] P. Nautin, "La conversion du temple de Philae en église chrétienne", *CahArch* 17 (1967), 1–43. As
late as the Synod in Constantinople in 692 a prohibition against heathen cults was issued, C. J. von
Hefele, *Conciliengeschichte*, III (2nd ed., Freiburg, 1877), 328.

gallery of statues in the *Historia Augusta*, reflecting the situation around 400, the association of Christ, Abraham and Orpheus did not strike anyone as being odd. Greek philosophers, politicians, and poets were frequently represented in early Byzantine mosaics and sculpture. Again Aphrodisias is a key centre in the East. Some ten years ago about a dozen marble tondi representing famous men of the past (and present) were recovered.[17] Some are anonymous (Fig. 3), others are accompanied by inscriptions: Aristotle, Alkibiades, Pindar, Alexander the Great.[18] Their faces are stylized, but the artistic impression is strong. These tondi were made in Aphrodisias, I should say, around 420.

Christian Religious Sculpture

As far as sculpture representing Biblical scenes or persons is concerned, it is generally assumed that human figures were no longer represented in the round after *c.* 450. This seems to apply to major reliefs as well: the latest early Byzantine reliefs with religious subject matter from Constantinople and vicinity are probably late Theodosian, and the Ravennate sarcophagi are without figural decoration after *c.* 450.[19]

Of special interest to Constantinople is the figural decoration from the church of St Polyeuktos (Saraçhane) founded by Anicia Juliana 524–527.[20] During excavation twenty-nine small heads of white marble (0.08–0.13 m) as well as some hands and feet were recovered. The marbles are worked in the round, but the backside is unfinished or merely summarily treated. Dowel holes in five heads indicate that they were inserted into a body. Plausibly they belonged to akroliths with bodies in relief in a different material. Some were meant to be viewed en face, others in three-quarter profile view. The fragments were unearthed in later Byzantine fill, chiefly in a thirteenth-century destruction layer. The excavator, R. M. Harrison, expresses uncertainty as to the date of the heads: perhaps late fourth to early fifth century, perhaps the sixth century.[21]

A comparison of head no. 432 (Fig. 4) with the so-called "Atalarich" in Forli (Fig. 5), generally accepted to date from *c.* 530/550, discloses a striking correspondence in the manner of executing the eye area.[22] These two heads appear to be more or less contemporary. Thus as far as style is concerned, the figures are certainly possible at the time of the building of the church, 524–527. But was religious sculpture in the round manufactured in Constantinople in the sixth century?

Of importance to this question is the function of these sculptures within the church complex at Saraçhane. The great number of heads points to a large,

[17] R. R. R. Smith, "Late Roman Philosopher Portraits from Aphrodisias", *JRS* 80 (1990), 127–155.

[18] On Alexander in Late Antiquity: B. Kiilerich, "The Public Image of Alexander the Great", *Analecta romana Instituti Danici*, suppl. 20 (1993), 85–92, esp. 90 f.

[19] A. Taylor, "Stylistic Variety in Constantinopolitan Stone Relief of the Theodosian Period", *Byzantine Studies/Études byzantines* 10 (1983), 184–201; P. H. F. Jakobs, "Das sogenannte Psamatia-Relief aus Berlin und die Beziehung zu den Konstantinopler Scheinsarkophagen", *IstMitt* 37 (1987), 201–217; J. Kollwitz and H. Herdejürgen, *Die ravennatischen Sarkophage* (Berlin, 1979) [Die antiken Sarkophagreliefs, VIII,2].

[20] R. M. Harrison, *Excavations at Saraçhane in Istanbul*, I (Princeton, 1986); Fıratlı, *Sculpture figurée*, nos. 425–484.

[21] Harrison, *Saraçhane*, 157–161, 418: "A sixth-century date for the Saraçhane heads seems unlikely but is not excluded", p. 418. See also M. Harrison, *A Temple for Byzantium. The Discovery and Excavation of Anicia Juliana's Palace Church in Istanbul* (Austin, 1989).

[22] S. Sande, "Zur Porträtplastik des sechsten nachchristlichen Jahrhunderts", *ActaIRNorv* 6 (1975), 65–106, esp. 89 and fig. 34. R. H. W. Stichel, *Die römische Kaiserstatue am Ausgang der Antike* (Rome, 1982), 66, suggests an identification with Totila (541–553).

Fig. 4. Head from St Polyeuktos. Istanbul,
Archaeological Museum (after Harrison,
Saraçhane, fig. 215).

continuous frieze-like composition. The execution indicates that they were not
free-standing but placed close to or against a wall. Gregory of Nazianzos de-
scribes a church founded by his father, who died in 374: "made up of eight
straight sides of equal length, and rising aloft by means of two storeys of beautiful
columns and portici, while the figures (*plasmata*) placed above them are true to

Fig. 5. So-called Atalarich. Forli, Archaeological
Museum (after Sande, "Porträtplastik", fig. 34).

nature" (*Or.* XVIII, 39).[23] *Plasmata* in all likelihood refers to stucco. Gregory's *plasmata* may have looked not unlike the stucco figures which at the middle of the fifth century decorated the cathedral in Ravenna, or the contemporary stuccoes still to be seen in the adjacent baptistery. Perhaps the figures in St Polyeuktos had bodies in painted stucco, and thus were a kind of *plasmata*, serving primarily a decorative function? Besides the figures were small, and—not unimportant—they were not strictly three-dimensional, but merely "two-and-a-half"-dimensional.

The stucco tradition continued down through the Middle Ages: one may recall the large female figures at the Tempietto in Cividale in Northern Italy, *c.* 750.[24]—Thus even though religious figure sculpture is rare, there are exceptions not least in architectural contexts.

Official Statues and Private Portraits

From around the middle of the fourth century imperial permission was required in order to set up bronze statues of magistrates in cities and provinces; it was regarded an *imperiale beneficium* (*Cod. Just.* I 24,1).[25] In private contexts one may have had to make do with the less pretentious, less monumental bust? This practice is hardly attested after the fifth century, one example being a couple from Thessaloniki, another being a couple from Stratonikeia in Caria.[26] The men undoubtedly were higher magistrates, but since their wives have been portrayed as well, we are probably facing private portrait busts, "family portraits".

Portraits in public places were the prerogative of members of the imperial house, dignitaries, higher magistrates and officials—and charioteers. Cities, societies, as well as individuals might commission monuments for a magistrate.[27] The Greek Anthology contains notes of early Byzantine magistrates commemorated with monuments in Constantinople. Thus Proclus, *quaestor sacri palatii* under Justin I (d. *c.* 526) was honoured with a bronze statue (*Anth. Planud.*, 48), as was Longinus, prefect in Constantinople, 537–39 and 542 (*Anth. Planud.*, 314), and the general Narses during the reign of Justin II, in the 560s (Preger, *Scriptores*, II, 230,22). The latest official record may be the likeness of Niketas, a general and cousin of the emperor Herakleios. To judge from the contents of the epigram the statue must have been set up after 614 (*Anth. Planud.*, 46–47).[28]

The latest magistrate encountered at Aphrodisias so far is the *vicarius, hypatikos* and *patêr poleôs* Flavius Palmatus.[29] Since the office *vicarius* was abolished by Justinian in 535 (Just., *Nov.* VIII, 2), this date may be taken as a *terminus ante quem* for the statue. In other parts of the East—Greece and Asia Minor—profane statues which may be considerably later have been preserved. A headless magis-

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[23] Mango, *Sources*, 26, note 16, expresses uncertainty as to whether these were carvings or paintings or both.

[24] H. P. L'Orange, *La scultura in stucco e in pietra del Tempietto di Cividale* (Rome, 1979) [*ActaIRNorv* 7, 3].

[25] A. v. Premerstein, *ÖJh*, 15 (1912), 216.

[26] H. P. L'Orange, "Der subtile Stil", *Antike Kunst* 4 (1961), 68–74; B. Kiilerich, "'Individualized types' and 'typified individuals' in Theodosian Portraiture", *Acta Hyperborea* 4 (1992), 237–248, Fig. 1a–b; R. Özgan and D. Stutzinger, "Untersuchungen zur Porträtplastik des 5. Jhs. n. Chr. anhand zweier neugefundener Porträts aus Stratonikeia", *IstMitt* 35 (1985), 237–274.

[27] I. Ševčenko, "A Late Antique Epigram and the So-Called Elder Magistrate from Aphrodisias", *Synthronon* [Bibl. des Cahiers archéol., 2] (Paris, 1968), 29–41, esp. 35.

[28] Niketas is referred to as "Persian-killer" in *Anth. Planud.* 46. In 614 Niketas received the Holy Sponge and the Holy Lance after the destruction of Jerusalem by the Persians; Al. Cameron, *Porphyrius the Charioteer* (Oxford, 1973), 255.

[29] J. Inan and E. Alföldi-Rosenbaum, *Römische und frühbyzantinische Porträtplastik aus der Türkei. Neue Funde* (Mainz, 1979), 26, 236 ff., no. 208, Pl. 264 f. Inscription on base, 238.

Fig. 6. Magistrate. Corinth,
Archaeological Museum (H. Torp).

trate from Corinth, one of three, is marked by abstraction and primitivity (Fig. 6).[30] Marble had become scarce, and the statue is an example of re-use, reworked from a female representation. The quality is bad and exact dating is difficult: the Justinianic era has been suggested, but it could well be roughly a generation later, say around 575. The latest statue known from Athens was excavated in the Agora (Fig. 7).[31] In comparison with classical Attic sculpture a change certainly has taken place. One might say that formally the latest sculpture in the round looks not unlike the earliest: namely the primitive, block-like *xoanon*. The torso is so far removed from organic shape, that an advanced date is tempting. It is

[30] F. P. Johnson, *Corinth Excavations*, IX: *Sculpture* (Cambridge, Mass., 1931), 148–153; nos. 326–328, with a 6th-century date.
[31] Athens, Agora Museum S 657. Found near the NE corner of the late antique gymnasium on the agora. E. B. Harrison, *The Athenian Agora*, I, *Portrait Sculpture* (Princeton, NJ, 1953), no. 64, p. 106, Pls. 41–42: late 5th century. H. A. Thompson, *The Athenian Agora. Guide* (Athens, 1976), 210 f., Fig. 108.

Fig. 7. Magistrate. Athens, Agora Museum (after Thompson, *The Athenian Agora*, fig. 108).

generally assigned a date in the fifth century; nonetheless it would appear to be well into the sixth.[32]

In addition to magistrates, members of the entertainment profession—in particular charioteers, but female pantomime artists are mentioned too (*Anth. Planud.*, 284: Constantinople, sixth century)—were honoured with statues. The charioteer Porphyrius is famous from 32 epigrams in the Greek Anthology.[33] He had monuments set up in the hippodrome in Constantinople between *c.* 500 and *c.* 540; two relief-decorated bases are preserved (Istanbul Archaeol. Museum).[34] This practice, especially popular during the reign of Anastasius, seems to have come to a stop before the middle of the sixth century.

Imperial Portraits

An imperial statue was more than a mere monument. It had a symbolic significance as the *alter ego* of the emperor. When an emperor entered upon office, his portrait was distributed all over the empire in order that people could pay homage to it. This act legitimized his accession. Where he was not present in person, his sculpted or painted image took his place. Severian of Gabala (*fl. c.*

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[32] Athens remained a city of some importance down to the Slavic invasion in the 580s, A. Frantz, *The Athenian Agora*, XXIV, *Late Antiquity: A.D. 267–700* (Princeton, NJ, 1988).

[33] Cameron, *Porphyrius.*

[34] Fıratlı, *Sculpture figurée*, nos. 63–64.

400) puts it thus: "Consider how many office-holders there are in the world. Since the emperor cannot be present with them all, his image must be in judgment halls, market-places, assembly rooms and theatres. In every place where an official governs, the image must be present in order that the official functions may be confirmed" (*De mundi creatione, Or.* 6,5).[35]

Among the very few imperial portraits recovered in Constantinople the latest dates from *c.* 400/410: the portrait of a Theodosian emperor.[36] A decree from the year 406 addressed to the city prefect of Constantinople states that in case of the necessity to repair colonnades or other buildings, it is permitted, "without prior inquiry by our highness but with due reverence, to remove portraits of us and earlier emperors". When the buildings have been repaired the statues must be returned to their proper places (*Cod. Theod.* XV, 1,44). One gets a notion of a city brimming with imperial effigies. One of these was the silver statue of Arcadius' wife, Aelia Eudoxia, set up on a column in 403. The base remains in the garden of Hagia Sophia (*CIG* 8614). A column in the Pittakia, north-east of Hagia Sophia, bore a likeness of Leon (457–474); fragments of this monument may be preserved.[37] By the mid-fifth century, however, according to documentary sources sculpture in the round of emperors and empresses had become rare.

It may be worth while to take a look at the literary and epigraphical evidence pertaining to the number of imperial statues set up between *c.* 370 and 610, a period which may be divided into three sub-periods of about eighty years each.[38] In the late Valentinianic and Theodosian dynasties, *c.* 370–450, some one hundred (*c.* 106) dedications were made in various parts of the empire. In the following period, that is from Marcian until Justinian, 450–527, merely about a score are recorded. One of the more interesting is the colossal bronze emperor at Barletta, probably brought from Constantinople by the crusaders.[39] In the period from Justinian to Phokas, 527–609, there is likewise evidence merely of a score, mainly portraits of Justinian (527–565). The head in red porphyry in San Marco, Venice, may be a likeness of this emperor.[40] He is the last emperor—that is the last pre-iconoclastic emperor—preserved in three dimensions. The female counterpart is the fine portrait, perhaps of his wife Theodora, in the Castello Sforzesco, Milan.[41]

Images of Phokas were set up in Rome and Constantinople, the latest being a golden bronze statue on a column by the Arsenal set up in 609 (Preger, *Scriptores*, II, 34). There is also a reference to a pair of statues of Phokas' daughter and her husband in the hippodrome (Theophanes, ed. de Boor, I, 294). For the following centuries the sources are less explicit and the terminology is imprecise: *agalma* and *stele* may refer to paintings as well as statues. A *stele* of Philippikos (711–713) was put up by the Baths of Zeuxippos, but since the artist is referred to as *zográphos*, it is unlikely to be a statue (*Parastaseis* 82, in Preger, *Scriptores*, I,

[35] H. Kruse, *Studien zur offiziellen Geltung des Kaiserbildes im römischen Reiche* (Paderborn, 1934), 79 f.

[36] Fıratlı, *Sculpture figurée*, no. 5; Kiilerich, *Classicism*, 87–89.

[37] U. Peschlow, "Eine wiedergewonnene byzantinische Ehrensäule in Istanbul", *Studien zur spätantiken und byzantinischen Kunst F. W. Deichmann gewidmet*, vol. 1 (Mainz, 1986), 21–33, reconstructs a statue column from fragments discovered in Topkapı Sarayi in 1959.

[38] Material collected in Stichel, *Kaiserstatue*, 75–115. See further M. Wegner, "Verzeichnis verlässlicher oder vermeintlicher Herrscherbilder von Valentinianus I. bis Herakleios", *Boreas* 10 (1987), 117–132.

[39] E. Demougeot, "Le colosse de Barletta", *MélRome* 94 (1982), 951–978. The identity of the emperor (Marcian?, Leo?, Zeno?) is uncertain.

[40] R. Delbrueck, "Carmagnola", *RM* 29 (1914), 71 ff.: Justinian II Rhinotmetos (685–695, 705–711); Sande, "Porträtplastik", 97 ff.

[41] Stichel, *Kaiserstatue*, 63–65, Pl. 33.

71).[42] Imperial statues appear to come to an end with Herakleios (610–641). It is telling that Herakleios in 612 places a cross on top of a column in Constantinople originally destined to carry a statue of Phokas (*Chron. Pasch.*, Bonn ed., I, 703,13).

It may be concluded that nearly five times as many imperial statues were erected in the Theodosian era as in each of the two following periods (450–530 and 530–610). In other words there was a sudden decline *c.* 450 rather than a gradual decrease.

The Disappearance of Sculpture in the Round

Mythological and historical statuary was newly manufactured well into the fifth century in the East (mainly Aphrodisias). This retrospective category, not surprisingly, is the first to come to an end, perhaps around 450. In the post-Theodosian era free-standing sculpture of ecclesiastical or religious function likewise is rare. However, the St Polyeuktos fragments prove the use of religious figural representation in sixth-century Constantinople. In fact ecclesiastical sculpture in the round is seen sporadically throughout the Middle Ages. These figures, nonetheless, stem from architectural contexts, and are not free-standing.

In Constantinople charioteers were commemorated towards 540. Imperial and official portraits were set up down to the reign of Herakleios, the latest secure evidence being the reference to Niketas *c.* 615. This date coincides with the end of imperial three-dimensional images: Phokas' statue in 609 could well be "the last emperor". There are, undoubtedly, exceptions, some material may easily have been overlooked, and future finds may modify the picture.

In general, sculpture in the round continues much longer in the East than in the West. As far as imperial portraits are concerned the written testimony is striking: for Constantinople after 450 at least 32 statues are recorded, to be compared with merely two in Rome (Zenon 474/6, Phokas 608) and one in Ravenna (Zenon, 474–491).[43] This 10:1 ratio cannot be fortuitous, but should be seen as a symptom of the decline and fall of the West Roman Empire. A few imperial portraits of the sixth century have been recovered in the West. However, sixth-century material, both imperial and non-imperial, comes mainly from the East, Ephesos being the primary site.

From an aesthetic point of view it may be said that the arts of Late Antiquity for centuries had dispensed with plasticity and depth and moved towards surface decoration and abstraction of form. Statues become strictly frontal, one-view objects. A taste for luxurious metals, brilliant colours and fabrics and decorative surfaces is characteristic of Late Antiquity and early Byzantium. This artistic attitude leads the way towards the complete flattening of the image and, eventually, the disappearance of figures in the round.

Historical and political circumstances undoubtedly contributed to this development. The conquests of the Arabs during the seventh century brought about a decline in Constantinople. This has been named the end of Antiquity.[44] As

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[42] For a discussion of the literary evidence pertaining to the 7th century and later, see Stichel, *Kaiserstatue*, 21–31; cf. Mango, "Statuary", 71, n. 96, who holds that the *stele* of Philippicus was a statue.

[43] Stichel, *Kaiserstatue*, 100–115.

[44] H. Hunger, "The Reconstruction and Conception of the Past in Literature", *17th Int. Byz. Congr., Major Papers* (New Rochelle, NY, 1986), 507–522, esp. 507: "This (i.e. the attack of the Arabs) was the definite end of late Antiquity; in a short period, the East Mediterranean Empire had become an economically and militarily weak petty state.—Soon a decay of culture and civilization began in this Byzantium turned small."

opposed to Antioch and Alexandria, Constantinople did not fall until 1204. All the same, the situation in Constantinople in many ways was precarious. Cyril Mango has referred to the mid-fifth century as a turning point in the history of the city, a period with social tension and rioting.[45] Fires were frequent; a large part of Constantinople was destroyed in a fire in 465 and had to be rebuilt. In the following one and a half century no less than thirteen fires have been recorded for Constantinople, one of which in connection with the Nika riot in 532. Further, in 542, half of the population died in the plague.

After 610 the situation becomes still more grim. Some examples: public building came to a stop from Herakleios to about 800. The corn supply from Egypt broke down around 618 (*Chron. Pasch.*, Bonn ed., 711). The aqueduct of Valens was destroyed by the Avars in 626 and not restored until 768. Public monuments deteriorated. The socio-economic conditions in Constantinople are definitely dreadful after 450 and downright disastrous after 610.[46]

It is worth noting that the periods which may be seen as turning points in the political and social life of Constantinople also make their mark within sculpture. In the turbulent post-Theodosian period the decline in the sculptural output is manifest, and in the beginning of the seventh century free-standing sculpture in the round disappears almost completely.

A socio-economical explanation model fits well as far as sculpture in the round in Constantinople is concerned. Nonetheless, it does not take all factors into account. First of all the downfall of sculpture in the round is not confined to Constantinople. Second, in other media art was still created in Constantinople. The palace mosaics certainly are post-Theodosian, they may even belong to the era of Herakleios or Justinian II.[47] Be that as it may, at least the Byzantine mosaics in the Ommayad Mosque in Damascus, *c.* 610, confirm that Constantinopolitan artists were still very much to the fore.[48] In the later fifth, the sixth and the seventh centuries excellent silver plate was produced in Constantinople.[49] Since the making of high quality mosaics and silver plate was within the possibility of artists in the city, theoretically this should go for sculpture, too. Thus socioeconomical circumstances can only be a contributing factor to the decline of sculpture in the round.

In my opinion, the primary reason is religious. From the very beginning the Church had been hostile towards pictorial representation. Endless discussions for or against the image ensued.[50] But the pagan pictorial tradition was strong, and images found their way into the church in spite of the opposition of the bishops. The Christians created pictures and provided them with a significance far beyond the purely aesthetic. The Christians took over the ancient view of the image as a magic substitute with a spiritual content, an abode of a spiritual force. The fact that the images, i.e. the icons, became holy, brought about a fear of creating idols.[51]

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[45] C. Mango, "The Development of Constantinople as an Urban Centre", *17th Int. Byz. Congr., Major Papers* (New Rochelle, NY, 1986), 117–136, esp. 124.

[46] C. Mango, *Le développement urbain de Constantinople (IVᵉ–VIIᵉ siècles)* (Paris, 1985), 51–60.

[47] J. Trilling, "The Soul of the Empire: Style and Meaning in the Mosaic Pavement of the Byzantine Imperial Palace in Constantinople", *DOP* 43 (1989), 27–72, with earlier bibliography; and P. J. Nordhagen in the present volume.

[48] B. Finster, "Die Mosaiken der Umayyadenmoschee von Damaskus", *Kunst des Orients* 7 (1970–71), 83–141.

[49] For instance, A. Banck, *Byzantine Art in the Collections of the USSR* (Leningrad–Moscow, 1966), Figs. 59, 67.

[50] G. B. Ladner, "The Concept of the Image in the Greek Fathers and the Byzantine Iconoclastic Controversy", *DOP* 7 (1953), 1–34; Th. Klauser, "Die Äusserungen der alten Kirche zur Kunst", *Studi di antichità cristiana* 26 (1965), 223–238.

[51] E. Bevan, *Holy Images. An Inquiry into Idolatry and Image-Worship in Ancient Paganism and in*

But why was figural representation condoned in mosaics and paintings? Probably because the creating of idols was regarded as less dangerous in two dimensions than in three dimensions, three dimensions being the more concrete, two dimensions the more abstract. A full plastic statue obviously constitutes a greater danger, as the spirit of the person represented lives in the representation; the similarity is too big. As the apprehension of three-dimensionality grew, full plastic mimesis was avoided. The process was a gradual one, probably beginning in the fourth, coming to the fore in the sixth century. Thus, inasmuch as the *eikôn* was accepted as a holy image, sculpture disappeared, because of the fear of making three-dimensional idols.

The object of the controversy was the sacred image—thus no life-size free-standing representations of holy persons. But since the emperor was sacred, the opposition might well come to involve the imperial portrait, the *alter ego* of the emperor, too. And if the emperor was not honoured with a statue, nor were, obviously, his officials. The spiritual climate or milieu with a hesitant attitude towards sculpture in the round—no or few imperial and ecclesiastical commissions—led to a general decline of the sculptural practice. It was not a result of the early Byzantines not being able to, but a result of their not wanting to.

Christianity (London, 1940); E. Kitzinger, "The Cult of Images before Iconoclasm", *DOP* 8 (1954), 85–150; H. Belting, *Bild und Kult. Eine Geschichte des Bildes vor dem Zeitalter der Kunst* (Munich, 1990).

Augustus Christianus–Livia Christiana: *Sphragis* and Roman Portrait Sculpture

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The Cross and the Seal

No one can have any doubt about the significance of the cross in Byzantine society. Nonetheless, it might be wise to remember how pervasively the cross manifested itself in nearly all aspects of life at all levels of the social structure. It is found not only in the church and its liturgy, not only in imperial and court ceremonies, but also in everyday life and popular beliefs. The sign of the cross blesses, protects, and heals; it wards off evil. It is used so often in so many contexts that it also, as in modern times, degenerates into a purely routine gesture.[1]

And neither can we doubt the significance of the seal in both Graeco-Roman and Byzantine societies. The seal guaranteed the origins, quality, weight of a product; it guaranteed safe and intact transport from sender to receiver; it guaranteed the legality of public documents. One can say that the state both ensured and wielded its power in Byzantium through the seal.[2] The seal was a guarantee even in the transactions of the emperor with the divine: see, for example, the bestowing of gifts in the imperial portraits in Hagia Sophia. And not everyone can break the seal, as Revelation, 5,1–2, dramatically reminds us.

In certain symbolic and practical connections, the sign of the cross implies the significance of the seal. This is a function that is revealed in a passage written by Cyril of Jerusalem, who also gives a good account of the growing practice of making the sign of the cross, at every time of the year, and on nearly every occasion. Cyril writes, "Be the Cross our seal made with boldness by our fingers on our brow, and on everything; over the bread we eat, and the cups we drink; in our comings in and goings out; before our sleep, when we lie down, and when we rise up; when we are on the way, and when we are still ... Despise not the seal because of the freeness of the gift; but for this rather honour thy Benefactor."[3]

Sphragis or *signaculum* are used both for the concrete seal and metaphorically for the symbolic seal. Clement of Alexandria, for example, uses *sphragis* in his discussion of what motives can suitably be engraved on one's signet ring,[4] while the concept in patristic literature refers to "the seal of Christ", "the sign of

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[1] Cf. H. Hunger, *Reich der neuen Mitte* (Vienna, 1965), 182 ff. Also G. W. H. Lampe, *The Seal of the Spirit* (London, 1951), 262 ff.
[2] Cf. G. Vikan and J. Nesbitt, *Security in Byzantium: Locking, Sealing, and Weighing*, exhib. cat., Dumbarton Oaks (Washington, DC, 1980), 10 ff.
[3] PG 33, col. 816A–B; here quoted from M. L. W. Laistner, *Christianity and Pagan Culture in the Later Roman Empire* (Ithaca, NY, 1967), 136, n. 18.
[4] R. Milburn, *Early Christian Art and Architecture* (Avebury, 1984), 2 f.

Christ", or "sealed in Christ".[5] The fact that Clement finds it necessary to present guidelines for what is suitable and what is unsuitable for the decoration on signet rings points to a situation in which the sign of the cross as *sphragis* could risk being used in connections, on a par with symbols with other meanings, where magical signs, amulets, protective formulas, and similar things simply must be involved. In early Christian and patristic literature, *sphragis* is in general charged with a richly varied set of meanings, abstractly allegorical as well as concrete.[6]

When Cyril speaks of placing the sign of the cross on our brows, he naturally relies on the Bible. In Ezekiel, 9,4, the people of Jerusalem are told to "set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst hereof". Those who decried heathen worship were marked so that they could escape when the time of judgement came. A parallel can be found in Revelation, 7,3, where God's servants are sealed. The four angels at the four corners of the earth may not hurt the earth, the sea, or the trees "till we have sealed the servants of God on their foreheads". Those who bear the sign shall escape the punishment of the angels; it is a sign of protection and salvation.

But God also marks his subjects with another sign. It is the sign of Cain (Genesis, 4,15: "And the Lord appointed a sign for Cain, lest any finding him [during his exile] should smite him"), which was linked with brandings and tattooed tribal markings among nomadic shepherds,[7] but which here also signifies a relationship, symbolical or concrete, in accordance with that of the slave or soldier, or in cases where the one who bears the sign or mark is under a kind of protection.

Pagan Portraits Marked with the Cross

In the following I will discuss a few aspects of the cross as *sphragis*, as *signaculum*, in conjunction with a specific body of archeological material: a little group of Roman portraits marked with the cross:

1–2. Portraits of Augustus and Livia from two seated colossal statues found in the market basilica in Ephesus (Selçuk Museum, No. 1957 and No. 1/10/1975)[8] (Figs. 1–2);

3. A portrait of Augustus, like the preceding found in the market basilica in Ephesus (Selçuk Museum, No. 1891)[9] (Fig. 3);

4. Germanicus (London, British Museum)[10] (Fig. 4);

5. A tetrarchic emperor from Afyon (Bursa, Museum)[11] (Fig. 5).

The portraits from Ephesus were marked with a roughly carved, but unmistak-

[5] F. J. Dölger, "Beiträge zur Geschichte des Kreuzzeichens, III", *JbAChr* 3 (1960), 5.

[6] Authoritative information in F. J. Dölger, *Sphragis. Eine altchristliche Taufbezeichnung in ihren Beziehungen zur profanen und religiösen Kultur des Altertums* (Paderborn, 1911), and Lampe, *Seal of the Spirit*.

[7] R. Graves and R. Patai, *Hebrew Myths. The Book of Genesis* (London, 1964), 95; Lampe, *Seal of the Spirit*, 14.

[8] W. Alzinger, "Das Regierungsviertel", *ÖJh* 50 (1972–1975), Beiheft, 259 ff.; C. Foss, *Ephesus after Antiquity: A Late Antique, Byzantine and Turkish City* (Cambridge, Mass., 1979), 32, 82; J. Inan and E. Alföldi-Rosenbaum, *Römische und frühbyzantinische Porträtplastik aus der Türkei. Neue Funde* (Mainz, 1979), cat. nos. 3, 57 f., and 5, 61.

[9] Alzinger, "Regierungsviertel"; Foss, *Ephesus*, 32, 82; Inan and Alföldi-Rosenbaum, *Porträtplastik*, cat. no. 2, 57 f.

[10] A. H. Smith, *A Catalogue of Sculpture in the Department of Greek and Roman Antiquities*, III (London, 1904), no. 1883; L. Curtius, "Ikonographische Beiträge zum Porträt der römischen Republik und der julisch-claudischen Familie", *Mitteilungen des Deutschen archäologischen Instituts* I (1948), 85.

[11] J. Inan and E. Rosenbaum, *Roman and Early Byzantine Portrait Sculpture in Asia Minor* (London, 1966), cat. no. 62, 85 f.

Fig. 1. Augustus, from Ephesus. Selçuk, Museum.

able sign of the cross on the forehead. The sign of the cross was more carefully executed on the portrait from Afyon and on Germanicus in the British Museum; in both cases the cross goes from the hairline to the root of the nose, and the ends of the arms of the cross are pointed; the latter is a pure Greek cross.

In each case the crosses are *later additions*. But there is no knowing when the portraits were given these additions. It is assumed that the three portraits from Ephesus received the crosses some time after AD 380. The seated colossal statues of Augustus and Livia were to all appearances located in the vicinity of the place where they were found, in the eastern chalcidicum of the market basilica, but were broken up and used as fill when a Byzantine house was built in the 6th century after the basilica had been destroyed in an earthquake.[12] For reasons that will be clarified below, I consider it impossible that the statues were demolished at the same time as they were given the sign of the cross; they must at least for some time have been visible, in a place where there was public access to them, with *sphragis* imprinted on their foreheads.

[12] Alzinger, "Regierungsviertel", 261; Inan and Alföldi-Rosenbaum, *Porträtplastik*, 58, following Alzinger; Foss, *Ephesus*, 82.
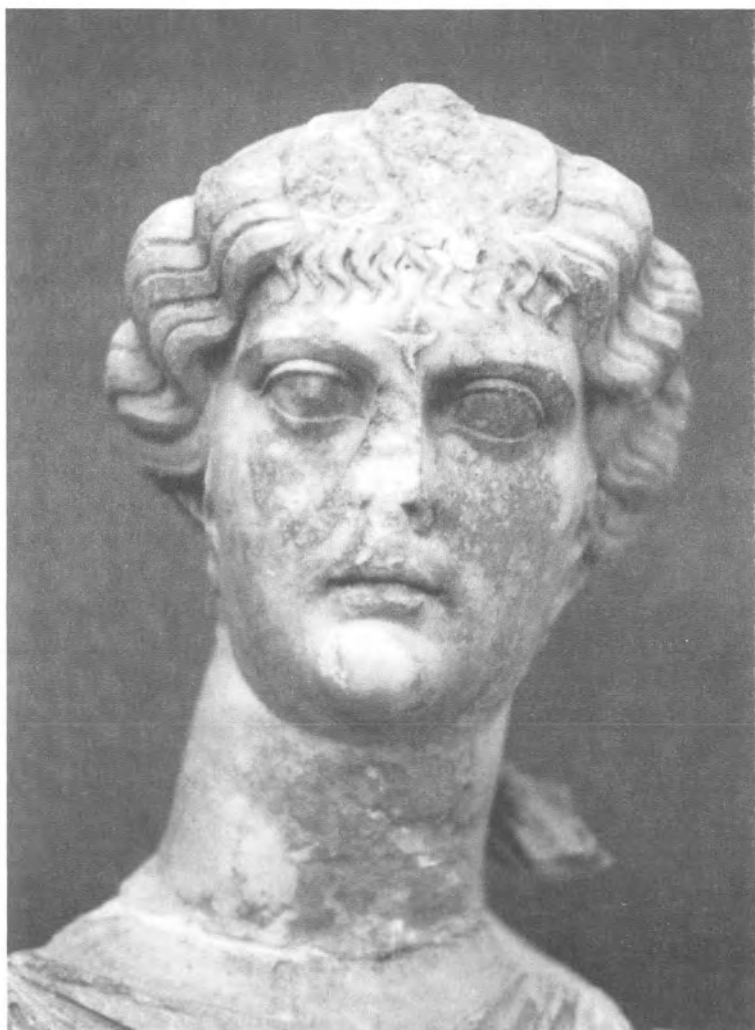
Fig. 2. Livia, from Ephesus. Selçuk, Museum.

