

Introductory statement

2. Wed Sep 20 Before Islam: the Byzantine Empire

- 2.1 A sketch of the Byzantine Empire
- 2.2 The Byzantine past in Muslim retrospect
- 2.3 Extracts on the cultural heritages of the Byzantine Empire

In the next three seminars, we are looking at how things were on the eve of the rise of Islam. To do this, we shall reach quite far back into the previous history of our region. We will split the region into three major components:

- (1) The Byzantine Empire (or Eastern Roman Empire) centered on the eastern Mediterranean, with its capital in Constantinople (today Istanbul).
- (2) The Sasanian Empire (or Persian Empire) centered in Iran and Mesopotamia (= Iraq), with its capital in Ctesiphon (near the later city of Baghdad).
- (3) Arabia, that is to say the Arabian peninsula (the major country there today being Saudi Arabia); this was the land inhabited by the Arab tribes.

We start with the Byzantine Empire.

Reading 2.1: This consists of two chapters from a celebrated book by Professor Peter Brown of our History Department. These

will give you a picture of the history and character of the Byzantine Empire in the fifth and sixth centuries. You don't get Brown's account of the previous centuries, so here is what you need to know. In the last centuries B.C., the Romans had created an empire which included the whole Mediterranean world.

Naturally it was ruled from Rome. The state religion was traditional Roman paganism, but the subject peoples mostly continued to worship their own traditional gods. In the fourth century several things changed. A new capital was built by the emperor Constantine, who modestly called it Constantinople. The same emperor adopted Christianity, a faith not noted for its tolerance of other views, as the state religion. And towards the end of the century, the empire was divided into two halves, a western half ruled from Rome and an eastern half ruled from Constantinople. Then, early in the fifth century, various Germanic peoples conquered the western half, and displayed a certain lack of cultural sensitivity by sacking Rome. This is where Brown takes up the story.

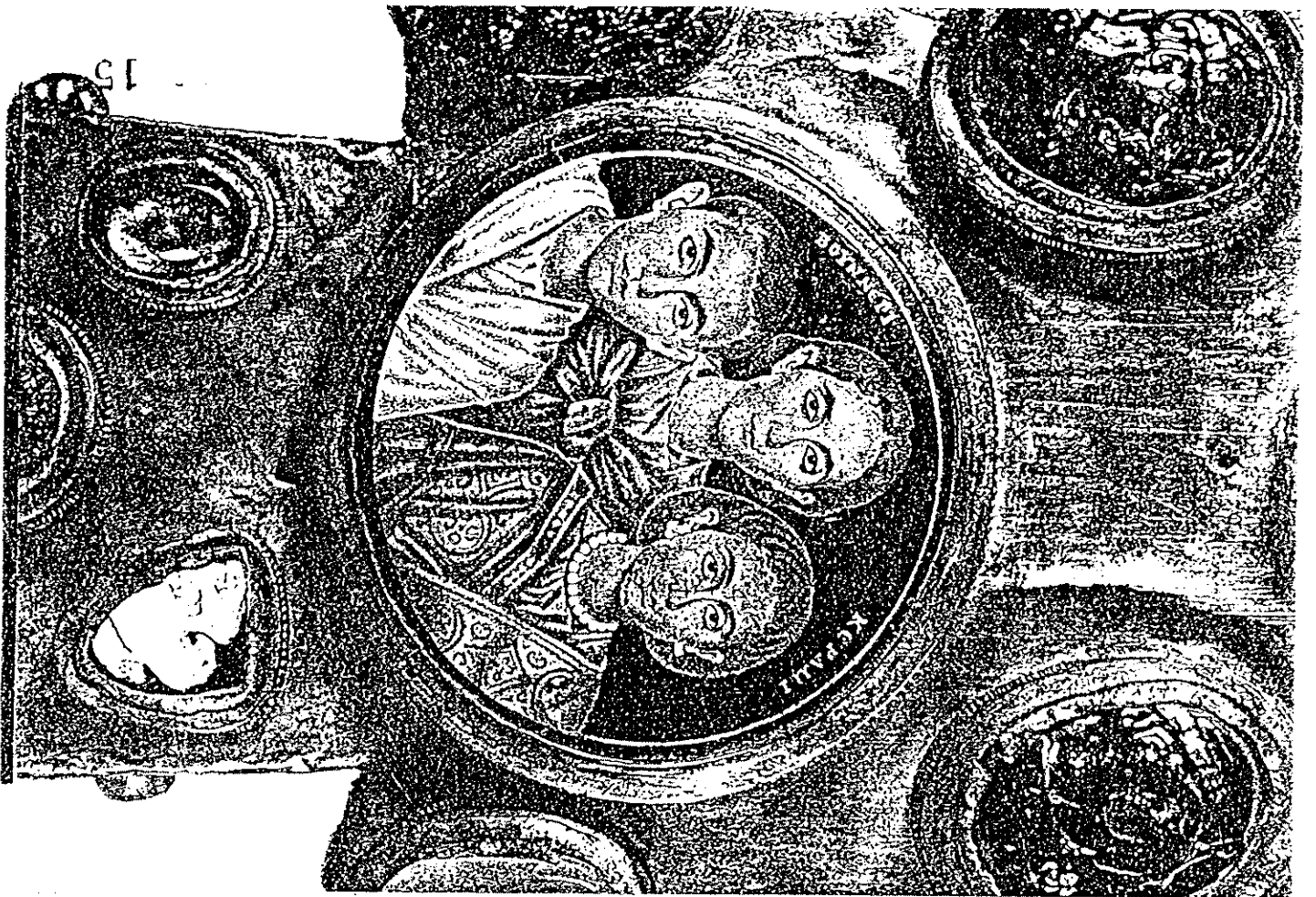
Reading 2.2: Tabari was a Muslim historian and scholar from northern Iran who lived in Baghdad, where he died in 923. He was

a quintessential nerd, and produced a massive history of the

world (or what he knew of it, or regarded as significant) down to his own times. This work has now been translated into English, and in the course of the semester you will read many extracts from it. You should not, in general, think of Tabari as the author of most of these extracts; his main role was to select, arrange, and edit accounts which he found in his sources. Usually he names them, though in this extract he does so only in the last paragraph. "Abu Ja'far" is Tabari himself; his students would respectfully address him this way, and would use this name for him as they wrote down his book at his dictation (those were the days). The point of including this text is to show you what sort of knowledge of Roman and Byzantine history Tabari (and by implication, well-informed Muslims at large) possessed. Whatever you do, don't get stuck on every detail, but do note points of interest or puzzles to bring up in class. For the next seminar you will read a text which gives you an idea how Muslims looked back on the Sasanian Empire, and you will then be able to draw a comparison.

Reading 2.3: This is a collection of extracts I put together a few years ago; you will encounter a good many little collections of this kind in the course of the semester. This set has a general purpose, namely to convey to you the rich variety of the cultural heritages of the territories ruled by the Byzantine Empire (for convenience, I have added the native peoples of Mesopotamia, which was ruled by the Persian Empire, but I have left the Persians themselves till next time). It also has more specific purposes which are sometimes hinted at in my headings, and will come out in class discussion; don't expect it to be obvious why every extract is there, but do spend time figuring out what you think is interesting, significant, or puzzling about them. The first three sections (on the Greeks, the Israelites, and the confluence of the two traditions) form one block. The rest form another, concentrating on the people of the Byzantine territories the Arabs are going to conquer several seminars down the line.

This introductory statement is unusually long because I wanted to limit your culture shock at this point. Once you have acquired an overall framework and gotten used to my way of doing things, I will be much briefer.



THE WORLD OF LATE ANTIQUITY

AID 150-750

PETER BROWN

with 130 illustrations 17 in color

Picture research: Georgetta Bruckner

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external enemies of Byzantine Empire

1) Sassanians (Persians)

(Rest of peace against the western)

2) Byzantines (Roman army)

3) Persians (Sassanians)

2) Avars - invaders from the north (nomads)

3) Huns (Aethiopia's people)

4) Bulgars

army recruitment
Balkans → tax base - agricultural base
Egypt, Arabia →

Macedonians - cultured, educated

beverage

mainly from Anatolia

land and slave which 80% they used for securing

Syria - trade, generating wealth -
Mesopotamia, bishops

XI 'THE RULING CITY': THE EASTERN EMPIRE FROM THEODOSIUS II TO ANASTASIUS, 408-518

When Rome was sacked in 410, three days of public mourning were declared at Constantinople. The eastern emperor, Theodosius II, did little else to help the western capital: but his ministers soon took good care to surround Constantinople with great walls. Throughout the Middle Ages, the Theodosian Wall, which still towers above the outskirts of modern Istanbul, summed up the impregnable position of Constantinople as the surviving capital of the Roman empire. It was not breached by an enemy until 1453.