Imperial portraits are not the only ones that were subjected to this treatment. Another category should be mentioned here, though not discussed in any detail: the heads of hermae, a couple of them preserved with their bodies, and a single— the best of those I know—with head severed from body. The bearded head with the carefully chiseled cross on its forehead originally comes from the Athens area, and is now in the museum in Karlsruhe.[13] On another example, known from the Palazzo Castellani in Rome in the last century, the head had been inscribed with the Constantine Christogram, while the herm's phallus had been knocked off.[14]

There are two reasons why the Christians showed a special zealousness in dealing with the hermae as a category. First of all, with their stump arms and prominent phallus, they were found exceedingly offensive. "Diese einst kanonische Bestandteile"[15] were consistently knocked off, and in some cases the deity's power was "neutralized" through the sign of the cross. Secondly, Hermes was linked with demonic powers, a lack of morals, and a consuming interest in procreation and fertility. When the herm as a type was later adapted to Christian

[13] H. Wrede, "Die spätantike Herme", *JbAChr* 30 (1987), 118–148, esp. 129.
[14] Ibid.
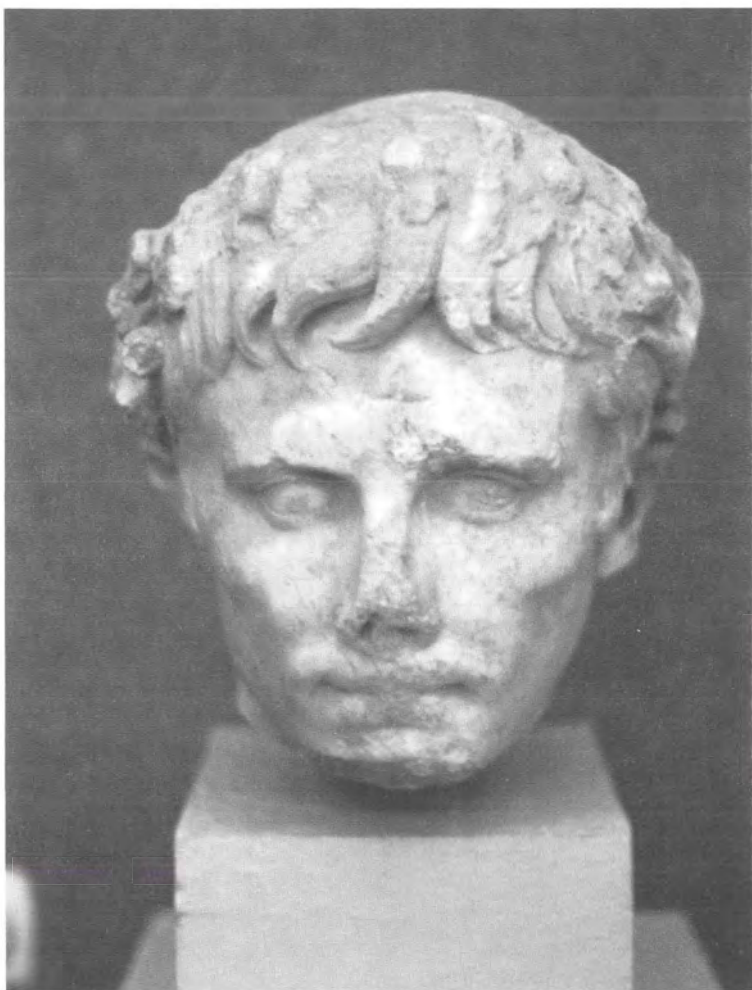[15] Wrede, "Die spätantike Herme", 130.

Fig. 3. Augustus, from Ephesus. Selçuk, Museum.

use, it was neutralized in yet other ways as well; in the Constantine period, the heads were youthful and highly standardized to avoid reminders of the god of Antiquity. Finally, the head was knocked off and the body itself used again, at times with a cross as its only decoration.[16]

The use of the sign of the cross as found on the portraits and hermae parallels Christianity's takeover of pagan temples: the old gods were driven out and the cross was used to convert the purified temple to *Ecclesia triumphans*.[17] A deity's image was mutilated and its head was replaced by a cross, as was done in the temple of Isis in Philae.[18] The inscriptions here leave no doubt about the significance: "the cross has triumphed; it always triumphs!"[19]

The practice reflects the Byzantine view of the surviving sculptures of Antiquity, remnants of heathen times. The extensive import to the capital of antique

[16] Ibid.

[17] F. W. Deichmann, "Frühchristliche Kirchen in antiken Heiligtümern", *JdI* 54 (1939), 105–136, repr. in id., *Rom, Ravenna, Konstantinopel, Naher Osten. Gesammelte Studien zur spätantiken Architektur, Kunst und Geschichte* (Wiesbaden, 1982), 56–94.

[18] P. Nautin, "La conversion du temple de Philæ en église chrétienne", *CahArch* 17 (1967), 1–43.

[19] Nautin, "Conversion", 14.—This is incidentally a custom with a long history. As late as 1588, Pope Sixtus V placed a bronze statue of the Apostle Paul at the top of the column of Marcus Aurelius in Rome, and explained in an inscription that ran around the base of the column that he had expurgated the heathen monument by converting it to Christian use (G. Armstrong, "Column under Glass", *Art News*, December 1985, 106).
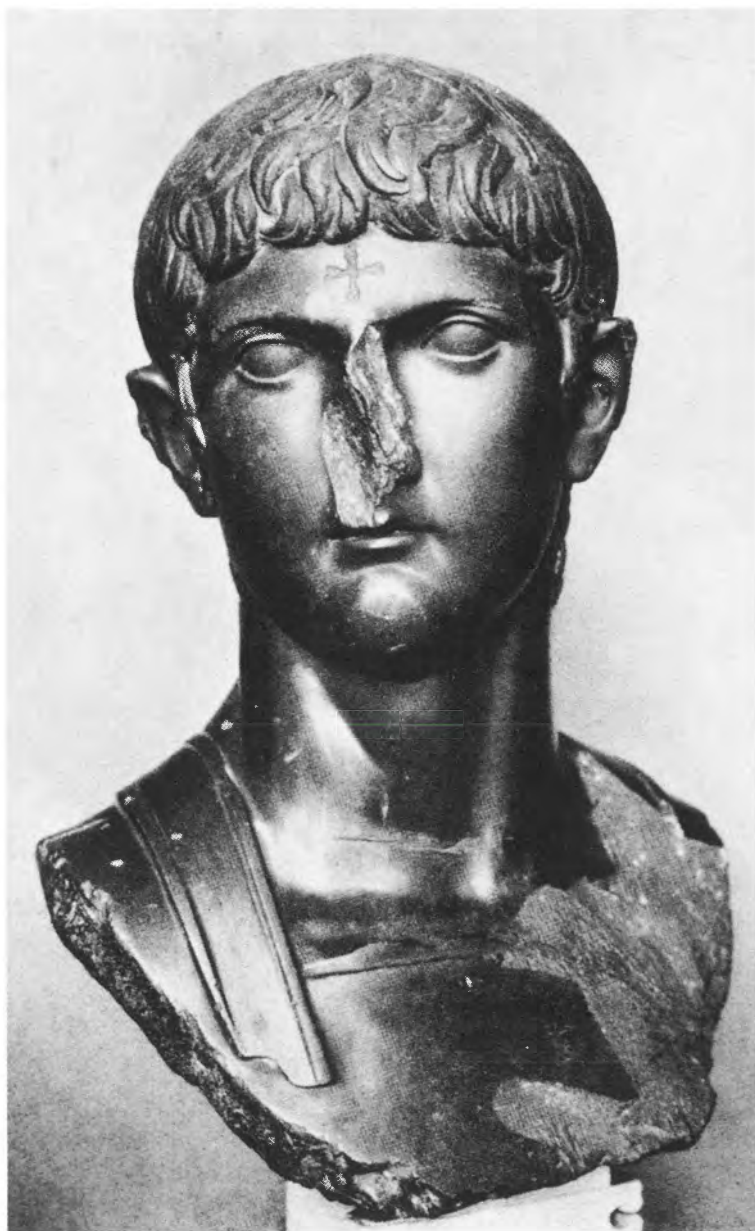
Fig. 4. Germanicus. London, British Museum (after Curtius).

statuary of various kinds in Constantine's time was carried on in a period with a labile and undefined official religious policy, and continued at a much reduced rate and to a much smaller extent to the time of Justinian.[20] The practice described reflects the Byzantine view of the surviving sculptures as remnants of heathen times, and the way one dealt with them. The underlying beliefs and attitudes are most clearly revealed by the descriptions in the many Lives of the saints. They unequivocally exemplify the common popular view of the statues of Antiquity: they are animate, are inhabited by demons that pose varying degrees of danger. Some of them might be quite innocent, while others are very sinister and threatening. This is not surprising, just one more aspect of popular beliefs— or should we say popular superstition—in a society that took dreams and portents seriously, and was used to having spokesmen for the supernatural among

[20] C. Mango, "Antique Statuary and the Byzantine Beholder", *DOP* 17 (1963), 55 ff.

Fig. 5. Tetrarchic emperor, from Afyon. Bursa, Museum (after Inan–Rosenbaum).

them, either as *ekstatikoi*, *prophêtai*, *daimonôntes*, or as holy men filled with the fear of God, spirituality, occult powers, and other strange gifts of grace.[21]

As representatives of heathen beliefs, it was fitting for antique statues to topple from their bases and be crushed when they were confronted with the divine—as was the case, according to Pseudo-Matthew, in the city of Sotinen in Egypt when its governor, Aphrodisius, was converted upon meeting the Holy Family during their flight. Statues were destroyed, even with official, imperial help—in a single case evidently with the intention of countering magic practices—but there do not seem to have been any attempts to carry out a systematic destruction of statues by the State. Cyril Mango, to whom we owe this information, estimates that in the capital during the Middle Byzantine period, about 100 antique statues had been preserved.[22] These statues played various roles in popular belief, as noted above, but they could also be accorded talismanic characteristics through various

[21] See E. R. Dodds, *Pagan and Christian in an Age of Anxiety* (New York, 1970), 37–68, and esp. 55 ff.
[22] Mango, "Statuary", 58 f. On Choniates's (positive) description of the antique statuary of Constantinople, see also A. Cutler, "The *De Signis* of Nicetas Choniates. A Reappraisal", *AJA* 72 (1968), 113–118.

rites.[23] In contrast, exorcism had to be employed if the statues were to be robbed of their power and their demons driven out. This was done in the same way as demons were exorcised from people who were possessed, or from haunted buildings and places.

A good example—and a single one can suffice, since the saints' Lives in this respect are stereotypic and repetitive—is found in the Life of Theodore of Sykeon. The holy man, Theodore, God's servant, was called to a village to drive out evil spirits from some of its inhabitants. A procession of supplicants circumvented the town and passed the place from which the demons had come. "Then he tortured them by the divine grace of Christ and by the sign of the holy Cross and by beatings on his chest..." After Theodore had prayed at length, they came out of the people and returned to their own dwelling. "But one very wicked spirit which was in a woman resisted and would not come out. Then the Saint caught hold of the woman's hair and shook her violently and rebuked the spirit by the sign of the cross and by prayer to God and finally said, 'I will not give way to you nor will I leave this spot until you come out of her'." The demon gave way and came out. Theodore now collected all the exorcized spirits with God's help (to observers, they appear to resemble blue-bottle flies, hares, and dormice), and drove them back to the cave in the mountain from which they had escaped, "which the Saint then sealed with prayer and the sign of the cross..."[24]

This episode, just one among many of the kind, is illustrative because it shows the double function of the sign of the cross: it can both exorcise and seal. It is precisely these two practices that delimit the field in which our imperial portraits imprinted with the sign of the cross should be placed.

It would be useful, before we proceed further, to see these portraits and heads with the sign of the cross added at a later date in contrast to a group of portraits of middle-aged men who are characteristic, not only for the lack of hair and beards, but also for the scar in the form of an X or T that was placed on their foreheads or over their temples. This "Scipio Africanus" type appears in great numbers from the Hadrianic to the tetrarchic period,[25] and presumably portrays priests or devotees of an oriental cult; both the mysteries of Isis and those of Mithras have been proposed.[26] A badly damaged head of uncertain date, a Greek philosopher or poet, was surprisingly found with an epsilon on his forehead over the left eyebrow, and for this reason was linked with Delphi.[27] A variation of these "Kahlköpfe" has hair and a scar in the form of an X or V.[28] The best-known of these portraits is probably the heroic equestrian figure that dominates the battle scene on the front of the Ludovisi sarcophagus (Fig. 6). The rider, who was identified in a problematic interpretation with Hostilian (d. 251), son of the Emperor Decius, bears an X-shaped sign on his forehead, perhaps denoting that he was an initiate of Mithras.[29]

[23] Mango, "Statuary", 61.

[24] E. Dawes and N. H. Baynes, *Three Byzantine Saints* (Crestwood, NY, 1977), 119 f. See also P. Brown, "The Rise and Function of the Holy Man in Late Antiquity", repr. in id., *Society and the Holy in Late Antiquity* (London, 1982), 125 f.

[25] H. Lilliebjörn, *Über religiöse Signierung in der Antike mit besonderer Berücksichtigung der Kreuzsignierung* (Diss., Uppsala, 1933), 63 ff., gives an annotated list of 26 numbers that comprises and supplements those previously published and discussed by Bernoulli (*Römische Ikonographie*, I, 1882), Dennison, Dölger, and others; further examples can now be added, cf. the following note.

[26] Cf. S. Sande, *Greek and Roman Portraits in Norwegian Collections* [*ActaIRNorv* 10] (Rome, 1991), 87 f., publishes one of these portraits and gives a general description of the type, with a bibliography. I am grateful to Siri Sande for information and references concerning the Scipio Africanus type.

[27] H. Möbius, "Der Philosoph mit dem Epsilon", *Eikones. Studien zum griechischen und römischen Bildnis* 12 (1980), 145–148. I am indebted to Jens Fleischer, who drew my attention to this article.

[28] An example made of terracotta in the form of a vase is at the museum in Bardo: *De Carthage à Kairouan. 2000 ans d'art et d'histoire en Tunisie* (Paris, 1982), 148, cat. no. 206, with bibliography.

[29] H. von Heintze, "Studien zu den Porträts des 3. Jahrhunderts. Hostilianus", *RM* 54 (1957), 69 ff.

Fig. 6. The Ludovisi sarcophagus, detail. Rome, Museo Nazionale.

The Meaning of the Sign of the Cross

When scholars discuss the early Christian and Byzantine use of the sign of the cross on temples or sculptures, it is often noted that it involved exorcism, or "neutralizing"[30] heathen elements, or "stigmatizing".[31] The terms accord different intentions and different meanings to this practice. The sign of the cross has magical powers; it can, as noted above, do many different things. Exorcism and "neutralization" involved the powers that inhabited the statues that had survived from earlier times. That which used to be is no longer; it has now been replaced by something else. The "stigmatization" that the pagan portraits bear, however, represents other notions that must also have prevailed in the early Christian and early Byzantine periods.

Dölger originally assumed that the X-shaped scar was a military stigma, while Lilliebjörn assumed that the rider with this sign declared himself a Mithraist and a follower of the imperial cult (*Religiöse Signierung*, 38 ff.). In his survey, R. Bianchi Bandinelli, *Rome. The Late Empire* (London, 1971), 59, sees it as "the distinguishing mark of a Mithraic initiate."

[30] E.g. Wrede, "Die spätantike Herme", 130.
[31] Alzinger, "Regierungsviertel", 262; Inan and Alföldi-Rosenbaum, *Porträtplastik*, 57, 58, 61.

As a stigma, tattoo, or scar, the X, T, V, or cross denoted a relationship, a sense of community with those who are like-minded, a group identity. This state of affairs has a long history. Slaves, like cattle, were tattooed so that they could be identified in relation to an owner.[32] Soldiers who were enlisted in the army were tattooed; this made them easily recognizable if they deserted, for example. But the tattoo was also a sign of their service, a sign of distinction.[33] Textual parallels to the relation of the "Kahlköpfe" to oriental or semi-oriental religions or cultures are found for example in III Maccabees, 2,29, which mentions the branding of Jews in the cult of Dionysus with an ivy leaf; or Lucian, who mentions a similar case in connection with the cult of a Syrian goddess, and Prudentius in connection with the worship of Attis.[34] What is particularly striking in our context is Tertullian's mention of how the "soldiers" of Mithras were signed: "et, si adhuc memini, Mithra *signat illic in frontibus* milites suos".[35] We must assume that it is this sign that is seen on the forehead of the rider on the Ludovisi sarcophagus. Soldiers or priests or believers thus signify their relationship to the emperor, cult, or god with a *signum*; they proclaim their membership of an ingroup in relation to the surrounding society.[36]

The *sphragis* is also apotropaic. It signifies protection under the seal, so to speak. As Narsai formulated it, "The case of the signing on the forehead is for the confusion of devils".[37] It is not far from this to the cross, Christograms, and the *ichtys* acrostics, which were placed on doorposts as apotropaic signs together with prayer formulae invoking aid.[38] For example, "When we sign thy cross, Christ... we avoid all evil." It is significant in this connection that some of these inscriptions with protective formulas have parallels in Antiquity. For example, the "Christus hic habitat" type corresponds completely to pagan Hercules inscriptions, "Heracles hic habitat", and displays the same basic concept and purpose: "Hic habitat felicitas ... nihil intrat mali".[39]

Applied to the individual, the idea is formulated in a lovely and curious way in a text by John Chrysostom: "One shall go with this word, as when one goes clad to market, and one shall always have it ready: 'I renounce thee, Satan, and all your splendor and all your deeds, and I commit myself to you, O Christ.' And never shall you leave your house without this word. It shall be your staff, your weapon, an unconquerable tower. And with this word *you shall also make the sign of the cross on your forehead.* So no man whom you meet—and not the devil himself—will be able to do you harm when he sees you appear everywhere with

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[32] The many cupids harvesting grapes in the Piazza Armerina mosaics and corresponding figures in the mosaics of Northern Africa with X- or V-shaped signs on their foreheads are considered a feature that was developed in a workshop tradition and should be disregarded in this context. J. W. Salomonsen, *La mosaïque aux chevaux de l'antiquarium de Carthage* (The Hague, 1965), 22: "... il s'agit manifestement d'un phénomène local, typique pour une région strictement circonscrite, qui—sauf pour Piazza Armerina—reste limitée à l'Afrique du Nord." Cf. R. J. A. Wilson, *Piazza Armerina* (London, 1983), 67 and 105, no. 41.

[33] Lampe, *Seal of the Spirit*, 9.

[34] For this and the following, see Lampe, *Seal of the Spirit*, 12f.

[35] Tertullian, *Praescr.* 40; Lilliebjörn, *Religiöse Signierung*, 26f.; Lampe, *Seal of the Spirit*, 11, 159.

[36] A macabre modern parallel is Charles Manson, who with his sect of young middle-class girls murdered the young actress Sharon Tate and her friends in a bestial and ritual fashion in 1969. He had stigmatized himself with an X- or cross-shaped sign on his forehead and during the trial reportedly claimed, "I have X'd myself from your world"—and consequently marked himself and his sect unequivocally as an outgroup in relation to society.

[37] Cf. E. C. Whitaker, *The Baptismal Liturgy* (London, 1981), 35.

[38] The parallel was already made in Deut. 6,4–9 and 11,13–21. Augustine claimed that the cross on the forehead had the same protective, apotropaic, effect as the blood from the Passover lamb on the doorposts (Whitaker, *Baptismal Liturgy*, 35).

[39] J. Engemann, "Zur Verbreitung magischer Übelabwehr in der nichtchristlichen und christlichen Spätantike", *JbAChr* 18 (1975), 42 ff.

this armament. Learn this lesson immediately so that you will be able to receive the wreath of righteousness when you have taken the seal upon you and are an armed soldier, and have lifted the sign of victory against the devil."[40]

A very similar train of thought in the story of Thecla makes a decisive link. When Thecla wants to follow Paul, he answers, "These are evil times and you are beautiful to behold. It would not be good if a new trial were to befall you, worse than the first, so that you could not stand it, but give in." Thecla said, "Only give me the seal in Christ, and trial shall not touch me." To whom Paul answered, "Thecla, be patient, and you shall receive the water."[41] In other words, the sign of Christ here, as in a large number of other texts, is the equivalent of baptism. Baptism "seals" and protects; with baptism, one receives the seal.[42]

The Cross and the Re-interpretation of Pagan Monuments

Was *sphragis*, *signaculum*, a visible sign? The "Kahlköpfe" or portraits of the Scipio Africanus type confirm that "the practice of tattooing or otherwise setting a mark upon the body as a sign of consecration to a deity was common in many of the cults of pagan Antiquity, especially in those oriental or semi-oriental religions in which the worshipper was brought into a personal relationship to his god like that of a servant to his master"; parallel to this, "the seal of the spirit" was at an early age "identified with the outward and visible sealing administered by the bishop as the head of the Christian family to mark its new member as one of Christ's men".[43]

Now the sign of the cross that the catechumen receives at baptism (*accipe signum*!) can naturally not be taken literally as testimony to physical markings, and the attempts that have been made to view Paul's reference (Gal., 6,17) that he bore the marks of Jesus branded on his body as an expression of this is not convincing.[44] In contrast, there are other texts that can confirm that a physical signing with an X (for Christ) or the sign of the cross was carried out, and which consequently links pagan with Christian tradition.[45]

The Emperor Julian's indictment of the Christians (361–363) includes the following points: "They worship the cross, *they draw its image on their foreheads and inscribe it on their doors*."[46]

Julian detected something that was evidently viewed as a common practice

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[40] *Homil. ad illumin. catech.* 2,5 (PG 49, col. 240). Here after F. J. Dölger, "Beiträge VI", *JbAChr* 6 (1963), 23 f.—In their lists of honorifics or epithets for the cross, both Ephraem the Syrian and Pseudo-John Chrysostom mention not only that it is the sign of victory over demons and the devil, but also "a covering for the naked". I.e. one is not uncovered and vulnerable, but protected ("clad") by the sign of the cross: F. J. Dölger, "Beiträge IX", *JbAChr* 10 (1967), 14 ff.
[41] Here from the Danish translation in B. Carlé, *Thekla. En kvindeskikkelse i tidlig kristen fortællekunst* (Copenhagen, 1980), 18 f.
[42] See Lampe, *Seal of the Spirit*, 106 f.
[43] Lampe, *Seal of the Spirit*, 12, 147.
[44] Cf. W. A. Meeks, *The First Urban Christians. The Social World of the Apostle Paul* (New Haven and London, 1983), 154 f. See also below, and n. 51.
[45] See E. Dinkler, "Jesu Wort vom Kreuztragen", in *Neutestamentliche Studien für Rudolf Bultmann* (Berlin, 1954), 125 f., repr. in id., *Signum Crucis* (Tübingen, 1967), 93 f. This book also contains Dinkler's consideration of whether *sphragis* was found as a tattoo, was drawn on with ashes, etc. Previously he had expressed his doubts about the physical character of the "Jahve sign": "Zur Geschichte des Kreuzsymbols", *Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche* 48 (1951), 167 f. (= *Signum Crucis*, 19 f.)—The pagan and Jewish tradition of physical signing was reviewed by Lampe, *Seal of the Spirit*, Ch. 1, esp. p. 7 ff.
[46] F. J. Dölger, "Beiträge VII", *JbAChr* 7 (1964), 23.

Fig. 7. Adoration of the magi. The Ratchis altar, Cividale.

and seems to be in keeping with the pagan tattoos mentioned earlier.[47] Reflections in visual art before and after our imperial portraits include an Archontic funerary stele from Kirbet Kilkis in the form of a human figure decorated with symbols on the body and with *sphragis* on the head and shoulders,[48] Mary with *sphragis* on her forehead on the Ratchis altar (744–749) in Cividale (Fig. 7), and Martin, Bishop of Dume and archbishop of Braga, with a similar sign on his sarcophagus from the middle of the 11th century.[49] Here *sphragis* signifies a consecration to Christ and Mary as bearers of the divine.

[47] They also have parallels in modern times. Up to the turn of the century, Slavic peasant girls often had a cross tattooed on their foreheads, presumably to protect them against Islam. Cf. E. Dyggve, *History of Salonitan Christianity* (Oslo, 1951), Fig. IV, 41b. Tattoos of the cross on the hands are known today in the Coptic church, cf. S. Oettermann, *Zeichen auf der Haut. Die Geschichte der Tätowierung in Europa* (Frankfurt a. M., 1979), esp. Ch. I, 2.
[48] A. Toynbee (ed.), *The Crucible of Christianity* (London, 1969), 269 (center left).
[49] H. Schlunk, "Ein Sarkophag aus Dume im Museum in Braga (Portugal)", *Madrider Mitteilungen* 9 (1968), 424–458.

What Claude Lévi-Strauss maintained in conjunction with a discussion of Maori tattooings must also hold true here. They are not only emblems of nobility and symbols of rank in the social hierarchy, "they are also messages fraught with spiritual and moral significance. The purpose of the Maori tattooings is not only to imprint a drawing onto the flesh but also to stamp onto the mind all the traditions and philosophy of the group".[50]

The seal that is mentioned repeatedly in the texts is the sign of baptism. Ephraem the Syrian sees baptism as "the seal of life", in other words the seal that gives access to eternal life. This is also the meaning of the dialogue between Paul and Thecla: the seal that she wants is baptism. Jerome, Tertullian, and others viewed Ezekiel 9,4 as a prophetic prediction of baptism. The *signaculum frontium* that Ezekiel mentions is the sign of the cross, which is also given at baptism. It is the "spiritual sign"—the cross on the forehead of the baptized, given immediately after baptism itself, as Ambrose described in his thorough discussion of the baptismal liturgy. This is the seal, *signaculum frontium*: the external, visible sign of baptism—and in the texts it is a metaphor for baptism. For Paul, who uses the term a few times (II Cor. 22; Eph. 1,13–14; Eph. 4,30), it is not a physical stamp or mark , but a metaphorical sign that one is a chosen member of the church of Christ.[51]

The texts show such a close link between *sphragis* and baptism that they must be considered synonymous. It is this positive aspect of *sphragis* that must be added to the traditional conception of the sign of the cross as an instrument with which to exorcize demonic powers that inhabit pagan statues, and which must hold true for the use of the sign of the cross on the Roman imperial portraits. As a sacred symbol, the sign of the cross has a synthesizing function; it consummates the Christian society's most comprehensive ideas of order.[52] The old heathen emperors were not "neutralized" but so to speak reactivated through the sign of baptism; they were made members of the Christian ingroup. They no longer rule, but bear witness to the fact that they now let themselves be ruled. They and the old order that they represent have been taken under the cross, brought under the new order with the aid of the holy symbol.

In a certain way, they can be said to create a parallel to the Christian reinterpretation of the monuments of Antiquity. Examples mentioned by Mango comprise a seated statue, perhaps of a philosopher, which was considered to represent Solomon; an imperial equestrian statue on the Forum Tauri which was considered to represent Joshua; and finally the antique reliefs and sculpture fragments for which room was found on church façades. Especially noteworthy was the use of remains from the monument of the Barbii, which were placed around the portal of S. Giusto in Trieste; some of the portraits from the tomb were actually given halos.[53]

In popular belief, the *sphragis* on the imperial portraits might represent a parallel to John Chrysostom's statement that Christian emperors "bear the cross on their brows above their diadems".[54] The few portraits that I have highlighted here might represent an anomaly in the finds, but it is significant so far that— with the exception of the tetrarchic emperor from Afyon—it is Augustus and representatives of the Julio-Claudian house who have received *sphragis*. Jesus

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[50] C. Lévi-Strauss, *Structural Anthropology* (New York, 1963), 257.
[51] These texts by Paul are the point of departure for Lampe's thorough study, *Seal of the Spirit*, 3 ff.
[52] Here I have paraphrased C. Geertz, "Religion As a Cultural System", repr. in his *Interpretation of Cultures* (New York, 1973), 89.
[53] Mango, "Statuary", 63 f.
[54] *Exp. in Ps. 109,6*, quoted by Lampe, *Seal of the Spirit*, 278, who is unsure whether the comment is meant metaphorically, and who refers to other examples of concrete, physical signings with the seal of the Cross.

was born under the reign of Augustus and the Empire and the *pax Romana* that he had brought about were necessary conditions for the spread of Christianity. With the *Imperium Romanum* under Augustus, the foundation was laid for the future *Imperium Romanum Christianum*. Origen is an early representative of the view of the *pax Romana* as part of God's plan for salvation.[55] Far into the Middle Ages, one finds discussions of Augustus as a figure of Christ.[56] It might also be conceptions of this kind that result in a *sphragis* marking the portraits in Ephesus as Augustus Christianus and Livia Christiana.[57]

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[55] Origen, *Contra Celsum* II, 30. Here from a translation and discussion in T. Christensen, *Romermagt, hedenskab og kristendom. En kulturkamp* (Copenhagen, 1970), 90 f.

[56] E.g. in an 11th-century commentary on Horace, quoted by B. Bischoff, "Living with the Satirists", in R. R. Bolgar (ed.), *Classical Influences on European Culture A.D. 500–1500* (Cambridge, 1971), 84.

[57] Germanicus can be included here very appropriately; as my colleagues at the Istanbul colloquium emphasized, developments in the Julio-Claudian iconography were such that during the Byzantine age, Germanicus could easily have been viewed as a portrait of Augustus.

Thessalonique paléochrétienne

Une esquisse

HJALMAR TORP

À la mémoire d'André Grabar

Fondée en 316/315 par le roi Cassandre sur le site d'une ville antérieure—probablement Therme—Thessalonique tire son nom de l'épouse du fondateur, demi-soeur d'Alexandre le Grand (Strabon, *Géogr.* VII, 330).[1] Pourtant, extrêmement peu des découvertes faites à l'intérieur des enceintes datent, en toute certitude, de l'époque hellénistique; en fait, les matériaux préromains sont tellement maigres qu'on a proposé une nouvelle, seconde naissance (non documentée) de la ville à l'époque de l'empereur Auguste.[2] Mais, de manière que la ville a retenu son nom primitif, il y a des éléments archéologiques en faveur de l'hypothèse qu'elle a aussi conservé des traits essentiels de son tissu urbain, de façon que la ville hellénistique—et son successeur romain—constitue la structure topographique de base dans laquelle les bâtiments des périodes ultérieures furent insérés, généralement parlant, jusqu'à l'époque moderne (fig. 1). Cependant, pour ce qui concerne la topographie urbaine de Thessalonique hellénistique et romaine, je me borne à renvoyer à quelques livres et articles,[3] et passe sans attendre à la Thessalonique de l'antiquité tardive.

Abréviations

Melétes = Μελέτες για την αρχαία Θεσσαλονίκη—"Θεσσαλονίκην Φιλίππου Βασίλισσαν" (Thessalonique, 1985)

Thessalonique I = *Thessalonique* (Centre d'Histoire de Thessalonique), vol. 1 (Thessalonique, 1985)

Spieser, *Thessalonique* = J.-M. Spieser, Thessalonique et ses monuments du IVe au VIe siècle. Contribution à l'étude d'une ville paléochrétienne [Bibliothèque des Écoles françaises d'Athènes et de Rome, 254] (Athènes-Paris, 1984)

Feissel, *Inscriptions* = D. Feissel, Recueil des inscriptions chrétiennes de Macédoine du IIIe au VIe siècle [*BCH*, suppl. 8] (Athènes-Paris, 1983)

Tafrali, *Topographie* = O. Tafrali, *Topographie de Thessalonique* (Paris, 1913)

[1] A. E. Vakalopoulos, Ἱστορία τῆς Θεσσαλονίκης 315 π.Χ. – 1912 (Thessalonique, 1947) (éd. angl. 1963), 2–7; A. I. Thavoris, "Θεσσαλονίκη—Σαλονίκη. Ἡ ἱστορία τοῦ ὀνόματος τῆς πόλεως", *Thessalonique* I, 1–22.

[2] H. von Schoenebeck, "Die Stadtplanung des römischen Thessalonike", *Bericht, VI. Internat. Kongress für Archäologie* (Berlin, 1940), 478–482 (= *Melétes*, 346–350).

[3] Tafrali, *Topographie*; Tabula Imperii Romani, K 34 (Ljubljana, 1976), 139–147 (A. Avraméa), avec excellent plan archéologique de la ville (I. Athanassiadi); M. Vickers, "Towards Reconstruction of the Town Planning of Roman Thessaloniki", *Ancient Macedonia*, I (Thessalonique, 1970), 239–251; id., "Hellenistic Thessaloniki", *JHS* 92 (1972), 156–170 (= *Melétes*, 486–499); S. Pelekanidis, "'Τὸ θέατρον τὸ καλούμενον στάδιον' τῆς Θεσσαλονίκης", *Kernos* 1972, 122–133 (= *Melétes*, 477–485); Ch. Bakirtzis, "D'une porte inconnue des remparts occidentaux de Thessalonique", *Balkan Studies* 14 (1973), 303–307; id., "Ἡ θαλάσσια ὀχύρωση τῆς Θεσσαλονίκης", *Byzantina* 7 (1975), 289–341; id., "Περὶ τοῦ συγκροτήματος τῆς ἀγορᾶς τῆς Θεσσαλονίκης", *Ancient Macedonia*, II (Thessalonique, 1977), 257–269 (= *Melétes*, 592–604); N. K. Moutsopoulos, "Contribution à l'étude du plan de la ville de Thessalonique à l'époque romaine", *Atti del XVI Congresso di Storia dell'Architettura. Atene 1969* (Rome, 1977), 187–263, pl. I–X; E. Kampouri, "Δημόσιο κτίσμα τῶν ρωμαϊκῶν αὐτοκρατορικῶν χρόνων στὸ χῶρο τοῦ συγκροτήματος τῆς ἀρχαίας ἀγορᾶς Θεσσαλονίκης", *Thessalonique* I, 85–107; voir en plus ci-dessous, n. 80.

Aspects of Late Antiquity and Early Byzantium, ed. L. Rydén, J. O. Rosenqvist, Swedish Research Institute in Istanbul, Transactions, Vol. 4 (Stockholm, 1993)

113

THESSALONIQUE

Plan cédé par l'École Polytechnique de l'Université de Thessalonique,
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100m 50 0   100   200   300   400   500m

LÉGENDE

	ENCEINTE EXISTANTE
	ENCEINTE TRACÉ CERTAIN
	ENCEINTE TRACÉ SUPPOSÉ
Nos 1-148	TOURS
Nos I-XXIII	PORTES AVEC INDICATION D'ENTRÉE
Nos 149-172	VESTIGES DES MONUMENTS
	VOIE ANTIQUE
	CÔTE ANCIENNE SUPPOSÉE
	CÔTE ACTUELLE

MONUMENTS

1. Tour Blanche
33. Tour de la Chaîne
141-148. Heptapyrgion
149. Rotonde Saint-Georges
150. Arc de Galère
151-155. Palais de Galère
156. Hippodrome
158. Odéon
159. Agora

161. Panagia tôn Chalkéôn
165. Sainte-Sophie
168. Saint-Démétrius
169. Hosios-David
172. Saints-Apôtres
I. Porte de Rome
II. Porte Cassandréotique
V. Porte d'Anne Paléologine
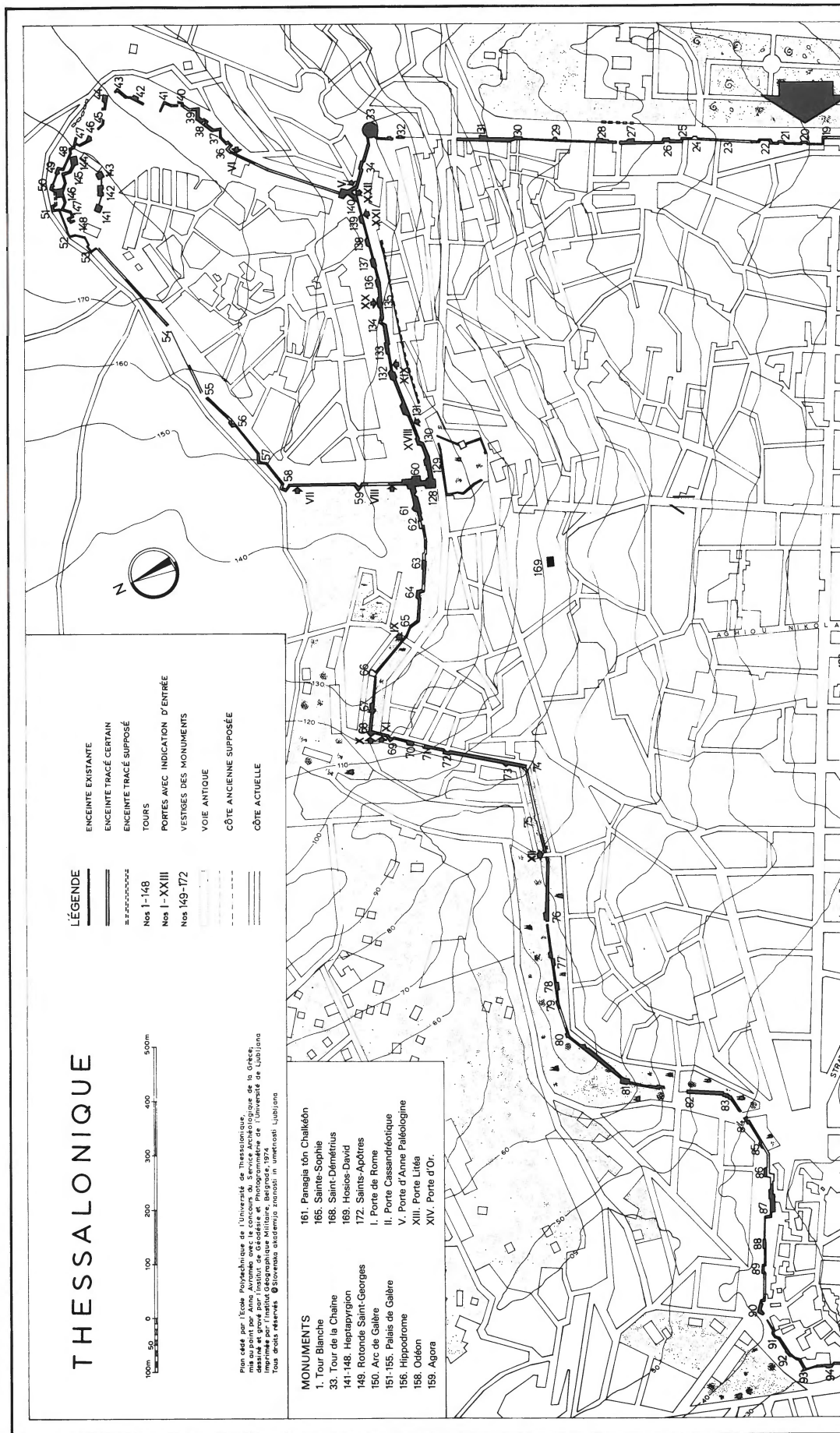XIII. Porte Litéa
XIV. Porte d'Or.

Fig. 1. Plan de Thessalonique (d'après *Tabula Imperii Romani*, K 34, et Spieser, *Thessalonique*, avec additions). 1: Tour Blanche. 20: Tour d'Hormisdas. 149: Rotonde. 150: Arc (II Porte Cassandréotique). 155: Octogone de Galère. 156: Hippodrome. 159: Agora, G *agiasma*. 165/167: Sainte-Sophie, vestiges basilique à cinq nefs; A, B murs romains. 166: Nymphée (puis baptistère?). 167A: Vestiges épiscopium? 168: Saint-Démétrius. 169: Hosios-David. 170: Église de l'Acheiropoiètos. C: Oratoire rue Valdadórou. D: Vestiges église-octogone (Saint-Nestor? XIV *Porta Aurea*). E: Vestiges église rue Saint Démétrius. F: Saint-Ménas.

Dessin: IRO ATHANASSIADI

Les enceintes romaine et chrétienne

A l'exception probablement du plateau fortifié situé au Nord de la ville, que l'on appelle Acropole, les murs chrétiens plus anciens, selon toute vraisemblance, suivent la même trace que les fortifications préexistantes des périodes hellénistique et romaine. Les ouvrages défensifs romains les plus importants semblent se rapporter aux sièges des Goths en 254 et 268. Même si l'étendue de ces travaux ne se laisse pas exactement établir, il s'agit assurément d'une réfection plutôt d'envergure. A part cette question de l'étendue des ouvrages réalisés au IIIe siècle, il y a encore un problème à discuter en liaison avec les remparts préchrétiens: la date à assigner au décrochement de la partie méridionale des murailles orientales, à l'Est de la Rotonde et en direction du golfe. La question est d'un certain intérêt, en particulier en relation avec la chronologie relative, entièrement incertaine, des bâtiments construits à l'intérieur de la zone palatiale. Ce qu'il y a de certain, c'est que la grande nécropole orientale de l'époque romaine s'étendait sur les terrains situés immédiatement à l'Est de la Rotonde et de l'arc de Galère, aux alentours de la Porte Cassandréotique—la porte principale de ce côté de la ville—et continuant vers le golfe au Sud.[4] Pour cette raison, les remparts hellénistiques auraient passé à l'Ouest du mur actuel, suivant probablement une ligne reliant le redan 19 (au Sud de la tour 22, d'Hormisdas) et la Tour Blanche. La question se pose alors de savoir si le décrochement daterait des années 250–260 (les invasions des Goths), ou d'environ 300 (le temps de l'érection de l'hippodrome et des divers édifices du palais impérial adjacent). A la place Syndrivani (Porte Cassandréotique), l'enceinte romaine et l'enceinte paléochrétienne (avec le redan 9), accolée à la première, traversent un secteur fouillé en 1970, occupé par trente tombeaux sûrement antérieurs au mur romain, mais dont la date, selon l'auteur des fouilles, ne dépasse pas la première moitié du IIIe siècle.[5] Ces tombes sont toutes d'incinération. Or, quelques années plus tard (1978) et peu de mètres plus au Nord, rue Melinikou 11, à la hauteur de la Rotonde, furent mis au jour, pendant des travaux de canalisation des eaux, encore treize tombeaux romains (dont un sarcophage de marbre avec inscription).[6] Ils sont tous d'inhumation, et devraient être plus récents que ceux trouvés près du redan 9. Malheureusement, sur la base des informations dont je dispose, il n'est pas possible de préciser davantage la date de ces enterrements.[7]

Les arguments pour dater les vestiges de l'enceinte préchrétienne existant sur le trajet du "décrochement" au temps des invasions gothiques sont essentiellement d'ordre conjectural;[8] quant à la technique et aux matériaux, l'identité entre

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[4] P. Wolters, "Funde – Salonik", *AM* 16 (1891), 262–264 (= *Melétes*, 711–713); J. Mordtmann, "Funde – Salonik", *AM* 16 (1891), 364–369 (= *Melétes*, 714–718); Ph. M. Petsas, "Χρονικὰ Ἀρχαιολογικὰ 1966–1967", *Makedonika* 9 (1969), 161, fig. 10–12, pl. 65; *ADelt* 26 (1971) [1975], 373–382 (A. K. Vavritsas); cf. ci–dessous, n. 6.

[5] *ADelt* 26 (1971) [1975], 373–382 (A. K. Vavritsas); Spieser, *Thessalonique*, 65, n. 239, me paraît prendre à la légère l'existence de cette nécropole, qu'il réduit à "certaines tombes".

[6] *ADelt* 34 (1979) [1987], 276, fig. 1–3 à p. 277–278 (A. Romiopoulou).

[7] Autant que je sache, le sarcophage à l'inscription n'a fait l'objet d'aucune publication.

[8] J.-M. Spieser, "Note sur la chronologie des remparts de Thessalonique", *BCH* 98 (1974), 507–519, partic. 516; cf. id., *Thessalonique*, 64–66.—Pour arriver sur la mer au point où se trouve aujourd'hui la Tour Blanche, les remparts du IIIe siècle auraient passé à environ 50 m à l'Est de la Rotonde et à travers l'hippodrome. Toute cette étendue (du commencement du crochet et jusqu'à la Tour Blanche) est mal explorée et probablement jamais fouillée au-dessous du niveau de l'époque tétrarchique. Par conséquent, en vue d'une datation fixée à l'époque des invasions gothiques de l'enceinte du décrochement, l'allégation (Spieser, *Thessalonique*, 65) qu'on aurait pu trouver sur le terrain du palais les fondations des remparts pré-galériens n'est pas davantage qu'un argument *ex silentio*. On n'a pas non plus découvert des restes du mur hellénistique, qui probablement aurait passé à travers ce même terrain. Il ne faut pas non plus négliger le fait qu'immédiatement au Sud de la Porte Cassandréotique les remparts se replient de nouveau, cette fois en direction opposée, c'est-à-dire vers l'Ouest, à coup sûr pour

ces vestiges des remparts et les autres parties gothiques ou tenues comme telles n'est pas du tout démontrée. Au contraire, en particulier les briques examinées[9] sur les vestiges près de la place Syndrivani, sont plutôt à rapprocher de celles utilisées dans des structures appartenant à l'époque galérienne.[10] Quant au tracé de la partie basse des remparts orientaux, plutôt que de le considérer comme projeté pour créer la possibilité de flanquement et de surveillance (du ravin au Nord-Est), proposition formulée par Spieser,[11] je préfère l'explication tradition-nelle, à savoir que le crochet daterait de l'époque de Galère[12] et serait dû à la nécessité d'incorporer dans le système défensif l'hippodrome. Peu d'années auparavant, l'Auguste de l'Occident, Maximien *Herculius*, au moyen d'un décro-chement des remparts, avait fait incorporer dans la zone occidentale de Milan l'hippodrome de son palais, se servant pour les murailles d'une partie de l'hippo-drome même.[13]

Au sujet des murailles chrétiennes, une fois de plus je suis "traditionaliste", en ce sens qu'à mon avis elles montrent trois techniques de construction (sans compter les réfections médiévales), dont l'une est bien distincte des deux autres qui, de leur côté, se ressemblent entre elles.[14] Ce sont les sections construites selon le premier de ces procédés qui sont les plus importantes et les plus anciennes. A cette enceinte paléochrétienne appartient la susnommée tour 22, sur laquelle se trouve l'inscription très-discutée, comportant le nom Hormisdas. L'identification de ce personnage est essentielle non seulement en vue de la datation de cette tour et des sections comparables, mais aussi d'autres monu-ments paléochrétiens de la ville. Parmi les personnages historiques portant ce nom, on a dernièrement et avec insistance dirigé l'attention sur l'Hormisdas préfet du prétoire *per Orientem*,[15] selon des documents entre février 448 et avril 450.[16] Cependant, à cette époque là, la ville de Thessalonique se trouvait dans la juridiction du préfet d'Illyricum et, en conséquence, hors de celle du préfet de l'Orient. Son attention ayant été attirée sur ce fait,[17] M. Vickers, pour sauver l'identification proposée et par là même la datation au Ve siècle des remparts, fit de cet Hormisdas le chef de la préfecture d'Illyricum, fonction qu'il aurait remplie avant de prendre en gérance la *praefectura praetorio Orientis*.[18] Cette solution de facilité a obtenu un grand succès parmi les érudits.[19] Néanmoins, on

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s'accoler à l'hippodrome. Vraisemblablement, celui-ci aurait été un des derniers parmi les édifices majeurs du palais à être projeté et construit, ce qui expliquerait et sa position à l'Est des autres bâtiments palatins (placé à l'Ouest, l'hippodrome aurait pénétré d'une manière intolérable le centre urbain) et la nécessité d'élargir de ce côté la ville. Comme pour la Rotonde, il me paraît assez probable que l'hippodrome est resté inachevé à la mort de Galère.

[9] Spieser, *Thessalonique*, 63–64.

[10] E. Hébrard, "Les travaux du Service Archéologique de l'Armée d'Orient à l'arc de triomphe 'de Galère' et à l'église Saint–Georges de Salonique", *BCH* 44 (1920), 5–40, partic. 22–23.

[11] *Thessalonique*, 66.

[12] Cf. *ADelt* 25 (1970) [1973], 365, où A. K. Vavritsas précise, à propos de la section des murailles découvertes rue Philikes Hetaireias, entre la rue Meg. Alexandrou et la rue Manousogiannaki: "τῆς ἐποχῆς τοῦ Γαλερίου, ὅπερ ἀπετέλει καὶ τὸ Α. πέρας τῆς Α. κερκίδος τοῦ Ἱπποδρόμου τῆς Θεσσαλονίκης"; Cf. *ADelt* 26 (1971) [1975], loc. cit. (id.); pour la datation gothique, *ADelt* 28 (1973) [1977], 480, n. 9; ibid., 37 (1982) [1989], 291.

[13] M. Mirabella Roberti, *Milano romana* (Milan, 1984), 29, 63–68, 78–84; fig. 2 à p. 8–9.

[14] Tafrali, *Topographie*, 65–76, reste la meilleure déscription des remparts.

[15] M. Vickers, "The Date of the Walls of Thessalonica", *Istanbul Arkeoloji Müzeleri Yılliği*, 15–16 (1969), 313–318, partic. 316; id., "The Date of the Mosaics of the Rotunda at Thessaloniki", *BSR* 38 (1970), 183–187, partic. 183.

[16] O. Seeck, *Regesten der Kaiser und Päpste für die Jahre 311 bis 476 n. Chr.* (Stuttgart, 1919), 455, index, s.v. Hormisdas.

[17] G. Gounaris, "Παρατηρήσεις τινὲς ἐπὶ τῆς χρονολογίας τῶν τειχῶν τῆς Θεσσαλονίκης", *Makedon-ika* 11 (1971), 311–322.

[18] M. Vickers, "The Late Roman Walls of Thessalonica", *Roman Frontier Studies 1969* [Eighth International Congress of *Limesforschung*] (Cardiff, 1974), 249–255, partic. 252–254.

[19] A titre d'exemples: Spieser, "Note sur la chronologie" (ci–dessus, n. 8); id., *Thessalonique*, 66 et n.

a pu montrer d'une manière concluante qu'elle repose sur une supposition gratuite, à savoir que le décret de février 448, sur lequel repose la construction historique, ne se rapporte pas à la préfecture illyrienne mais manifestement à celle de l'Orient[20]—ce que d'ailleurs la grande majorité des historiens ont toujours retenu.[21]

Selon l'identification traditionnelle, initialement avancée par O. Tafrali en 1913,[22] l'Hormisdas de l'inscription serait un haut dignitaire d'origine princière perse, loué par Ammien Marcellin (XXVI.8). D'abord au service de l'usurpateur Procope, il était plus tard, selon le témoignage de Zosime (*Hist. Nov.* IV.30), vers 380, sous Théodose Ier, présent à Thessalonique, en qualité de commandant de corps d'armée et chargé de conduire des troupes barbares en Egypte.

L'inscription d'Hormisdas, constituée de briques, est longue d'environ 19 m[23] et comptait primitivement au moins deux lignes inscrites chacune dans une *tabula ansata*. Seul le texte de la seconde ligne est préservé. Avant le séisme de 1978, on avait pu établir le texte suivant: τεί[χ]εσιν ἀρ[ρή]κτοις 'Ορμίσδας ἐξετέλεσσε τήνδε πόλ[ι]ν ... "Par des remparts infrangibles Hormisdas a parachevé cette cité...",[24] la fin de la ligne étant très mal assurée.[25] Or, après le tremblement de terre en juin 1978, les travaux de restauration et de nettoyage exécutés en 1981–1982 par les autorités grecques ont non seulement assuré cette transcription mais en outre fourni les quatre mots finals de la ligne, de sorte qu'actuellement le texte se présente de cette façon: ΤΕΙΧΕϹΙΝ ΑΡΡΗΚΤΟΙϹ ΟΡΜΙϹΔΑϹ ΕΞΕΤΕΛΕϹϹΕ ΤΗΝΔΕ ΠΟΛΙΝ ΜΕΓΑΛΗΝ ΧΕΙΡΑϹ ΕΧΩΝ ΚΑΘΑΡΑϹ.

Au début de l'été de l'an 390, 7 000 personnes selon une source, selon une autre 15 000, furent massacrées par les soldats sur l'hippodrome de Thessalonique, par représailles à la suite de l'assassinat de Buthéric, *magister militum* (?) d'Illyricum.[26] Quant à l'inscription, l'auto-disculpation d'Hormisdas du carnage commis sur l'hippodrome en 390 paraît évidente: ... χεῖρας ἔχων καθαράς, ... *ayant les mains nettes*.[27] Donc, après sa mission en Egypte vers 380, Hormisdas serait retourné à Thessalonique et il est concevable qu'après le meurtre de Buthéric il ait succédé à celui-ci dans la charge de *magister militum per Illyricum*. En tout cas, quel qu'ait été son grade ou sa fonction, on est bien fondé à affirmer que c'est cet Hormisdas actif sous l'empereur Théodose Ier qui se trouve désigné sur l'inscription de l'enceinte orientale.[28]

244; J. R. Martindale, *The Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire*, II (Cambridge, 1980), 571, cf. 1249 (Hormisdas, préfet du prétoire *per Illyricum* 448, sans point d'interrogation; Feissel, *Inscriptions*, n° 89; J. H. Humphrey, *Roman Circuses. Arenas for Chariot Racing* (Londres, 1986), 630.

[20] B. Croke, "Hormisdas and the late Roman walls of Thessalonika", *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies* 19 (1978), 252–255; cependant, d'une part parce que "stylistic considerations all point to a mid-fifth-century date for the walls", d'autre part parce que, selon les sources, les Huns semblent avoir contourné Thessalonique en 447, Croke pense que "Hormisdas constructed the walls of Thessalonika in 442/3 when he was resident there as Praetorian Prefect of Illyricum."[!] Les Huns, peut-on se demander, auraient-ils attaqué la ville si les murs avaient été érigés une cinquantaine d'années plus tôt? Cf. ci-dessous, texte aux notes 26–28.

[21] Je reviendrai ailleurs avec plus de détails sur la préfecture d'Illyricum, sur Thessalonique, les murailles et sur Hormisdas.

[22] *Topographie*, 23–39.

[23] Feissel, *Inscriptions*, n° 89.

[24] Feissel, *Inscriptions*, loc. cit.

[25] Cf. Feissel, loc. cit.

[26] Sozomène, *Hist.Eccl.* VII 25,3: τοῦ ἡγουμένου τότε τῶν παρ' Ἰλλυριοῖς στρατιωτῶν; sur la répression, voir I. Hahn, "Ἡ ἐξέγερση τοῦ 390 στὴ Θεσσαλονίκη καὶ τὸ ἱστορικὸ τῆς πλαίσιο", *Byzantinisch-Neugriechische Jahrbücher* 19 (1966), 350–372.

[27] A. Kountouras, "Τρεῖς ἐπιγραφὲς ἀπὸ τὰ τείχη τῆς Θεσσαλονίκης", *3ème Symposion d'archéologie et d'art byzantin et post–byzantin* (Athènes, 1983), 39–40; *Thessaloniki and its Monuments* [Thessaloniki Ephorate of Byzantine Antiquities] (Thessalonique, 1985), 27–28 (T. Papazotos); H. Torp, "The Date of the Conversion of the Rotunda at Thessaloniki into a Church", *The First Five Lectures* [Papers from the Norwegian Institute at Athens, 1] (Athènes, 1991), 13–28, partic. 19.

[28] Probablement Hormisdas aurait fini (après 390) ce que Théodose Ier avait commencé pendant son
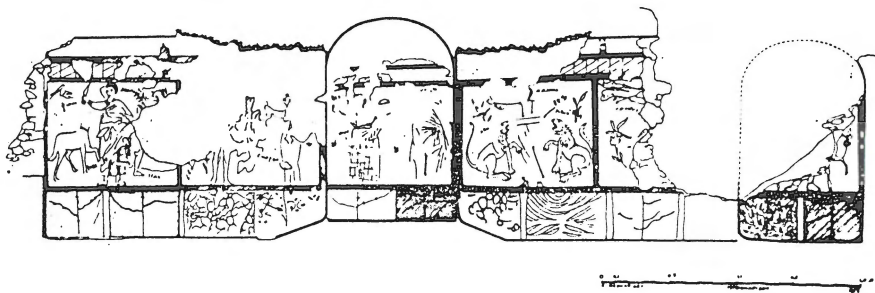
Fig. 2. Peintures du tombeaux de la rue Apolloniados 18, cimetière occidental. Sacrifice d'Abraham; Adam et Eve; martyre de Sainte Thècle; Daniel entre les lions; Noé (détruit) et la colombe; Bon Pasteur (dessin des parois, d'après Th. Pazaras).

Extra muros

Cimetières. Les nécropoles les plus importantes (dont l'histoire remonte jusqu'à l'époque hellénistique et même plus loin)[29] étaient situées au long des voies principales sortant de la ville dans la direction Nord-Ouest (vers Pella), Nord-Est (Macédoine orientale et Thrace) et Sud-Est (Chalkidiki); cette dernière en particulier paraît importante, s'éteignant à l'époque romaine, comme nous venons de le voir, à partir de l'ouest même de la Porte Cassandréotique et des remparts préchrétiens.[30] Nos connaissances des terrains situés hors des murs étant fondées dans une large mesure sur des découvertes fortuites, des sondages hâtifs et des fouilles de circonstance, préalables à la construction des édifices ou à des travaux de voirie, plutôt que sur des explorations systématiques, il est difficile de se faire une image détaillée de la topographie suburbaine de Thessalonique. Mais malgré le caractère très fragmentaire de la documentation, il semble assuré qu'au moins par endroits et peut-être jusque dans le courant du VIe siècle, des sépultures chrétiennes se rencontrent dans une espèce de coexistence avec des sépultures païennes: ou sous forme d'un nombre limité de tombes individuelles (en particulier sur les endroits tout proches de l'enceinte orientale) ou sous forme de noyaux chrétiens particuliers, introduits dans une nécropole d'ailleurs pour une grosse part païenne. Les cimetières chrétiens de Thessalonique se sont donc développés au sein même des nécropoles non-chrétiennes existantes; en d'autres termes, il n'existe pas de solution de continuité entre nécropoles païennes et cimetières chrétiens, conformément à ce qui est normal partout dans le monde romain.[31]

Les sépultures chrétiennes sont en tous genres: de simples inhumations à fosses, des tombeaux à chambre voûtée, des sarcophages; davantage que les sarcophages et les fosses, normalement disséminés sans ordre, les chambres voûtées sont disposées par rangs, l'une accotée à l'autre.[32] Les mausolées voûtés

premier séjour dans la ville quelque dix ans plus tôt. En fait, d'accord avec ce qu'en dit Ch. Edson dans son volume des *Inscriptiones Graecae*, X.2,1 (Berlin, 1972), n° 42, je pense que l'inscription métrique (sculptée sur un long bloc de marbre) aujourd'hui perdue mais autrefois copiée à la porte de Lètè dans les remparts occidentaux de Thessalonique, ne doit pas être attribuée au second Théodose (Feissel, *Inscriptions*, n° 88) mais à son grand-père, le premier empereur de ce nom: "Théodose, souverain détenteur du sceptre, a édifié ce rempart" (Feissel).

[29] K. L. Sismanidis, "Μακεδονικοί τάφοι στην πόλη της Θεσσαλονίκης", *Thessalonique* I, 35–70.

[30] Ci–dessus, n. 5, 6; M. Perdrizet, "Le cimetière chrétien de Thessalonique", *MélRom* 19 (1899), 541–548; Ch. Avezou, Ch. Picard, "La nécropole de Thessalonique", ibid., 32 (1912), 337–361 (= *Mélétes*, 269–293).

[31] Cf. en dernier lieu la synthèse présentée par U. M. Fasola et V. Fiocchi Nicolai, "Le necropoli durante la formazione della città cristiana", *Actes du 11e congrès international d'archéologie chrétienne 1986* (Cité du Vatican–Rome, 1989), 1153–1213, partic. 1154–1157, et p. 1181, n. 106 (note d'E. Marki sur la Grèce).

[32] Voir, par exemple, *ADelt* 27 (1972) [1977], 559–564, pl. 509a (E. Tsigaridas); Ph. M. Petsas, "Χρονικὰ Ἀρχαιολογικὰ 1966–1967", *Makedonika* 9 (1969), 158, fig. 8.
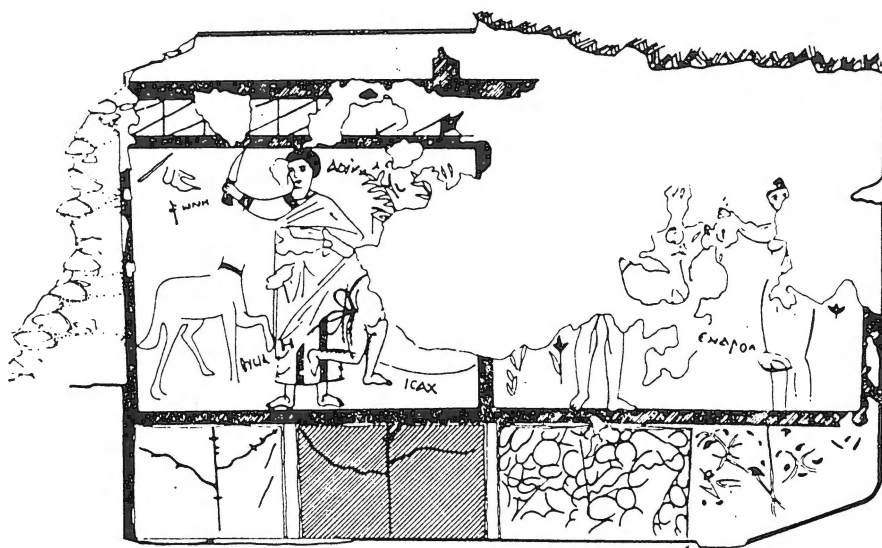
Fig. 3. Détail de fig. 2. Parois Sud: sacrifice d'Abraham; Adam et Eve (d'après Th. Pazaras).

très souvent étaient décorés de peintures pariétales. Un nombre considérable de ces monuments suggestifs, datant généralement du courant du IVe siècle, ont été fouillés soit à l'Est de la ville, soit sur les terrains situés en dehors des murailles occidentales (fig. 2, 3).[33]

Cependant, les plus anciens documents funéraires d'origine chrétienne vraisemblable consistent en deux ou trois épitaphes et une stèle, datant des IIe–IIIe siècles.[34] Parmi les documents épigraphiques sûrement chrétiens et de date peut-être préconstantinienne, on remarquera surtout deux inscriptions de sarcophages, dont l'une, d'Ailios Lykos, comporte la croix latine pattée, l'autre, de Ioulios Ioulianos, le *chrismon*.[35] Bien que ces documents les plus anciens n'aient pas été trouvés *in situ*, ils proviennent sans doute des cimetières chrétiens de la ville.

Dans la grande nécropole orientale, des groupes de tombeaux chrétiens ont été repérés en particulier dans la région de l'Hôpital Civil, sur les terrains de l'Université, dans le bois de Seich Sou et finalement au Nord du Musée Archéologique, dans la rue du Trois Septembre (fig. 4). Ce dernier ensemble de structures, découvert au cours de travaux de voirie en été 1980, constitue l'*area* funéraire chrétienne la plus importante jusqu'ici fouillée à Thessalonique, comprenant 58 tombeaux voûtés et rangés autour d'une grande basilique et d'un sanctuaire contigu plus petit. Les tombes auraient été consacrées à des sépultures

[33] Mordtmann, op. cit.; *ADelt* 16 (1960) [1962], 223–224, pl. 194–196 (S. Pelekanidis); *ADelt* 21 (1966) [1968], 334–339, pl. 348b, 357a (Ph. Petsas); *ADelt* 27 (1972) [1977], 563–565, fig. 10–12, pl. 507b, 510b–c (E. Tsigaridas); *ADelt* 34 (1979) [1987], 293, pl. 126c (Eu. Kourkoutidou-Nikolaïdou, Ch. Mauropoulou-Tsioumi); Petsas, "Χρονικὰ 1966–1967", 154–158, fig. 4; id., "Χρονικὰ Ἀρχαιολογικὰ 1968–1970", *Makedonika* 14 (1974), 319, 377–378; Th. Pazaras, "Δύο παλαιοχριστιανικοὶ τάφοι ἀπὸ τὸ δυτικὸ νεκροταφεῖο τῆς Θεσσαλονίκης", *Makedonika* 21 (1981), 373–389; Ch. Mauropoulou-Tsioumi, "Παράσταση τῆς Σωσάννας σὲ παλαιοχριστιανικὸ τάφο τῆς Θεσσαλονίκης", Ἀφιέρωμα στὴ μνήμη Στυλιανοῦ Πελεκανίδη (Thessalonique, 1983), 247–259; S. Pelekanidis, *Gli affreschi paleocristiani ed i più antichii mosaici parietali di Salonicco* (Ravenne, 1963); id., "Die Malerei der konstantinischen Zeit", *Akten des 7. intern. Kongresses für christliche Archäologie (1965)* (Cité du Vatican, 1969), 215–235 (= id., *Studien zur frühchristlichen und byzantinischen Archäologie* [Thessalonique, 1977], 75–96); Θεσσαλονίκη. Ιστορία και Τέχνη (Catalogue Exposition Tour Blanche) (Thessalonique, 1986), n° III, 4–5; 8–9 (p. 46–48); III, 16–19 (p. 58, 60–61).

[34] Feissel, *Inscriptions*, n°s 113–115 (épitaphe n° 114 aujourd'hui perdue).

[35] Feissel, *Inscriptions*, n°s 116–117; sur l'emploi et la valeur de ces deux symboles dans les inscriptions en question, voir loc. cit.
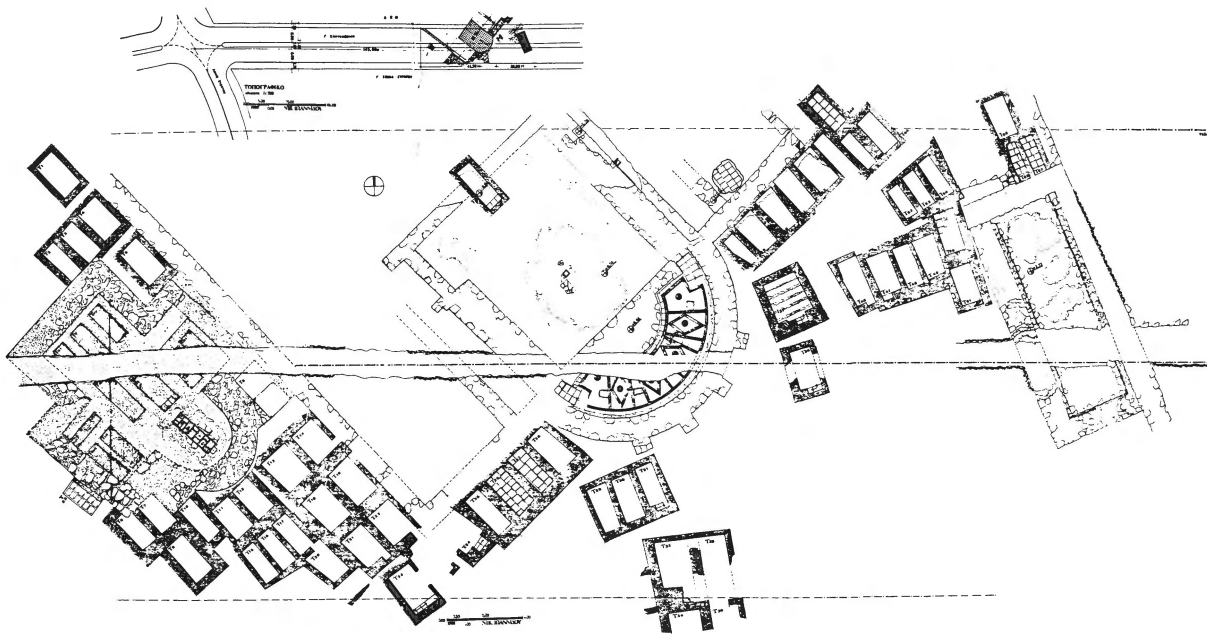
Fig. 4. Plan de l'*area* de la rue du Trois Septembre (d'après E. Marki).

successives du commencement du IVe siècle jusqu'aux sièges avaro–sklavènes aux environs de l'an 600. Si cela est exact, cette *area* aurait été le noyau d'un cimetière organisé, peut-être dès son début, par l'église locale—et, de ce fait, serait à rapprocher du cimetière de Calliste à Rome.

Sanctuaires suburbains. Selon les sources, la sainte Matrone aurait été ensevelie près de la *Léôphoros*, qui est le nom de la grande artère Ouest-Est ("Egnatia") traversant Thessalonique.[36] Après les persécutions, l'archevêque Alexandre, probablement le dignitaire de ce nom attesté en 325 au concile de Nicée,[37] aurait construit, à l'intérieur de la ville, un oratoire (εὐκτήριον οἶκον) pour y déposer le corps saint, primitivement sans doute selon la coutume, enterré aux environs de la ville, en dehors de l'enceinte. Je partage l'opinion de Spieser,[38] et placerais à l'Est de la ville son martyrion qui, au temps du siège avaro–sklavène vers la fin du VIe siècle, était fortifié et assez imposant pour que les ennemis le prennent, dans la nuit, pour la ville même.[39] Du même côté de la ville que le martyrion de Matrona et "à très petite distance des murailles", était également situé le sanctuaire—autrement inconnu—des saintes Chionè, Irène et Agapè.[40]

La découverte de l'*area* funéraire au-dessous de la rue du Trois Septembre[41] sert à éclairer ce qu'était un tel sanctuaire suburbain à Thessalonique. De la

[36] Tafrali, *Topographie*, 189, n. 3; Spieser, *Thessalonique*, 28, n. 13.

[37] L. Petit, "Les évêques de Thessalonique", *EO* 4 (1900–1901), 139; Tafrali, *Topographie*, 189; A. E. Vakalopoulos, "Ἱστορικὲς ἔρευνες ἔξω ἀπὸ τὰ τείχη τῆς Θεσσαλονίκης", *Makedonika* 17 (1977), 1–39, part. 36.

[38] Spieser, *Thessalonique*, 28–29. Je n'ai pu consulter ni N. Moutsopoulos, "Η θέση της ἄγνωστης μονῆς της ἁγίας Ματρώνας στη Θεσσαλονίκη", *5ème Symposion d'archéologie et d'art byzantin et post-byzantin* (Athènes, 1985), 58–59, ni id., "Monasteries Outside the Walls of Thessaloniki during the Period of Slav Raids", *Cyrillo-Methodianum* 11 (1987), 129–194.

[39] P. Lemerle, *Les plus anciens recueils des miracles de saint Démétrius et la pénétration des Slaves dans les Balkans*, I (Paris, 1979), index p. 255, s.v. Ματρώνα (ἁγία); II (Paris, 1981), 46–69.

[40] Dans les *Miracula Demetrii*, Lemerle, op. cit., I, 126, ce sanctuaire est cité dans le même contexte du *naos* de sainte Matrona.