Under Theodosius II, Constantinople became 'The Ruling City'. The emperors came to reside permanently in the Great Palace by the Bosphorus. The ceremonies of the court became part of the rhythm of the daily life of the city. The great issues of policy - peace and war, heresy and orthodoxy, parsimony or affluence - hammered out by the emperor and his advisers in the great 'Hall of Silence' (the *silentium*) would spill over into the bazars of the city: when the emperor appeared in his box in the Hippodrome, the supporters of the rival racing-stables - the Circus-factions of 'Greens' and 'Blues' - would applaud or criticize his decisions in rhythmic shouting. The inhabitants of Constantinople, cocksure and contentious, were frequently reminded that politics was no game. Constantinople lay on the Balkan side of the Straits of Marmara, only 270 miles away from the storm-centres of the Danube estuary. Nearly every generation, the inhabitants of the city would watch, from their great wall, the trail of smoking villages left by barbarian war-bands. In the fifth and sixth centuries, Constantinople combined the pride of a city-state and the high morale of an outpost with the resources of a vast Near Eastern empire.

Yet at the beginning of this period, Constantinople was still very much an alien northern capital. As we have seen (on p. 112), the deepest division in the society of the fourth century was between north and south, not between east and west: victims of the Milder-

rancaen were all of them equally distant from the military court that paced up and down the northern highroads. Theodosius II himself came from a family of Latin generals; and in 438 he instigated the great Latin compilation of imperial laws known as the Theodosian Code.

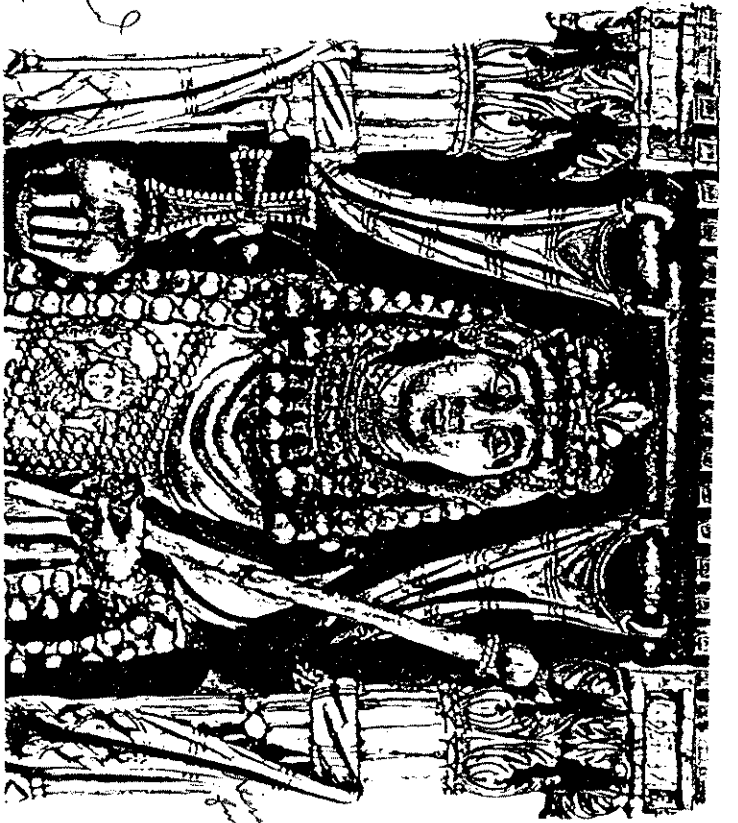
As long as the court maintained its connection with the military, Latin was its spoken language. Even to a Greek, Latin had always been the language that expressed the majesty of the state – like 'hau French' in late medieval England. Latin was the imposing jargon of the administration. This Latin was learnt by the east Romans in schools, though it had no connection with the living language – we have papyri showing Egyptian boys doing passable translations of Vergil, as we ourselves do in a modern school. The foundation of Constantinople had brought the majesty of the Roman state into the heart of the Greek world; but the Greeks who learnt Latin in increasing numbers in the fourth and fifth centuries did not do so to visit the old Rome in the West, but to enhance the grandeur of Constantinople, their 'New Rome'.

Like the Egyptian obelisks in the Hippodrome and the Greek classical statues in public places, Latin survived quite naturally in Constantinople as part of the grandiloquent facade of a world empire. The Latins themselves, however, slowly disappeared in the course of the fifth century. In Constantinople, the whole tendency, from the third century onwards, for the Roman empire to become a military autocracy was silently reversed. At the end of the fifth century, the Roman army had been eclipsed as a political force by a cabal of high administrators, palace officials and retired bureaucrats resident in Constantinople. The two greatest emperors of the age, Anastasius (491–518) and Justinian (527–65), were both civilians of the new type: Anastasius had been a palace official until late middle age; and Justinian, though the nephew of a Latin soldier from the Balkans, had become thoroughly civilianized. The heights of statecraft and culture reached under these two remarkable men sum up the slowly matured achievement of the civilian governing class. In the course of the fifth century, the Roman empire had found its way to a new identity, as the empire of Constantinople.

The scholar-gentry of the Greek towns had been the architects of this silent revolution. They filled the minor offices of the great financial and legal ministries. One such, John of Lydia, made one

thousand gold pieces in his first year, under Anastasius... and that was honestly come by'; he added! He learnt Latin; he wrote poems in praise of his chief of staff; he retired to write an antiquarian monograph, *On the Magistracies of the Roman State*. The tenacious conservatism of a classically educated gentleman which, in the western provinces, had been focused in vain on a mirage of *Roma aeterna*, invested the efficient framework of the eastern empire with a necessary patina of long traditions and quiet pride. In Constantinople, scholarship and letters were an adjunct, not an alternative, to statecraft. Agritation against an unpopular tax, for instance, made decisive use of a play on the subject 'in the manner of Euripides'. Even the Platonic tradition which, in the West had passed on only its otherworldly and mystical aspects, retained in Constantinople its concern with government. Policies were hotly debated: in 399, a future bishop, Synesius of Cyrene, could outline a policy of excluding the barbarians in his speech *On Kingship*; in his *Secret History* of about 550, Procopius of Caesarea could draw up, for a politically alert faction, a notorious 'Black Book' of the reign of Justinian. These men continued from their master Thucydides a tradition of writing contemporary history. Their varied careers gave them ample opportunity for this: Procopius of Panium left a keenly observed description of his mission to the court of Artab in Hungary; Procopius (died 562), as secretary to Justinian's victorious general Belisarius, a deeply felt *History of the Wars* of his time.

The civilian governing class of the east Roman empire learnt the arts of survival in a hard school. The rise of the great nomad empire of Artab (434–53), whose power stretched from the plains of Hungary to ~~Holland~~ and the Caucasus, marked a turning-point in Roman history. This was the first emergence, in the northern ~~west~~ of a barbarian empire on a par with the Romans. The fourth-century Roman empire had still thought of itself as embracing the known civilized world. The Sassanian empire was the only other organized state it knew. Like a policeman, it patrolled the small-time criminals on the utmost fringes of civilization. In the fifth century, this myth of the 'middle kingdom' was shaken. The east Romans came to learn that their empire was one state among many, in a world that had to be scanned anxiously and manipulated by adroit diplomacy. In the mid-fifth century, Olympiodorus of Thelbes (in Egypt) is the first colourful representative of a long tradition of Byzantine diplomats:



Handwritten notes:
 Greek - dressed
 in a robe - a
 lamp - a
 lamp - a

he went on missions as far apart as Rome, Nubia and the Dnieper accompanied by a parrot who spoke pure Attic Greek.

The emperors insisted that diplomacy, being as important as warfare, should cost as much. At exactly the same time as the western senators were allowed by their ruler to burn their tax-arrears, the senators of Constantinople were being made to sell their wives' jewellery to pay for the subsidies that eventually brought down the empire of Attila. For the bureaucracy was often headed by ruthless outsiders, who depended on imperial favour alone. Martinus the Syrian, the praetorian prefect of Anastasius, was typical of the financial experts who saved the eastern empire when its western half had collapsed: 'And at night also, he had a pen-and-ink stand hanging beside his bedside, and a lamp burning by his pillow, so that he could write down his thoughts on a roll; and in the daytime he would tell them to the emperor and advise him as to how he should act.' (Zachariah of Mitylene, *History*)
 The emperor's palace officials - above all the great eunuchs - were recruited from far beyond the traditional

governing class. Thus the backstairs government of the palace did not cut off the emperor from his subjects. Far from it: it was part of the secret of Byzantine rule that this all-important, shadowy fringe was often more closely in touch with the feelings of the provincials than was the polished mandarin of the bureaucracy.
 Constantinople had become the goal of ambitious provincials placed far beyond the Greek core of the empire from which the traditional bureaucracy was recruited. At the end of the fifth century, Daniel, a young Syrian from Mesopotamia on his way to practise asceticism in Jerusalem, was warned in a vision to go instead to Constantinople: with its great churches and collection of relics, the 'Ruling City' had become a 'Holy City'. Less spiritual young men would make the same decision: Daniel had hardly set himself up on a pillar - in imitation of the Syrian practices of Simeon the Stylite - when he was chatting away in Syria with a fellow oriental who had become the emperor's head-waiter! The history of Constantinople in the late fifth century was shaped by such gifted immigrants. The emperors could not do without the new ferment of prosperity and

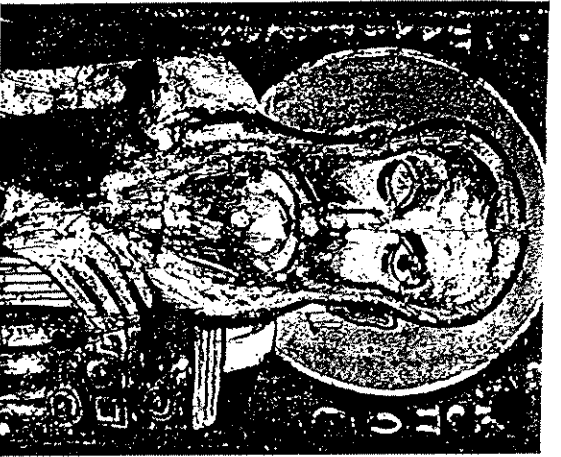
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92 The imperial nuptials. The empress Ariadne, wife of the emperor Anastasius (491-518). Ivory diptych, c. 500.

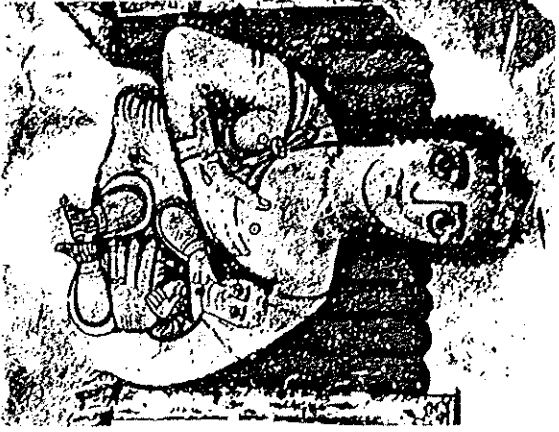
93 The east Roman bureaucrat. A statue set up (during the fifth century) in his home town in Asia Minor.



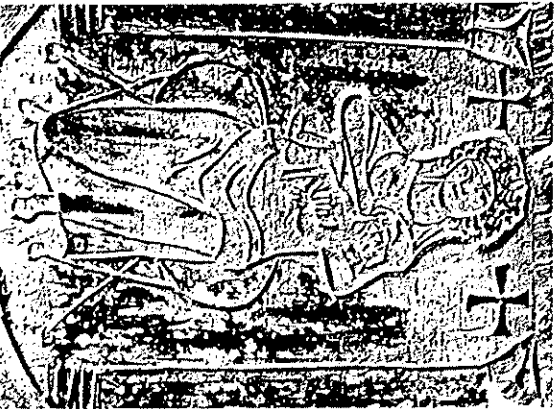
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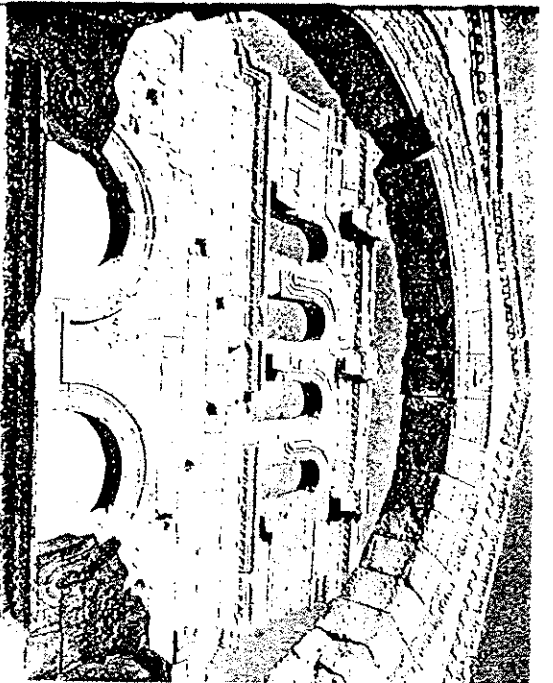
94 A father of the faith: icon of *apa* Abraham. The monastic leaders were the focus of intense local loyalties and the true arbiters of the theological controversies of the sixth and seventh centuries, for they were treated as the spiritual directors of the laity, and as the guardians of the traditions of the faith. Sixth- to seventh-century panel painting from Hawiti, Egypt.



THE MOTHER OF GOD 95 Pagan: Isis suckling Horus. Third-century Coptic frieze



96 Christian: Mary suckling Jesus. Fifth- to sixth-century tombstone from Fayum, Egypt.



97 The Syrian archway. The pilgrimage centre and monastery established near the pillar of St Simeon. The architecture continues Byzantine style of the late second century (cf. Ill. 3), the emperor is showing his loyalty, not to his home but to the local saint. Mar portal of the south facade. Qal'at Sem'an, c. 480.

talent along the fringes of the classical world. It was not enough that the empire of Constantinople should be a Greek empire; it had also to embark on the delicate quest for an identity as an eastern empire in the true sense. The cultural and theological storms that bulk so large in the ecclesiastical history of the late fifth and sixth centuries were part of the attempt of the cosmopolitan society of the eastern empire to find its balance.

The one maxim of extended empire, a wise and salutary neglect (Burke), just could not be applied to the provincials of the fifth-century empire. Egypt, for instance, had entered the mainstream of cultural life. Its richer peasants and small-town notables were typical provincials of a new east Roman society. They had created from scratch an exuberant and idiosyncratic sub-classical art – Coptic art. The most typical creation of the Egyptian Christians of these centuries was the icon: an abstracted, simplified image on which the worshipper could concentrate, looking straight into the charged eyes of his spiritual Father – Menas, Anthony or some other hero of Egyptian Christianity. The Egyptian patriarchs, Theophilus and Cyril, led the Greek world. The Council of Ephesus in 431, in declaring that Mary was the *Theotokos* – She Who gave birth to God – ratified the fervour of the Copts, who had worshipped her as such, suckling the new-born Jesus. This prototype of the most tender scene in medieval art was a Coptic adaptation of Isis suckling the infant Horus.

Use
 the
 word
 'Theotokos'
 in
 the
 text
 'Theotokos' -
 Cyril

The heyday of the Syriac-speaking provincials came a little later. Under Anastasius, Syrian merchants were trading as far apart as Gaul and central Asia. The financial wizard of the court, Marinus, was a Syrian. Syrian masons developed a filigree delicacy in carving stone surfaces. Above all, it was the Syrians who had filled the Greek world with music. Romanos the Melodist came to Constantinople from Edessa: he poured an imagery and a dramatic sense, that reach back directly to the most ancient Semitic East, into the chants of the Byzantine Church. In the Hagia Sophia, bands of Syrian monks would disturb the Sunday congregation by striking up, in long-drawn melodies, the litanies of their distinctive adoration of the crucified Christ. Syrian farmers had colonized the hillsides of the Anti-Lebanon with olive trees. The emperor established a huge pilgrimage centre on the spot where Simeon had squatted on his pillar. The vast complex of Qalat Sem'an, greater than Baalbek and as exuberant, was a gesture of recognition from the 'Ruling City' to the provincials, whose industry the economy of the east Roman state depended.

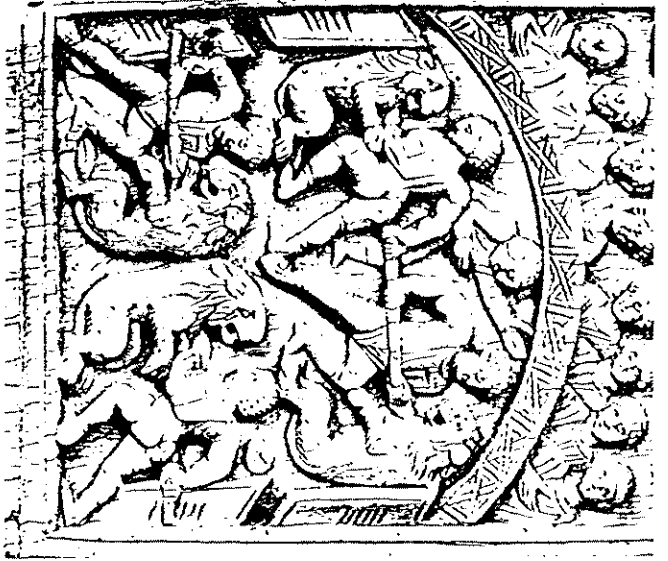
Compared with these ancient Christian centres, Constantinople, only recently weaned from a military, Latin past, was a colourless newcomer. But to be a 'Ruling City' it had to lead the empire in doctrine also. The emperors hastily forced it to the fore. At the Council of Chalcedon in 451, the emperor Marcian took advantage of a trend in Greek opinion and of the support of Leo, the bishop of Rome, to humble the patriarch of Alexandria, and so to secure the position of Constantinople as the leading Christian city of the empire. The settlement arrived at in Chalcedon did violence to some of the deepest currents in Greek Christian thought of the time. The equilibrium of eastern Christianity was brutally upset. For the next two centuries, the emperors faced the uphill task of restoring the balance, sometimes by palliating, sometimes by by-passing 'the accursed council', without going back for a moment on the initiative which their 'Ruling City' had won at Chalcedon.