[41] E. Marki-Angelkou, "Τὸ σταυρικὸ μαρτύριο καὶ οἱ χριστιανικοὶ τάφοι τῆς ὁδοῦ Γ´ Σεπτεμβρίου στὴ Θεσσαλονίκη", *AE* 1981, 53–69; D. Makropoulou, "Ὁ παλαιοχριστιανικὸς ναὸς ἔξω ἀπὸ τὰ ἀνατολικὰ τείχη τῆς Θεσσαλονίκης", *Makedonika* 23 (1983), 25–46; Th. Giankos, "Περὶ τῆς παλαιοχριστιανικῆς

basilique, la première révélée hors des murs de la ville,[42] seules sont fouillées les parties orientales avec l'abside, les restes du bâtiment se trouvant au–dessous des pavillons d'exposition sur le terrain de la Foire internationale. Il s'agit d'un bâtiment en briques (épaisseur des murs environ 1–1,25 m), à trois nefs et aux dimensions vastes puisque la partie orientale dégagée mesure environ 28,5 m de largeur intérieure (et par conséquent probablement au moins 60 m de longueur totale). Le bêma, orienté et mesurant environ 8 x 9,75 m, comportait des banquettes latérales pour le clergé et, à cheval sur le bêma et la nef, une chambre sépulcrale voûtée. L'abside, pourvue de quatre contreforts à l'extérieur, aurait été voûtée en cul-de-four. A l'intérieur de l'abside, dont le pavement aurait constitué une plate-forme (avec le synthronon?) surélevée d'environ 1,50 m par rapport à celui du bêma, était disposé un déambulatoire (κυκλίον) exceptionnel-lement large (2,75 m) et montrant des traces d'un aménagement liturgique secondaire.[43] Partiellement souterrain, ce couloir se trouverait de plain–pied avec les chambres funéraires accolées au mur oriental des bas–côtés. Enfin, au-dessous de la place de l'autel, situé à 3,25 m à l'Ouest de la corde de l'abside, la structure de l'*enkainion* avec un coffret en marbre renfermant un petit (8,2 x 4,8 x 4,2 cm) reliquaire ovale, en argent, décoré de quatre croix sur les côtés et du *chrismon* sur le couvercle.[44] Devant et presque en contact direct avec l'*enkain-ion*, furent trouvées 77 monnaies de cuivre datant de Constance II (347/348) à Théodose II (450), la majorité appartenant à la fin du IVe siècle et au premier quart du siècle suivant.[45]

L'identification de cette imposante basilique funéraire, manifestement liée à la vénération des martyrs et des reliques, reste incertaine; quant à la chronologie, on a proposé la première moitié du Ve siècle. Les points de repère sont rares et vagues. Cependant, un élément comme le couloir-*ambulacrum* en contrebas, dont la construction serait contemporaine de la basilique même, rend difficile une datation avant le VIe siècle.[46] On ne sait pas non plus de façon sûre jusqu'à quand l'église resta en service; il est à présumer qu'elle n'a pas survécu au "Siège de trente-trois jours", vers 618.[47]

Tassé contre le mur Sud (-Est) de la basilique, se trouve un bâtiment beaucoup plus petit (mesurant à l'extérieur environ 13,50 x 11 m), construit en moellons bruts, et de plan conçu en croix libre avec l'abside inscrite dans la branche orientale.[48] Y sont creusées onze tombes, dont la plus importante (mais non la plus ancienne?) occupe justement l'abside. Le bâtiment est dit antérieur à la

βασιλικῆς τῆς ὁδοῦ Γ' Σεπτεμβρίου Θεσσαλονίκης", *Γρηγόριος ὁ Παλαμᾶς* 66 (1983), 246–251 (pas consulté); *ADelt* 36 (1981), 310 (Ch. Mauropoulou-Tsioumi, Eu. Kourkoutidou-Nikolaïdou).

[42] Je n'ai pu consulter E. Marki, "Δύο ἄγνωστα μνημεῖα τῆς Θεσσαλονίκης", *5ème symposion* (ci-dessus, n. 38), 52–53 (sanctuaire suburbain τῶν Ἀμπελοκηπῶν).

[43] Makropoulou, op. cit., 32–35.

[44] Eu. Kourkoutidou-Nikolaïdou, "Τὸ ἐγκαίνιο τῆς βασιλικῆς στὸ ἀνατολικὸ νεκροταφεῖο Θεσσαλονίκης", *AE* 1981, Χρονικά, 70–81; cf. Catalogue Exposition 1986 (ci-dessus, n. 33, *in fine*), n° II, 14–15 (p. 35–36).

[45] D. Eugenidou, "Τὰ νομίσματα τοῦ ἱεροῦ τῆς βασιλικῆς τῆς Γ' Σεπτεμβρίου Θεσσαλονίκης", *AE* 1981, 82–85; le pavement du bêma aurait été refait; il ne parait pas possible de dire avec certitude à quelle phase appartiennent les monnaies.

[46] D. Pallas, "L'édifice cultuel chrétien et la liturgie dans l'Illyricum oriental", *Actes du 10e congrès international d'archéologie chrétienne 1980* (Cité du Vatican–Thessalonique, 1984), I, 85–160, partic. 137–138; les couloirs les plus anciens, début VIe siècle, seraient ceux de la basilique B de Nikopolis, deuxième phase, et de la basilique C de Thèbes Phthiotides, Pallas, loc. cit.; l'idée d'une influence de Constantinople paraît raisonnable, même si les exemples qui y sont conservés sont postérieurs; cf. J.–P. Sodini, "Les dispositifs liturgiques des basiliques paléochrétiennes en Grèce et dans les Balkans", *CorsRav* 31 (1984), 441–473, partic. 442–443.

[47] Lemerle, op. cit., I, 189, l. 6–10 (II, 94–103), Recueil Anonyme. Deuxième miracle, § 212: "Les barbares, considérant le peu de chances de leur entreprise contre la ville, demandèrent que leur départ fût acheté à prix d'argent: les Thessaloniciens n'y consentent pas, ils reprirent les hostilités. Leur chef le chagan, enflammé de colère de l'humiliation qu'il subissait, donne l'ordre de brûler tous les sanctuaires et toutes les constructions se trouvant hors de la ville, menaçant de ne pas se retirer ..." (ibid., 183).

[48] Marki-Angelkou, op. cit. (ci-dessus, n. 41).

basilique et aurait été le martyrion primitif du site. Parmi les exemples à rapprocher du monument thessalonicien, il faut citer les ruines de l'Ilissos des environs d'Athènes,[49] comportant une basilique et, accolé à son mur latéral Nord, un mausolée (martyrion de saint Léonidès?) préexistant.[50] Pour la date, on a proposé la fin du IVe siècle, ce qui n'a rien d'improbable,[51] bien que les points de repère en soient faibles.

Les branches de l'édifice auraient été couvertes de voûtes en berceau accompagnées, probablement, d'une coupole surbaissée au-dessus de la croisée, le tout, assurément, assez ressemblant à la chapelle dite mausolée de Galla Placidia.[52] De même que celui-ci, le martyrion était décoré de mosaïques, dont on a découvert des morceaux comportant des tesselles d'or. A ce propos, on se rappellera que cette impératrice, fille de Théodose Ier, revint en 424 de Thessalonique à Ravenne, où, plus tard, entre autres édifices, elle érigea l'église de Sainte-Croix et son annexe, la chapelle cruciforme qui aujourd'hui porte son nom.

Intra muros

Je ne m'arrêterai pas ici sur les problèmes de la Rotonde;[53] sa transformation en église et son embellissement avec des mosaïques constituent une vaste et très coûteuse entreprise dont, malgré toutes les contestations, je persiste à considérer qu'elle fut exécutée sur l'initiative du susnommé Théodose Ier et qui, en tant que fondation impériale, occupe une position particulière parmi les monuments paléochrétiens de la ville.[54] Je ne m'occuperai pas non plus de l'église de la Vierge Acheiropoiètos, dont la date, aux environs du milieu du Ve siècle ou peu d'années après, me paraît bien assurée;[55] ni du petit sanctuaire aujourd'hui connu sous le vocable de Hosios-David, que déjà A. Xyngopoulos, dans son *editio princeps* du monument, faisait plausiblement remonter aux environs de l'an 500;[56] non plus de Saint-Ménas (fig. 1, F), datant de la même époque.[57] Quant à la grande basilique de Saint Démétrius, je suis acquis à la date relativement basse, proposée récemment, à savoir le commencement du VIe siècle.[58] Le

[49] G. Sotiriou, "Παλαιὰ χριστιανικὴ βασιλικὴ τοῦ Ἰλισσοῦ", *AE* 1919, 1–31; M. Chatzidakis, *Πρακτικὰ τῆς ἐν Ἀθήναις Ἀρχαιολογικῆς Ἑταιρείας* 1948, 69–80; id., "Remarques sur la basilique de l'Ilissos", *CahArch* 5 (1951), 61–74; autres exemples de la catégorie d'églises funéraires, C. S. Snively, "Cemetery Churches of the Early Byzantine Period in Eastern Illyricum: Location and Martyrs", *GOTR* 29 (1984), 117–124 (l'auteur en géneral réservé quant à l'identification des mausolées annexés comme tombes de martyrs).

[50] I. Travlos, *Πολεοδομικὴ ἐξέλιξις τῶν Ἀθηνῶν* (Athènes, 1960), 136.

[51] Marki-Angelkou, op. cit., 57, avec des renvois, entre autres, à l'oeuvre fondamentale d'A. Grabar, *Martyrium. Recherches sur le culte des reliques et l'art chrétien antique*, I (Paris, 1946). Selon Marki-Angelkou, ibid., 62, le saint vénéré dans le martyrion de Thessalonique aurait pu être Alexandre, martyrisé et enterré à Pydna sous Maximien Galère, mais plus tard transféré dans notre ville sur le bord opposé du golfe, tandis que quelques-unes des autres tombes pourraient appartenir à des évêques locaux.

[52] Marki-Angelkou, op. cit., 57.

[53] N. K. Moutsopoulos, "Ἡ παλαιοχριστιανικὴ φάση τῆς Ροτόντας τοῦ Ἁγίου Γεωργίου Θεσσαλονίκης", *Actes du 10e congrès* (ci–dessus, n. 46), II, 355–376.

[54] Torp, op. cit. (ci–dessus, n. 27).

[55] W. E. Kleinbauer, "Remarks on the building history of the Acheiropoietos church at Thessaloniki", *Actes du 10e congrès*, II, 241–257, partic. 245–247; cf. R. Farioli, "I capitelli paleocristiani e paleobizantini di Salonicco", *CorsRav* 11 (1964), 133–177, partic. 154–156; J.-P. Sodini, "La sculpture architecturale à l'époque paléochrétienne en Illyricum", *Actes du 10e congrès*, II, 45, 50; pour les diverses phases constructives de l'église, voir les rapports de K. Theocharidou, dans: *2ème Symposion d'archéologie et d'art byzantin et post-byzantin* (Athènes, 1982), 31–32; et dans: *Byzantine Studies Conference, Abstracts of Papers* (1986), 344–345.

[56] A. Xyngopoulos, "Τὸ καθολικὸν τῆς Μονῆς Λατόμου ἐν Θεσσαλονίκῃ καὶ τὸ ἐν αὐτῷ ψηφιδωτόν", *ADelt* 12 (1929) [1931], 142–180; cf. E. Tsigaridas, *Οι τοιχογραφίες της μονής Λατόμου Θεσσαλονίκης και η βυζαντινή ζωγραφική του 12ου αιώνα* (Thessalonique, 1986), 13–14.

[57] M. Kabouri-Vamboukou, "Ἀρχιτεκτονικὰ γλυπτὰ ἀπὸ τὸν ἅγιον Μηνᾶ Θεσσαλονίκης", *Actes du 10e congrès*, II, 225–233.

[58] C. Strube, *Polyeuktoskirche und Hagia Sophia. Umbildung und Auflösung antiker Formen. Entstehen*
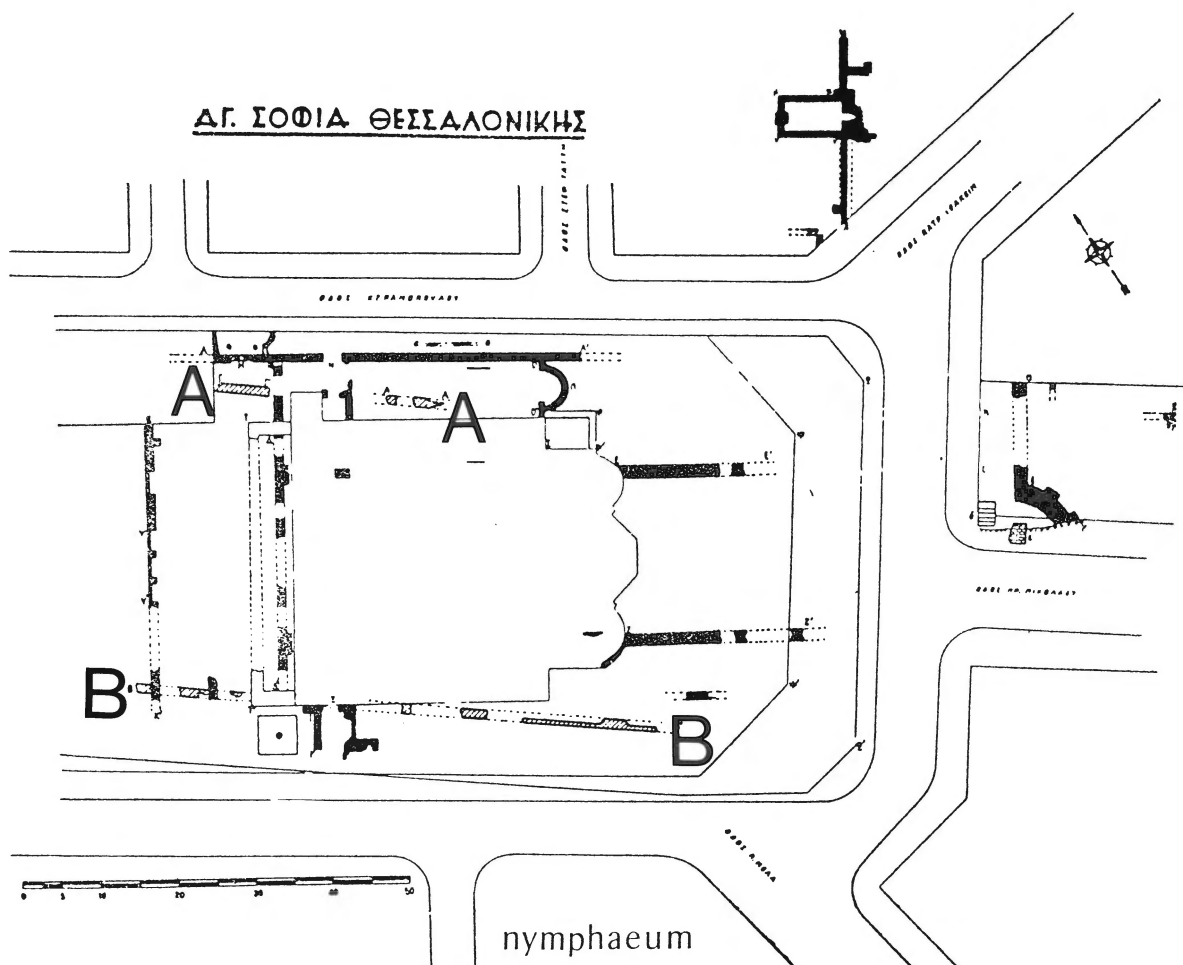
ΑΓ. ΣΟΦΙΑ ΘΕΣΣΑΛΟΝΙΚΗΣ

nymphaeum

Fig. 5. Plan des fouilles au site de Sainte-Sophie (d'après F. Drosogianni).

splendide bâtiment à cinq nefs présupposerait, d'autre part, un culte bien établi. Indépendamment de la question de l'origine du culte, je ne vois pas de raisons pour que la vénération, à Thessalonique, de Saint Démétrius ne remonte pas à environ 400 et même plus haut, comme le veut la tradition;[59]—pourtant reste très énigmatique l'élaboration architecturale de ce culte durant la période précédant l'érection de la grande basilique.[60]

Des questions restant pareillement en suspens concernent les vestiges mis au jour au-dessous de l'église actuelle de Sainte–Sophie (fig. 5). Or, en dépit du caractère partiel des fouilles, il ne saurait y avoir de doute sur la nature des structures mises au jour. En fait, les ruines se rapportent à un grand ensemble comportant une basilique à cinq nefs avec abside à l'Est, narthex et atrium, pour un total d'environ 175 m de longueur et 53 m de largeur et élevé sur une terrasse en terre-plein (fig. 6).[61] Après la destruction du bâtiment (vraisemblablement au

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des Kämpferkapitells [Bayerische Akad. d. Wiss., Phil.–hist. Kl., Abh. NF, H. 92] (Munich, 1984), 42–44, n. 194; Spieser, Thessalonique, 165–214.

[59] Le petit oratoire qui se trouve au–dessous de l'église Saints–Jean–et–Paul à Rome serait un parallèle à Saint–Démétrius en tant que sanctuaire à l'intérieur de la ville servant au culte des martyrs avant 400.

[60] P. Lemerle, "Saint-Démétrius de Thessalonique et les problèmes du martyrion et du transept", BCH 77 (1937), 660–694 (partiellement reproduit id., Recueils, II, 205–218); Ch. Bakirtzis, "Ἡ ἀγορὰ τῆς Θεσσαλονίκης στὰ παλαιοχριστιανικὰ χρόνια", Actes du 10ᵉ congrès, II, 5–19, partic. 5–7, avec réf. bibliogr.

[61] M. Kalligas, dans: AE (1936), 111–118; (1938) [1939], 67–75, fig. 3; (1939) [1940], 73–84, fig. 5; (1940), 23–27, fig. 3; (1941–1944), 44–52. ADelt 18 (1963), 235–240, fig. 1 (P. A. Drosogianni); D.
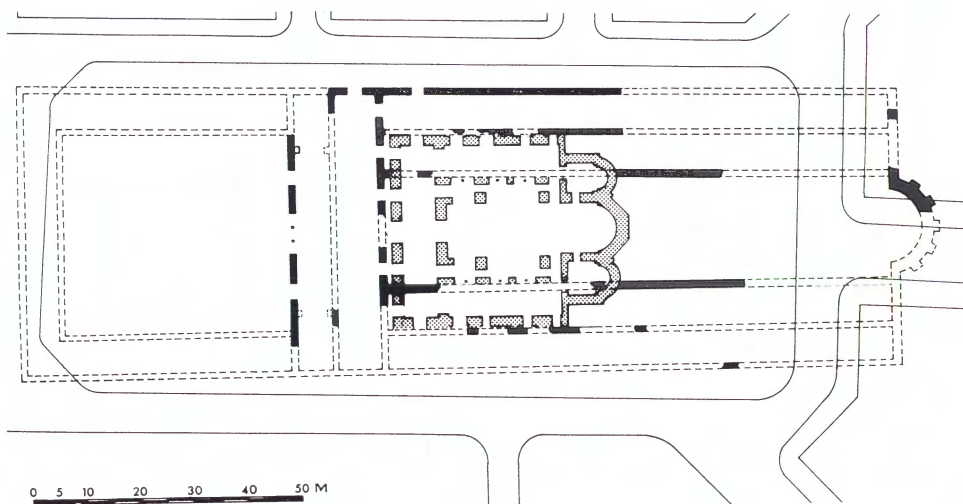
Fig. 6. Plan restitué de la basilique à cinq nefs, au-dessous de Sainte-Sophie (d'après K. Theoharidou).

début du VIIe siècle), la vaste abside servit longtemps d'oratoire (souterrain?); par conséquent, son aménagement primitif reste inconnu.[62] Avant l'abside, au contraire, il y avait—comme souvent en Grèce—des bancs latéraux, placés de part et d'autre du sanctuaire.[63]

De dimensions vraiment impériales—à peu près du même ordre de grandeur que la fondation constantinienne au Vatican—les fonds destinés à l'entreprise auraient été difficilement procurés par le capital local, à savoir l'argent soit de l'évêque, de la communauté ou des deux à la fois. En effet, comme pour la Rotonde, je pense que l'État a dû participer au financement de ce projet spectaculaire. Parmi les empereurs qui, pendant l'antiquité tardive, étaient liés d'une façon spéciale à Thessalonique, on penserait d'abord à Constantin Ier et à Théodose Ier. Ce dernier et son fils Arcadius ont été proposés sur la base de pièces de monnaies—de Théodose (383/92), d'Arcadius (395/402) mais aussi d'Honorius (393/95)—pièces qui, cependant, furent toutes trouvées hors d'un contexte archéologique défini et, en conséquence, sont sans valeur démonstrative.[64] A vrai dire, les découvertes archéologiques semblent plutôt suggérer une chronologie sensiblement plus basse, vers l'an 500, pour l'achèvement de l'énorme oeuvre.[65] Mais il est vrai aussi que l'édification de ce vaste ensemble aurait pu

Pallas, *Les monuments paléochrétiens de Grèce découverts de 1959 à 1973* (Cité du Vatican, 1977), 63–65, fig. 36–37; A. Mentzos, "Συμβολὴ στὴν ἔρευνα τοῦ ἀρχαιότερου ναοῦ τῆς Ἁγίας Σοφίας Θεσσαλονίκης, *Makedonika* 21 (1981), 201–221; K. Theoharidou, *The Architecture of Hagia Sophia, Thessaloniki, from its Erection to the Turkish Conquest*, BAR Int. Ser., 399 (1988), 10–13, 125–126, 167–168.

[62] Les marches découvertes à l'entrée de l'abside ne sont guère originales, comme paraît le supposer C. S. Snively, "The Sunken Apse: a Feature of Early Byzantine Churches in Macedonia", *AJA* 86 (1982), 286.

[63] *ADelt* 17 (1961) [1963], 253–256, fig. 3, pl. 311 (S. Pelekanidis); le premier exemple de ce dispositif liturgique connu à Thessalonique serait l'aménagement primitif de la Rotonde; restitution dans H. Torp, *Mosaikkene i St. Georg-rotunden i Thessaloniki* (Oslo, 1963), fig. à p. 9.

[64] Theoharidou, op. cit., 13 (fin IVe siècle); Pelekanidis, "Malerei" (ci-dessus, n. 33), 221. Le fragment de peinture architecturale qu'il cite n'appartient pas à la grande basilique, mais plutôt à la construction romaine antérieure (Kalligas, *AE* 1939, 78–79, fig. 5; 1940, 24, fig. 1–2, mur A). Pour la datation haute des vestiges on fait appel, entre autres, à des monnaies (dont une d'Honorius); pour les monnaies trouvées sur le site des fouilles, voir Kalligas, *AE* 1939, 83: "... 4 νομίσματα ... οὕτως ὥστε οὐδὲν σαφὲς δύνανται νὰ προσφέρουν διὰ τὴν χρονολογίαν".

[65] *ADelt* 18 (1963), 239, n. 10, pl. 269 a, c–d (fragments sculptés fouillés au site, cf. Th. Pazaras, "Κατάλογος χριστιανικῶν ἀναγλύφων πλακῶν ἐκ Θεσσαλονίκης μὲ ζωομόρφους παραστάσεις", *Byzantina* 9 (1977), 23–95, n° 11 ("première moitié VIe siècle"), 14 ("milieu VIe siècle"); Mentzos, op. cit., 216–220, pl. 1–2; Pallas, op. cit., fig. 37). Voir Theoharidou, op. cit., 114–124, sur la chronologie (aux environs de 500) des divers chapiteaux remployés dans l'actuelle Sainte-Sophie et présumés provenant

traîner en longueur,[66] comme cela aurait été le cas pour Saint-Léonide de Léchaion, de dimensions comparables.[67] Les préliminaires pourraient donc bien remonter au Ve siècle (troisième quart?).

Au-dessous de la grande basilique on a fouillé des vestiges considérables de murs datant probablement du commencement du IVe siècle.[68] Tandis que la différence entre les niveaux de l'église de Sainte-Sophie actuelle et de la basilique à cinq nefs ne mesure que quelques dizaines de centimètres, le niveau de la basilique est élevé d'environ 3 m par rapport aux constructions romaines tardives. Celles-ci, j'y reviendrai bientôt, sont orientées légèrement de biais par rapport à la basilique à cinq nefs. Cependant, dans le terre-plein se trouvant au-dessus des constructions romaines, il y a d'autres restes de murs, parallèles les uns aux autres et en même temps orientés de concert avec la grande basilique.[69] Ces murs n'ont jamais été étudiés ou fait l'objet de commentaires. Manifestement plus récents que les constructions romaines, leur situation par rapport à la basilique paraît indiquer qu'ils peuvent être plus anciens que celle-ci; je m'imaginerai donc qu'il pourrait s'agir des restes d'une église antérieure à la grande basilique à cinq nefs.

Les vestiges romains, enfin, appartiennent à deux longs murs parallèles, séparés d'environ 40 m, et mis en lumière sur une longueur d'environ 70 m, de la cour de Sainte-Sophie et en direction de l'Est (fig. 5, murs A–A, B–B). Prolongé dans l'Est, le tracé de ces murs aurait croisé l'axe Nord-Sud du palais galérien à un endroit situé entre les deux salles à abside du palais même, immédiatement à l'Ouest de l'hippodrome. A l'instar des rues qui se rencontrent à l'arc de Galère, il est tentant de s'imaginer une *via porticata* de date galérienne,[70] conduisant du centre de la ville vers l'entrée principale du domaine palatin, située peut-être à la hauteur de la croisée des rues Pringhipos Nikolaou (Alexandrou Svolou) et Pal. Patron Germanou.[71] Au cas où cette interprétation concernant les longs murs romains serait correcte, la première église épiscopale de Sainte-Sophie (la basilique à cinq nefs ou l'église qui l'aurait précédée), par sa position topographique, aurait été sans doute une fondation impériale (cf. la basilique—à cinq nefs—de l'évêque de Rome, au Latran, que Constantin avait fait construire sur les casernes de la Garde Impériale (*Equites Singulares*).

de l'église antérieure. Les bâtisseurs, dans une large mesure, se sont servis des matériaux de remplois, y compris plus d'un type de briques; cependant, l'épaisseur de la majorité des briques mesure 3–3,5 cm, et celle des joints de mortier, remarquablement grande, 5–6 cm (Theoharidou, op. cit., 125–126, et table A, face à p. 128), ce qui donne un "coefficient de densité" (relation brique:mortier) d'environ 0.7 (P. Aupert, "L'évolution des appareils en Grèce à l'époque impériale", *BCH* 114 (1990), 593–637, partic. 612–13, graphique 2 à p. 605); cette technique—dissociant nettement les vestiges de la grande basilique des constructions galériennes, des murailles paléochrétiennes, de la Rotonde et des parties originales de l'Acheiropoïètos—indiquerait une datation "vers 500".

[66] Mentzos, op. cit. (ci-dessus, n. 61), 219.

[67] Pallas, *Les monuments* (ci-dessus, n. 61), 171: "... corps de l'église ... fondé entre 450 et 460 environ et achevé entre 490 et 500. Les deux atriums ... ajoutés sous ... Justinien I (518–527) au plus tôt."

[68] Cf. n. 61.

[69] Kalligas, *AE* (1939) [1940], 73; fig. 1 à p. 74, murs 4 et 5; je ne peux pas dire si le sol(?) découvert à une profondeur considérable derrière Sainte-Sophie, *AE* (1940), 27; ibid., (1941–1944), 43; fig. 3a–c à p. 43–45, serait à associer aux murs 4 et 5.

[70] Base ionique découverte à l'Est de l'abside de la basilique à cinq nefs, *ADelt* 18 (1963), 240, pl. 268d (Drosogianni), à rapprocher de la base d'une des voies à portiques près de l'arc de Galère, E. Dyggve, "Kurzer, vorläufiger Bericht über die Ausgrabungen im Palastviertel von Thessaloniki, Frühjahr 1939" *Dissertationes Pannonicae*, Sér. 2, n° 11 (Budapest, 1941), 63–71, partic. 68, n. 17, pl. VI, 24–25; cf. G. Velenis, "Architektonische Probleme des Galeriusbogens in Thessaloniki", *Archäologischer Anzeiger* (1979), 249–263; fig. 14, p. 260; fig. 16, p. 262. Pour ce qui est des peintures architecturales décorant la face intérieure (Nord) du long mur méridional (ci-dessus, n. 64), cf. les peintures découvertes dans le palais galérien même, Pelekanidis, "Malerei", (ci-dessus, n. 33), 216–217, pl. 111–112.— Mentzos, op. cit. (ci-dessus, n. 61), 202, cf. 209, émet, avec beaucoup de réserve, l'hypothèse que les murs romains pourraient se rapporter à de grands thermes, englobant aussi le nymphée.

[71] La direction de ces longs murs romains se trouvant au-dessous de Sainte-Sophie est à peu près perpendiculaire à quelques vestiges du palais mis au jour à l'Ouest de l'octogone, G. Knithakis, "Tò
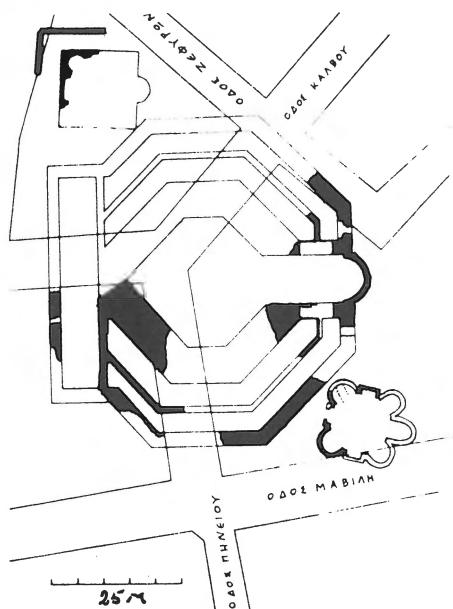
Fig. 7. Plan des sanctuaires découverts près de la *Porta Aurea*: octogone, martyrion(?, en bas), baptistère(?) (d'après E. Marki).
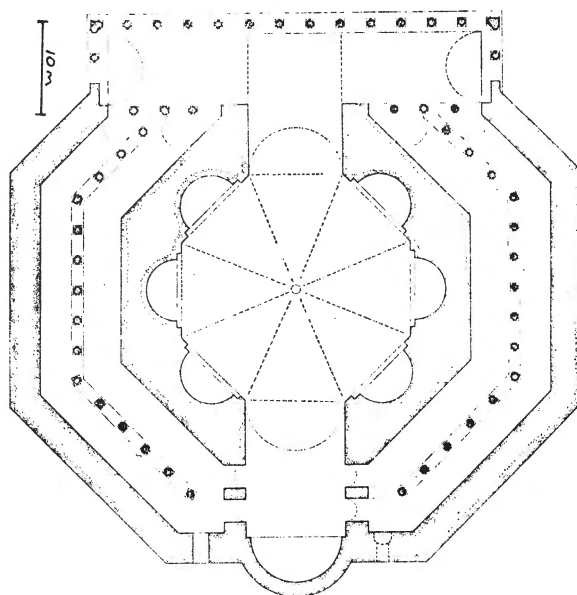

Fig. 8. Plan restitué de l'octogone près de la *Porta Aurea* (d'après E. Marki).

Au cours des années 1970, de nouveau un vaste ensemble architectural (comportant trois bâtiments) destiné au culte chrétien fut découvert tout près de la *Porta Aurea* à l'Ouest de la ville, peu de mètres au Nord du Léophôros (fig. 1, D; fig. 7).[72] L'élément principal en est constitué par une église à plan centré (fig. 8), à la même échelle grandiose que la Rotonde, et, par sa forme, inspirée évidemment soit de celle-ci, soit de l'octogone de Galère.[73]

Ainsi que pour la grande basilique se trouvant sous l'église Sainte-Sophie, on a suggéré une date très haute aussi pour ce bâtiment, le second vaste octogone de la ville; cependant, la sculpture architecturale associée à l'édifice indiquerait une date se situant vers le dernier quart du Ve siècle.[74] Déjà pendant la première moitié du VIe siècle cette église sur plan central aurait été ravagée par un tremblement de terre, après quoi les restes auraient pu servir comme catholicon d'un monastère implanté dans le site.[75] Durant la *tourkokratía,* le site servait de carrière.

En raison de sa localisation, E. Marki propose que l'octogone était consacré au saint Nestor, le compagnon de saint Démétrius qui, selon la *Passio altera* de celui-ci, subit le martyre près de la Porte Dorée.[76] Constituant un martyrion urbain, l'ensemble comporte, à côté de l'octogone, soit un baptistère(?), soit une chapelle-reliquaire(?) et des bains. De la même façon, le modèle immédiat du

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ὀκτάγωνο τῆς Θεσσαλονικης. Νέα προσπάθεια ἀναπαραστάσεως", *ADelt* 30 (1975) [1978], 90–119, partic. fig. 14, p. 108 (*Melétes*, 548–591; fig. 14, p. 566). Cf. le plan, ma fig. 1, 155.

[72] E. Marki, "Ἕνας ἄγνωστος ὀκταγωνικὸς ναὸς στὴ Θεσσαλονίκη", *Makedonika* 23 (1983), 117–133.

[73] Marki, op. cit., 123–126; sur l'octogone de Galère, voir n. 71 et 80.

[74] Marki, op. cit., 124–125, pl. 8a; il s'agit des chapiteaux publiés par Ch. Mauropoulou-Tsioumi et D. Bakirtzi, "Κιονόκρανα τῆς συλλογῆς τῆς Ροτόντας Θεσσαλονίκης, Ι", *Makedonika* 19 (1979), 11–39, n°s 11–15 ("début VIe siècle"); cf. Farioli, op. cit. (ci-dessus, n. 55) 138–139; pour une date un peu antérieure, voir R. Kautzsch, *Kapitellstudien. Beiträge zu einer Geschichte des spätantiken Kapitells im Osten vom vierten bis ins siebente Jahrhundert* [Studien zur spätantiken Kunstgeschichte, 9] (Berlin – Leipzig, 1936), 55–56, pl. 13, n° 176–177; p. 61–62, pl. 15, n° 198–203.

[75] Marki, op. cit., 130–131.

[76] Lemerle, *Recueils* (ci-dessus, n. 39), II, 198–202.

sanctuaire principal, la Rotonde galérienne transformée en église, était sans doute également dotée de reliques. Ainsi me paraît séduisante l'idée de Mme Marki, selon laquelle l'octogone avoisinant la Porte Dorée aurait été fondé pour faire pendant à la Rotonde, située près de la Porte Cassandréotique à l'extrémité opposée de l'artère plus importante de la ville: armés des prières des saints, les deux sanctuaires protégeaient les deux portes principales de cette ville constamment assiégée.
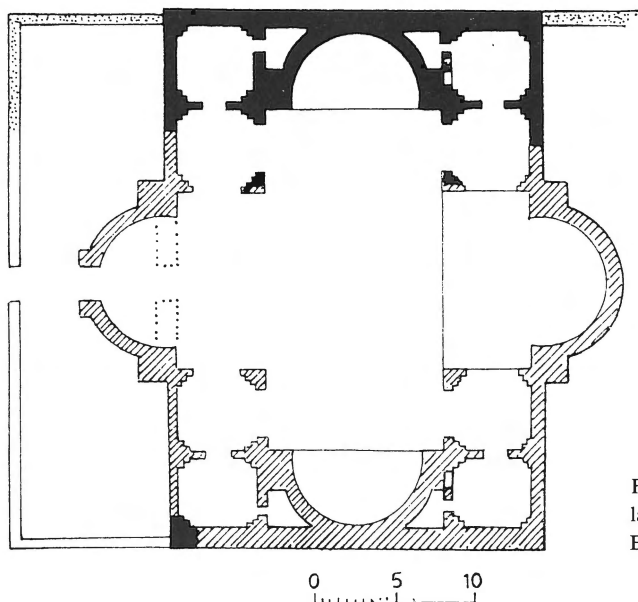

Fig. 9. Plan restitué de l'église de la rue Saint Démétrius (d'après E. Marki).

Enfin il faut mentionner les vestiges d'un bâtiment de plan plutôt exceptionnel mis au jour en 1969 dans la rue Saint Démétrius, à l'Est de la basilique de ce saint (fig. 1, E; fig. 9). La majeure partie de l'édifice restant inconnue, beaucoup d'éléments d'incertitude sont liés à l'interprétation qu'on peut donner de ces ruines. Selon l'hypothèse d'A. M. Kountouras et E. Marki,[77] il s'agirait d'un sanctuaire chrétien de la deuxième moitié du VIe siècle, et d'aspect fort intéressant, presque arménien:[78] une tétraconque d'environ 31,5 x 31,5 m (100 x 100 pieds), avec deux absides libres et deux inscrites, et dont la coupole centrale reposait sur quatre points d'appui formant un plan à croix grecque, enrichi de compartiments carrés entre les branches de la croix et (accompagnés d'espaces triangulaires) des deux côtés de l'abside Nord et Sud. Selon l'avis d'E. Marki, le sanctuaire aurait servi de martyrion urbain. Se trouvant dans le voisinage de la basilique de Saint-Démétrius, on pourrait se demander si l'édifice n'aurait pas été érigé pour abriter le culte de son disciple saint Nestor, après la destruction du sanctuaire de celui-ci, l'octogone fouillé près de la Porte d'Or.[79]

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[77] E. Marki, "Ὁ ἀνώνυμος σταυρικὸς ναὸς τῆς ὁδοῦ Ἁγίου Δημητρίου στὴ Θεσσαλονίκη", *Thessaloni-que* I, 159–188.

[78] A la même famille "arménienne" paraît appartenir encore une église de la région, située à une trentaine de kilomètres de Thessalonique, à savoir le catholikon du monastère de Peristera, K. F. Kinch, "En byzantinsk kirke", *Festskrift til J. L. Ussing* (Copenhague, 1900), 144–155; A. K. Orlandos, Ἀρχεῖον τῶν βυζαντινῶν μνημείων τῆς Ἑλλάδος, 7, 2 (Athènes, 1951), 146–167; Ch. Mauropoulou-Tsioumi, A. Kountoura, "Ὁ ναὸς τοῦ Ἁγίου Ἀνδρέα στὴν Περιστερά", *Kleronomia* 13 (1981), 487–497, pl. 1–8; fig. 1–8, qui en déterminent les élements primitifs incorporés dans la reconstruction du IXe siècle.

[79] Cependant, une tradition locale cite le martyrion de Saint Nestor au Sud-Ouest de Saint-Démétrius, Tafrali, *Topographie*, 189–190; Bakirtzis, "Ἀγορά" (ci-dessus, n. 60), 7–9.
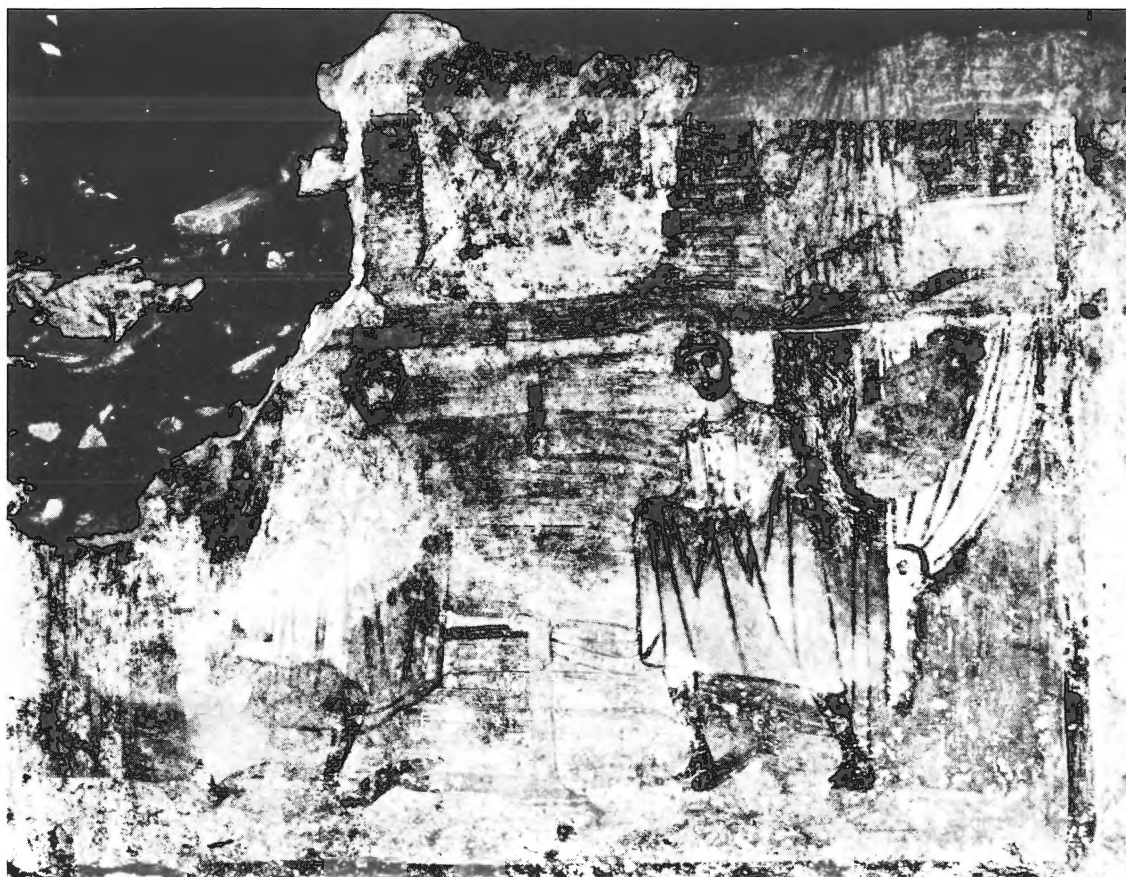
Fig. 10 a. La peinture pariétale de l'*agiasma* de l'agora (d'après *ADelt* 23 [1968]).

Lieux de culte chrétiens et réseau urbanistique antique

L'intégration des lieux de réunion paléochrétiens dans la structure urbaine de Thessalonique s'est produite de diverses manières. Quelques-uns des monuments les plus grandioses de la ville illustrent la pratique consistant à réutiliser et adapter des constructions existantes: telle la transformation en églises de la Rotonde et de l'octogone de Galère, tous les deux appartenant primitivement au palais impérial romain,[80] ainsi que la reconstruction probable en baptistère du nymphée monumental au Sud de Sainte-Sophie (fig. 1, 166). Plus humbles, mais tout aussi révélatrices des modalités de l'implantation du christianisme dans cette ville antique sont les deux petites chapelles souterraines, à savoir d'une part

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[80] Ch. Makaronas, "Τὸ ὀκτάγωνον τῆς Θεσσαλονίκης", *AE* 1950 (1951), 303–321; Moutsopoulos, "Contribution" (ci-dessus, n. 3), 240–250 (tombeau paléochrétien dans l'abside principale au Nord; deux structures cruciformes ajoutées au Nord-Est et Nord-Ouest; nouveau pavement); *ADelt* 26 (1971), 367, fig. 1–3 (A. K. Vavritsas); Knithakis, op. cit., 563–565.—M. Vickers, "Observations on the Octogon at Thessaloniki", *JRS* 63 (1973), 111–120, suivi de Spieser, *Thessalonique*, p. 118, n. 237 et id., "La ville en Grèce du IIIe au VIIe siècle", *Villes et peuplement dans l'Illyricum protobyzantin* [Collection de l'École française de Rome 77] (Rome, 1984), 319, n. 21, sont de l'avis que l'octogone n'a jamais été transformé en église; Ch. Bouras, "Νέες παρατηρήσεις στὸ ὀκτάγονο τῆς Θεσσαλονίκης", *Actes du 10e congrès*, II, 33–43, pense que l'octogone aurait été construit pour servir au mausolée de Théodose Ier; cependant, bien qu'appartenant à une seconde phase de travaux, probablement après l'élévation de Galère à la pourpre (305), comme datation du bâtiment la période galérienne me paraît indiscutable. Sur l'octogone et sa fonction, voir aussi H. Torp, "Victoria Persica: un tema trionfale espresso in forma pagana e cristiana nel palazzo imperiale di Thessalonica", *Colloqui del Sodalizio tra studiosi dell'arte* (Roma), 2a ser. 6 (1976–1978; 1978–1980), 81–87, pl. XVII–XVIII; et M. Cagiano de Azevedo, "Il palazzo imperiale di Salonicco", *Felix Ravenna* 117 (1979), 7–28, partic. 7–8, 15–18, 26–28.
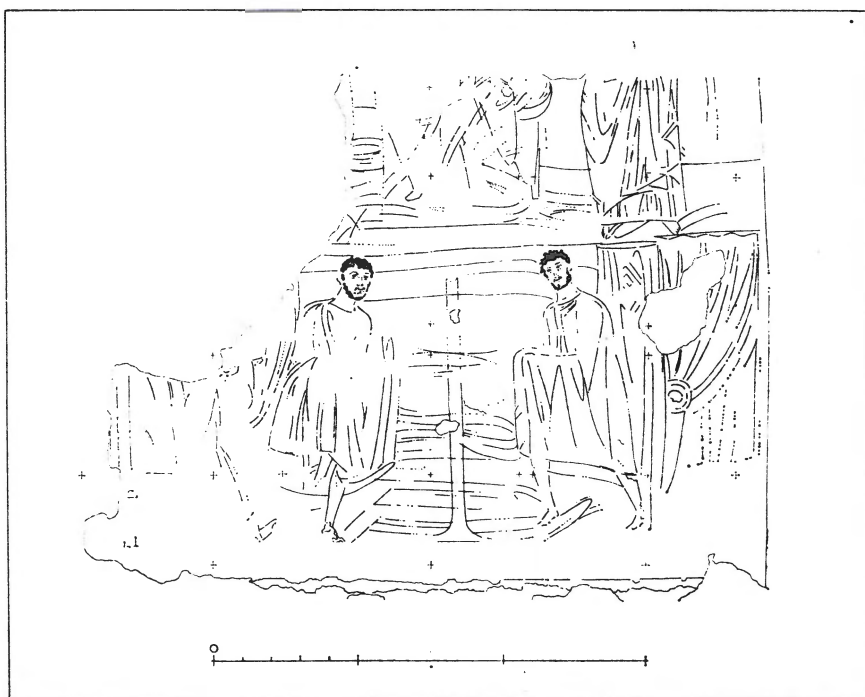
Fig. 10 b. La peinture pariétale de l'*agiasma* de l'agora (d'après Ch. Bakirtzis).

l'oratoire de "Sergius Pragmateutes" de la rue Valtadôrou (fig. 1, C),[81] installé dans de grands thermes romains à l'Ouest de l'agora et décoré de peintures et, ultérieurement (V^e ou VIe siècle), d'une mosaïque; d'autre part, sur l'agora même, l'humble pièce au-dessous de l'escalier du cryptoporticus Sud (transformé en citerne) (fig. 1, G), aménagée en ἀγίασμα et embellie (vers la fin du VIe siècle) d'une peinture pariétale très intéressante, raffigurant l'*adoratio crucis* (fig. 10).[82]

Dans d'autres cas, il s'agit de constructions neuves érigées sur les sites de structures datant de l'époque romaine; ce sont, en premier lieu, les deux églises de l'Acheiropoïètos et de Saint-Démétrius et la basilique à cinq nefs partiellement fouillée au-dessous de l'église de Sainte-Sophie.[83] Tandis que l'identification des vestiges romains découverts sur le site de Sainte-Sophie reste problématique,[84] il convient de signaler que tant l'Acheiropoïètos que Saint-Démétrius sont construites sur une partie des sites de deux grands thermes, la dernière en

[81] A. Xyngopoulos, "'Υπόγειος ναὸς τοῦ Πραγαμάτου", *ADelt* 7 (1922–1925) [1927], 64–65, fig. 3 à p. 66; A. Papadamou, "'Ο ἀνώνυμος ναὸς τοῦ Σεργίου Πραγαμᾶ στὴ Θεσσαλονίκη", *2e Symposion d'archéologie et d'art byzantin et post-byzantin* (Athènes, 1982), 85–86; Feissel, *Inscriptions*, n° 111; *Thessaloniki and its Monuments* (ci-dessus, n. 27), 44 (T. Papazotos).

[82] *ADelt* 23 (1968) [1969], 328–330, pl. 278; A. Xyngopoulos, "'Η παλαιοχριστιανικὴ τοιχογραφία τῆς Ρωμαϊκῆς 'Αγορᾶς Θεσσαλονίκης", *Byzantina* 9 (1977), 409–417; Pallas, *Les monuments*, 65–68, avec n. 138; Bakirtzis, "'Αγορά", 13–17.—En général, sur la transformation de constructions antiques pour servir à des fonctions ecclésiastiques, y compris des thermes et citernes ainsi que des édifices de spectacle (odéons, stades, cirques et amphithéâtres), voir J. Vaes, "'Nova construere sed amplius vetusta servare': la réutilisation chrétienne d'édifices antiques (en Italie)", *Actes du 11e congrès* (ci-dessus, n. 31), I, 299–321; A. Provoost, "L'implantation des édifices ecclésiastiques d'après les textes littéraires antérieurs à 400 ap.J.-C. (résumé)", *ibid.*, 323–326; J.-M. Spieser, "La christianisation des sanctuaires païens en Grèce", *Neue Forschungen in griechischen Heiligtümern* (Tübingen, 1976), 309–320.

[83] Au-dessous d'une partie de l'église-octogone, près de la Porte d'Or (et du temple de Sérapis, fig. 1, 164), furent trouvés des vestiges d'une maison de l'époque romaine, Marki, op. cit. (ci–dessus, n. 72), 121, pl. 5b; sur le sous-sol de Saint-Menas et de l'église de la rue Saint Démétrius il me manque des informations. Sur le temple de Sérapis, voir *Tabula* (ci-dessus, n. 3), 144.

[84] Cf. ci–dessus, n. 70.

incorporant même des éléments importants. En fait, les bains publics jouent un rôle considérable dans la topographie chrétienne de Thessalonique, phénomène déjà mis en évidence par Ch. Bakirtzis.[85] L'oratoire de la rue Valtadôrou vient d'être nommé. En outre, selon les *Passions* de saint Démétrius, ce martyr fut tué et inhumé dans "les chambres de chauffe" d'un bain public "proche du stade". En fait, à Thessalonique, la notion du rapport des bains au culte paléochrétien était tellement forte que beaucoup plus tard (XIIe siècle?), le cathégoumène Ignace, dans son "Récit édifiant", pouvait décrire le sanctuaire de Hosios–David comme ayant été à l'origine des bains privés construits par la fille de Galère, Théodota, et ensuite transformés par elle–même en église.[86]

L'aspect chronologique

Pour la plupart des monuments paléochrétiens de Thessalonique, les critères chronologiques laissent beaucoup à désirer. Spécialement, en quête de la cathédrale primitive (et abstraction faite de la Rotonde, à mon avis toujours liée au palais), on souhaiterait davantage d'informations sur la chronologie du site de Sainte-Sophie, *avant* la construction de la basilique à cinq nefs: je serais bien étonné qu'une église beaucoup plus ancienne, digne de l'évêque (dès le début du Ve siècle vicaire papal de l'Illyricum oriental), n'ait pas existé sur cet endroit (le nymphée voisin adapté en baptistère).[87] En fait, je suis porté à croire qu'à Thessalonique—ville apostolique—le groupe épiscopale primitif a été installé ici, au centre de la cité, entre l'agora et le palais, dès la paix de l'Église. Dans la deuxième moitié du Ve siècle, pendant la construction de la basilique à cinq nefs, l'octogone du palais (délié du domaine de la cour) peut avoir servi temporairement de cathédrale.[88]

Comme indiqué ci-dessus, l'image que l'on peut se former de Thessalonique extra-murale ne diffère pas de ce que l'on sait d'autres grandes villes des régions méditerranéennes. Quant à l'activité constructive *intra muros,* gérée par les autorités *ecclésiastiques* (et, en conséquence, abstraction faite de la Rotonde), elle ne nous est matériellement attestée qu'après le milieu du Ve siècle.[89] Or, cette situation n'est pas si singulière qu'il n'y paraît au premier abord. A Rome même, à part des fondations impériales et papales, ce n'est que pendant les dernières décennies du IVe siècle et la première moitié du Ve siècle que les anciennes

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[85] "Ρωμαϊκὸς λουτρὼν καὶ ἡ Ἀχειροποίητος τῆς Θεσσαλονίκης",'Αφιέρωμα (ci-dessus, n. 33), 310–329; le dernier des trois pavements en mosaïque superposés et appartenant aux bains du site (ibid., fig. 1), date du IVe siècle; voir aussi N. Duval, "Églises et thermes en Afrique du Nord", *Bulletin archéologique* 7 (1971) [1973], 297–317, et Bakirtzis, "Ἀγορά" (ci-dessus, n. 60), 5–7.

[86] V. Grumel, "La mosaïque du 'Dieu Sauveur' au monastère du 'Latome' à Salonique (découverte en août 1927)", *EO* 29 (1930), 157–175, partic. 161 et 165; Bakirtzis, "Ρωμαϊκὸς λουτρών", 326; cf. ci-dessus, n. 70, *in fine*.

[87] Cf. M. Vickers, "Fifth-century brickstamps from Thessaloniki", *Annual of the British School at Athens* 68 (1973) 285–294, partic. 293–294 avec n. 45; M. Falla Castelfranchi, "Sulla primitiva chiesa episcopale di Tessalonica", *Quaderni dell'Istituto di archeologia e storia antica* (Libera università abruzzese, Chieti), 2 (1981), 107–125, partic. 112 ss. (avec des notions et dates erronées concernant les découvertes au site de Sainte-Sophie); le nymphée, F. Glaser, *Antike Brunnenbauten (KPHNAI) in Griechenland* (Österr. Akad. d. Wiss., Phil.-hist. Kl., 1983), 113–114, fig. 211 s., 232–234.

[88] W. E. Kleinbauer, "The Original Name and Function of Hagios Georgios at Thessaloniki", *CahArch* 22 (1972), 55–60, partic. 56, estime que l'octogone galérien transformé en église était la cathédrale primitive de la ville. Sur la question de l'insertion de l'évêque, de sa résidence et de la cathédrale à l'intérieur des villes en Grèce, voir l'exposé de G. Lavas, "Οἱ πόλεις τῶν Χριστιανικῶν βασιλικῶν': μία συμβολὴ στὴν πολεοδομία τοῦ Ἀνατολικοῦ Ἰλλυρικοῦ", *Actes du 10e congrès* (ci–dessus, n. 46), I, 581–623, et la discussion subséquente, ibid., 624–630.

[89] Cf. la chronologie relative suggérée ci-dessus: Acheiropoiètos, octogone à la *Porta Aurea*, adaptation de l'octogone galérien, basilique à cinq nefs, Hosios-David, Saint-Démétrius, église de la rue Saint Démétrius.

domus ecclesiae furent à grande échelle déménagées et remplacées par de nouvelles basiliques.[90] En Grèce il n'y a d'ailleurs qu'un nombre très restreint de basiliques qui semblent remonter à une date antérieure à l'an 400.[91] Ainsi, il apparaît qu'à Thessalonique, et en Grèce en général, jusque vers 450, les communautés ont continué dans une large mesure à s'assembler dans les traditionnelles *domus ecclesiae*. En plus, l'histoire de l'implantation du christianisme à Thessalonique me paraît indiquer que la raison principale de cette situation était d'ordre économique ou plutôt—comme au centre de Rome—due à la rareté des terrains à bâtir: c'est seulement avec la législation de Théodose Ier et de ses successeurs immédiats qu'une portion de la propriété publique confisquée a pu, dans une mesure notable, être mise à la disposition des évêques. De même qu'à Rome les sites mithriaques paraissent avoir été spécialement disponibles (Saint–Clément, Sainte-Prisca, Saint-Etienne-le-Rond), à Thessalonique les grands établissements de bains publics auraient été mis—totalement ou en partie—à la disposition des fidèles (à Saint–Démétrius, à coup sûr, bien avant la construction de la basilique actuelle).[92] Enfin, comparée avec celle de Constantinople, la chronologie de Thessalonique chrétienne semble très "normale": en fait, là, ce n'est qu'assez tardivement, sous Théodose Ier et ses successeurs du Ve siècle, que l'objectif de Constantin visant à christianiser la Nouvelle Rome a été atteint.[93] Pourtant, les circonstances historiques étaient sensiblement différentes dans les deux villes: tandis que la Constantinople chrétienne était essentiellement une création nouvelle, l'implantation du christianisme à Thessalonique constitue un exemple classique d'une *continuatio* urbanistique.

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[90] R. Krautheimer, *Three Christian Capitals. Topography and Politics* (Berkeley etc., 1983), chap. IV, partic. 94–102; L. Reekmans, "L'implantation monumentale chrétienne dans le paysage urbain de Rome de 300 à 850", *Actes du 11ᵉ congrès* (ci-dessus, n. 31), II, 861–915 (avec références aux principales sources et études), partic. 867–868: "Les structures ecclésiales les plus anciennes retrouvées dans les titres presbytéraux romains datent le plus souvent des deux dernières décennies du IVe siècle et de la première moitié du Ve siècle. Les vestiges, antérieurs au pontificat de Damase (366–384), sont, exception faite pour la basilique de Saint-Marc, extrêmement rares dans les titres romains."

[91] A savoir l'église de l'évêque Paul de Philippes (340) et celle de Dion (?); l'état primitif de la basilique C de Néa Anchialos et de celle de Damokratia à Démétrias, cf. Spieser, "La ville en Grèce" (ci-dessus, n. 80), 329 avec notes 78–81.

[92] A Rome, au commencement du Ve siècle, Sainte-Pudentienne fut installée dans une salle thermale à trois nefs.

[93] G. Dagron, *Naissance d'une capitale. Constantinople et ses institutions de 330 à 451* (Paris, 1974; 2ᵉ éd. 1984), 388–409; id., "Constantinople. Les sanctuaires et l'organisation de la vie religieuse", *Actes du 11ᵉ congrès*, II, 1069–1085; C. Mango, *Le développement urbain de Constantinople (IVe–VIIe siècle)* (Paris, 1985), 23–50.

Gaza, Emesa and Constantinople: Late Ancient Cities in the Light of Hagiography

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What a typical *polis* looked like during the Roman Empire is relatively well known. Its plan was simple and regular. The main streets were broad, straight and colonnaded. There were open spaces. In the centre public buildings of various kinds were located, a town hall, public baths, a library, temples dedicated to various gods etc. In addition there was a theatre, and more important cities also had a hippodrome. Public spaces were adorned with fountains, columns, reliefs and statues, many of them in the nude. Social and cultural life was characterized by openness and variety. The town belonged to the living. The dead were buried outside the walls.

In Late Antiquity the situation changed. Following the advance of Christianity the pagan temples were pulled down or, more often, fell into disrepair. Instead churches were built, often with spolia from the ruins of pagan edifices. The dead were no longer stopped by the walls but were buried within the city.[1] Gradually the ancient squares and avenues shrank under the pressure of business activities and new settlements. At the end of the period the ancient geometrical plan had been replaced by an apparent mess, Nicaea in Bithynia being one of the few exceptions. On the administrative level the ruling élite of the provincial cities began to associate itself with the Church, and bishops soon became powerful administrators of economic surplus. As a consequence of the influence of the Church and the success of the monastic movement, cultural variety was replaced by uniformity. The Church offered a new form of social contact instead of that of the old *polis*. On the other hand, many traditional forms of human contact tended to become inhibited because of the monastic ideal, according to which the individual dialogue with God was more important than relations with one's fellow creatures. In areas conquered by the Arabs the situation became still more complicated by a second change of religion.

Of course, the urban milieu did not change with equal speed everywhere, nor did the changes yield the same result in every place. It was a complicated process which has been the focus of much fruitful discussion in the last few years.[2] I shall not try to make another contribution to this discussion. My intention here is more modest, namely to illustrate changes with regard to religion and everyday

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[1] For this change of burial customs, see G. Dagron, "Le christianisme dans la ville byzantine", *DOP* 31 (1977), 1–25, esp. 11 ff.

[2] Among the great number of useful studies, I would like to single out the following three papers, in which further literature may be found: J.-M. Spieser, "L'évolution de la ville byzantine de l'époque paléochrétienne à l'iconoclasme", in *Hommes et richesses dans l'empire byzantin*, vol. 1 (Paris, 1989), 97–106; R. Cormack, "Byzantine Aphrodisias. Changing the Symbolic Map of a City", in *Proceedings of the Cambridge Philological Society* 216, NS 26 (1990), 26–41; M. Whittow, "Ruling the Late Roman and Early Byzantine City: a Continuous History", *Past and Present* 129 (1990), 3–29.

Aspects of Late Antiquity and Early Byzantium, ed. L. Rydén, J. O. Rosenqvist, Swedish Research Institute in Istanbul, Transactions, Vol. 4 (Stockholm, 1993)

133

life in three different cities in the 5th, 6th and 7th century respectively, mainly on the basis of hagiography.

Gaza

According to the editors of the Life of St Porphyrios, Bishop of Gaza *c.* 395–420, at that time Gaza had about 50–60,000 inhabitants,[3] although I suspect the figure is too high. In any case, as indicated in chapter 21 of the Vita, most of them lived in houses made of unbaked brick. Syriac was the main language (ch. 68). The great majority consisted of pagans or, to use neutral terminology, polytheists. At the centre, where the main streets met, there was a statue of Aphrodite, to whom young women put questions concerning their husbands-to-be (ch. 59). There were temples dedicated to Helios, Aphrodite, Apollo, Kore, Hekate, Tyche, and Marnas, and in addition a heroon (ch. 64). The most important god was Marnas, a Semitic god believed to correspond to Zeus. His temple, the Marneion, had the form of a circular building with a high dome and two concentric rows of columns. Gaza was also provided with a theatre and a hippodrome.[4]

The number of Christians did not exceed 280, i.e. no more than a half percent of the whole population, if we can trust the numbers mentioned above (ch. 19). Their church was far away from the Marneion. Presumably it was located in the outskirts, like many other early churches. Again like many early churches it had been dedicated to an abstract concept, in this case Eirene, "Peace" (ch. 18, with note). Despite its small number the flock was led by a bishop, who in his turn was subordinated to the Metropolitan of Caesarea a couple of days' journey to the north.

Whereas Gaza was almost completely pagan, its seaport Maiouma with its large Egyptian population (ch. 58) was mainly Christian. In addition there were monks and hermits in the area south of Gaza, followers of St Hilarion, the disciple of St Antony the Great, whose Life was written by St Jerome.

In the middle of the 390s the Bishop of Gaza died and a priest at Jerusalem called Porphyrios was appointed his successor. Porphyrios had grown up at Thessalonike as the son of wealthy parents. After the example of many other wealthy persons in this period he had disposed of his property and become an ascetic, first in Egypt, then at the Jordan and eventually in Jerusalem, where he became keeper of the True Cross. Following his appointment he now left Jerusalem and went to Caesarea, to be ordained bishop by the metropolitan. So far all went well, but when he approached Gaza he began to meet with difficulties. He discovered that horn-trees, stones, dirt and things emitting smoke had been put in his way. Yet he managed to reach his goal, although he and his flock continued to be pestered by the heathen. There was a drought and the blame was put on his arrival. Later on the city gate was shut in the face of the faithful as they returned from a procession outside the city. Another time a Christian was badly hurt, also outside the city gate. His fellow Christians tried to carry him inside the walls, but the pagans, believing that he was dead, put a rope around his foot and dragged him away.

At last Porphyrios had had enough. He sent a letter to Constantinople by which he managed to obtain an imperial order that all pagan temples at Gaza

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[3] Mark the Deacon, *Vie de Porphyre, Évêque de Gaza*, ed., tr. and comm. by H. Grégoire and M.-A. Kugener (Paris, 1930), p. vii.
[4] A charioteer from Gaza is mentioned in the Life of St Hilarion, *BHG* 752, ed. A. Papadopoulos-Kerameus, 92,29.

should be closed. Unfortunately, although all the other temples were shut and the idols destroyed, the *agens in rebus* was bribed to exempt the Marneion (ch. 27).

The Christians continued to feel harassed. They were not allowed to hold office (ch. 32). In order to put an end to the troubles Porphyrios decided to go to the capital himself. He was accompanied by the Metropolitan of Caesarea. Their aim was to obtain an order that the pagan temples at Gaza, including the Marneion, should be destroyed. The Emperor Arkadios was reluctant to repel the pagans, who paid their taxes, whereas the Empress Eudoxia sided with the Christians. At last, using trickery, she persuaded Arkadios to issue the order that the bishops coveted, whereupon they returned in triumph. As they reached Gaza's centre the statue of Aphrodite fell from its base under the impact of the Cross and went to pieces. This was regarded as a good omen by the Christians.

Many rich pagans now left Gaza. Their houses were requisitioned by the officer who had come from Constantinople to implement the Emperor's order. The demolition of the smaller temples caused no problem. The Marneion was another matter, as the doors had been barricaded. In addition the Christians hesitated whether they should pull it down, burn it, or transform it into a church. At last they opted for the second alternative. As had been the case when they demolished the smaller temples, soldiers and foreigners took the opportunity to lay their hands on the valuables—the native Christians are said to have been above such looting (chs. 65, 69).

Private houses were also searched for idols and pagan writings. All such material was burnt. Frightened, many polytheists were converted. At church the question was raised whether such converts should be accepted or not (ch. 72).

After the Marneion had been destroyed the erection of a Christian church on the same spot began. The site was cleared and the architect, a certain Rufinus from Antioch, marked out the plan with chalk (ch. 78).[5] The building material was taken from a hill east of Gaza, not from the ruins of the temple. In front of the church, however, the soil was paved with marble slabs taken from the adyton of the Marneion, so that this marble, holy to the heathen, might be trodden by the dogs and the swine. The women, who had never been allowed into the adyton, refused to set foot there (ch. 76).

After five years the church was finished. It was cruciform and was adorned by thirty-two marble columns from Euboia, among other things. The building had been financed by the Empress and was therefore named Eudoxiana (ch. 92).

These dramatic events are graphically described in the Life of St Porphyrios mentioned above, supposedly written by the Saint's inseparable friend, the Deacon Markos. If this is true, we have an eye-witness account of how Gaza was christianized at the beginning of the 5th century. Most earlier and some recent historians have taken the eye-witness character of the Vita more or less for granted.[6] On closer inspection, however, discrepancies begin to appear. As the editors H. Grégoire and M.-A. Kugener[7] and especially the Bollandist P. Peeters[8] have observed, several pieces of information concerning people are wrong, and so are many indications of time; that the author was an eye-witness is a fiction. It is also remarkable that Bishop Porphyrios is not mentioned in any other source, at least not in such a context that he can be identified. In its present shape the Life must have been written long after the lifetime of Porphyrios, perhaps as late

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[5] As C. Mango, *Byzantine Architecture* (paperback ed., London, 1986), 16 observes, Rufinus' role was that of a master-builder rather than that of an architect in the modern sense, for the plan was drawn up at Constantinople.

[6] So evidently for instance A. Demandt, *Die Spätantike* [*HAW* III.6] (Munich, 1989), esp. 4 and 160.

[7] *Vie de Porphyre*, "Introduction", *passim*.

[8] P. Peeters, "La Vie géorgienne de saint Porphyre de Gaza", *AnalBoll* 59 (1941), 65–216, esp. 89–94.

as the early 7th century.[9] P. Peeters thinks that the Greek Life is ultimately based on an original version written in Syriac, which has been revised and enlarged for reasons of propaganda.[10] Thus the Greek Life of St Porphyrios is a piece of late hagiographic fiction, and this may be the reason why it contains so many graphic details. On the other hand it also contains much that is historically correct. In 403 St Jerome wrote in a letter, "To-day even the Egyptian Serapis has become a Christian: Marnas mourns in his prison at Gaza, and fears continually that his temple will be overthrown."[11] This letter must have been written after the Marneion had been shut down but not yet demolished. It is worth noting that the church replacing the Serapeion of Alexandria c. 390 was named after the Emperor Arkadios, just as the church that replaced the Marneion at Gaza was later named after his consort. Commenting on Isaiah's prophecy that Damascus shall be destroyed (Isa. 17,1), St Jerome further says, "This we see being fulfilled also in our time: the Serapeion of Alexandria and the Marneion of Gaza have been resurrected as churches of the Lord."[12] Evidently St Jerome, who died in 420, wrote this after the Marneion had been replaced by a church. The event described in the Life of St Porphyrios is therefore basically correct, although there may have been more violence than the hagiographer intimates, as indicated by the riots at Alexandria following the destruction of the Serapeion and by the notorious murder of the female philosopher Hypatia in 415. Peeters even thinks that the hagiographer, describing the transmutation of the Marneion into a church at the beginning of the 5th century, had the previous more violent transmutation of the Serapeion in mind, by this silent contrast stressing the relative mildness of his hero.[13] Evidently the Life of St Porphyrios is not unlike a modern historical novel, in which the physical context and the main events are described by and large correctly, although episodes and characters of the author's own making have been added in order to make the narrative detailed and exciting.[14]

Gaza was well known for its school of rhetoric, which cannot have existed unless there was a Greek-speaking élite supporting it. This élite is likely to have looked upon the growth of Christianity with mixed feelings. Nevertheless it survived the change of religion. Toward the end of the 5th and during the first half of the 6th century, ancient forms of literature flourished at Gaza, although the authors were Christian.[15] Whether the historian Prokopios, a native of Caesarea, studied there, is doubtful.[16] His namesake, however, the rhetor Prokopios, d. 528, certainly spent all his life there, as did his disciple Chorikios. Prokopios, a Christian, treated both Christian and secular topics. Among other things he described a monumental clock at Gaza, in which the twelve hours were represented by the twelve labours of Herakles. Thus not all memories from the days of polytheism had disappeared.

The theatre, too, in which the literary stars performed with great success, remained. Chorikios wrote a speech in defence of the actors, the last of its kind

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[9] Grégoire and Kugener seem to opt for a date around the year 500 ("Introduction", LXXIV), whereas P. Maas in his review of their edition, BZ 31 (1931), 73–75, regards the first half of the 7th century as a more likely date of composition.

[10] Peeters, "La Vie", 95–97.

[11] F. A. Wright (tr.), Select Letters of St. Jerome (repr. London, 1975), 343.

[12] PL 24, col. 249AB.

[13] Peeters, "La Vie", 88.

[14] Although the introduction and notes with which Grégoire and Kugener provided their edition are still very useful, it is clear that the Life of St Porphyrios is in great need of a modern commentary based on the important research work that has been done since 1930. In the meantime the forthcoming book by F. R. Trombley, Hellenic Religion and Christianization, c. 370–529, is likely to be of great help.

[15] G. Downey, Gaza in the Early Sixth Century (Norman, Okla., 1963), esp. ch. 7, gives an idea of the intellectual atmosphere of Gaza in this period.

[16] See Averil Cameron, Procopius and the Sixth Century (London, 1985), 6.

before the ancient theatrical performances were forbidden in 526.[17] Thus at the great outburst in *c.* 400 only the temples and the most offensive statues disappeared, while the other ancient monuments were left alone. Classical education was maintained. An anonymous pilgrim from Piacenza, visiting Gaza toward the year 570, describes it as a *civitas splendida deliciosa*, inhabited by cultivated and hospitable men.[18] On the mosaic map at Madaba in Jordan, produced at about the same time, Gaza is represented with a colonnaded main street, a theatre and a great basilica, perhaps to be identified with the one built by Porphyrios.[19] From the point of view of Antiquity, the real decline must have set in at the beginning of the 7th century, when the area was occupied by culturally alien powers, first temporarily by the Persians, then permanently by the Arabs, who took over Gaza in 635.