The issues raised at the time of Chalcedon were not trivial, for the council had seemed to split the human from the divine element in the person of Christ. The emperor's part in the council was partly political; but resistance to its doctrine was heartfelt and not a 'cover' for social grievances, much less for strivings for national autonomy by the eastern provinces. Centuries of Christian experience in the provinces had been flouted by the august capital. For the pious Greek, Copt and Syrian,

Christ was the prototype of the redeemed man. To what extent, these men would ask, did God deign to take up and transform human nature, to lift it out of its frailties, in the person of Christ? If human nature was totally transformed and made one with God's nature in Christ - hence the convenient theological label 'monophysite' (*monos*, single; *physis*, nature) - then the average man could eventually hope to be saved in the same way: he, also, would be transformed. The average man looked round him. He saw the holy man: if frail human nature could be endowed with such supernatural power in this life, then surely the divine nature in Christ had been that much more absolute and indivisible? Who but a totally divine Being could stand between mankind and its towering enemy, the devil? To emphasize, as the doctrinal statement of pope Leo's *Tome* - had done, the humbled, human element in Christ, shocked the Greek reader. For this attitude threatened to leave God's work of salvation half-done: to condemn human nature itself to the position of an untransformable residue, a bitter dreg at the bottom of the unbounded sea of God's power.

It has been said that the Council of Chalcedon divided the empire irreparably: that it rendered inevitable the loss of the eastern provinces to Islam in the seventh century. This view is so hazy that it misses the quality of the life of the sixth-century eastern empire entirely. The exact opposite was the case. Despite the explosive nature of the issues involved, despite the fact that the ecclesiastical traditions of whole provinces were mobilized on both sides, the empire remained united. We can learn a lot about the resources of the east Roman state by seeing how this could be so.

In the first place, the imperial administration had created a unified state: men paid their taxes and prayed for the success of the emperor whatever their shade of theological opinion. It was possible for a merchant from Alexandria to cash a cheque in a bank at Constantinople - a service which no medieval state could offer until thirteenth-century China. The culture of the empire had few deep barriers. Men felt free to move from the provinces to the capital without losing touch with their roots. Scratch a Greek poet like Crisostom of Panopolis, and we find an Egyptian devoted to the martyr-saint of his home-town; and even Procopius, the Byzantine Thucydides, spoke Syriac and believed that the prayers of Syrian holy men played their part in holding the eastern frontier of the empire. Throughout this



98 Secular: a wild-beast hunt in the circus of Constantinople. Detail from the ivory diptych of Arcobindus, 506.

99 Religious: relics carried in procession. The patriarch on his high carriage holds the box with the relics, as he passes the imperial palace (note top left, the icon of Christ over the main gate). They are preceded, left to right, by the senate, the emperor and the empress. Spectators in the top window of the palace swing sweet-smelling incense. Fifth-century ivory plaque.

period, we are dealing with a society which had experienced strong and intimate pressures making for centralization, for standardization, for economic and political solidarity. The concern for the 'peace of the Church', that haunted the emperors of the late fifth and sixth centuries, should not be seen as a desperate attempt to heal a divided empire: rather, the emperors hoped to make the partisan bishops and their flocks live up to standards of unity and obedience that were patently being realized in every other field but religion.



The prestige of the emperor was even increased by religious uncertainties, for all attempts to achieve unity passed through the court. The emperor gained a position that he was to hold throughout Byzantine and early Russian history: he was the keystone of the great vault of the peace of the Church. It was a position gained by sheer hard work. When conspirators wanted to assassinate the emperor Justinian, they knew how they would find him: every night he would be sitting in an alcove of the Great Palace, discussing with holy men and bishops the intricacies of his subjects' beliefs.

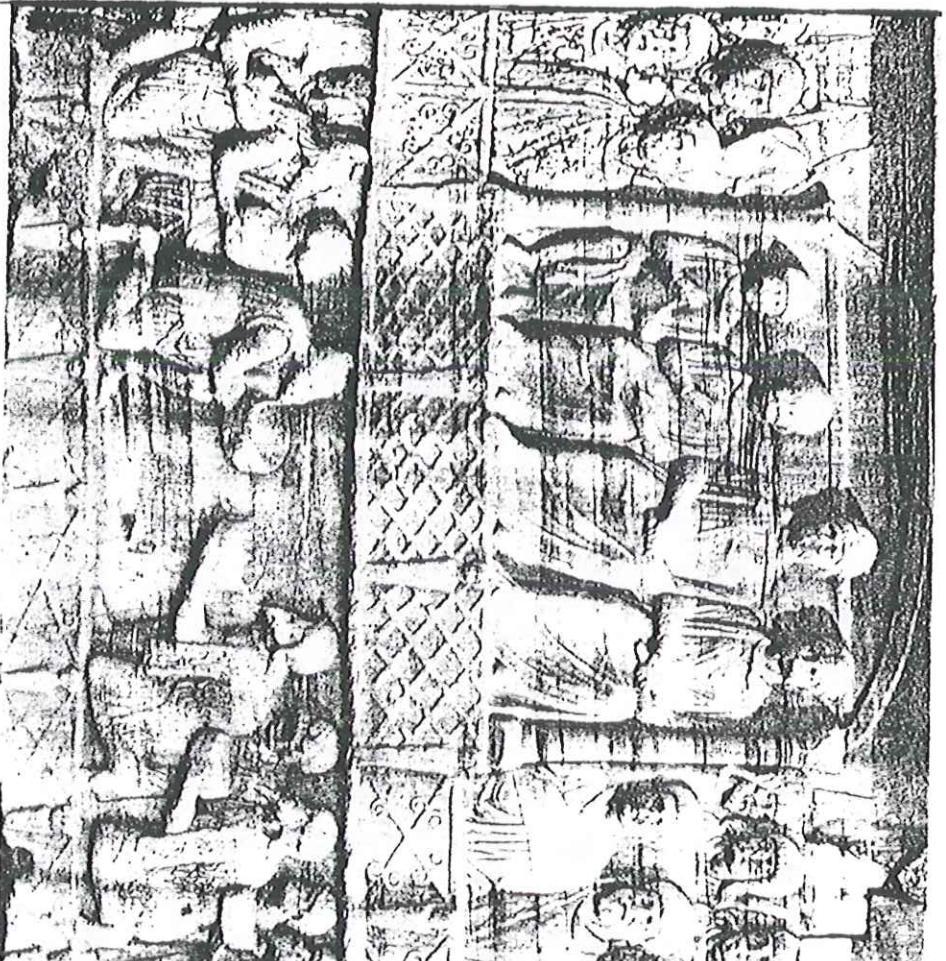
The reign of the emperor Anastasius (491-518) sums up the quality of the east Roman empire at this time. Anastasius was a pious layman, who used to give lectures on theology. He was the only late Roman emperor ever to abolish a tax - the gold tax on the cities. By rigorous professionalism, he died with a surplus of thirty-two thousand pounds of gold. We catch a glimpse of him in the local chronicle of Edessa: in this faraway frontier town, the emperor was

~~Stoic~~ ~~philosophy~~ ~~not~~ ~~best~~ ~~way~~ ~~to~~ ~~survive~~.
 what you want
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very much 'the little father' of his people. Even to his theological opponents, he was 'Anastasius, the good emperor, the lover of monks and the protector of the poor and afflicted'. In his religious policy, he was unmistakably a product of east Roman society. Though a sincere 'monophysite', he worked, above all, for religious peace. He banned extremists of every kind.

In 517, Anastasius received a delegation of priests from Rome that showed how far apart the western and the eastern halves of Christendom had already drifted. The Catholic Church in the West had become a closed elite - like a colonizing power in underdeveloped territories, it regarded itself as obliged to impose its views, by force if need be, on the unregenerate 'world'. Reinforced by their aristocratic background, its senator-bishops towered above an increasingly passive and uncultivated laity. They were in the habit of telling lay-rulers what to do. The Roman legates told Anastasius that he should impose the Catholic faith on his provincials with the firmness of a crusader. To the east Roman emperor, such advice came from another, more barbarous world. Anastasius wrote back: he would not make the streets of his cities run blood so as to impose the views of one faction on all the rest. His business was not to outlaw half his empire; it was to find a formula by which the rich spectrum of the beliefs of his subjects could be blended: 'Peace I leave with you,' he quoted to the pope, 'my peace I give you.'