Emesa

Let us leave Gaza and move about 400 km north-east to Emesa, the modern Homs, which is on the right bank of the Orontes, at the road between the Mediterranean coast and Palmyra, about midway between Damascus and Antioch.

Emesa became Roman in the reign of Domitian (81–96). It began to flourish when Elagabalus, hereditary priest of the sun-god of Emesa, became Roman Emperor at the beginning of the 3rd century. Toward the end of the same century, at the latest, Emesa already had a bishop. At the time of Julian the Apostate it boasted at least two churches, one designated as the old church, a building which Julian pulled down, the other described as the great church—in this Julian put up a statue of Dionysos.[20]

An important event in the history of Emesa occurred in 452, when the head of St John the Baptist was found in a cave monastery nearby. The Piacenza pilgrim just mentioned says that it was kept in a glass vessel.[21] In 761, when Emesa had long been in Arab hands, the precious relic was transferred to the crypt of a church in central Emesa. Theophanes Confessor says that in his time (the beginning of the 9th century) it was still venerated there, curing the faithful of their diseases.[22]

Emesa appears to have remained predominantly Christian until 855 when, as a result of an unsuccessful rebellion, the Christians were either put to death or deported and all but one of the churches destroyed.[23] In 969 the head of John the Baptist was taken away by Nikephoros Phokas and brought to Constantinople. The church, turned into a mosque, is still standing and said to contain both Roman columns and Christian relics.[24]

From the Christian point of view Emesa's greatest son was St Romanos the Melode, who moved to Constantinople in the reign of the Emperor Anastasios I and became the best known hymnographer of the Orthodox Church. But Emesa

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[17] W. Schmid and O. Stählin, *Geschichte der griechischen Litteratur*, 2,2 [*HAW* VII.II.2] (Munich, 1924), 1031.
[18] English translation in J. Wilkinson, *Jerusalem Pilgrims Before the Crusades* (Warminster, 1977), 85.
[19] For a recent study of this map see R. Warland, "Die Mosaikkarte von Madaba und ihre Kopie in der Sammlung des Archäologischen Instituts der Universität Göttingen", *Antike Welt* 23 (1992), 287–296, with a general view of the whole map in Fig. 1.
[20] Theophanes, *Chronographia*, ed. C. de Boor (repr. Hildesheim-New York, 1980), 48.
[21] Wilkinson, *Jerusalem Pilgrims*, 89.
[22] *Chronographia*, 431. For a discussion of the vicissitudes of this relic, see P. Peeters, "La passion de S. Julien d'Émèse", *AnalBoll* 47 (1929), 44–76, esp. 44 ff.
[23] P. K. Hitti, *History of Syria* (New York, 1951), 544.
[24] Ibid., 511.

was also the place where, in the 6th century, St Symeon the Fool challenged the devil by pretending to be mad for the sake of Christ. According to his biographer Leontios of Neapolis Symeon was born at Edessa (the modern Urfa in Turkey).[25] His mother tongue was Syriac, although Leontios is anxious to point out that he had received a complete Greek education.[26] After a pilgrimage to Jerusalem he is said to have withdrawn to the desert east of the Dead Sea, where he spent about thirty years before returning to civilization, this time not to Edessa but to Emesa. Strictly speaking it is not proper for a hermit to live in a city, but the role as a fool gave Symeon an alibi. By playing the fool he could penetrate all the milieus believed to be dominated by the devil while at the same time intensifying his ascesis by incurring ill-treatment.[27]

Leontios wrote the Life of St Symeon in Cyprus in the 7th century. For obvious reasons he had not met his hero, nor does he give the impression of having been to Emesa. In any case he seems to have developed a special interest in Symeon, for he says that he has written two Lives of him, one when his material was still limited and a second when he had managed to obtain more information.[28] Thus there existed more than one source. Leontios' main contribution consisted in giving the anecdotes he had collected a deeper meaning and providing them with a biographical framework in which the holy fool was given the features of a true imitator of Christ. Exactly when Leontios finished his work is hard to determine. He does not mention the Arab conquest of Syria, but this does not necessarily mean that the Vita was written before the middle of the 630s. Nor does he mention the Persian occupation which preceded it, although he is highly unlikely to have written before 609, when the Persians appeared.[29]

The biographical framework need not detain us here. What is of interest in this context is the picture of Emesa and its social life that emerges from the anecdotes about Symeon, reproduced by Leontios.[30]

Emesa was of course surrounded by a city wall. The first thing Symeon saw when he came to Emesa was a heap of refuse at the city gate, on which a dead dog had been thrown. He took his waistrope, tied it around one of the dog's legs and thus entered the city dragging along a carcass. A school was located close to the gate. The children there, enjoying the spectacle, followed Symeon, shouting, "Look, a crazy monk!"

The following day he went to church but behaved so badly that he was thrown out. Before he disappeared he took the opportunity to overturn the tables of the confectioners—on Sundays they evidently put up their pastries for sale in front of the church.

Despite these offences Symeon was soon hired by a *phouskarios,* i.e. the owner

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[25] L. Rydén (ed.), *Das Leben des hl. Narren Symeon von Leontios von Neapolis* (Uppsala, 1963), 139,21. This edition was reprinted with minor changes in *Léontios de Néapolis, Vie de Syméon le Fou et Vie de Jean de Chypre,* ed. by A.-J. Festugière in collaboration with L. Rydén (Paris, 1974); It. tr. in P. Cesaretti, *I santi folli di Bisanzio* (Milan, 1990), 39–93, Dutch in W. J. Aerts and others, *Leontios van Neapolis, Leven van Symeon de Dwaas* (Bonheiden, 1977).

[26] Rydén, *Leben,* 125,14 f.

[27] There are many studies on the role of the Holy Fool, see, e.g., L. Rydén, "The Holy Fool" in S. Hackel (ed.), *The Byzantine Saint* (London, 1981), 106–113 (on Symeon, 108–112) and the perceptive article by G. Dagron, "L'homme sans honneur ou le saint scandaleux", *Annales ESC* 45 (1990), 929–939.

[28] Rydén, *Leben,* 169.

[29] So far the most energetic examination of the problems connected with the chronology of Leontios and his hagiographical œuvre is C. Mango, "A Byzantine Hagiographer at Work: Leontios of Neapolis", in: Irmgard Hutter (ed.), *Byzanz und der Westen* (Vienna, 1984), 25–41, although in my view Mango underestimates Leontios' literary ability.

[30] What follows overlaps to a certain extent with W. J. Aerts' paper "Emesa in der Vita Symeonis Sali von Leontios von Neapolis" in: V. Vavřínek (ed.), *From Late Antiquity to Early Byzantium. Proceedings of the Byzantinological Symposium in the 16th International Eirene Conference* (Prague, 1985), 113–116, from which I have benefited.

of a *phouskarion,* an establishment in which, in addition to beans and other edibles, *phouska,* a warm, non-alcoholic beverage also used in the Roman army, was sold.[31] But as he gave everything away without caring about payment he was of course soon fired.

Later on he worked as a *thermodotes* in a tavern, serving warm water to be mixed with the wine, but when he pretended to want to sleep with the innkeeper's wife he was dismissed. And so the story continues.[32]

In addition to the places mentioned so far we learn about other schools (151,2), a square (agora, 148,16; 157,7), a bath, or rather a combination of two baths, one for men and one for women (typically, Symeon enters the one reserved for women, 149,3–10), further a glass-blower's workshop (163,7–8), and a theatre, obviously of the ancient kind (150,7–10). Columns that incline or tumble down because of an earthquake are also mentioned, although their location is not specified (150,23–28).

Outside the city walls there was, in addition to heaps of refuse, a place where clothes were washed, probably by the Orontes (163,16), a burial-ground for foreigners (168,13) and a gallows hill (160,5–6)—the context in which this latter is mentioned indicates that the proceedings leading to an execution could be exceedingly summary.[33] The mention of so-called *demotai,* presumably in uniform (163,16), indicates that Emesa also had a hippodrome. From one of the episodes in the Vita one may further conclude that the countryside contained vineyards (164,16–17).

Of the people mentioned in the Life of St Symeon some were rich, having servants (or slaves), among them a cupbearer (161,20). Some of them were cruel to their servants (161,21–22). At the other end of the social spectrum we find the sick and the crippled and the poor who in the chilly period warmed themselves in the glass-blower's shop. Diseases specified are cataract (161,4), epilepsy (155,22–23) and plague (151,1–8)—the plague may be the one raging from 542 onwards. Between these social extremes we recognize the glass-blower, who is a Jew, and the innkeeper, who is a Monophysite (an acephalous Severian, to be precise, 146,21), further doctors (161,7) schoolteachers (151,5) a muleteer bringing in wine in skins from the countryside (164,14 ff.), mounted messengers in the service of the administration of justice (160,6), a juggler (150,9), an enchantress (162,22) and finally actresses/prostitutes, with whom Symeon used to dance in full view of all the people (154,27–155,3). Remarkably enough, as M. Whittow observes,[34] there is no mention of a bishop.

There was no lack of fun and entertainment. The story of the high-ranking man who fell ill and played dice with Death (165,15 ff.) indicates that dice-playing was a popular pastime. Young girls amused themselves by dancing in the street and mocking the monks (157,17–18). Grown-ups also danced, apparently in the open air in front of the tavern (147,14: Symeon danced with the *demotai* outside the tavern where he was employed). People went to the theatre to watch the juggler. Symeon himself seems to have taken part in make-believe slapsticks (154,27 ff., 156,14). He also visited the rich, playing the buffoon (151,10–11, 165,15–16). In the *Miracula Artemii,* to which I shall turn in a moment, the upper ten are said to like the company of clowns (mir. 17). Outside the city the young men used to play a game called something like "run and break the door" (*trechein lusoporta,* 149,19).

[31] See E. Kislinger, "ΦΟΥΣΚΑ und ΓΛΗΧΩΝ", *JÖB* 34 (1984), 49–53.

[32] The episodes referred to may be found in Rydén, *Leben,* 145–148.

[33] For the gallows (φούρκα) and the way they worked, see O. Kresten, "Die Hinrichtung des Königs von Gai (Jos. 8,29)", *Anzeiger der Akademie der Wissenschaften, Wien* 126 (1989), 111–129, with the additional remarks by P. Speck in *JÖB* 40 (1990), 359 f.

[34] Whittow, "Ruling the Late Roman and Early Byzantine City", 25.

Apparently in 6th–century Emesa much of the ancient way of life still existed. People indulged in drinking at the tavern, dancing in the street and watching shows. There were plenty of prostitutes. The monks were not so holy that one could not make fun of them. Recently a young American scholar has demonstrated that some of Symeon's offences against decent behaviour derive from the Cynic Diogenes, thus indicating another link with Antiquity.[35] On the other hand there is no trace of pagan religion in the episodes told by Leontios. The holy man's enemies do not consist of pagan gods and temples but of heretics, Jews and secular entertainment. Thus if Mark the Deacon described the first phase of the battle for a Christian society, the Life of Symeon the Fool reflects phase number two, in which the goal is a hyperchristian society governed by ascetic ideals.[36]

Constantinople

It goes without saying that Constantinople is in every respect on a different level than Gaza and Emesa, also with regard to the fact that its history and development are much better recorded. In the capital, the conflict between Christianity and pagan polytheism never manifested itself with the same brutality as at Alexandria and Gaza. It is true that the inauguration of Constantinople was an act without Christian elements, yet it was founded by the emperor who acknowledged the new religion and was eventually baptized. Gradually it assumed an ever more Christian character as new churches were erected and the old temples fell into neglect. The number of relics gathered there grew steadily. Eventually Constantinople became regarded as a New Jerusalem, a city placed under the particular protection of the Mother of God. In legend even the inauguration of 330 received a Christian touch.[37]

A phenomenon sharply contrasting with the conversion of Gaza is that Constantinople became something of a place of refuge for antique statues, whereas at Gaza they were destroyed.[38] Constantine I himself had a great number of statues transported to the Bosporos for the embellishment of his new city.[39] The importation continued, albeit at a lower pace, well into the 6th century. Although some of these statues were more or less indifferent from the religious point of view, many of them represented pagan gods, Phidias' chryselephantine statue of the seated Zeus being the most famous; it appears to have been brought from Olympia to Constantinople after the closing down of the Olympic Games in 394. Along with many other ancient works of art it was destroyed by fire in 475. Other statues fell victim to other disasters, but no systematic destruction occurred until the fourth crusade.[40] The statues were left alone where they were, at the Forum of

[35] D. Krueger, "Literary Allusions to Diogenes of Sinope in Leontios of Neapolis' *Life of Symeon salos*", *XVIIIth International Congress of Byzantine Studies. Summaries of Communications* (Moscow, 1991), 616. — After this paper was prepared for publication I received Krueger's excellent dissertation *Cynics, Christians, and Holy Fools: The Late Antique Contexts of Leontius of Neapolis' "Life of Symeon the Fool"* (UMI, Ann Arbor, 1993; defended 1991), in which he maintains that "although set in Emesa in Syria during the sixth century, the text reflects the economic prosperity and religious diversity of Cyprus in the first half of the seventh century." If this is true, all evidence offered by the Vita must be used with great caution.
[36] The very interesting Life of St Symeon the Fool will be further illuminated through forthcoming publications by V. Déroche and O. Kresten.
[37] See G. Dagron, *Naissance d'une capitale. Constantinople et ses institutions de 330 à 451* (Paris, 1974), esp. 367–409 ("Constantinople chrétienne").
[38] The paradox is pointed out by C. Mango in his classic paper "Antique Statuary and the Byzantine Beholder", *DOP* 17 (1963), 53–75, esp. 55 f. To a large extent the paradox is explained by the particular status of Constantinople as the Emperor's own city, cf. next note.
[39] It should be noted that the idea of moving ancient works of art from their original habitat to new centres of power was old and that the purpose was not only aesthetic but also ideological, see Sarah Guberti Bassett, "The Antiquities in the Hippodrome of Constantinople", *DOP* 45 (1991), 87–96.
[40] See Mango's survey in "Statuary", 55–59, 68 and 75.

Constantine, on the spina of the Hippodrome and in other public places. There is plenty of evidence that the Byzantine intellectuals appreciated the aesthetic qualities of these ancient works of art.[41] By the uneducated, on the other hand, they were looked upon with superstitious indifference, an attitude inherited from the pagan past.[42] Of course there was still an interest in creating religious imagery, although it now manifested itself in the creation of icons, reliefs and mosaics rather than in the making of sculpture in the round.[43] In addition religiously neutral works of art continued to be produced, the floor mosaics in the imperial palace (7th century?) being a particularly impressive example.[44]

With their wealth of illuminating glimpses of everyday life in the capital the Miracles of the Martyr Artemios, to which I now address myself, form an important counterpart to the Lives of Sts Porphyrios and Symeon the Fool. Governor of Egypt in the 4th century, Artemios had been executed by Julian the Apostate and his relics translated to Constantinople, where in the 7th century they were preserved in a lead coffin in the crypt of a church dedicated to St John the Baptist situated in the area called Oxeia, roughly where the Süleymaniye mosque now stands.[45] On Sunday night, when a lay brotherhood which supported the cult of St Artemios organized a procession and a vigil,[46] the crypt was opened, whereupon at midnight wax tokens, apparently stamped with the picture of St Artemios, were distributed among the sick (mir. 16, 33). The *Miracula Artemii*, as they are called, consist of a collection of forty-five case histories meant to demonstrate that the relics of St Artemios could cure hernia; on occasion they also cured other ailments or helped people retrieve stolen goods. The collection was compiled in the 660s by an Anonymous, presumably a priest in the church of St John. The earliest case dates from the reign of the Emperor Maurice (582–602).[47]

When a person suffering from hernia, usually a man, turned to St Artemios for help, he brought a mattress with him and made his bed in the left aisle of the church, whereupon, sooner or later, the Saint appeared to him in a dream and cured him. If the patient was a small boy he was accompanied by his mother. The rare female patients ware accommodated in the right aisle, where St Febronia, St Artemios' assistant, took care of them in similar fashion.[48] In Antiquity, incubation was in the first place associated with the shrines of Asclepios, but as polytheism gave way to Christian belief the pagan shrines were closed and the

[41] See Helen Saradi-Mendelovici, "Christian Attitudes toward Pagan Monuments in Late Antiquity and Their Legacy in Later Byzantine Centuries", *DOP* 44 (1990), 47–61, esp. 58–60.

[42] See Mango, "Statuary", *passim*, with Helen Saradi-Mendelovici's additional remarks, "Christian Attitudes", 57.

[43] On the complex picture of the gradually discontinued production in this period of sculpture in the round, religious as well as secular, see Bente Kiilerich's contribution to this volume.

[44] For the palace mosaics, see P. J. Nordhagen's contribution to this volume.

[45] For the location of the Oxeia see A. Berger, *Untersuchungen zu den Patria Konstantinupoleos* [Poikila Byzantina 8] (Bonn, 1988), 459; for the interior of the church see C. Mango, "On the History of the *Templon* and the Martyrion of St. Artemios at Constantinople", *Zograf* 10 (1979), 40–43, esp. 41–43.

[46] On Byzantine confraternities, see J. Nesbitt and J. Wiita, "A Confraternity of the Comnenian Era", *BZ* 68 (1975), 360–384, esp. 360 f., J. Russell, *The Mosaic Inscriptions of Anemurium* (Vienna, 1987), 62–64, and N. Oikonomides, "The Holy Icon as an Asset", *DOP* 45 (1991), 35–44, esp. 40. In this case the members are not called φιλόπονοι or σπουδαῖοι but οἱ τῆς παννυχίδος. One of them is *subadiuva*, an official in the service of the city prefect (instead of Σουβαδίου Βασῶν p. 23,12 read σουβαδιούβας ὤν), another a free servant in the house of a magnate (mir. 15); a woman is also mentioned (mir. 46).

[47] Pending the critical edition by V. Déroche one has to make do with the text published by A. Papadopoulos-Kerameus, *Varia graeca sacra* (St Petersburg, 1909), 1–75, to which I refer. An English translation with commentary by J. F. Haldon is in progress. An article in Swedish by the present writer was published in *Religion och Bibel* 44 (1985), 3–16 under the title "Kyrkan som sjukhus".

[48] The cult of St Febronia, martyred at Nisibis under Diocletian (284–305), seems to have reached Constantinople *c.* 600, and her Life, written in Syriac, is believed to have been translated into Greek at about the same time; see *Holy Women of the Syrian Orient*, tr., with an Introduction, by S. Brock and Susan Ashbrook Harvey (London, 1987), 151.

churches took over.[49] In its Christian form incubation was practised during the whole Byzantine period and also afterwards until this century.[50]

The author who compiled the Miracles of St Artemios does not criticize Asclepios. He does not even mention his name; probably he knew little or nothing about him. On the other hand he mentions both Hippocrates and Galenos (mir. 24, 26) and is not unfamiliar with medical terminology, as his use of terms like σημειόομαι 'examine', ἐντεροκήλη 'intestinal hernia', σμίλη ἰατρικὴ 'scalpel', ἀπολίνωσις 'operation by ligature', ψυχροὶ καυστῆρες 'cold cauteries',[51] shows; many of these technical terms appear in the *Epitome* of Paul of Aegina, who practised medicine in Alexandria till after 642. On one occasion he even begins to speak in Hippocrates' Ionic dialect (p. 38,23). This is in line with the fact that in the vicinity there was a hospital called *Ta Christodotes* which is mentioned without depreciation (mir. 22). In fact, Artemios often appears in the guise of a doctor, making his rounds like a doctor in a hospital (ὡς ἐπὶ ξενῶνος p. 7,2), feeling the pulse (mir. 9) and performing tasks that are reminiscent of surgical operations or parodies of operations (mir. 41, 42, 44). Nevertheless doctors are often described as greedy, incompetent and dangerous, especially if they are allowed to operate on you (mir. 25). Once after an extraordinary miracle the author exclaims, "What do you say to that, Hippocrates?" (p. 38,21). Thus to his mind doctors are outdone by Artemios. This ambivalence may perhaps be explained by the fact that, after a promising beginning, ancient medicine had reached an impasse. Without microscopes and other technical instruments further progress had become impossible.[52] The human body and its diseases remained enigmatic. Whether you went to see a doctor or a holy man or pinned your hopes to the relics of a martyr did not make much difference. This made for competition, as the anti-medical outbursts in some of the miracles indicate. But if you saw a holy man or went to a church with wonder-working relics at least you did not have to pay a heavy fee (mir. 26), you did not have to suffer unbearable pains—mir. 21 contains a particularly impressive description of painful medical treatment—, nor did you run the risk of being killed by the doctor's knife which, to judge from the *Miracula*, cut off intestines and testicles alike.[53] No wonder that before he operated the doctor had the patient give him the knife as proof of his consent (mir. 26).[54]

It may be worth mentioning that, before Artemios, Asclepios also used to appear in the guise of a doctor and behave in a professional manner.[55] Like Artemios he performed make-believe operations,[56] but his relations with the doctors were less complicated than in the case of Artemios. In Antiquity the doctors treated those whom they regarded as curable, while Asclepios took care

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[49] In the 5th century, the Asclepieion on the south side of the Acropolis of Athens was destroyed, but the traditional incubation continued in the church built on the same spot, see T. Gregory, "The Survival of Paganism in Christian Greece: a Critical Essay", *American Journal of Philology* 107 (1986), 229–242, esp. 238 f. It seems doubtful, however, whether "survival of paganism" is the appropriate term for this kind of continuity.

[50] See *Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium* (New York–Oxford, 1991), 992 (F. R. Trombley), with further lit. For the medieval West see P.-A. Sigal, *L'homme et le miracle dans la France médiévale* (Paris, 1985), 134 ff.

[51] The 'cold cauteries' refer to the application of various caustic substances. I wish to thank Mr A. Kramer, Bonn, for making this sense plain to me.

[52] Cf. Antje Krug, *Heilkunst und Heilkult. Medizin in der Antike* (Munich, 1984), 213.

[53] Cf. p. 35,17 ἀποκόψαι τοὺς διδύμους, p. 72,28–73,1 ἀποτεμεῖν ὃν ἠσθένει δίδυμον ... κηλοτομεῖσθαι. There are many indications that the author did not distinguish between the testicles and a piece of intestine descended into the scrotum, see, e. g., mir. 28.

[54] On this topic see E. Kislinger, "Der kranke Justin II. und die ärztliche Haftung bei Operationen in Byzanz", *JÖB* 36 (1986), 39–44. esp. 43.

[55] Krug, *Heilkunst*, 137.

[56] Ibid., 138.

of the desperate cases. There was no antagonism between the doctors and the god.[57]

Also outside the realm of illness and incubation the case histories included in the *Miracula Artemii* throw interesting light on everyday life in Constantinople in the 7th century. In one episode a money-changer, who is also treasurer in the brotherhood of St Artemios, is doing business in a portico, while some men on the other side of the street play dice (mir. 18, p. 22,2). The same episode provides fascinating insights into the administration of justice seen from the point of view of a singer at the vigil robbed of his ceremonial clothes. Often a patient is said to lift his clothes to show his ailment (mir. 17, 40). Thus one did not yet use trousers except on ceremonial occasions, it would seem. Mir. 26 contains a graphic description of a hot–tempered Cilician blacksmith at work; his workshop is located at the same colonnaded avenue as *Ta Christodotes*. In mir. 21 a deacon at Saint Sophia who is also poet of the Blue Faction buys wax candles from a candlemaker late at night; unfortunately it rains and he slips in the mud, breaking his candles and losing his money. Mir. 32, dating from the reign of the Emperor Maurice, features a young man from Alexandria who is injured as he carries earthenware jars, heavy with wine, to a cargo ship loosely anchored in shallow waters. In mir. 7 a young man called Plato makes a bet that he can put the stone used as a counterbalance in the weighing of timber (or firewood?) on his shoulder; as expected he incurs a hernia.

The sick or their parents and other relatives who resorted to the relics of St Artemios belonged to all levels of society except the lowest. They include an imperial judge who is also patrician, a lady from the imperial court who is too important to sleep in the aisle reserved for women and therefore spends the night with her ailing son in a chamber in the right-hand gallery, further a civil servant from a government office, a doctor, a merchant, a money-dealer, a pawnbroker (?),[58] a shipowner, a shipbuilder, sailors, a coppersmith, a bowmaker, a tanner, a granary guard, a female bath attendant, a free servant in a rich man's house, a priest in the Church of St John who to his own detriment forgets about St Artemios and goes to see a doctor, a deacon at St Sophia and poet of the Blue Faction, a church singer, a monk. It is remarkable that so many of the patients are engaged in various kinds of trade. In part the reason may be that Artemios came from Egypt. It is likewise remarkable that there are several immigrants among the people mentioned in the *Miracula*. One of them comes from Amastris in Paphlagonia, another from Phrygia, a third, already mentioned, from Cilicia, a fourth, a clown (*telôn skenika*) in the service of a magnate, from Alexandria. Chios, Rhodes, Alexandria, North Africa, and Gaul are mentioned, but there is no indication that Egypt has been taken by the Arabs. In fact, Arabs (Hagarenes, Saracens) do not appear at all, although one would expect the Arab conquests, a turning–point in world history, to be reflected in one way or another. However, the exclusion of the Arabs is not an isolated phenomenon.[59] Instead we meet a Persian doctor and a servant with the Persian (or Armenian) name Narses.

As far as I can judge, the *Miracula Artemii* is one of the last literary documents that have a fairly Antique atmosphere. On the other hand the dawn of the Middle Ages makes itself felt in various ways. For instance, a private clown plays an important part in mir. 17, but there is no mention of a theatre, nor for that matter of taverns. Circus factions are mentioned, but no chariot races, let alone circus riots, which had been so common earlier. Instead the author mentions a

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[57] Ibid., 121.
[58] P. 62,1, ἔχων γονεῖς διὰ τοῦ χρυσοκαταλλακτικοῦ καὶ σημιδαρικοῦ πόρου μετερχομένους.
[59] Cf. Averil Cameron and Judith Herrin (eds.), *Constantinople in the Early Eighth Century: the Parastaseis Syntomoi Chronikai* (Leiden, 1984), 37.

place where the stables for the horses of the hippodrome had been, as if such stables were no longer needed (mir. 13). Moreover the chancel screen in the church where St Artemios' relics were kept is described in a way that foreshadows the iconostasis.[60] The very cult of St Artemios' relics is of course characteristic of the Middle Ages rather than of Antiquity. The idea, expressed in mir. 24, that St Artemios' coffin was in fact a well receiving its water from the Jordan is also medieval rather than ancient, since it equates Constantinople with Jerusalem.[61]

Usually a hagiographical document not only has a hero in the shape of a saint but also an enemy in the form of an antihero or a detested social phenomenon. In the Life of St Porphyrios the enemy is Marnas. In the Life of St Symeon the Fool the enemy is represented by the traditional pleasures of the ancient *polis*, whereas in the Miracles of St Artemios he is represented by secular medicine. Each in its way, these three texts are good expressions of the changes taking place during the period under consideration.

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[60] See further Mango, "On the History of the *Templon*".

[61] Cf. G. Dagron, "Pèlerins russes à Constantinople", *Cahiers du Monde russe et soviétique* 30 (1989), 285–292, esp. 288, where the meaning of a similar story in the "Wanderer of Stephen of Novgorod" is thus explained.

Asia Minor on the Threshold of the Middle Ages: Hagiographical Glimpses from Lycia and Galatia

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The Texts

In the fourth to sixth centuries Asia Minor was a province of little importance in hagiography.[1] Other parts of the Empire, such as Egypt, Syria and Palestine, as well as Constantinople, dominated the scene. When Asia Minor did begin to assume a more productive role, focus was characteristically put on the country-side.

In the present paper the new upsurge for hagiography in Asia Minor will be represented by two important texts. The first is the Life of St Nicholas of Sion.[2] Sion was a monastery near Myra in Lycia, in the south–western part of the country, and Nicholas, its abbot for a number of years, probably died in 564. Another Nicholas of Lycia is better known—the bishop of Myra who allegedly lived two hundred years earlier—but, historically, he is a shadowy figure whose hagiographical tradition owes a great deal of its vivid details to the Life of Nicholas of Sion.

The Life is presumed to have been written soon after Nicholas' death.[3] It is undoubtedly one of the most interesting documents in its genre from the Early Byzantine period. With one or two exceptions, however, scholars have paid surprisingly little attention to it after the appearance of Anrich's commentary in 1917,[4] a work that remains fundamental to the understanding of the Life. The new edition by the Ševčenkos,[5] with its brief introduction and a few explanatory notes, does not aspire to be a fresh over–all study of the text. A recent article by Clive Foss is an excellent contribution, the main interest of which is, however, the Life's information on Lycian topography.[6]

The second text to be considered is the famous Life of St Theodore of Sykeon.

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[1] The few texts that can be located to this area include mainly a number of "epic" martyrs' Passions, for example those of the Forty Martyrs of Sebasteia (*BHG* 1201), St Eustratios of Arauraka and his Companions (*BHG* 646), St Eugenios of Trebizond and his Companions (*BHG* 608y, z), St Hieron and his Companions (*BHG* 749).

[2] *BHG* 1347. See G. Anrich (ed.), *Hagios Nikolaos. Der heilige Nikolaos in der griechischen Kirche*, I (Berlin, 1913), 3–55. Vol. II of the same work (Leipzig – Berlin, 1917) contains "Prolegomena, Untersuchungen, Indices". For the text of the Life, see now the corrected and completed reprint of Anrich's text, along with a brief introduction and an English translation, by I. Ševčenko and N. Patterson Ševčenko, *The Life of Saint Nicholas of Sion* (Brookline, Mass., 1984). References to the text (henceforth *VNic*) will be to chapter (and line) of this edition.

[3] Anrich, *Hagios Nikolaos*, II, 220.

[4] Anrich, *Hagios Nikolaos*, II, 208–260.

[5] See above, note 1. Two new editions of this Life with translation and commentary are now being prepared, one by J.-M. Olivier (in collaboration with B. Bavant), the other by V. Ruggieri.

[6] C. Foss, "Cities and Villages of Lycia in the Life of Saint Nicholas of Holy Zion", *GOTR* 36 (1991), 303–337.

Aspects of Late Antiquity and Early Byzantium, ed. L. Rydén, J. O. Rosenqvist, Swedish Research Institute in Istanbul, Transactions, Vol. 4 (Stockholm, 1993)

145

It had been known since 1884, from the edition of an incomplete manuscript in Venice,[7] when in 1970 the first complete edition appeared.[8] The text must have been finished after 641, but its author may have already been at work at a much earlier date. Theodore himself died in 613 in his monastery at Sykeon, a village in Galatia c. 80 km west of Ankyra, and he may have been born around 530. The Life is exceptional for its length and the richness and diversity of its information. It is no wonder that in recent years it has been exploited by a vast number of scholars who have studied it from a variety of aspects.[9]

Although these two texts have a number of features in common, the differences between them are much more striking. Especially important in this context is the fact that their settings are so different. In both cases, to be sure, the countryside of Asia Minor is involved. But whereas Lycia was a typical out-of-the-way area, Galatia was situated on the old Roman highway between Constantinople and Ankyra, a fact that meant easy and quick communication with the capital. As we may expect, therefore, Theodore often travelled to Constantinople. Also, important persons from the capital, such as emperors and generals, often visited him at his monastery in Sykeon. In contrast, Nicholas made some journeys to Jerusalem, but seems never to have had any contacts with Constantinople. His activities were a purely local affair.

Both Lives describe a large number of miracles, i.e. more or less supernatural solutions brought about by the holy men in response to various problems. Theodore especially was an active and outgoing saint who throughout his career was employed to solve problems of all kinds. In part his activities took place in urban settings (Constantinople, Nicomedia in Bithynia), but the miracles performed in the rural areas of his home-land Galatia are those that will be of primary interest here.

In both Lives, there are features that point back towards Antiquity, as well as such that foreshadow the future, the Byzantine middle ages. In both categories we find elements that reflect the structure of society at large, as well as characteristic individual details in the historical fabric. I will discuss a few examples drawn from these two categories which, I believe, may illustrate the situation in rural Asia Minor in a reasonably representative way.

Agriculture

If we are looking for information on the organization and content of agricultural work, the kind of activity that naturally dominates the rural areas with which we are concerned, we find the most interesting material in the Life of Theodore.[10] We may first note some points of small surprise. Grain (which means primarily wheat) is a major produce, various vegetables are cultivated, vineyards kept.[11] As for live-stock, cows and sheep are bred, oxen and mules used as beasts of

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[7] *BHG* 1748. Ed. princeps by Th. Joannou, in Μνημεῖα ἁγιολογικά (Venice, 1884), 361–495.

[8] A.-J. Festugière (ed.), *Vie de Théodore de Sykéôn*, I. *Texte grec*, II. *Traduction, commentaire et appendice* [Subsidia Hagiographica 48] (Brussels, 1970). References to the text (henceforth *VThSyc*) will be to chapter (and line) of this edition.

[9] Add now the contribution by Ø. Hjort to this volume.

[10] Some of this material is discussed by H. J. Magoulias, "The Lives of the Saints as Sources for Byzantine Agrarian Life in the Sixth and Seventh Centuries", *GOTR* 35 (1990), 59–70. It is used extensively by M. Kaplan, *Les hommes et la terre à Byzance du VIe au XIe siècle. Propriété et exploitation du sol* (Paris, 1992).

[11] (Fields with) grain: *VNic*, 59,6; *VThSyc*, 36,4; 118,21 f.; 145,3; 158,6. Vegetables: *VThSyc*, 101,13 ff.; 124,9; 158,6 (gardens). Vineyards: *VNic*, 63,6; *VThSyc*, 36,4; 52,4; 115,44; 144,2 ff.; 145,3; 158,6; 159,2. Also (fruit-) trees: ibid., 158,6.

burden.[12] Horses are used only for travelling long distances and appear mostly in connection with inns or as possessions of the mighty.[13]

People live in villages.[14] They are either free small–holders or farm workers without landed property, a category whose civil status is not always clear, although serfdom is sometimes implied.[15] The latter work on land owned by, usually, the Church or some private proprietor.[16] The villages are organized as communities with a number of important functions.[17] These are close networks that organize social life on a local level, for example by arranging common feasts on different occasions.[18] But the communities, led by the mayor and the elders,[19] are also legally responsible bodies which may be charged with a joint responsibility for illegal actions committed by its individual members.[20] It may also be noted that even small villages had schools; at least this was the case in Theodore's early years.[21]

Agricultural conditions in this period,[22] as regards ownership of land and forms of production in general, have often been discussed.[23] A primary document for all such discussion is the so–called *Farmers' Law* (νόμος γεωργικός).[24] This is a document of uncertain date and place of origin.[25] Most scholars seem to date it soon before or soon after 700, although it is generally thought to reflect older conditions.[26] It is not a law in the ordinary sense of the word, created on a single occasion and intended to regulate conditions throughout the Empire. Rather it seems to have been a private collection made for use as a practical manual by judges on a local level. The uncertain date and origin of the document, in addition to its local character, make it difficult to generalize from the emergent picture. Still it may be interesting to note one or two cases of agreement between the situation reflected in the *Farmers' Law* and the one which we glimpse in the Life of Theodore.