Here we have a parting of the ways: western Europe in the Middle Ages was dominated by the idea of the Church Militant; Byzantium, a stable and united empire beneath its apparent disagreements, long skilled in the politics of *consensus*, stuck to the grand ideal of the 'peace of the Church'. In his last sentence, Anastasius was to address the pope in words that are an overture to the majesty of Justinian: 'You may thwart me, Reverend Sir; you may insult me; but you may not command me....'



EMPIRE AND BARBARIANS
 100 Ideal. Relief from the obelisk of Theodosius I in the Hippodrome in Constantinople, c. 390.

101 Reality: a coin of the emperor, maybe given as largesse, worked into a piece of barbarian ornament. Gold pendant set with a coin of Valentinian II, seventh century, found in Staffordshire.



Anastasius, as we have seen, passed naturally into the imperial office after a lifetime of service in the palace. Justinian, by contrast, was a nonurban ride of east Roman culture. With his uncle Justin, he had drifted into the 'Ruling City' from a Balkan village; his native language was Latin. When Justin, as captain of the guard, became emperor by accident, Justinian, as heir apparent, threw himself into the life of Constantinople. It was in Constantinople, one suspects, and not in his village, that Justinian first learnt to value Latin as the imperial language. In Constantinople he gained a deep acquaintance with Greek theological literature and opted for the anti-monophysite party. In Constantinople, also, he dabbled in the demimonde: he played politics with the Circus-factions and he took his wife, Theodora, from a family connected with the racing-stables. As a young man, he was anxious to conform to the backward-looking ethos of the resident aristocracy: he wooed the senators of Constantinople, and on becoming consul, he humbly dedicated his ivory diptychs to them, in Latin - 'Small gifts these, in price, but heavy with respect.' His first act on becoming emperor was to form a commission to reorganize the Roman law. When Justinian succeeded his uneducated uncle in 527, it seemed as if the 'Ruling City' had absorbed yet another zealous parvenu.

The great Nika Riot of January 532 - so called from the slogan Nika (Conquer!) adopted by the mob - changed the tempo of his reign dramatically. It was the worst explosion of violence in east Roman history. Angered by Justinian's ministers, people and Senate united against the emperor. Half the city was burnt. As the flames rose round the Great Palace, only Theodora was able to rally her panic-stricken husband - 'The purple is a glorious winding-sheet,' she said.

Theodora's exclamation became the keynote of Justinian's reign. Somewhat like a 'liberal' tsar of nineteenth-century Russia who had been the object of an assassination plot, Justinian turned his back on the traditionalist elements in Constantinople. No east Roman emperor exploited with such zest the resources of the autocracy.

The stage-set of traditional ceremonies inherited from the Roman past was wheeled away to leave the emperor alone in his majesty: the consulship, which the young prince had valued so highly, was abolished in 541. The life of the court was expanded, its ceremonial

Greek!
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 Just. 150
 ministers for
 533
 full power.

102 Justinian and his ministers. Mosaic in San Vitale, Ravenna

103 Theodora. Mosaic in San Vitale



made more awesome: Theodora travelled with four thousand attendants – twice as many, that is, as were used by the Ottoman sultans in the nineteenth century. Justinian appealed to the Christian provincials of his empire, away from the neutral facade of the educated aristocracy. He posed as the 'most Christian emperor'. His fanaticism was all-embracing and, usually, prudently directed against isolated minorities, such as the surviving pagans. After 533 public opinion was mobilized in a crusade against the heretical Arian kingdoms in the West. Public morality was upheld by meticulous legislation against blasphemy and gambling. Theodora looked after her own by founding a hostel for reformed prostitutes. Throughout the empire, Justinian placed churches whose style, based on the basilicas of the capital, was uniform from Ceuta, on the Atlantic coast of Morocco, to the Euphrates. In an age of primitive communications, Justinian ensured that by memorable gestures of Christian piety and Christian intolerance, and above all through money, stone and mosaic-work, the presence of the autocrat was brought home to the man in the street.

These gestures were crowned by the rebuilding of the Hagia Sophia, burnt down in the Nika Riot. Justinian could have restored the old church, as had been done before; but he was in no mood for so limited a project. Instead, he called on Anthemius of Tralles and Isidore of Miletus to build a revolutionary new church. These men were typical members of the technological elite of the Greek world: as a mathematician, Anthemius went beyond Euclid in exploring the parabola; and Isidore had studied the great monuments of Rome. The Hagia Sophia combined the two traditions: in the Roman imperial grandeur of this church, a Greek tradition of abstract thought was frozen into stone, with the hovering domes. When he entered the new church, however, Justinian struck the more popular note of the Byzantine man in the street: 'Solomon!' he cried, 'I have outdone thee!'

The 530s were an exceptionally favourable interlude for the eastern Roman state. Justinian exploited the opportunities in the international situation to the full. The imperial fleet that sailed from the Bosphorus to Africa in 533 was presented as a crusade to deliver the lost provinces of the Roman empire from their heretical overlords. The prodigious windfall of the quick collapse of the Vandal Kingdom in Africa proved Justinian right: the Vandal king was paraded in

104 'The salvation and glory of the Romans': medallion celebrating the reconquest of Justinian. The emperor is shown on horseback, as in the great days of the imperial recovery of the third century (cf. III. 15). Medallion of Justinian, 534-38 (copy).



triumph in the Hippodrome. When he issued the second edition of his Digest of Roman law in 529, Justinian revived in his proclamation the grandiloquent epithets of a Roman conqueror: 'Justinian... conqueror of the Vandals, of the Goths, etc.' The commission that produced this great work included the same ministers – Tribonian and John of Cappadocia, the praetorian prefect – for whose heads the mob had chanted in the Nika Riot of only two years previously. Justinian and his friends were more firmly in the saddle than ever before. In 539, the Ostrogoths had been driven out of Rome; and were suing for peace; and in Constantinople, Justinian appeared on a mosaic, surrounded by his faithful advisers, 'with gay and festive expression'.

Few emperors established their threatened position with such inspired opportunism. But in so doing, Justinian had cast his own shadow over the rest of his reign. Compared with the grandiloquent euphoria of the 530s, the remaining twenty-five years of his reign seem a sinister anti-climax. For modern scholars, Justinian has been trapped in his own image. His astute manipulation of the resources of propaganda has been taken at face value. Hence he has gained the reputation of being a romantic idealist, haunted by the mirage of a renewal of the Roman empire; and the difficulties of the succeeding years have unjustly been presented as the nemesis of a grandiose policy.

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Justinian is a less sinister, if more complex figure. He sought glory while the going was good, because he sorely needed it to maintain his position; and he had the genius to realize the vast resources available to an east Roman emperor of the early sixth century - an almost numinous past history, a full treasury, an unrivalled supply of human talent in every field. But the history of his reign was written - as was so often the case in the Roman empire - by the alienated and the embittered. Justinian had betrayed the traditionalist governing class of the empire; he had outflanked them in a policy of flamboyant glory; but it was they who remained to chronicle, with bitter attention, every detail of the shipwreck of the young emperor's hopes.

The 540s were a catastrophic decade. In 540, Khusrro I Anoshirwan, the shah of Persia, broke his truce with Byzantium. The eastern garrisons had been neglected for the western wars. The shah fell on Anioch, the second city of the empire, and, having cynically offered to sell it to Justinian, plundered it and marched slowly home again, emptying the cities of northern Syria with impunity.

In his reaction to the revival of the menace of Persia, Justinian showed that he was no dreamer. The war in Italy was instantly relegated to a backwater. In coming years, Justinian was prepared to spend more money on impressing one Persian ambassador in Constantinople than on all the armies in the reconquered western provinces. From the Black Sea to Damascus, the emperor's foresight was crystallized in stone. Justinian's fortifications along his eastern frontier are the most refined example of Roman military architecture. They still stand in the desert as tangible reminders of the overriding priority of the Near East in the policies of the east Roman state.

While the eastern provincials were sheltered from the consequences of Justinian's western commitments, his fellow countrymen in the Balkans felt the strain directly. The Balkan garrisons were stripped to provide levies for the western armies. The Danube frontier became permeable again. In the 540s the Slavs raided deep into Roman territory. From 559 onwards Constantinople itself was frequently menaced by the revival of great confederacies of Turkic nomads - heirs to the empire of Attila: first the Bulgars, followed by the Avars. To regain the remote latitude of Italy and Africa, Justinian weakened the living Latin core of the east Roman state in the Balkans. The Slav settlement of the Balkans was a direct consequence of Justinian's western ambitions. While his portrait survives in Ravenna, Justiniana Prima, the capital of the reorganized Balkans which he had founded under his own name (somewhere, perhaps, in southern Serbia), vanished so completely, after the invasions of the late sixth century, that nobody knows for certain where it stood.