First, in the *Farmers' Law* it appears that the large landed estates, the old Roman *latifundia*, have lost their dominating role (which does not mean that they have disappeared). This corresponds to the increasingly important and perhaps dominant role played by land–owning peasants.[27] Second, the village

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[12] Cows: *VThSyc*, 145,13. Sheep: *VNic*, 62,2 f. (prob.). Oxen: *VNic*, 54,3; 56,4, 20, 25; 57,5, 16, 19, 22; *VThSyc*, 98,2; 114,4 (prob.); 156,34. Mules: ibid., 99,1. Fowl: ibid., 145,14.

[13] *VThSyc*, 106,22; 109,20; 151,15; 156,20 (prob.); 157,3; also, ibid., 99,10.

[14] It may be noted that both Lives contain an unusually rich material of names of villages and other small places, a great deal of which are apparently of non-Greek origin.

[15] Free peasants: *VNic*, ch. 59; *VThSyc*, chs. 98; 114; 149; farm workers without land: ibid., 147,49–53 (γεωργοί generally treated like slaves); 148,1 (γεωργοί running away from their master). Also, ibid., ch. 76.

[16] The Church: *VThSyc*, 34,6 f.; 75,20 ff.; private proprietors: ibid., 147,51–53 (unspecified); 148,1–3 (Megethios, a tax-collector).

[17] For discussions of the village communities, with several examples from the *VThSyc*, see J. F. Haldon, *Byzantium in the Seventh Century. The Transformation of a Culture* (Cambridge, 1990), 134–141; Kaplan, *Les hommes et la terre*, 195–203.

[18] *VThSyc*, 143,1–2: the community of Apoukoumis slaughter an ox and feast on the meat.

[19] *VThSyc*, 124,1–4.

[20] *VThSyc*, ch. 114, on which see further below.

[21] *VThSyc*, 26,11–13: a schoolmaster in the village of Mossyna (or Mossynoi, also called Enistraton), is admitted among Theodore's followers.

[22] For the material found in hagiography, see Magoulias, "The Lives of the Saints", 59–70.

[23] See the convenient treatments by P. Lemerle, *The Agrarian History of Byzantium from the Origins to the Twelfth Century* (Galway, 1979), 1–67, and Haldon, *Seventh Century*, 125–172.

[24] Ed. by W. Ashburner, "The Farmer's Law", *JHS* 30 (1910), 85–108, and 32 (1912), 68–95.

[25] For these questions, see J. Karayannopulos, "Entstehung und Bedeutung des Nomos georgikos", *BZ* 51 (1958), 357–373.

[26] Karayannopulos, "Enstehung", 373, is very categorical: we can be sure that "der N(omos) G(eorgikos) als Ganzes älteres Recht wiedergibt, und folglich steht seine Erscheinung in keiner genetischen Beziehung zu irgendwelchen äusseren Faktoren des 7. Jh." See further the discussions in Lemerle, *Agrarian Society*, 27–67 (for the date, esp. 32–35); Haldon, *Seventh Century*, 132–141, with lit. in note 21 (p. 132 f.); Kaplan, *Les hommes et la terre*, 387 f.

[27] See Lemerle, *Agrarian Society*, 51–54.

communities have a number of important functions.[28] As appears from the Life of Theodore as cited above, the situation of the Galatian peasantry a hundred years earlier was developing toward much the same conditions.

Insecurity and Conflicts

The mental atmosphere in these villages seems insecure and full of tensions and conflicts. There is a hint at the general insecurity in the Empire at the beginning of the Life of Theodore. There the author says that his hero was born in a period "when the Emperor's decrees were [generally] obeyed",[29] a phrase that seems to suggest a decline in the imperial administration: things had obviously changed for the worse before the Life was finished. In part the insecurity was no doubt a consequence of well-known elements in the history of the age. It may suffice to refer to the Persian invasion, which is mentioned several times in the Life,[30] and the unstable interior situation in the decade before the accession of Herakleios, a situation to which the author of the Life also makes several references.[31] If Lycia is taken into account, mention must also be made of the plague, which seems to be, at least indirectly, the background of a striking series of episodes in the Life of Nicholas, of which more will be said below.

Especially the miracles in the Life of Theodore abound in concrete examples in which the insecurity of human life stands out. In many of these examples the holy men are confronted with more or less timeless everyday problems, typical of any rural population. They can be understood and explained without any reference to a specific historical background or social conditions. It may be a question of producing rain during a drought (ch. 101),[32] of preventing inundation when rain is over-abundant (ch. 145), of stopping hail-storms (chs. 141; 144) or of improving a poor harvest (ch. 158; also Life of Nicholas, chs. 59–60). It may be exterminating noxious animals that threaten the crops (chs. 36; 101; 115; 118; 145), curing cattle diseases (chs. 45; 98; 99; 145; 160,68–69) or food poisoning in humans (ch. 143), or, if we leave the sphere of agriculture, helping fishermen whose catches are poor (158,42–46).

More instructive for the student interested in problems specific for the period is the fact that Nicholas as well as Theodore repeatedly have to intervene to settle conflicts, which are sometimes very violent and wide-ranging.[33] What the underlying social tensions were like became very clear to Theodore during his short tenure as bishop of Anastasioupolis (ch. 76).[34] The church there owned land that was managed by a certain *protiktor*,[35] Theodosios, who lived in the city and used the population of some villages as fieldworkers. It soon appeared that Theodosios was abusing his position, not by embezzling the revenues of the church, but by forcing his peasants to toil unbearably.[36] Driven to despair, the villagers

[28] See esp. Haldon, *Seventh Century*, 133–141, stressing the parallels with the *VThSyc*.

[29] *VThSyc*, 3,11–12, τῶν βασιλικῶν διαταγμάτων κατεχομένων.

[30] *VThSyc*, 49,18–19 (in a prophecy by Theodore); 54,3–4; 120,5–6; 153,3; 154,5–7; 166,3–4.

[31] For example, in *VThSyc*, ch. 133, the Emperor Phokas is told by Theodore that the prayers for which the emperor asks him will be inefficient unless he abstains from murder and bloodshed. For the historical events, see G. Ostrogorsky, *Geschichte des byzantinischen Staates* (Munich, 1963), 70–72.

[32] For this and the following kinds of disasters, cf. Magoulias, "The Lives of the Saints", 61–62.

[33] This theme was elaborated in the study by P. Brown, "The rise and function of the holy man in late Antiquity", *JRS* 60 (1970), 80–101, here 91 f.

[34] Cf. Magoulias, "The Lives of the Saints", 68–69.

[35] The meaning of this term is not wholly clear. Normally it denotes a military officer, but as Festugière suggests (*Vie de Théodore*, Commentaire, 201) it may here mean simply a grandee or magnate.

[36] Cf. M. Kaplan, "L'église byzantine des VIe–IXe siècles: terres et paysans", in *Church and people of Byzantium, Society for the Promotion of Byzantine Studies. Twentieth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies Manchester, 1986*, ed. by R. Morris (Birmingham, 1990), 109–123, here 110–112, stressing the fact that in the 6th c. the Church's estates in general were badly run and in a poor economic condition.

threatened to kill him, and Theodore summoned him in order to notify him of his immediate dismissal. Theodore himself was then maltreated by Theodosios who, to boot, claimed damages for the breach of contract. Theodore seems to have given in to Theodosios' threats (the text is not very clear in this point), but still worse problems awaited him in his delicate position. On the one hand, the villagers tried to poison him, on the other, he was accused by the Church of embezzling her property. At last he decided to resign as bishop.

This episode took place rather early in Theodore's career. Afterwards he returned to the activities of an independent "holy man", a person who could no longer be regarded as a representative of either the ecclesiastical or the secular power. From then on, he could therefore act with much greater authority in one of his most important roles, that as arbiter. There are numerous cases where he intervenes in this capacity in social conflicts, as a rule for the benefit of the weaker part. This happens, for example, when peasants are abused and mistreated by powerful men, in a way that is reminiscent of the case of Theodosios referred to above;[37] or when two villages dispute an area of woodland (ch. 150), or when enmity breaks out within a family (ch. 149; also 145,20, in very general terms). There is a constant element of violence or threats of violence in this picture. One has the impression that people lead their lives in a nervous mood, dominated by helplessness before everything that might be considered a threat to the security of their existence.

The insecurity is sometimes connected with natural and trivial elements of work generally performed in the countryside. In the Life of Nicholas (chs. 15–18), for example, there is the case of an unusually tall tree that is to be felled. A demon dwells in this tree, who causes it to fall backwards, so that many people are in danger. They are miraculously saved by Nicholas' intervention. This example belongs to the category of solutions of timeless problems: as everyone knows, the felling of a tree may be dangerous, whether a demon dwells in it or not.

Demons and Diggers

More interesting are some episodes in the Life of Theodore where the dangers connected with digging the earth recur as a refrain. In a fascinating way these episodes illustrate how a fear based on both rational and irrational calculations of risks could impose limits on the liberty of action for those engaged in the daily work with the earth.

There are different occasions for the digging. In one case it is done because a bridge is being built (ch. 43), in another because a cistern is to be constructed (ch. 161). There are, finally, cases in which a land–owner wishes to enlarge or improve his land, for example in order to have a larger threshing–floor a certain year when the harvest is especially rich, so that two oxen rather than one are needed for threshing (ch. 114).

The rational element here is the suspicion raised against some of the diggers that they are in fact searching for a buried treasure. This suspicion causes strong reactions among the neighbours as well as the authorities. Treasures, hidden and discovered, appear now and then in Byzantine literature, in historical as well as in legendary contexts. A well–known example is the legend about the construction of Hagia Sophia of Constantinople, in which a treasure found unexpectedly and under supernatural circumstances plays a decisive role in bringing the work

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[37] See, for example, the story of Alexander, deputy governor of Ankyra, in *VThSyc*, ch. 151.

to completion.[38] The realistic background of such events is especially apparent in times of insecurity, such as the sixth century. They must have been a strong enticement to people among whom money and precious objects were scarce. However, the danger of not resisting such temptations appears in two cases in the Life of Theodore. What happens in both is that the provincial governor threatens to intervene and punish those who have committed what he regards as a crime. And in one of these cases (ch. 114), which takes place in a village called Sandos, not only the digger himself, a certain *oikodespotes*, but the village community as a whole, would be liable to punishment. As a consequence, the villagers are infuriated against the man who has jeopardized their security, and plan to burn his house, with him and his family in it. At last Theodore appears as a mediator who successfully averts the imminent catastrophe.

The crime that the provincial governor sets out to punish here consists primarily of an attempt by a private person to appropriate property to which the state lays claim. The state's attitude to buried treasures seems to have changed over the centuries, depending on, among other things, its own financial situation.[39] In this perspective it would be understandable that its claims were strictly maintained in the period in question here. A law promulgated in 474 afforded the finder of a treasure one half of it and the owner of the land the other half.[40] But there are other early Byzantine sources confirming that the Life of Theodore reflects reality more faithfully than the law in operation.[41] Such a situation will have been a good ground for an arbitrary administration of law, and the fear of the peasants of Sandos was surely very rational.

On the irrational side there is the element common to all these stories: a band of demons pouring forth from the ground and causing all kinds of damage. To explain why this happens, the Life sometimes refers to the fact that old tombs have been digged unintentionally. For example, when the bishop of Germia had a cistern built in the western part of his city, numerous tombs were damaged and the demons living in them left their dwellings (ch. 161). According to the accusation put in the demons' mouth, the bishop did this "for his own pleasure",[42] i.e. the work was not done by any necessity. Sometimes a slightly different explanation is offered, as when we learn that parts of funeral monuments or similar have been intentionally removed to be used as construction material or for other practical purposes; this is the case when on one occasion the lid of a sarcophagus is removed and used as a container for rainwater (ch. 118).

It is a common notion that demons dwell in old, i.e. ancient and pagan, tombs.[43] One aspect of the role played by the demons in the stories under discussion is also among their most common: to act as the missing link needed to establish a causal connection between events which have nothing to do with each other, so as to explain otherwise unexplainable calamities and problems. The attitudes reflected in events of this kind are certainly medieval rather than ancient. It should be recalled however that demons are active already in the New Testament, and that the system of demonology was developed already in the early Christian centuries.[44]

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[38] See Preger, *Scriptores*, I, 74–108, here 88–90, and cf. the translation by G. Dagron, *Constantinople imaginaire. Études sur le recueil des* "Patria" (Paris, 1984), 201–202, with note 101 on pp. 234–235. A 10th-c. addition to the legend of St Sophia tells a similar story about the Church of the Holy Apostles; text in Preger, *Scriptores*, II, 286–288.

[39] See C. Morrisson, "La découverte des trésors à l'époque byzantine: théorie et pratique de l'εὕρεσις θησαυροῦ", *TM* 8 (1981), 321–343.

[40] *Cod. Just.* X, XV. See the translation in Morrisson, "La découverte des trésors", 331.

[41] Morrisson, "La découverte des trésors", 333–334.

[42] *VThSyc*, 161,45–46, διὰ ἰδίας αὐτοῦ ἡδονάς.

[43] See C. Mango, "Diabolus Byzantinus", *DOP* 46 (1992), 215–223, here 219, with refs. in note 31.

[44] Thus Mango, "Diabolus Byzantinus", 217 f.

However, I would like to draw some attention to another element in this superstition which, I suspect, reveals an attitude toward ancient remains which is especially interesting in the present context. As already mentioned, the tombs that figure as demons' haunts in these stories are ancient and pagan funeral monuments: tomb–stones that can be re–used for the construction of a bridge, or the lid of a sarcophagus that can serve as a water–container. The fact that such objects are charged with demonic power recalls an attitude present in a much more developed form in the enigmatic work called *Parastaseis syntomoi chronikai* ("Short historical notes"), written some 150 years later.[45]

A striking feature in that work are the numerous cases in which various demonic and magic operations are ascribed to antique statues.[46] Although the purpose of the work is disputed, it seems likely that this does reflect a typical Byzantine attitude toward Antiquity, a civilization that the Byzantines never fully, and rarely to any considerable extent, understood. This perspective may help explain, I think, the fear of demons in ancient tombs that we have observed among the peasants of Galatia. If that is correct, these episodes in the Life of Theodore constitute another connection with the Middle Ages, heralding the deep estrangement from Antiquity which was, after all, more typical of the Byzantines than a familiarity with ancient culture.

Urban and Public Life

Sometimes the conflicts that appear in the two Lives may be described in terms of antagonism between urban and rural populations. For example, the Life of Nicholas (chs. 52–53) describes how, when the plague reached Myra in Lycia, the peasants of the surrounding countryside stayed away from the city in order to avoid contagion. As a consequence Myra's supply of food was jeopardized, and this lead to slander against Nicholas, according to which he was the one responsible for preventing the peasants from visiting the city. When the authorities sent men to seize him, the people of the neighbouring village of Traglassos tried to keep him from leaving; we do not learn whether they succeeded. From the Life of Theodore it has already been mentioned that tensions repeatedly appear between peasants and people in the cities, whether landowners or authorities. But in Galatia as well as in Lycia it is apparent that these tensions depend on very material causes and not, as one could have expected, on different mentalities and different lifestyles.

The vexed question of the development of cities and city–life in late Antiquity shall not be discussed here.[47] However, the information on this subject which can be deduced from our two Lives may be briefly indicated. In the Life of Nicholas, cities play a rather minor role. Myra was a flourishing city in the sixth century,[48] but since most of Nicholas' activities took place in the countryside, the city is not focussed by the author of his Life. With its archbishop, it there figures mainly as

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[45] Preger, *Scriptores*, I, 19–73. See also the reprint of this ed. with transl. and commentary in Av. Cameron, J. Herrin, *Constantinople in the Eighth Century* (Leiden, 1984); further Dagron, *Constantinople imaginaire*, 29–48; and especially the fundamental discussion of the text's date, authorship and general character by I. Ševčenko, "The Search for the Past in Byzantium around the Year 800", *DOP* 46 (1992), 279–293, esp. 289–293.

[46] See C. Mango, "Antique Statuary and the Byzantine Beholder", *DOP* 17 (1963), 53–75; Dagron, *Constantinople imaginaire*, 132–135; H. Saradi-Mendelovici, "Christian Attitudes toward Pagan Monuments in Late Antiquity and Their Legacy in Later Byzantine Centuries", *DOP* 44 (1990), 47–61, esp. 56–58.

[47] Haldon, *Seventh Century*, 92–124, with full bibliographic refs. For Asia Minor especially, see W. Brandes, *Die Städte Kleinasiens im 7. und 8. Jahrhundert* (Amsterdam, 1989).

[48] See Foss, "Lycia", 313–316.

an ecclesiastic centre and as a market for the peasants' surplus produce. On one occasion (ch. 19) Nicholas needs men to saw up a big tree that has been felled. He does not find any with sufficient skill in Myra, but he does find them in the village of Karkabô. Such a detail could suggest that as a centre of crafts and trades the metropolis of Myra did not surpass any village in the Lycian countryside. However, the episode may reflect a specialization in the economy of Karkabô. If the recent indentification of this village with present Alakilise is correct, it was rather prosperous in the sixth century, and the fact that it is surrounded by forests suggests that woodcutting was an important factor for its prosperity.[49]

The Life of Theodore offers a much more varied picture, a fact explained in the first place by the closeness of Constantinople and the many contacts between Sykeon and the City. Some glimpses of urban life are also found in episodes that take place in Nicomedia. In that city there appears to be not only an organized religious life but also some non–religious institutions, private and public, as well as a few artisans and merchants etc.[50] As for Galatia itself, the urban centre is Anastasioupolis.[51] Like Myra in Lycia, this is primarily an ecclesiastical centre with a bishop and with numerous monasteries. Artisans and merchants are not mentioned, nor any urban activities of other kinds. The most powerful and influential social group seems to be the great landowners. This is especially clear from the phrase κληρικοὶ καὶ κτήτορες ("clerics and [land]owners"), which is repeatedly used to denote the upper stratum of Anastasioupolis (58,2, 10; 169,42).

Those elements in the two Lives that have been discussed so far seem mainly to point forward, toward the Byzantine Middle Ages. But there are others which rather reveal an affinity with Antiquity, a fact which becomes especially apparent when these Lives are compared with typical examples of Middle Byzantine hagiography. I should like to draw attention to two features of this kind. The first, which is very obvious in both texts, is the fact that so much of what happens takes place outdoors, in public, with the actors taking part in collective manifestations of various kinds. In the light of the future development, this appears as one of the most typically ancient features. As is well known, with the transition to the Middle Ages life lost this open character, and the privacy that increasingly imposed itself was reflected in city plans with narrow streets and few open places, in an adjustment of ecclesiastical architecture to a liturgy lacking open-air processions, etc.

However, whereas the public life of Antiquity was urban in character, the scene for the public events characteristic of our Lives is not the city, with its urban population and its colourful street life, but, rather, the villages and small towns of the countryside with their peasant population. This is certainly no accident due simply to the fact that the action of the Lives happens to take place in rural environments; rather it takes place there because it was in such environments that the people of Asia Minor led their lives.

And if the rural scenery still displays some features reminiscent of Antiquity, the same cannot be said for the events themselves. Among the collective public

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[49] Thus Foss, "Lycia", 311 f. On this episode in the VNic, see also ibid., 305.

[50] VThSyc, 156,21 (a grocer and his shop), 26 (the cantor of the poorhouse of Geragathis); 156a,21 (a man who whets knives etc.), 31 and 33 (the director and the clerk of Geragathis); 159,10 (Martinos, a scholarios, i.e., a former military officer, and shoemaker).

[51] On this bishopric, see Festugière, Vie de Théodore, Commentaire, 170 and 209, with refs. According to W. M. Ramsay, The Historical Geography of Asia Minor (London 1890; repr. Amsterdam, 1962), 244, Anastasioupolis is identical with Lagania (or Regenagalia), which would have been renamed rather than founded by Anastasios I (491–518). Cf. however Paulys Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft 12 (1925), col. 454.

manifestations of which most performances consist, processions of various kinds are the most common. Almost always they are religiously motivated. Many are connected with the ecclesial feasts, which means that they are regulated by the liturgical calendar. Thus they are parts of the liturgy that had in a way taken over the theatre's function of satisfying people's need for spectacular performances.[52] Many processions are, however, arranged spontaneously and for the most varied reasons. Let us take an example from the Life of Theodore.

Theodore was a severe ascetic. As an instrument for his exercises in asceticism he had commissioned an iron cage that he intended to place on top of a rock exposed to all winds. The cage was to be manufactured by the blacksmith of a certain village called Ergobrotis, whose inhabitants donated their iron tools to provide the material.[53] They asked Theodore to let them retain the cage until they had made a wooden copy of it intended to be a talisman for them in the future. When the wooden cage was finished they arranged a procession in which Theodore was brought from his monastery to the village, where the cage was set up in a church. He entered the cage and remained standing in it between Christmas and Easter. When the period of fasting was at an end, the villagers arranged a new procession, bringing Theodore together with the real cage, the one of iron, to the rock at Sykeon where they set it up. Then in another final procession they returned to Ergobrotis (ch. 27).

The public affair to which these processions form the setting is the holy man's spiritual exercises. To the modern reader of the Life of Theodore the most striking thing about the scene is hardly its antique flavour. But a comparison with Middle Byzantine hagiography's way of describing its heroes' asceticism and other achievements is instructive here: to those later hagiographers it was a virtue that asceticism be exercised in private. Although life often made compromises necessary, the ideal of a holy man should be not to put his feats on display but rather hide them from the public.[54] Corresponding with this change of mentality is the fact that much of the public life reflected in our two Lives no longer existed in the Byzantine Middle Ages. Where it did exist, the holy man would be apt to regard it with suspicion.

Paganism and Christianity

In the sixth century, especially after Justinian, the Christian religion had long since been generally accepted in the central parts of the Empire. The kind of "educated" paganism still very vital in the fourth century was a stage that had passed. In literature, certainly, the ancient forms were still alive, but if one scratches the surface of Prokopios' historical works, for example, one will soon observe that these forms are just a surface, polished according to the ancient models but concealing a mentality that is all but ancient.[55] And toward the end of the century, Christian modes of thought began to appear overtly even in high-

[52] See A. Kazhdan and G. Constable, *People and Power in Byzantium. An Introduction to Modern Byzantine Studies* (Washington, DC, 1982), 103.
[53] As observed by A. Bryer, "The Question of Byzantine Mines in the Pontos: Chalybian Iron, Chaldian Silver, Koloneian Alum and the Mummy of Chereiana", *AnatSt* 32 (1982), 133–150, here 138, since the difficulties of production made iron precious and scarce, this cage must have represented quite a considerable economic value to the villagers.
[54] For a typical statement of the ideal in which the necessary concessions to reality are also expressed, see the Life of Luke the Younger (*BHG* 994; written soon after Luke's death in 953), ed. by D. Z. Sophianos, ῞Οσιος Λουκᾶς. ῾Ο Βίος τοῦ ῾Οσίου Λουκᾶ τοῦ Στειριώτη (Athens, 1989), ch. 1 (p. 159): Λουκᾶ τοῦ πολλὰ μὲν διαλαθεῖν σπουδάσαντος καὶ κρύψαι βίον φωτὶ πλουσίῳ τῆς ἀρετῆς λαμπόμενον, οὕτω δὲ δῆλου σχεδὸν ἅπασι γενομένου, κ.τ.λ.
[55] See the discussions in Av. Cameron, *Procopius and the Sixth Century* (London, 1985).

brow works by classicizing authors.[56] Still isolated cases of pagan worship in upper–class Constantinople are attested as late as the 560s.[57] From the provinces there are several pieces of evidence of a less sophisticated kind of paganism living on in the countryside, mostly in remote areas.[58] Naturally such traces are not very numerous, nor very well articulated. For example, we know from historical sources that in 579 the state intervened against pagan religious centres in the province of Asia.[59] And as late as 692 the Quinisext council tried to abolish pagan practices in daily life.[60]

Generally, such testimonies are tendentious. In hagiography their function may be, for example, to provide a problem for a Christian hero to resolve or a dark background against which his feats appear even brighter. But there are also more ambiguous cases, in which the impression created is rather that the Christian hero has assimilated a pagan tradition. This is a well–known and much discussed phenomenon in cases where an older pagan cult has not been abolished but has been functionally taken over and continued by a Christian cult with a similar character.[61]

The Lives of Nicholas and Theodore contain, however, more direct pagan traces. In the latter there is a story in which the Anatolian Artemis appears. Far from being a goddess of Olympic stature, she is a demon that haunts a certain place called Arkea along with a band of other demons, making the place dangerous to visit at certain times. Theodore easily solves this problem by exorcizing the demons in his familiar way (ch. 16). A similar achievement is performed by Nicholas in a Lycian village called Plakoma (chs. 15–19). The pagan deity involved—perhaps Artemis in this case too—shows somewhat more specific features. Probably, although this is not clearly stated, the situation reflected in this story is that a primitive tree–cult in Plakoma has not been wholly overthrown: the tree is still "sacred".[62]

The phenomenon of a Christian hero taking over features originally belonging to pagan worship is possibly illustrated by a very curious series of episodes in the Life of Nicholas (chs. 54–57). In the aftermath of the plague, a famine befell parts of Lycia. "When it pleased God to honour" Nicholas, he made a journey around the Lycian countryside, visiting various shrines and offering up two oxen or more at each. Each time the people were assembled for a banquet at which the meat was served together with bread and wine that he had brought from his monastery. Two years later he was told by the Holy Ghost to make another similar journey. Leaving his monastery with money and provisions and visiting village after village he repeated the same procedure at each local church or monastery, offering up oxen varying in number from one to seven and inviting

[56] See Av. Cameron, "Images of Authority: Élites and Icons in Late Sixth-Century Byzantium", *Byzantium and the Classical Tradition. University of Birmingham Thirteenth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies 1979*, ed. by M. Mullett and R. Scott (Birmingham, 1981), 205–234, here 224–225.

[57] See K. W. Harl, "Sacrifice and Pagan Belief in Fifth- and Sixth-Century Byzantium", *Past and Present* 128 (1990), 7–27, esp. 23–24; Haldon, *Seventh Century*, 329 f.

[58] See F. R. Trombley, *The Survival of Paganism in the Byzantine Empire During the Pre-Iconoclastic Period (540–727)* (Ph. D. Diss., University of California, Los Angeles, 1981); Haldon, *Seventh Century*, 330–337.

[59] See I. Rochow, "Die Heidenprozesse unter den Kaisern Tiberios II., Konstantinos und Maurikios", in *Studien zum 7. Jahrhundert in Byzanz*, ed. by H. Köpstein and F. Winkelmann (Berlin, 1976), 120–130; Haldon, *Seventh Century*, 332.

[60] Haldon, *Seventh Century*, 332–337.

[61] A case with a special interest for the Life of St Theodore is the Church of the Archangel (St Michael) at Germia in southern Galatia. This church was famous among pilgrims for its pond with miraculous fishes, a fact that may indicate a connection with an old cult of Attis on the same spot; see C. Mango, "St. Michael and Attis", Δελτίον τῆς Χριστιανικῆς Ἀρχαιολογικῆς Ἑταιρείας 4 (1986):12, 39–62.

[62] *VNic*, 15,4, ξύλον ἱερόν. On the whole story, see Anrich, *Hagios Nikolaos*, II, 224–226; Foss, "Lycia", 305–306.

the local population to share the banquet. Finally Nicholas returned to his monastery.

These events raise a number of questions, of which only one or two can be dealt with here. First, a couple of down–to–earth, perhaps even trivial, problems. It can hardly have been possible for Nicholas to slaughter cattle at will in the Lycian countryside. Who owned them? Probably not the Church, for even if it might be possible for an independent holy man such as Nicholas to use ecclesiastical property in this way, this seems unlikely here in view of the fact that, when Nicholas started his first journey, he was already at variance with the archbishop of Myra (53,3 ff.). Private landowners? If yes, did they give away their cattle to public purposes, or did Nicholas pay for them? As mentioned already, we learn that he took money along on his journey, but could the monastery afford the price of all these animals? Probably it could. That Sion was a rich monastery is amply illustrated by some luxurious silver objects dedicated to it which were found at Kumluca in the 1960s.[63] Another illustration is provided by the Life itself. We learn there that as bishop of Pinara Nicholas initiated the construction of a church dedicated to the Virgin that cost four hundred nomismata.

However, it is the religious aspect that really justifies a discussion of these events in the present context. The vocabulary used to describe them makes it clear that they were meant as sacrifices, or at least that this was how the author of the Life regarded them.[64] Blood sacrifices in a Christian setting is in itself most surprising. Although Theodosius I's edict of 391–392 against pagan sacrifices was a measure directed against the old religion at large, it seems that the sacrifices were especially offensive to Christians.[65]

In an attempt to shed some light on the animal sacrifices apparently performed by Nicholas, Anrich adduced a description by Paulinus of Nola of sacrifices offered in his home town to St Felix.[66] According to Paulinus, the peasants of the surrounding countryside used to bring cattle and swine to the saint's church and slaughter it there. A banquet was arranged at which the meat was eaten by the peasants themselves, while a part of it was given to the poor. This is in many ways a striking parallel, and the existence of similar cult practices in Lycia would be a likely background for Nicholas' sacrifices. Still a close comparison of the two stories also reveals some differences. For the present purpose the most important single detail is that in the Life of Nicholas no recipients of the sacrifices are indicated. This means that, rather than conforming to an established cult pattern in each case, they must be regarded as improvised *ad–hoc* responses to a situation in which they were needed.

It has been suggested that Nicholas' journeys were a part of missionary propaganda among the imperfectly Christianized people of the Lycian mountains.[67] This may be true. As propaganda the journey would have been rather efficient, both because it involved sacrifices, which played such a central role in pagan worship,[68] and because it satisfied, at least momentarily, an obvious need for food. However, it must be noticed that Nicholas's sacrifices always were performed at a church or a monastery. This must mean that Christian activity was already established, if not necessarily widespread, in the areas involved, a fact

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[63] Ševčenko and Ševčenko, *Life of St. Nicholas*, Introduction, 16.
[64] The verb used throughout is θύειν, which in itself is ambiguous: "sacrifice" or "slaughter". But the use of some additional terms leaves no doubt that the former sense is meant: θυσίας ἐπέδωκεν εὐχαριστῶν τῷ θεῷ βοΐδια δέκα ἕξ (54,15), ἁγίασμα θυσίας ἀπὸ ζυγῆς βοϊδίων (56,4).
[65] Harl, "Sacrifice and Pagan Belief", 7–8.
[66] Anrich, *Hagios Nikolaos*, II, 245.
[67] Ševčenko and Ševčenko, *Life of St. Nicholas*, Introduction, p. 17.
[68] Harl, "Sacrifice and Pagan Belief", *passim*.

that would perhaps make the idea of Nicholas as a missionary somewhat less likely.

In any case it must be admitted that the form of the sacrifices is both original and functionally effective. Whatever their main purpose was, a part of the impression is one of large–scale charity, apparently modelled on the Gospels' story of Christ feeding five thousand men.[69] They took place at a time of an extraordinary crisis in which there was a need for extraordinary measures. So the curious procedure may be given a rational explanation as far as its function is concerned, and there are Christian elements in its form. Nonetheless it seems impossible to account for it without reference to a background of similar sacrifices in pagan Antiquity. In Byzantium proper at any rate, it seems that similar scenes are inconceivable after the seventh century.

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[69] As noted by the editors of the Life, this story in John, 6, is echoed in *VNic*, 55,11, 13–14; 56,15, 17; 57,6, 7.

The Duties of an Emperor According to Justinian I

GUNNAR af HÄLLSTRÖM, Athens

Justinian I (527–565) is probably the best known of the Byzantine emperors.[1] Even if they know nothing else about him, at least people know that Justinian closed the Academy of Plato in 529. This emperor has been called the last Roman and the first Byzantine Caesar.[2] If so, he seems a suitable subject for study by those who wish to find out what a Byzantine emperor stood for, in what sense his duties differed, if at all, from those of earlier emperors. Being something of a bridge between two worlds, elements of both worlds are likely to be found in Justinian's definition of his own position in the changes taking place in his day. If he was the "last Roman" emperor, one would expect traditional Roman declarations of his duties, and if he was the "first Byzantine" ruler, we should expect some new elements in his self-definition. Justinian was to become the pattern of an ideal emperor for many future Byzantine rulers,[3] a fact providing sufficient reason for scrutinizing his idea of a good ruler.

The Sources

Justinian wrote a number of theological tracts, letters (in particular to the popes), and a hymn in honour of Christ. All these writings may be used as sources for a study of Justinian's views. The law codices are a more difficult matter in this respect. The *Novellae*, i.e. the new constitutions from AD 534 onwards, are likely to provide material for reconstructing Justinian's opinions, whereas the collections of older laws give little information as to the collector. Thus H. Jones can claim that the *Novellae* are in fact a self-portrait of the emperor.[4] K.-H. Schindler solved our problem by choosing the so-called *quaestiones, dubitationes, et ambiguitates* as reflections of Justinian's own opinions, for the reason that in these instances the emperor had to make up his own mind for lack of an unambiguous precedent.[5] However, there is indisputably plenty of personal material in the introductions to the *Novellae*. The problem of using Justinian's laws as sources for his own opinions goes back to the larger, frequently vexed argument as to

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[1] Thus H. Hunger, "Kaiser Justinian I (527–565)", in id. (ed.), *Das byzantinische Herrscherbild* (Darmstadt, 1975), 350–351.

[2] D. Talbot Rice, *The Byzantines* (London, 1962), 46.

[3] In his study *Justinianuksen keisariuden kuva bysanttilaisissa historiankirjoissa ja kronikoissa* (The picture of Justinian's rulership in Byzantine historiography and chronicles) (Joensuu, 1982), V. Tajakka has illustrated how Justinian, long after his death, became the ideal ruler for Byzantines in the 10th century.

[4] Huguette Jones, "Justiniani Novellae ou l'autoportrait d'un legislateur", *Revue internationale des droits de l'Antiquité* 35 (1988), 149–208.

[5] K.-H. Schindler, *Justinians Stellung zur Klassik* (Cologne – Graz, 1966), 2.

Aspects of Late Antiquity and Early Byzantium, ed. L. Rydén, J. O. Rosenqvist, Swedish Research Institute in Istanbul, Transactions, Vol. 4 (Stockholm, 1993)

157

whether the emperor personally wrote the laws promulgated in his name. Both the laws themselves and contemporary historiographers maintain that he did.[6]

Religious Aspects
Pax deorum—pax Dei

In the debate concerning the religiosity of late Roman emperors, which in my view is often rather anachronistic, it has been possible to doubt the depth of Constantine the Great's religious feelings. However, in the case of Justinian such doubt simply cannot be sincerely discussed. Not even Justinian's worst critic, i.e. Procopius of Caesarea, could deny the religiosity of the emperor; he could claim that Justinian was ruthless, greedy, a demon incarnate, but irreligious he was not.[7]

"*Bene gubernat humana cui prius divina placuerint*".[8] From this indeed very religious principle Justinian's thought and acts can be best understood. There is no future for a state under God's wrath. In holding this view Justinian shares the old belief in *pax deorum*, important in private as well as public affairs for Christians and non-Christians alike. Constantine the Great had expressed this view numerous times in his writings, and, on the pagan side, so had Julian the Apostate. In practice, this principle had meant interest in and privileges for the priests, as well as a keen supervision of their way of life. The emperors had hitherto been able to supervise the priests by their office as *pontifices maximi*. This control guaranteed that the Divinity (of whatever name) received the attention necessary for the security of the state. From earlier imperial tradition Justinian took over the idea that God has to be placated, but his application of it is partly new. The God to be placated is the *triune*, Christian God. There is consequently no room for misunderstanding or misrepresenting the doctrine of the Trinity, a conviction which forced Justinian himself to profound study of this theme. Therefore his theological tracts deal with precisely this matter, showing the importance he attached to it.