The natural catastrophe of the Great Plague formed the background to these reverses. The epidemic began with a vicious outbreak between 541 and 543, and remained endemic throughout the Mediterranean up to the 570s. It was the worst attack until the Black Death of 1348. It knocked the bottom out of the grandeur of the 530s.

From 540 onwards, Justinian sank himself into a dogged routine of survival. The true measure of the man and of the east Roman state was not the belle époque of 533 to 540: it was the quality revealed in the harsh years that followed. The Justinian of the Byzantine tradition is not the young adventurer of the 530s, whose portrait we all know from the mosaics in his reconquered capital of Ravenna: it is the slightly uncanny old man, who worked until dawn every night in the seclusion of the Great Palace - the 'many-eyed' emperor, the sleepless one.

Throughout the wars and the plague, Justinian's financial officers kept the money coming in - not by increasing the taxes, but by ensuring that the rich paid up promptly. Money was now turned to a technology of survival. Fortifications replaced men along the frontiers. Diplomacy was stretched to its utmost to cover a lack of military power. Only under Justinian did Christian missionaries begin to be used as agents of Byzantine cultural imperialism in the northern world: baptism and the arrival of clerical advisers now became the routine consequences of an alliance with the emperor.

Warfare, also, became more specialized. Later in the sixth century, Byzantine generals wrote manuals which show how closely they had observed and copied the new cavalry tactics of the nomads. War, for such men, was like hunting - a delicate art in which bloodshed was no substitute for skill. The perpetual emergencies from 540 onwards created, among the generals and diplomats, an experimental frame of mind that culminated, in the mid-seventh century, in the development of 'Greek fire' in the Byzantine navy - the most devastating application of technology to warfare in the early medieval period.

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of silk, for instance, became a government monopoly. He ruthlessly cut away dead wood. An immensely costly system of free government transport, inherited directly from the time of Augustus, was axed. Only one road was now maintained – significantly, the great highway leading across Asia Minor to the eastern frontier. By the end of Justinian's reign, the exuberant, involuted facade of the late Roman state, whose generous and many-sided reserves Justinian had tapped with gusto before 540, had been stripped down to its steel framework.

Because of this drastic overhaul, Justinian's reign did not end in failure. Far from it: in 552 the Ostrogothic resistance was shattered in a single, skillfully planned and executed engagement; in 554, large areas of southern Spain came under Byzantine rule; after 560, Africa was pacified, and Byzantine fortresses held a frontier more ambitious than that held by the emperor Trajan. The Danube line was protected by a cat's-cradle of alliances. The truculent Khazro I had been checkmated. Within the empire, the villages of Palestine and Syria were as prosperous as ever. International trade provided opportunities for revenue: the fleets of the patriarchs of Alexandria sailed to Cornwall in the early seventh century; and the beautiful gold coins of Justinian and his successors found their way as far afield as Sweden, Peking and Zanzibar.

The most fateful legacy of Justinian to succeeding generations was precisely the extent of his success. He had proved that autocracy worked as a short-term remedy for the ills of the Byzantine state. Rather like Philip II, toiling endlessly in the Escorial, this 'sleepless' figure fostered the illusion that one man could solve the problems of an empire.

Personal government sapped the quality of the imperial bureaucracy. The scholar-administrators of the early sixth century had tended to be hidebound and resistant to high taxation. But they had guaranteed a degree of continuity and had fostered the participation in government of the educated governing classes of the Greek world. Justinian's gifted professionals ended by whitening down the links between a bureaucracy made up increasingly of imperial favourites, and east Roman upper-class society at large. These men got in the taxes; but the steady press of talented young gentlemen to Constantinople came to a halt – imperial service was too abrasive a profession. As a result of increased professionalization throughout the sixth

century, the old structure of provincial life disappeared. The immortal right of the Greek town councils to levy the taxes on their locality vanished. By the end of the sixth century, town councillors in their solemn robes were no more than a childhood memory. Deprived of their old focus of allegiance, the towns of the eastern empire fell into the hands of their bishops and their great landowners. The populace turned to theology and to gangsterism. Savage clashes between Circus-factions in all the towns of the empire shocked and puzzled contemporaries in the late sixth century, much as they still puzzle historians.

Justinian had cut away too much of the old tissues of east Roman society. Only his choice of efficient servants and his boundless curiosity saved him from isolation. And in his old age, Justinian's grip was relaxed with disastrous results. His successors had nothing to fall back on but his tradition of palace-government: Maurice (582–602) and Heraclius (610–41) were spectacular emperors; but they had to govern their empire through a camilla of hated and disunited courtiers and through their relatives.

The weakness of the east Roman empire, however, was that it was an essentially civilian state. Its strength lay in its tax-payers. Throughout the sixth century, agriculture had been maintained at a high level; and new opportunities for commerce had been opened up. Until the reign of Heraclius, the emperors had sufficient trunk to allot to substitutes for military strength, fortification and diplomacy. But money could not create soldiers. Maurice and Heraclius both revived the older, militaristic tendencies of the Roman empire. They took the field in person. But they found they had not enough men to lead. Hence the strange combination of fragility and grandeur in the Byzantine empire after Justinian: a sprawling territory of rich countryside and prosperous cities found itself caught between the hammer and the anvil of two professedly military empires – the warrior-hegemony of the Avars to the north and the fearsome nobility of Persia to the east. How could the traditions of civilian autocracy, inherited and heightened by Justinian, resist consistent pressure in the Near East from Persia, whose art, a Roman observer once remarked, 'shows nothing but scenes of hunting, of bloodshed and of war'?

The challenge of Persia dominated the late sixth and early seventh centuries in Byzantium. In the course of the sixth century the Roman

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empire had become a Near Eastern state. Rome was an outpost: 'If God does not move the heart of the emperor to send us a general or a governor,' wrote the pope in the late sixth century, 'then we are lost.' Even on the distant shores of the western Mediterranean, Byzantine rule meant incorporation in an oriental empire. The Byzantine outpost in the West were like mirrors, casting the light of the eastern Mediterranean far into the darkness of early medieval northern Europe. Isolated and grandiloquent, the kingdom of Visigothic Spain nevertheless moved to the rhythms of Byzantine life: its rulers eyed the eastern empire closely as a model and as a potential menace. In northern Europe, every great church was hung with Byzantine silks; liturgical books were written on Byzantine papyrus; relics were cased in Byzantine silverwork; legends and liturgy were of eastern origin; saints were, inappropriately, buried in shrouds of Persian silk, showing the griffins of Zoroastrian mythology and the hunting feats of pagan shahs in the Iranian plateau.

The centre of gravity of the Christian world still lay in the eastern Mediterranean. One of the earliest archbishops of Canterbury, Theodore (669-90), was a Byzantine subject from Tarsus (southern Turkey). On the Northumbrian coast, the Venerable Bede (c. 672-735) drew his Biblical erudition from the works of African bishops who had written to persuade Justinian in faraway Constantinople. When Gregory I wished to cement an alliance with the Lombards, he sent their queen a flask of oil from the shrine of the Holy Cross at Jerusalem. On the Atlantic coast of Spain, an unknown lady was buried with a similar flask. For the barbarians of Europe, Jerusalem was still the centre of the world: and Jerusalem was a Byzantine city.

Fragile though these Byzantine outposts were, they ensured that the southern shores of the Mediterranean belonged to an empire whose heart lay in the Near East. This is the long-term significance of Justinian's reconquests in the West. From Gibraltar to Gaza, the inhabitants shared with the eastern provinces a common loyalty to the Roman emperors, a common piety, a common idiom in ornament, a common stable coinage. They were already sharply distinguished from the underdeveloped territories to their north - northern Spain, Gaul and northern Italy. The diagonal division of the Mediterranean into two societies, so that a Near Eastern empire came to stretch like the long, sloping plane of a wedge from Antioch to the valley of the Guadalquivir, was the most marked feature of the western



104 Affluence: a banquet scene from a sixth-century manuscript, the *Frontispiece* (Cod. Bezae Cantabrigiae).

Middle Ages. The division was begun by the conquest of Justinian. Except at Rome and Ravenna, the Muslims stepped straight into the inheritance of the Byzantine exarchs. Even the fateful entry of the Moors of Al-Ṭarīk into Spain in 711 - the notorious 'betrayal of Don Julian' - was a last, fatal stroke of diplomacy by an isolated Byzantine governor, Julianos of Ceuta: his ill-judged use of the Muslims as barbarian mercenaries was in the best traditions of Byzantine foreign policy laid down by Justinian.

In the Near East, Justinian did not stand by himself. His achievements were rivalled by the revival of Persia under Khusro I Anoshirwan - 'Khusro of the immortal soul'. A contemporary, the historian Zachariah of Mitylene, saw this clearly when he watched the celebrations in the Hippodrome of Constantinople in 534. The Vandal king was paraded before Justinian in an unparalleled triumph: 'But ambassadors of Khusro, king of the Persians, were there, and they sat there, and they saw these things. . . . It is time for us, also, to look at the sixth-century world through more eastern eyes.'

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VOLUME IV

The Ancient Kingdoms

translated and annotated
by

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annotations of Iranian names and terms
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The Roman Rulers

The Roman rulers, according to the Christians, reigned over Palestine from the ascension of Christ to the age of the Prophet Muhammad.

Abū Ja'far says: They assert that after Tiberius, Palestine and other parts of Syria were ruled by Gaius, son of Tiberius, for four years. He was succeeded by another son, Claudius, for fourteen years, following which Nero ruled for fourteen years. He slew Peter and crucified Paul head down. For four months Botlāius [Vittelius] ruled thereafter. Then Vespasian, father of Titus whom he sent to Jerusalem, ruled for ten years. Three years after his rise to power, forty years after the ascension of Jesus, Vespasian sent Titus to Jerusalem. Titus destroyed it and slew numerous Israelites in his wrath over the fate of Christ. The following Roman kings then ruled:

Titus, son of Vespasian, ruled for two years; Domitian, sixteen years; Nerva, six years; Trajan, nineteen years; Hadrian, twenty-one years; Antonin, twenty-two years; Marcus and his sons, nineteen years; Commodus, thirteen years; Pertinax, six months; Severus, fourteen years; Antoninus (= Caracalla), seven years; Marcianus (= Macrinus), six years; Antoninus (= Elagabalus), four years; (Severus) Alexander, thirteen years; Chasmiyanus (= Maximinus), three years; Gordian, six years; Philipp, seven years;

Decius, six years; Gallus, six years; Valerian and Gallienus, fifteen years; Claudius II, one year; Citalius, six months; Aurelianus, five years; Tacit, six months; Florian, twenty-five days; Probus, six years; Carus and his two sons, two years; Diocletian, six years; Maximian, twenty years; Constantine, thirty years; Constantine, thirty years; Constantine, thirty years; Julian the Apostate, two years; Jovian, one year; Valentinian and Gratian, ten years; Valentinian II, one year; Theodosius the Great, seventeen years; Arcadius and Honorius, twenty years; Theodosius II and Valentinian, sixteen years; Marcian, seven years; Leo, sixteen years; Zeno, eighteen years; Anastasius, twenty-seven years; Justin I, seven years; Justinian I, twenty years; Justin II, twelve years; Tiberius, six years; Maurice (Maurikios) and his son Theodosius, twenty years; Phocas, who was slain, seven and a half years; Heraclius, to whom the Messenger of God wrote an epistle, thirty years.

From the rebuilding of the Temple, after it was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar, to the hijrah there elapsed, according to these scholars, over a thousand years. From the reign of Alexander to the hijrah there elapsed over 920 years. Of these, 303 years elapsed from the rise of Alexander to the birth of Jesus, and thirty-two years elapsed from the birth of Jesus to his ascension. From his ascension to the hijrah there elapsed 585 years and a few months.

Some authorities assert that the death of John the Baptist at the hands of the Israelites took place at the time of Ardashir b. Bābak, after eight years of his reign, and that Nebuchadnezzar went to war in Palestine against the Jews on behalf of Shapur (Sābur) of the Troops b. Ardashir b. Bābak.

Extracts on the cultural heritages of the Byzantine Empire

2.3

(1) The Greeks

A. Zeno of Elea against plurality (fifth century B.C.)

"If there is a plurality, things will be both great and small; so great as to be infinite in size, so small as to have no size at all. If what is had no size, it would not even be. For if it were added to something else, that is, it would make it no larger; for being no size at all, it could not, on being added, cause any increase in size. And so what was added would clearly be nothing. Again if, when it is taken away, the other thing is no smaller, just as when it is added it is not increased, obviously what was added or taken away was nothing. But if it is, each thing must have a certain size and bulk, and one part of it must be a certain distance from another; and the same argument holds about the part in front of it—it too will have some size and there will be something in front of it. And it is the same thing to say this once and to go on saying it indefinitely; for no such part of it will be the last, nor will one part ever be unrelated to another. So, if there is a plurality, things must be both small and great; so small as to have no size at all, so great as to be infinite."

(Kirk and Raven, §365)

B. Isocrates (fourth century B.C.)

"I have often found it amazing that those who organised the first national festivals and established the athletic games should have thought physical success worthy of such great rewards, whereas to those who have laboured in private for the public good, and have trained their own minds so as to be able to help others besides themselves, they accord no mark of distinction, when it was to this man that they ought reasonably to have paid greater regard: for, if all the athletes should double their physical strength, the rest of us would gain nothing thereby; but if a single man should conceive a good idea, there would be benefit for all who wished to share his intelligence.

"Yet I have not been discouraged by this and chosen to do nothing, but have come to offer counsel on the subjects of war against the barbarians and concord among ourselves, believing that the renown which I shall win from the speech itself will be a sufficient prize. I am quite aware that many of those claiming to be sophists have launched upon this theme, but I hope to do so much better than them that other speakers would seem never to have said anything on those

I have "plurality" in mind. I will be the last, nor will one part ever be unrelated to another. So, if there is a plurality, things must be both small and great; so small as to have no size at all, so great as to be infinite.

1. "There is in Egypt at the head of the Delta, where the Nile divides, a district called the Saitic.... The chief goddess of the inhabitants is called in Egyptian Neith, in Greek (according to them) Athena; and they are very friendly to the Athenians and claim some relationship to them. Solon came there on his travels and was highly honoured by them, and in the course of making inquiries from those priests who were most knowledgeable on the subject found that both he and all his countrymen were almost entirely ignorant about antiquity. And wishing to lead them on to talk about early times, he embarked on an account of the earliest events known here.... And a very old priest said to him, 'Oh Solon, Solon, you Greeks are all children, and there's no such thing as an old Greek', 'What do you mean by that?' inquired Solon. 'You are all young in mind', came the reply: 'You have no belief rooted in old tradition, and no knowledge hoary with age.
2. "And the reason is this. There have been and will be many different calamities to destroy mankind.... Your own story of how Phaethon, child of the sun, harnessed his father's chariot, but was unable to guide it along his father's course, and so burnt up things on the earth and was himself destroyed by a thunderbolt, is a mythical version of the truth that there is at long intervals a variation in the course of the heavenly bodies and a consequent widespread destruction by fire of things on earth...."
- (Plato, *Timaues*, 21f)
- C. Plato on Egyptian wisdom (c. 400 B.C.)

subjects. At the same time, I have chosen as the finest class of oratory that which deals with the most important subjects, while giving the speakers the greatest opportunity for display and their audience the greatest benefit; this discourse falls into that category. Next, the opportunity has not yet passed, rendering pointless any reference to it now; for that is the only time we should cease talking about it, when either events have reached a conclusion and there is no further need to make plans about them, or it is seen that discussion has been exhausted and that there is no way for further speakers to improve upon it. But so long as the situation remains the same as before, and what has already been said is inadequate, surely we ought to make this subject one of close study and research, since if those studies are successful they will rid us of intestine warfare, of our present confusion, and of our greatest evils."

(*Panegyricus* ed. Usher, 1-6)

(2) The Israelites

D. The Israelite God

- 1. "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.... And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.... So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them."

- 2. "And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made."

- 3. "And they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God amongst the trees of the garden. And the Lord God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou?"

(Genesis 1-3)

E. God as political guardian

- 1. "Then sang Moses and the children of Israel this song unto the Lord, and spake, saying, I will sing unto the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously: the horse and his rider he hath thrown into the sea.... The Lord is a man of war: the Lord is his name. Pharaoh's chariots and his host he hath cast into the sea: his chosen captains also are drowned in the Red sea. The depths have covered them: they sank into the bottom as a stone."

(Exodus 15)

- 2. "Therefore thus saith the Lord concerning the king of Assyria, he shall not come into this city, nor shoot an arrow there.... By the way that he came, by the same shall he return, and shall not come into this city, saith the Lord. For I will defend this city to save it for mine own sake, and for my servant David's sake. Then the angel of the Lord went forth, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians a hundred and fourscore and five thousand; and when they arose early in the morning, behold, they were all dead corpses. So Sennacherib king of Assyria departed, and went and returned...." (Isaiah 37)

2. "But you, wise Isalah, as you prefigured for me when I began my speech the deliverance of this city, so now also set your seal on my words with your conclusion and announce the good news of safety and peace for the city in the future. Thus speaks the Lord our God: I will defend this city to save it for me and for my servant David. For our emperor is a new David in his piety to God and his clemency towards his subjects. And the Lord will crown him with victories like David, and his son who reigns with him, making him wise and peaceable like Solomon, and bestowing on him and on his father piety and orthodoxy. Ask this, prophet, from the God of Solomon... and beseech the Virgin, whom you foresaw with the eyes of the mind to be truly the Mother of God... to save the city for ever... Amen.