In practice, however, Christ has to a large extent occupied the place of God in Justinian's thinking, which in its turn makes *Christology* of profound importance; one fruit of this interest was the summoning of the great synod in Constantinople in 553. Christ is frequently called "our God" by the emperor,[9] and he in turn is called "philochristos" (*christianissimus*) in contemporary texts.[10] However, non-Christian emperors had been called "theophilês" in the past;[11] basically the expressions are the same, those dealing with Justinian being Christianized versions of a common idea. The god-loving emperors of the past, and Decius not least, had considered it their duty to suppress Christianity in the name of the gods concerned. Justinian acts upon the same premises. Heretics holding erroneus views in Christological matters were suppressed by law and by force, even more than non-Christians were.

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[6] *Digesta*, chapter "Tanta": nostra maiestas semper investigando et perscrutando ea quae ab his componebantur ... in competentem formam redigebat; Procopius, *Anecdota* 14, 3.

[7] Discussing the emperor's Christianity Procopius has nothing more to say than that it did not prevent the emperor from murdering people in the name of religion: "He seemed to be a convinced believer in Christ, but this too meant ruin for his subjects" (*Anecdota* 13, 4).

[8] *Ep. ad Hormisdam Papam*, PL 63, col. 496A.

[9] E.g., the Edict on confirmation of the *Digesta* is written "in the name of our Lord and God Jesus Christ".

[10] See O. Kresten, "Iustinianos I., der 'christusliebende' Kaiser. Zum Epitheton φιλόχριστος in den Intitulationen byzantinischer Kaiserurkunden", *Römische Historische Mitteilungen* 21 (1979), 83–109.

[11] H. Hunger, *Prooimion* (Vienna, 1964), 63 (giving Decius as an example).

Justinian, the Instrument of Divine Providence

"The greatest gifts that God's heavenly *philanthropia* bestowed upon men are the *sacerdotium* and the *basileia*, of which the former serves divine matters, the latter presides and watches over human affairs, and both proceed from one and the same principle and regulate human life."[12] The world of God is one, but God has two hands, so to speak, to provide for it, i.e. the emperor and the Church. It seems to follow from the quotation that their offices are rigidly divided, but this is not what Justinian has in mind. Justinian does not represent the state only; as providence incarnate, as it were, he stands *above* the division of God's world into two parts. "Imperium nobis a coelesti maiestate traditum est."[13] The emperor shows, like God, great "philanthropia" towards his subjects, and like his heavenly prototype distributes both punishment and mercy.[14] Only in theory does the Church mind its own affairs. In practice the emperor has not only the right but the *duty* to see to it that the Church really fulfills its divine task. Justinian feels that he is called (by God) to exercise πρόνοια, divine providence over the Church also.

By the "Church" supervised by Justinian one has to think of Christendom in its entirety. Being an instrument of God's providence towards *all* Christendom Justinian supervises even the bishop of Rome. The emperor admits the double apostolicity of the Roman see and recognizes its authority in doctrinal matters.[15] When the Pope is negligent in the emperor's view, he must be rebuked. Justinian even threatens Hormisdas with God's punishment if he continues in negligence,[16] which is an inversion of traditional roles illustrated e.g. by the quarrel between Theodosius I and Bishop Ambrose of Milan. It is also the task of the emperor to summon an ecumenical council if the affairs of the Church demand it, but, according to Justinian's theory of the correct distribution of work in God's world, it is the task of the council to condemn the heretics.[17] Pope Vigilius had to admit that, due to Justinian's efforts to have the decrees of the first four Ecumenical Councils accepted, the emperor had a "priestly soul" as well as an "imperial" one. From Justinian's own point of view, however, one might rather say that his priestly interests were merely part of his responsiblity for the Empire as a whole.

Justinian's supervision was also manifested in his care for the moral standard of the clergy, particularly austere against homosexuality among bishops. In practice, then, the emperor was a *pontifex maximus*, a supervisor of all clergy, as had been Julian the Apostate before him in legislating with respect to the morals of pagan priests.

The Church, too, had duties towards the emperor. Apart from the rather abstract duty of being *one* Justinian emphasizes in particular the task of *sacrificing*, that is, *praying*, for the emperor and the Empire. The survival of the Empire is totally dependent on God's grace, and through the offerings it is secured.

Justinian's grandiose building programme can, or perhaps should, be seen in the light of his being a collaborator with God himself as the "incarnate Providence". He and Theodora are standing "before the face of God" in the mosaics of San Vitale in Ravenna, the "other" priests, including Maximus himself, being mere assistants on the occasion. The construction of Hagia Sophia in Constanti-

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[12] *Novella* 6.
[13] *Cod. Just.* 17, 1.
[14] For references, see Hunger, *Prooimion*, 149–150.
[15] For a more detailed discussion of Justinian's attitudes towards the Pope, see my article "Justinianus (527–565) mellan öst och väst", in *Florilegium patristicum. En festskrift till Per Beskow* (Delsbo, 1991), 123–130.
[16] Corpus scriptorum ecclesiasticorum latinorum 35, 716.
[17] *Ep.* to the Fifth Council concerning Theodore of Mopsuestia, PG 86:1, cols. 1041–96, esp. 1043.

nople has been interpreted as a conciliatory offering after the slaughter of thousands in the Nica revolt in 532; even more plausibly it can be understood as a trophy, to judge from the architecture and size of the sanctuary. Justinian's famous cry, "I have defeated thee, Solomon", is known to us from rather late sources, but expresses his emotions convincingly.[18] Procopius thought he entered heaven itself when visiting the church for the first time; the emperor is more occupied with his own person at the corresponding moment. This attitude of his is evident in other churches as well, as in the inscription running high up on the wall in Sts Sergius and Bacchus.

The New Moses

God governs the world with his two hands, as we have said, the state and the Church. The state in turn has two hands with which to fulfil its duties—the law and the sword. The power of jurisdiction is anything but a "secular" matter; "we have the authority to legislate from God", Justinian says.[19] He completed the Codex Iustinianus "deo auctore".[20] Nonetheless the emperor regards legislation as a function of the state, though he legislates for the Church also.

As a legislator, Justinian seems most conservative, indeed. Old Roman laws seem to enjoy almost unlimited authority. "Vetustas", "antiquitas" and similar words underline the continuity in Roman legislation. However, the numerous laws concerning ecclesiastical matters demonstrate that Justinian is not merely repeating old Roman jurisprudence. He seems, in fact, at least sometimes to be aware of the fact that he *differs* from many earlier legislators through his being a *Christian* emperor. The old laws, he says, gave no rights to illegal children. As a Christian, however, he has to practise the philanthropy of the new religion; thus he decides to improve the status of the children in question.[21]

The imperial duty of issuing laws is given a theological interpretation by Justinian. It is one more instance of the emperor functioning as incarnate Providence. Repeatedly he speaks of his laws as (royal) "providence", which is explicitly combined with divine providence.[22] God cares for his people through imperial legislation. Instead of instances of timely imperial aid to needy people, a law makes the aid permanent.[23] The laws are compared with medicine, and expected to cure rather than to punish.[24] But there is a purgative element in Justinian's legislation also. The emperor feels that the Empire has not fulfilled its mission to be a *Christian* empire, and is therefore in need of purification. Thus it seems correct to understand Justinian's laws also as instruments for achieving *pax Dei*, in a way similar to the sacrificial service of the Church. Interestingly enough, Justinian is capable of combining this motive with another very different one—that of cultural imperialism. Justinian's legislation will make people more *Roman* than they were before. Is, then, *Romanitas* at its best perhaps an instance of God's providence also?

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[18] For another interpretation of Justinian's words, see M. Harrison, *A Temple for Byzantium. The Discovery and Excavation of Anicia Juliana's Palace-Church in Istanbul* (Austin, TX, 1989), 40.
[19] *Novella* 72.
[20] *Digesta*, ch. "Tanta".
[21] *Novella* 89.
[22] *Edict*. VII.
[23] *Novella* 1.
[24] *Novella* 111.

"Inclytus victor et triumphator"

Through Justinian the Byzantine empire reached its greatest extent ever. His wars, most of them carefully described in Procopius' *Wars*, ruined innumerable human lives as well as the state treasury. Nonetheless Justinian was not an altogether militant emperor. He tried to settle disputes with neighbouring countries by paying them abundant tributes, also ruining the state in this way, as Procopius laments in his *Secret History*. Taking care of the Empire meant for Justinian avoiding war for as long as possible—at least such was the theory.[25] But the wars against the Vandals and Goths had a theoretical basis, too. In Codex Iustinianus I 27.1 the emperor reports his conquest of Africa and introduces the news by saying: "nunc omnipotens Deus per nos pro sua laude ..." This he could have said of most of his enterprises! The acting agent is God, the instrument the emperor, the result more glory to the name of the Christian God. Justinian had received his βασιλεία from God in order to subdue his enemies,[26] and so he conducted his wars "caelesti praesidio".[27] Moreover, Justinian draws his favourite theme of providence into the discussion, claiming that in warfare one must trust the Providence of the triune God alone, that is, trust in oneself or in other men is to be rejected.[28] In fulfilling the duties of Providence Justinian can trust Providence, even in warfare. All this he can claim, however, speaking about war waged against other Christians, the Vandals in Africa and the Goths in Italy. Providence works against heretics and for the truth, of course. And so Justinian, like the emperors before him, added the names of subdued peoples to his imperial epitheta: he is Justinian, "Alamannicus, Gothicus, Francicus, Germanicus, Vandalicus, Africanus ...". If the list itself is traditional, the context is not: it initiates a tract ("Edictum rectae fidei confessionem continens") dealing with the correct interpretation of the divine Trinity. In the light of our discussion above there is nothing odd in Justinian's combining his military achievements with theological considerations. True doctrine contributes to *pax Dei*, while false teaching endangers it.

Conclusions

God created the whole world, we are told, and has given the Empire to Justinian, and grants both peace and successful wars to his servant.[29] We are not explicitly told whether all this leads to the conclusion that there must be just one Christian empire as there is only one God, but there is much in favour of such an interpretation. What is more certain, however, is that Justinian considers that he stands *above* the state and the Church, since he is the instrument of Providence, who cares for the entirety of human life. As incarnate Providence he stands between God and men, as it were, with responsibilities in both directions. Thus he expected superhuman authority and respect, as Procopius reports,[30] from men however noble, but he never claimed divinity, or that he was a "divi filius" or anyting of the sort. Let this be a Christianized version of the cult of the emperor, if you wish, but this is not a necessary conclusion, as many non-

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[25] *Novella* 85.

[26] *Lib. adv. Origenem*, PG 86, col. 948A.

[27] *Novella* 37.

[28] *Cod. Just.* 17, 1.

[29] Ibid.

[30] The last chapter of the *Anecdota* (30, 23) deals with the arrogance of Justinian and Theodora. Visitors had to "fall on the floor flat on their faces, stretch out their hands and feet as far as they could, touch with their lips one foot of each of Their Majesties ..."

Christian Roman emperors rejected such a cult. In relation to God, Justinian felt he was a mere instrument for realizing God's purposes on earth, altogether dependent himself on *pax Dei*; the Western part of the Empire had fallen precisely due to unworthy emperors.[31] Agapetus, the deacon of the Hagia Sophia church, could be proud of his royal pupil, if he really was the teacher of Justinian. According to his *Scheda regia* a true emperor is the image of God among men, but before God he is no more than a mortal man, responsible for his management on earth.[32] God needs nothing, while the emperor needs only God. This is very much the way Justinian had thought and acted.

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[31] See Gray, "Justinian", *TRE* 17, 479.
[32] *Ekthesis* 21 and 71.

Überlegungen zur frühbyzantinischen Stadtplanung in Konstantinopel[1]

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Aus den erhaltenen Bauresten des byzantinischen Konstantinopel ist heute nicht mehr eindeutig erkennbar, ob die Stadterweiterung unter Konstantin nach einem regelmäßigem Straßennetz in Rasterform angelegt war oder nicht. Diese Frage ist früher vorwiegend unter kulturkritischen Gesichtspunkten diskutiert worden. Erst K. O. Dalman argumentierte in seinem 1933 postum erschienenen Werk über den Valensaquädukt nach dem vorhandenen Befund, als er den Stadtplan von Konstantinopel in drei Zonen einteilte, nämlich die gewachsene Altstadt innerhalb der severianischen Mauern, die systematisch angelegte Konstantinsstadt und das nicht durchgeplante Gebiet der theodosianischen Stadterweiterung.[2] Noch 1977 aber ging W. Müller-Wiener vom Fehlen eines Straßenrasters in Konstantins Neugründung aus und vermutete freiere Bebauung außerhalb der fächerförmig auseinanderlaufenden Hauptstraßen,[3] die nach allgemeiner Auffassung dem Verlauf der alten römischen Landstraßen folgten, unter ihnen an erster Stelle der *Via Egnatia*. Eine konsequente geometrische Straßenplanung konnte sie wegen der ungleichen Winkel zwischen ihnen höchstens zum Teil berücksichtigen.

M. Restle erkannte 1980 als erster ein konkretes Straßenraster, das an der alten Landstraße zum Edirne Kapı orientiert war. Es ergibt sich aus der Terrasse der Apostelkirche und der korrespondierenden Lage der als Straßendurchgänge angelegten Bögen 26/27 und 52 des Valensaquäduktes,[4] die allerdings später anscheinend nicht benützt worden sind. Die bis in unser Jahrhundert wirklich verwendeten Durchgänge und die Tore in der Seemauer legen nahe, daß später – wohl zur Zeit der theodosianischen Dynastie – eine andere Planung durchgeführt wurde,[5] nämlich ein System im Winkel von 30° nach Nordosten orientierter Parallelstraßen im Abstand von 218 m, der zehnfachen Länge der für die Landvermessung üblichen Meßseile (σχοινία) oder 700 byzantinischen Fuß, von denen jede zweite auf ein Haupttor führte. Südlich von der Mese ist diese Anlage um eine halbe Blockbreite verschoben (s. Abbildung).[6]

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[1] Eine ausführliche Fassung dieses Beitrages erscheint voraussichtlich in den *IstMitt* 44 (1994).

[2] K. O. Dalman, *Der Valens-Aquädukt in Konstantinopel* [Istanbuler Forschungen, 3] (Bamberg, 1933), 53.

[3] W. Müller-Wiener, *Bildlexikon zur Topographie Istanbuls. Byzantion – Konstantinupolis – Istanbul bis zum Beginn des 17. Jahrhunderts* (Tübingen, 1977), 19.

[4] M. Restle, "Bauplanung und Baugesinnung unter Mehmet II. Fâtih. Filarete in Konstantinopel", *Pantheon* 39 (1980), 361–367, hier 362–363. Zur Landstraße A. Berger, *Untersuchungen zu den Patria Konstantinupoleos* [Poikila byzantina, 8] (Bonn, 1988), 330–331.

[5] Zu den Toren der Seemauer A. M. Schneider, "Mauern und Tore am Goldenen Horn zu Konstantinopel", *Nachrichten der Akad. d. Wiss. in Göttingen*, phil.-hist. Kl. 5 (1950), 65–107.

[6] Das zwischen Kumkapı und Yenikapı eingezeichnete Tor ist nicht bezeugt, aber durch einen Entlastungsbogen aus Ziegeln auf der Landseite deutlich erkennbar.
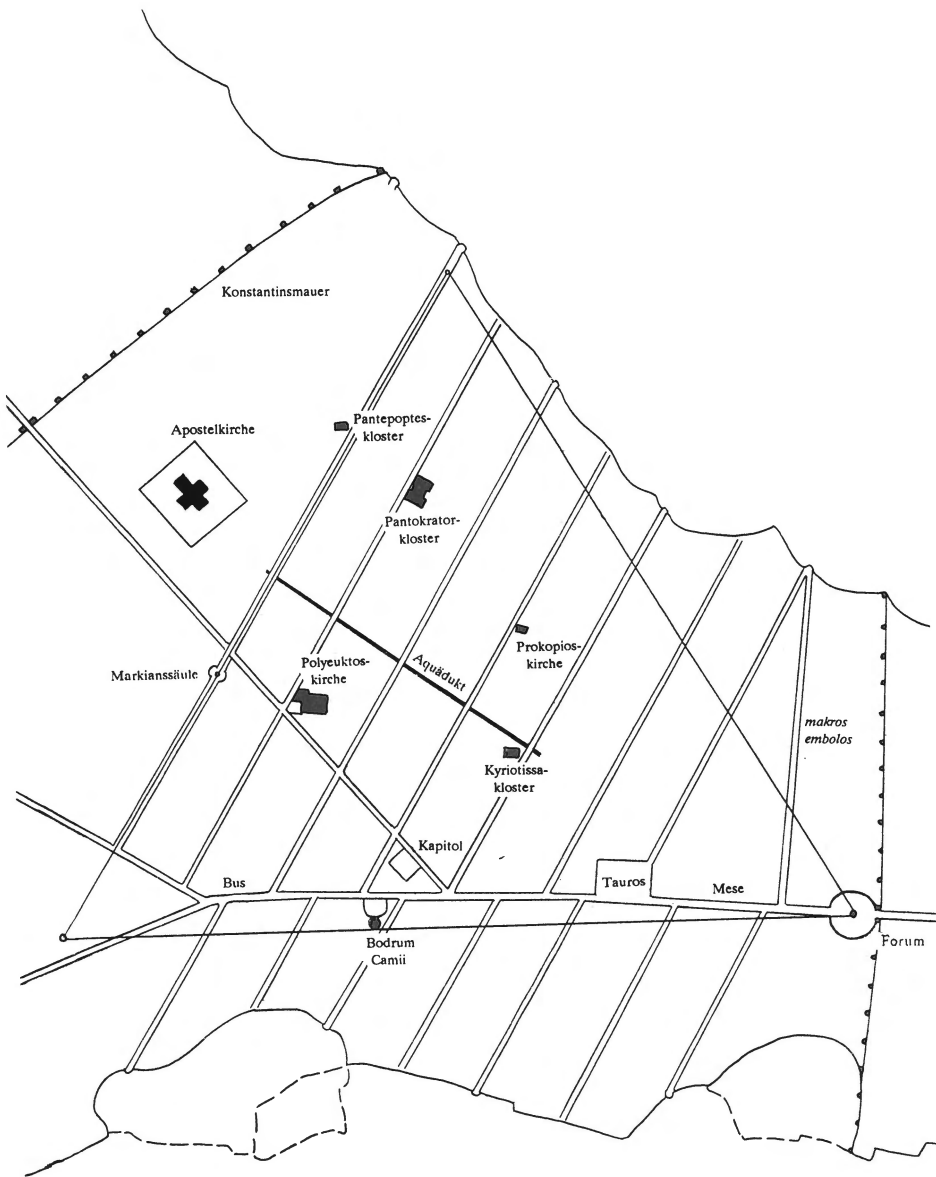
Das theodosianische Straßensystem von Konstantinopel und das Dreieck der geometrischen Konstruktion nach R. Brun.

Problematisch ist in beiden Planungsphasen die Rekonstruktion der Querstraßen, die zweifellos ebenfalls vorgesehen waren. In der konstantinischen Planung nach Restle lassen sich noch zwei von ihnen erkennen, in der theodosianischen Phase sind keine Anhaltspunkte für die Existenz von quadratischen oder rechteckigen Blocks vorhanden, schon weil die rekonstruierten Straßen von Südwesten nach Nordosten weder Mese noch Aquädukt rechtwinklig kreuzen.

Ob die rekonstruierten Straßen tatsächlich alle existierten und wenn ja, wie lange, wissen wir nicht, doch zeigt die Lage von Pantokrator- und Pantepopteskloster, die nach unserer Kenntnis beide keine Vorgängerbauten haben, daß sie wenigstens teilweise im 11. und 12. Jahrhundert noch vorhanden waren. Doch dürfte die Bebauung in der unmittelbaren Nähe der Mese nach ihrem Verlauf in west–östlicher Richtung angelegt gewesen sein, und auch der 396 vollendete *megas embolos,* der etwas westlich vom Konstantinsforum begann und zum Goldenen Horn führte, scheint auf diese Straßenplanung keine Rücksicht genommen zu haben.

Die Ausrichtung im Winkel von 30° zur Nordrichtung legt einen Zusammenhang mit dem von R. Brun 1986 vermuteten geometrischen Schema nahe, nach dem verschiedene Monumente über das Stadtgebiet verteilt waren.[7] Unter den zugrundeliegenden Figuren befindet sich ein Dreieck mit einer Seitenlänge von 100 Meßschnüren oder 7 000 Fuß, dem zehnfachen Abstand der Parallelstraßen, dessen nordwestliche Seite mit einer der hier vorgeschlagenen Parallelstraßen zusammenfällt.

[7] R. Brun, "An Urban Design Imported from Rome to Constantinople—New Rome", *Bysans och Norden. Akta för Nordiska forskarkursen i bysantinsk konstvetenskap 1986* [Acta Univ. Upsaliensis, Figura, N.S., 23] (Stockholm, 1989), 203–217; ders., "A Geometrical System of City Design in the Ancient World Based on Equilateral Triangles", *International Congress for the History of Art* (Washington, DC, 1986), 199–205; zuletzt in *Svenska kommittén för bysantinska studier. Bulletin* 7 (1989), 21–28.

The Mosaics of the Great Palace of Constantinople: A Note on an Archaeological Puzzle

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In an age when in most fields of scholarship specialization is taking command, one needs to be reminded that there are still areas where arguments and methods drawn from several schools or disciplines may offer the best instruments of investigation. The historiography of one single important site at Istanbul, that which incorporates the mosaics of the Great Palace of the Byzantine emperors, will tell how a basic problem of dating and chronology can be approached from different angles. The lesson to learn from the case, however, is that a better coordination of these heterogeneous approaches is the precondition for their fruitful employment. As the following summary of the discussion will demonstrate, the methods in question, the archaeological and the art historical, are basically antithetical as regards their theoretical foundations, the one being stratigraphically and materially orientated, the other carrying a strong emphasis on such hermeneutically problematic aspects as those of *style* and *iconography*. Thus, to have them act in unison is conceivably to expect too much; to accept them as mutually complementary, however, will represent one significant step in the right direction.

The monument, with its singular architectural form and magnificent floor mosaics, has long since entered the textbooks on the art and archaeology of Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages and needs no thorough presentation here. The story of the long and complicated research on it is, however, less well-known and should be summarized. Despite three campaigns of excavation and field work, the first of which took place just before World War II, the second in the 1950s and the third in the 1980s, it appears that the material for an exact *ad quem* date, which must be based on a stratigraphy built up of securely datable objects like ceramics and coins, is still inadequate. The reason for this is, apparently, the particular structure of the site, which with its position in the strongly sloping terrain between the Hippodrome and the Sea Walls underwent, in the course of the centuries, enormous terracing operations during which large masses of earth and fill were brought into it from elsewhere. This seriously reduced the possibility of reaching conclusions based on ordinary stratigraphic analysis and has impaired the attempts by several able archaeologists to bring what one would term a definite and acceptable solution to the problem. The absence of concord has prompted forays into the matter by scholars whose main instruments of investigation are not the tools for digging but the methods pertaining to the history of styles and the practice of iconographical interpretation.

A simplified overview of the discussion up to the present day yields the following sequence: In a pioneer study published in 1947, the first excavators

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167

suggested as a date for their find the fifth century;[1] this result is based primarily on the archaeological material they presented, yet it draws arguments from an assessment of style. The latter fact represents a methodological oddity, since on the whole this very first report on the mosaics is little concerned with the artistic problems which one meets in the Palace mosaics.

The archaeological arguments were, first, the discovery of pottery stamped with crosses in the layer *below* the mosaics; this *post-quem* carried the date safely into the Christian era. According to the excavators, an *ante-quem* or lower time limit was provided by coin-finds which they insisted came from trenches that cut into the mosaics and thus were posterior to them; these coins were Justinianic and post-Justinianic. This would put the latest possible date of the monument to about AD 500. The observations on style that were crucial to the conclusions had to do with the apparent "Classicism" of the mosaics, a trait visible not only in their rendering of landscape forms or in the stupendous border ornament of the "peopled scroll" type, but also in the human figures and in the animals, both wild and domestic, that were the main components of the rich picture carpet typical of this mosaic. This "classical" aspect would seem to eliminate a date later than the fifth century, the era when, in the opinion of experts, classical art had its last flourishing.

The uncertainty raised by the first publication, with regard both to the precision of the archaeological work presented in it and to its conclusions, led to renewed exploration of the site in the post-war years. A new team, members of which were such connoisseurs of Late Antique and Byzantine art and architecture as D. Talbot Rice and J. Ward Perkins, undertook an excavation that uncovered a large area adjacent to that exposed by the earlier campaign. More of the mosaic floors came to light and, equally important, remains of walls which proved that the vast atrium building embellished with mosaics was part of a larger architectural complex. The atrium had served as the forecourt of a structure which bore the salient features of a ceremonial basilica; the excavators named this structure the "Apsed Hall".

This spectacular new find, combined with improved archaeological techniques in the work of probing the deeper layers, added considerably to our insight into the history of the site. The second report (1958) edited by Talbot Rice[2] established a new *terminus post quem* based on the find of column capitals of a sixth century type among the remains of a cistern below the apsed hall. This implied that the mosaics might have originated as late as in Justinianic or even post-Justinianic times. Compared with the date ascribed to them by the first report, this new result represented a considerable chronological revision. Style was again brought in as complementary evidence, for the second report concluded that "... the Peristyle (atrium) with its mosaics, can hardly, on stylistic grounds, be dated later than the sixth century". The observations on the find of late coins on the site presented in the first report are apparently attributed little weight and play no part in the argumentation. Thus stylistic evidence, not archaeological, was brought to bear on the question of fixing the lower time limit for the execution of the architectural *ensemble* and its embellishment.

C. Mango's review of the second report offered another important contribution to the study of the Palace mosaics.[3] He moved the date of the monument down towards the end of the sixth century. This conclusion sprang partly from his knowledge of the building techniques seen in the structures found below the

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[1] G. Brett, W. J. Macaulay, R. B. K. Stevenson, G. Martiny, *The Great Palace of the Byzantine Emperors* (Oxford, 1947).

[2] D. Talbot Rice (ed.), *The Great Palace of the Byzantine Emperors. Second Report* (Edinburgh, 1958).

[3] C. Mango and I. Lavin, review of D. Talbot Rice, *Second Report*, in *Art Bulletin* 42 (1960), 67–73.

apsed hall and partly from a study of the chronology of the brick stamps from this material. Concerning these structures he stated: "... the peristyle with its mosaics cannot be earlier than the reign of Justinian, and is probably later, since we must allow an interval of time both for the destruction of the cistern and for stages III–V under the apsed hall". Mango set the lower time limit for the monument to *c.* AD 600; and like his predecessors he used the style as his gauge: "...the most likely date ... is towards the end of the sixth century, since the style of the mosaics as well as historical factors would appear to preclude a date after the beginning of the seventh century". The "historical factors", it turned out, are the lack of any information concerning building activity in that part of the Palace between Tiberius I (578–582) and Justinian II (first reign, 685–695).

The present author added a footnote to the discussion in 1963 when he published some suggestions regarding the date and the historical interpretation of the Apsed Hall complex.[4] Combining a study of the style with a renewed scrutiny of the archaeological facts and of the historical sources, he developed a thesis according to which the Apsed Hall was to be identified as the "Justinianos", an aula for ceremonies erected within the Great Palace area by Justinian II (first reign AD 685–695). The suggested date broke the chronological barrier set *c.* AD 600 by earlier research and placed the monument in a new historical and artistic context.

The main arguments for a theory along these lines were art historical, and were conditioned by the author's study of Early Medieval painting, above all of the extremely rich material of seventh- and eighth-century frescoes that are found in the church of S. Maria Antiqua in Rome. As to the archaeological foundation for this theory, his thesis built mostly on the material Mango had added to the discussion (see above), evidence which seemed to have made acceptable a date almost on the threshold of the seventh century. Yet the method of stylistic comparison, first and foremost with the wall paintings in the church at Rome, was what formed the backbone of the argumentation, a comparison that focused on certain key configurations and types that seem to occur in both monuments and are also frequently found in other pivotal material from the Early Middle Ages; of particular relevance are the famous silver plates from Cyprus with their hallmarks datable to the second quarter of the seventh century. Despite its strong element of conjecture, the author's theory was received not unkindly by Talbot Rice, the editor of the second report on the mosaics, who listed it generously among the least impossible possibilities.[5]

In the decades that followed, further probing took place into the sources and origin of the style of the Palace floors. In 1975 D. H. Wright weighed the late (seventh) century date against arguments drawn from recent research on Early Byzantine art.[6] Also, there was an urge for a re-opening of field work on the site. Discussing some aspects of the floors' impressive iconography of beasts, A. Cutler in 1985 suggested new methodological strategies by which to define their ambiguous style; at the same time he called for new archaeological exploration that could cast a firmer base for the scholarly debate.[7]

When in recent years James Trilling, another art historian, focused on the chronology and context of this illustrious monument, a detailed analysis of the

[4] P. J. Nordhagen, "The Mosaics of the Great Palace of the Byzantine Emperors", *BZ* 56 (1963), 54–68.
[5] D. Talbot Rice, "On the Date of the Mosaic Floor of the Great Palace of the Byzantine Emperors at Constantinople", Χαριστήριον εἰς ᾿Αναστάσιον Κ. ᾿Ορλάνδον (Athens, 1965), 1–5, reprinted in D. Talbot Rice, *Byzantine Art and Its Influences* (London, 1973).
[6] D. H. Wright, "The Shape of the Seventh Century in Byzantine Art", *First Annual Byzantine Studies Conference. Abstracts of Papers* (Cleveland, 1975), 9–28.
[7] A. Cutler, "The Elephants of the Great Palace Mosaic", *Bulletin de l'Association internationale pour l'étude de la mosaïque antique* 10 (1985), 125–138.

style again served as a main point of departure; yet his contribution also introduced a study of the pictorial content as a novel implement for research.[8] His is the most comprehensive attempt to read the iconography of the mosaic floors. His essay thus introduced a new weapon in the scholarly duel that for forty years had been waged on the date and meaning of this monument. Adopting some of the present writer's suggestions as to the character of the style, for example that its background was to be found in the Early Byzantine "Hellenism", which was a Constantinopolitan product, rather than in Late Roman art, Trilling's detailed autopsy of the style of the Palace floor and of a considerable number of sixth-, seventh- and eighth-century monuments led him to opt for a late date. His choice was the reign of the Emperor Heraclius (610–641), and through a reconstruction of the iconographical message contained in the floors he sought to strengthen his thesis with additional evidence.

As Trilling explicitly stated, his was not the first attempt to decode the gallery of human and animal figures that constitute the "program" of the mosaics. His study is, however, among the earliest which aim at a total reading of this giant repertoire that unfolds in a seemingly unstructured way across the floors.

While earlier scholarship had striven to give a Christian interpretation of their overt classical/pagan components, among which several obviously derive from Greek and Roman mythology (some of these have tentatively been linked to Christian conceptions of salvation or have been identified as types of the Christian cosmos), Trilling looks towards other solutions. He reads the juxtaposition of rural idylls and violent combat scenes (animal against animal, animal against hunter) as intimately linked to Roman literature, particularly the bucolic genre with its inherent traces of state ideology. The spirit of Virgil's *Georgics* pervades these confrontations, which oppose the bliss of peace to the terrors of lawless and unharnessed nature. The Augustan world view which embraced such ideas had a resurgence under Emperor Heraclius in the seventh century, when it came to the fore in the works of literature produced in court circles.

The publication of Trilling's article coincided in time with a significant attempt at revision of the paradigm by which the *terminus post quem* had been set to the advanced sixth century. In 1987 G. Hellenkemper Salies questioned the deductions culled from the material that in the 1950s had been found in the strata below the Apsed Hall and the mosaic floors.[9] Examining the arguments that were presented in the second report and later elaborated by C. Mango, Salies makes a case for a date of the monument to the fifth century. According to her analysis, neither the "sixth century" brick stamps nor the "sixth or seventh century" cistern capitals that had formed the cornerstone for the theories behind the late date should be regarded as key evidence; a reliable chronology still has to be established with regard to these find categories. The pottery from the site, Salies insists, is well compatible with the date she has suggested. Here is a major contribution to the archaeological discussion that had started forty years earlier, when through the pages of the first report scholars where confronted with the stratigraphical complexity of the Great Palace area.

When an Austrian team directed by W. Jobst assembled and published material for a new assesment of the problem (1992), a full circle had been accomplished in the history of research on the Palace mosaics.[10] The publication is the corol-

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[8] J. Trilling, "The Soul of the Empire: Style and Meaning in the Mosaic Pavement of the Byzantine Imperial Palace in Constantinople", *DOP* 43 (1989), 27–72.

[9] G. Hellenkemper Salies, "Die Datierung der Mosaiken im Grossen Palast zu Konstantinopel", *Bonner Jahrbücher* 187 (1987), 273–308.

[10] W. Jobst, "Der Kaiserpalast von Konstantinopel und seine Mosaiken", *Antike Welt* 18,3 (1983), 2–22. W. Jobst, H. Vetters (eds.), *Mosaikenforschung im Kaiserpalast von Konstantinopel. Vorbericht über das Forschungs- und Restaurierungsprojekt am Palastmosaik in den Jahren 1983–1988* (Vienna, 1992).

lary of almost ten years of repair and maintenance work on the mosaic floors in collaboration with the Turkish authorities. The layers below the tesellated floors were subjected to competent and very detailed sifting, a process which brought out proof that these layers contained pottery datable to the fourth-sixth centuries. As the chronology of ceramics has been vastly improved over the last sixty years, these are important results; yet the question, whether the masses containing these sherds is a normal accumulation giving a reliable stratigraphy, or is a fill that furnishes a high margin of uncertainty, is not fully answered. In its conclusions the Austrian team sets the date of the mosaic mortar bed and its foundations to the last quarter of the fifth century "at the earliest". Although the team concludes that "... *nach den bisherigen Untersuchungen (ist) die Entstehungszeit der Unterkonstruktion des Mosaikbodens frühestens im letzten Viertel des 5. Jahrhunderts anzusetzen*",[11] it is still inclined to place the lower time limit as early as around the year AD 500.

This is almost a return to the view held by the first excavators, yet the scholarly base for the new thesis is a different and very solid one. As a whole the methodological improvements are striking, above all in the parts that contain the painstaking evaluation of the find material. Yet essential questions remain unanswered. Worth noting is the uncertainty which apparently still reigns with regard to the important architectural remains that were unearthed below the Apsed Hall during the second campaign (see above). It was the consideration of this material that brought about the substantial chronological amendments presented in the report edited by Talbot Rice; it also formed the base for further elaboration by Mango and led him to the ascription of a very late sixth-century date. As we have seen, several of the authors who have studied the Great Palace area take their clues from Mango's deductions. Few will deny that the archaeological problems posed by the lower strata of the site are formidable. Yet, until the data concerning them are subjected to a full discussion again, either to be dismissed or accepted as evidence, the debate on the chronological position of the Palace floors will remain in midair.

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[11] Jobst, Vetters, *Mosaikenforschung*, 60.

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