1. "... You foreign and devilish troops! A woman, the Mother of God, will quell all your boldness and boasting with one command, for she is truly the Mother of Him who drowned Pharaoh with all his army in the Red Sea."

H. Address celebrating victory against the Avars (626 A.D.)

"If you ask about your change, the shopkeeper talks theology to you, on the Begotten and the Unbegotten; if you inquire the price of a loaf, the reply is: 'The Father is greater and the son is inferior'; and if you say, 'Is the bath ready?' the attendant affirms that the son is of nothing." (Brown, Power and persuasion, 89f)

G. Gregory of Nyssa on Constantino (later fourth century A.D.)

(The Book of Common Prayer, 27-30)
 except a man believe faithfully, he cannot be saved."
 unity of person... This is the Catholic Faith: which God! one altogether, not by confusion of substance: but by the Godhead into flesh: but by taking of the Manhood into yet he is not two, but one Christ; one, not by conversion of Son of God, is God and Man... who although he be God and Man: that we believe and confess: that our Lord Jesus Christ, the are not three Gods: but one God... For the right Faith is God, the son is God: and the Holy Ghost is God. And yet they Persons: nor dividing the substance... So the Father is Trinity, and Trinity in Unity; neither confounding the "And the Catholic Faith is this: That we worship one God in

F. The Athanasian Creed (fourth century A.D.)

(3) Getting it all mixed up

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1. "Thus the land of Egypt was in former times the abode of idols; evil spirits lived there and took more pleasure in it than in any other country in the world. But now it has become the abode of God and His angels, and is full of all the saints, more so than any other land. What country is so filled with monasteries and dwellings of saints as Egypt? There is nothing like it in the world." (seventh-century homily ascribed to Theophilus, ed. Fieisch, 383)

C. Coptic Christianity

"From Harpokration son of Dioskoros (son of Harmais) and of Senorsenouphis (daughter of Psenanouphis), from Tanyathis: I register for the house-by-house census of Lord Hadrian Caesar's second year, in compliance with the demands of Ramminus Martialis the most noble Prefect...: (1) myself, a scribe, aged 70, scar on the shank of the left leg; (2) Dioskoros, a son, his mother being Senpachounis (daughter of Anompis), without scar, doctor, aged 17; (3) Senpachounis daughter of Anompis, wife of Harpokration, aged 39; (4) Tazbes the younger, a daughter, aged 15. And I swear by the fortune of the Emperor Caesar... Hadrian... that I have honestly and truthfully presented the above return, and that no one is left unregistered, or may I be liable on my oath." (P. Giss. 43 in Philadelphia handout)

B. An Egyptian census return of 119 A.D. (in Greek)

1. "By the might of Pharaoh and the honour of Egypt (Keme) and our Lord Apis, the honour of the crown and the strength of the warriors..."

2. "For who has there ever been among the kings, not only among the Assyrian kings, but among those from the whole world, who have risen up against Egypt and have been able to maintain her, so that thou, goddess one, will be able to maintain her?"

3. "For you know yourself all the Egyptians, that they are warriors and that their women hurl stones with slings and train their children and teach them to wage war. Early in childhood they use to teach them to hurl stones." (Jansen, 64, 66)

A. The Coptic story of Cambyses' invasion (c. 400 A.D.?)

(4) Egypt

Handwritten notes:
 2.3
 Cambyses
 Egypt

(BT, Baba mezi'a, 59b)

"On that day Rabbi Eliezer brought forward every imaginable argument, but they [his fellow-scholars] did not accept them. Said he to them: 'If the law agrees with me, let this carob-tree prove it!' Thereupon the carob-tree was torn a hundred cubits out of its place—others affirm, four hundred cubits. 'No proof can be brought from a carob-tree', they retorted.... Again he said to them: 'If the law agrees with me, let it be proved from heaven!' Thereupon a voice from heaven cried out: 'Why do you dispute with Rabbi Eliezer, seeing that in all matters the law agrees with him?' But Rabbi Joshua arose and exclaimed: 'It is not in heaven!' (Deut. 30:12) (What did he mean by this? Rabbi Jeremiah says: that the Torah had already been given at Mount Sinai; we pay no attention to a voice from heaven....). On that day all objects which Rabbi Eliezer had declared clean were brought in and burnt. Then they took a vote and excommunicated him."

Handwritten notes:
 "What - 2"
 "Allegory - 2"
 "Mystery - 2"

E. On sticking to the point at issue

(BT, Menahot, 29b)

1. "Rav Yehudah said: When Moses ascended on high, he found God sitting fixing little strokes to the tops of the letters. [Moses asked him why.] He replied: 'At the end of many generations, there will be a man called Agiva ben Yosef, who will expound heaps and heaps of laws on the basis of each little.' 'Lord of the Universe,' he said, 'show him to me!' God told him to turn round. He went and sat down behind eight rows [of students]. He had no idea what they were talking about, so he felt uncomfortable. But when they came to a certain matter, the students said to [the teacher]: 'Rabbi, where do you get that from?', and he told them 'It's a law [revealed] to Moses from Sinai'. So Moses felt good [again]."

D. On the progress of scholarship

(5) The Jews

2. "A certain brother went on one occasion from Egypt to Syria to visit Abba Zeno, and the Egyptian began to make accusations against his [own sinful] thoughts before the old man; and when Abba Zeno heard this, he marvelled and said, 'The Egyptians always hide the spiritual excellences which they possess, but they describe the shortcomings which they do not possess; on the other hand, the Syrians and Greeks declare that they possess the virtues which they have not, and they hide the shortcomings which they do possess.'" (Palladius (early fifth century), Paradise, §457)

Handwritten notes:
 "Egyptian"
 "Syrian"

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Handwritten notes:
 "What is the point of this?"
 "Why do you dispute with him?"
 "Why do you dispute with him?"

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(BT, Menahot, 29b)

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 "What is the point of this?"
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1. "I have come from Babylon to make a cry reverberate across the world." (Mant in Puech, Manichéisme, 13)

K. Manichéism (third century A.D.)

"The Samaritan Simon Magus from the village of Gitta... under the emperor Claudius accomplished magic works of power through the arts of the demons working in him... Almost all the Samaritans, and a few also among other nations, confess him as the first god and worship him... And a certain Helen, who at that time went about with him but had formerly maintained herself in a prothel, is said to have been the first Ennoia (thought) emanating from him." (Justin Martyr ibid., 1:27f)

Explic
Mant
to
Mant

J. The beginnings of Gnosticism (first century A.D.)

"I am God or the son of God or a divine spirit. I am come. For the world is already at the point of being destroyed and you, ye men, shall perish because of your unrighteousness. But I wish to deliver you. You shall see me again coming with heavenly power. Blessed is he who now worships me—upon all the rest I will bring fire from heaven... but those who follow me I will keep safe for ever." (Celsus in Foerster, Gnosis, 1:28)

I. The message of the Syrian prophets of the second century A.D.

(7) other religious groups and trends

3. [Instructions issued by the Nestorian church, 576 A.D.:] "It is right that in all the churches of this exalted and glorious kingdom that our lord the victorious Choroos, king of kings, be named in the litanies during the liturgy. No metropolitan or bishop has any authority to waive this canon in any of the churches of his diocese and jurisdiction." (Brock, "Christians in the Sasanian empire", 14, 8, 11)

2. [Mihreshabur, Zoroastrian official, to Bahram V in 422 A.D.:] "If the king would hear me, let him give orders that the Christians convert from their religion, for they hold the same faith as the Romans, and they are in entire agreement together: should a war interpose between the two empires these Christians will turn out to be defectors from our side in any fighting, and through their playing false they will bring down your power."

2. "Wisdom and good works have been brought in a perfect sequence from age to age by the messengers of God. They were brought at one time by the prophet called Buddha in the region of India, at another by Zoroaster in the land of Persia, at another by Jesus in the West. After that, revelation has come and prophecy has been manifested in this last age through me, Mani, the messenger of the God of Truth in Babylonia."
3. "The religion which I have chosen is in ten respects superior to the other, earlier religions:
 "First: The earlier (?) religions were [each] in [only] a single land and a single language. Now my religion is such that it will appear in every land and in all languages and will be taught in the furthest lands."
 (Mani in Andreas-Henning, "Mitteliranische Manichaica aus Chinesisch-Turkestan", II, 295)

I have a
 sketch -
 Mani +
 Muhammad (?)

Universal
 religions -

Mani -
 part of prophesy